

Joint Statement on the occasion of the Signature of the Comprehensive Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Palestine

On Friday 26 June 2015, at the Vatican Apostolic Palace, a Comprehensive Agreement was signed between the Holy See and the State of Palestine.

The accord follows on the Basic Agreement which was signed between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on 15 February 2000 and is the result of the negotiations undertaken by a bilateral working commission over the past number of years.

His Excellency Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, signed for the Holy See and His Excellency Dr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed for the State of Palestine.

The following took part in the solemn act:

For the Holy See: His Excellency Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto, Apostolic Delegate to Jerusalem and Palestine; His Excellency Archbishop Antonio Franco, Apostolic Nuncio; His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Patriarch of Jerusalem of the Latins; Mgr. Antoine Camilleri, Under-Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States; Rev. Fr. Lorenzo Lorusso, O.P., Under-Secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches; Mgr. Alberto Ortega, Official of the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State; Mgr. Paolo Borgia, Official of the Section for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State; and Rev. Fr. Oscar Marzo, O.F.M., member of the Custody of the Holy Land and Official of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

For the State of Palestine: His Excellency Dr. Ramzi Khoury, Advisor to the President, Deputy Head of the Presidential Higher Committee on Church Affairs in Palestine; Ambassador Issa Kassissieh, Representative of the State of Palestine to the Holy See; Ambassador Rawan Sulaiman, Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs; Mrs. Vera Baboun, Mayor of Bethlehem; Mr. Moussa Abu Hadeed, Mayor of Ramallah; Mr. Ammar Hijazi, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral Affairs; Mr. Azem Bishara, Legal Advisor of the PLO; Mr. Ammar Nisnas, Counselor of the Diplomatic Representation of the State of Palestine to the Holy See.

The Agreement is comprised of a Preamble and 32 Articles distributed in 8 Chapters. It deals with essential aspects of the life and activity of the Catholic Church in the State of Palestine, while reaffirming support for a negotiated and peaceful resolution of the situation in the region.

The Agreement shall come into force when both Parties have notified each other in writing that the constitutional or internal requirements for the coming into force of the Agreement have been met.