



Praise be to God and prayers be upon our prophet Mohammad and upon the prophets Issa and Mousa and upon all the prophets and messengers of God

I would like to welcome Palestine's distinguished guest on behalf of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian leadership, and on behalf of the Muslim Waqf officials, and Palestinian Jerusalemite dignitaries who welcome your Holiness as you visit Al Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth in the holy and sacred land. This land that is the cradle of religions and prophets, the place of Prophet Mohammad's - may God's prayers be upon him- journey to heavens and the birthplace of Prophet Issa, peace be upon Him, the land of the Virgin Mary, peace be upon Her. It is the land that nurtured the calls for good, faith, and love among all human beings honoured among all creatures

“We have honored the children of Adam...”

Al Isra' verse: 70¹

"O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another"

Al Hujurat Verse: 13

This is a clear Qura'nic call for knowing the other, engaging in dialogue with the other towards the best interest of humanity through the common principles and values that Islam embraces. Indeed it urges adherence thereto far from the negative image that some people have of Islam falsely accusing it of violence and terrorism.

¹ Reference of the English translation at: <http://www.quran-islam.org>



Your Holiness;

The solid relations between Christians and Muslims and their co-existence is very well known under common values of tolerance and good relations in the Holy Land over more than fourteen century until this day. We do not exaggerate when we say that this co-existence serves as a model to be followed in all countries across the world where Muslims and followers of other religions live.

- However today in our country peace and security are lacking as a result of the Israeli occupation. We aspire for the day when we enjoy freedom and see the end of occupation. The day when our Palestinian people obtain and enjoy their legitimate rights including the right to an independent state with its capital Jerusalem ,the right of refugees to return to their towns and villages from which they were expelled. These are fundamental and inalienable rights that are not bound by time or judicial limitations. The peace that we aspire to is a peace based on justice and the respect of the other. It is the demand of our people who have suffered and continue to suffer from the injustice and cruelty of occupation. Peace, however, can only be achieved through the collaboration and concerted regional and international efforts to make this peace a reality on the ground.
- Working towards consolidating peace and justice in Palestine and in other countries across the world that suffer from conflicts require Muslim and Christian cooperation to promote values of tolerance and justice among people regardless of their religion, race, or colour. These values are among the most important values shared among all monotheistic religions. God in whom we believe is a God of peace

“He is the One GOD; there is no other god beside Him”.

Al Hasher Verse: 23



- The Israeli political, administrative, and demographic measures in addition to its arbitrary and harsh measures in relation to residency rights and family reunifications make our lives- in Jerusalem in particular and in Palestine in general- subject to constant threats the least of which is the threat for the Palestinian citizens to lose their right to permanent residency in the city.
- Additionally, it is extremely difficult to obtain building permits thus creating a situation where Palestinian houses are demolished upon unfair and arbitrary decisions and measures. The Israeli settlements and the digging works underneath Al Aqsa Mosque that threaten its foundations, the isolation of Jerusalem by a ring of settlements, in addition to the construction of the Apartheid Wall transforms the city into a big prison that lacks all kinds of social and cultural activities, and the basic human rights to live in freedom and dignity.
- The actions taking place in Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, in Al Bustan neighbourhood, and other Arab neighbourhoods in the city, in terms of violations threaten the presence of complete families and deprive them of their most important rights to a shelter.

Our Palestinian people are deprived of the sense of safety and security and of its basic rights as a result of the Israeli occupation measures throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We salute the Vatican for its positions on the question of Palestinian refugees since 1948 and we would like to reiterate the importance of continued support to their right of return.

We would also like to point out an important and humanitarian concern for all Palestinians, the question of detainees in Israeli



jails, who have exceeded 11,000 in total, who are yearning as their families for freedom.

We reiterate to you that peace and stability in this country, which have been lacking for decades, can only be achieved with the end of occupation and with our Palestinian people regaining their freedom, their right to self-determination, and their other legitimate rights.

We look forward for your Holiness' effective role in putting an end to the on-going aggression against our people, our land, and our holy sites in Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank. We look forward to your role in enabling Palestinian Muslims and Christians to access their holy sites in Jerusalem to enjoy their right and freedom to worship at Al Aqsa mosque, the Holy Sepulchre, of which they are currently deprived by the Israeli occupation forces. This constitutes a violation of their most basic religious rights.

I welcome your Holiness again in the Holy Land, the cradle of religions and prophecies.

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein
Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Holy Land