



Holy Land Co-ordination 2017

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14-19 January 2017 - Following on from the HLC2016 meeting with refugees in Jordan, the annual meeting of the Holy Land Co-ordination (HLC2017) began this year on Saturday 14 January, the eve of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, with a day devoted to the situation of Christian migrants and refugees present in Israel.

On the Saturday morning in Jaffa, the group of European, North American and South African bishops, who since the 1990s have been making an annual visit to the Christian communities present in the Holy Land, participated in the traditional “Mass of the Peoples” animated by the various national communities present in Israel. In the afternoon, the bishops of the HLC2017 transferred to Tel Aviv where they visited the Pastoral Centre for Migrants.

The days after, from their base in Bethlehem, the members of the HLC2017 dealt with the theme of the 50 years of occupation with a visit to Hebron and East Jerusalem, and examined in depth the current situation in the dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, visited initiatives aimed at promoting the dialogue and mutual respect, such as the Tent of Nations. The working days, marked by opportunities for prayer and the daily celebration with the various Catholic parishes in the Bethlehem district, envisaged meetings with the local bishops of the Holy Land, the teaching and administrative staff and the students of Bethlehem University, diplomats and those in charge of Catholic charitable bodies. To mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the afternoon of Wednesday 18 January was entirely devoted to ecumenical dialogue with a meeting of local Christian leaders in the Holy Land, and at 1700 there was a prayer in the Anglican Cathedral of St George in Jerusalem.

The HLC2017 was preceded by a two-day visit (12-13 January) by part of the delegation to the small Christian community of Gaza.

Finally the Bishops of the 2017 Holy Land Co-ordination released a final communiqué calling for prayer, awareness and action after 50 years of occupation in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. For the full statement [see here](#).