



# PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

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## ***Statement from the Council of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem The Christian Schools in Israel***

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, are distressed that our schools in Israel are on strike for more than two weeks. It hurts to see 33,000 students from all faiths and denominations out of their classrooms, while hundreds of teachers and employees are watching their schools empty. This situation is a grave inconvenience to the parents as their children remain at home, while education is a basic human right that no child should be denied.

The struggle for justice and equality for our schools started almost two years ago, after serious budget cuts imposed upon our schools caused a financial deficit. Negotiations between the Office of Christian Schools in Israel and the Ministry of Education failed and all solutions presented by the Ministry were unrealistic and would cause further financial burden on parents of our students.

For hundreds of years, our schools have provided quality education. Our commitment to education and advancement of our society is embodied in our mission and vision. Therefore, we call upon the Ministry of Education and the government of Israel to take immediate action and end this strike by responding to the schools' modest and just demands in order for our students, teachers and parents to resume their normal life.

The struggle of our schools is a just cause, in seeking not only equal rights, but also recognition of the outstanding services that are offered.

We thank all those who have stood with our schools in their strife, as we hope and pray that this undesirable and painful strike will end with the return of the full rights and respect to our schools, so that they can continue this mission of education for the glory of God and service for humanity.

### **The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem**

- +Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarchate
- +Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land
- +Archbishop Anba Abraham, 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