



The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, to Lambeth Palace last week.

The Patriarch shared issues of concern with the Archbishop, including proposed changes to land tenure in Jerusalem.

He highlighted a proposed bill signed by 40 Knesset members that would restrict the rights of churches, including the Episcopal Diocese in Jerusalem, to deal independently with their land.

The Archbishop restated his support for the Christian community throughout Israel and the Palestinian Territories and across the Middle East.

His Beatitude the Patriarch recently met Pope Francis in Rome, where the Pope said: 'The Holy City, whose Status Quo must be defended and preserved, ought to be a place where all can live together peaceably; otherwise, the endless spiral of suffering will continue for all.'

The Archbishop praised close relationships which exist between the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, especially between the Patriarch and Archbishop Suheil Dawani, who is the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem and Primate of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Over the last months the Patriarch has been warmly welcomed by religious leaders around the world. The Archbishop was pleased to receive the Patriarch at Lambeth Palace and said: 'I join other Church Leaders in calling for all parties to uphold the Status Quo and resist weakening it. I believe that a continued Christian presence in the Holy Land is of paramount importance.' The Archbishop asserted that Jerusalem must remain a place where people of all faiths can live and thrive together.

The meeting closed in prayer in the Crypt Chapel at Lambeth Palace with the words of Psalm 122:

O pray for peace of Jerusalem:

'May they prosper who love you.

'Peace be within your walls

And tranquillity within your palaces.'

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