Heads of local Churches write to President Trump about the status of Jerusalem

PATRIARCHS AND HEADS
OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

President Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America

Jerusalem on December 6, 2017

Dear Mr. President,

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Dear Mr. President,

We are fully aware and appreciative of how you are dedicating special attention to the status of Jerusalem in these days. We are following with attentiveness and we see that it is our duty to address this letter to Your Excellency. On July 17, 2000, we addressed a similar letter to the leaders who met in Camp David to decide the status of Jerusalem. They kindly took our letter into consideration. Today, Mr. President, we are confident that you too will take our viewpoint into consideration on the very important status of Jerusalem.

Our land is called to be a land of peace. Jerusalem, the city of God, is a city of peace for us and for the world. Unfortunately, though, our holy land with Jerusalem the Holy city, is today a land of conflict.

Those who love Jerusalem have every will to work and make it a land and a city of peace, life and dignity for all its inhabitants. The prayers of all believers in it—the three religions and two peoples who belong to this city—rise to God and ask for peace, as the Psalmist says: "Return to us, God

Almighty! Look down from heaven and see!" (80.14). Inspire our leaders, and fill their minds and hearts with justice and peace.

Mr. President, we have been following, with concern, the reports about the possibility of changing how the United States understands and deals with the status of Jerusalem. We are certain that such steps will yield increased hatred, conflict, violence and suffering in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, moving us farther from the goal of unity and deeper toward destructive division. We ask from you Mr. President to help us all walk towards more love and a definitive peace, which cannot be reached without Jerusalem being for all.

Our solemn advice and plea is for the United States to continue recognizing the present international status of Jerusalem. Any sudden changes would cause irreparable harm. We are confident that, with strong support from our friends, Israelis and Palestinians can work towards negotiating a sustainable and just peace, benefiting all who long for the Holy City of Jerusalem to fulfil its destiny. The Holy City can be shared and fully enjoyed once a political process helps liberate the hearts of all people, that live within it, from the conditions of conflict and destructiveness that they are experiencing.

Christmas is upon us soon. It is a feast of peace. The Angels have sung in our sky: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to the people of good will. In this coming Christmas, we plea for Jerusalem not to be deprived from peace, we ask you Mr. President to help us listen to the song of the angels. As the Christian leaders of Jerusalem, we invite you to walk with us in hope as we build a just, inclusive peace for all the peoples of this unique and Holy City.

With our best regards, and best wishes for a Merry Christmas.

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem

+Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

+Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate

+Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator, Latin Patriarchate

+Fr. Francesco Patton, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land

+Archbishop Anba Antonious, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem

+Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate

+Archbishop Aba Embakob, Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate

+Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek-Melkite-Catholic Patriarchate

+Archbishop Mosa El-Hage, Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate

+Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East

+Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

+Bishop Pierre Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate

+Msgr. Georges Dankaye', Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate