



100

FRANCISCUS PP.

DIE XXVI MENSIS IUNII ANNO MMXV A PAULO
RICHARDO GALLAGHER, ARCHIEPISCOPO TITULO
HODELMENSI, SECRETARIO SECTIONIS DE RATIO-
NIBUS CUM CIVITATIBUS, ET A RIAD AL-MALKI, MI-
NISTRO AB EXTERIS NEGOTIIS STATUS PALÆSTINÆ,
HAEC QUAE SEQUITUR CONVENTIO INITA EST:

Francis PP

On the 26 of the month of June in the year 2015, Paul Richard Gallagher, titular Archbishop of Hodelmensi, Secretary of the Section for Relations with States and Riad al-Malki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, have stipulated the following Agreement:

Comprehensive Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Palestine

Preamble

The Holy See and the State of Palestine,

Conscious of the profound historical and cultural relations between the Holy See and the Palestinian people in the Holy Land;

Reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, freedom, security and dignity in an independent State of their own;

Expressing full support for a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in all its aspects, in accordance with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as for an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, living side by side in peace and security with all its neighbours;

Reaffirming their support, in accordance with international law and consensus, for the two-state solution, under which all states in the region live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders;

Recalling the *Basic Agreement* between the Holy See and the PLO that was signed and entered into force in 15 February 2000 and which this Agreement intends now to further expand;

Re-committing themselves to the terms expounded in the Preamble to the aforementioned *Basic Agreement* which declared "that an equitable solution for the issue of Jerusalem, based on international resolutions, is fundamental for a just and lasting peace..., and that unilateral decisions and actions altering the specific character and status of Jerusalem are morally and legally unacceptable";

Reiterating, in this regard, that a just and lasting peace should be achieved through agreement between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and that any illegal unilateral measure, of whatever kind, is null and void, morally unacceptable and creates obstacles to the search for peace;

Looking forward to achieve and attain the above mentioned shared noble objectives;

Desirous of furthering the relationship between the Holy See and the State of Palestine;

Agree on the following Articles:

Chapter I

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND NORMS

Article 1

- § 1. This Agreement has been made taking into account the provisions and mutual obligations established in the Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organization which was signed and entered into force on 15 February 2000.
- § 2. In recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent and sovereign state, the Holy See recognizes the State of Palestine and welcomes its admission to the United Nations as a Non-Member Observer State.
- § 3. This Agreement applies to the entire territory under Palestinian sovereignty in accordance with international law.
- § 4. Upon entry into force of this Agreement, the Holy See and the State of Palestine shall upgrade their diplomatic relations at the levels which shall be determined by the Parties, in accordance with relevant international law provisions.

Article 2

- § 1. This Agreement shall not prejudice, detract, or derogate from the applicable principles, rules and norms of international law recognized and accepted by both Parties.
- § 2. The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its educational, spiritual and moral mission, and while being committed, among other, to the promotion of human rights, justice and peace and of the compliance with international law by all States, deems it

opportune to recall that, owing to its own character, it remains extraneous to all merely temporal or political conflicts and claims no competence to enter into territorial disputes between nations, unless the contending parties or the international institutions make concordant appeals to its missions of peace.

- § 3. The State of Palestine herein re-affirms its commitment to the provisions of the Declaration of Independence of 15 November 1988 and Palestinian Basic Law with regard to the guarantee of freedom of religion, belief, worship and the performance of religious functions. The State of Palestine therefore confirms that it shall, in accordance with Palestinian law and internationally accepted human rights standards, permit without undue restrictions the exercise of the above freedoms of religion, belief, worship and the performance of religious functions to the Catholic Church, to any canonical legal person and to any Catholic person. The State of Palestine further confirms that it will take all possible legal measures to protect and guarantee the exercise of these freedoms.

Article 3

Once signed and ratified by both Parties, this Agreement shall enter into force and its operative paragraphs shall be applicable in all territory administered by the State of Palestine without prejudice to Palestinian *de jure* sovereignty over all Palestinian territory in accordance with international law.

Chapter II

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE

Article 4

- § 1. The State of Palestine re-affirms its commitment in the Basic Agreement to “uphold and observe the human right to freedom of religion and conscience as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments relevant to its application”.
- § 2. The Holy See recalls the commitment of the Catholic Church in the Basic Agreement to support this right and declares once more the respect that the Catholic Church has for the followers of other denominations and religions.

§ 3. In particular the Parties re-affirm that every person, individually or in community with others, has the right to freedom of religion and conscience, and that these rights, as universally proclaimed, should be implemented in each territorial jurisdiction and political community within its own constitutional framework and specific circumstances. These rights include:

1. Freedom to have a religion or belief of one's choice, and to maintain that religion or belief, in accordance with his or her conscience, including the right to do so in line with established procedures, without incurring discrimination, or being subject to coercion or restrictions, likely to undermine or impair his or her freedom in the matter.
2. Freedom to profess his or her religion and to worship, whether individually or in community with others, in private or public.
3. The right to peaceful assembly, and to establish and maintain public places of worship and assembly.
4. Freedom to practise religious rights and to establish and manage spiritual, religious, charitable, educational, social and cultural institutions, in accordance with the relevant Palestinian laws.
5. Freedom of the Catholic Church in Palestine to form territorial federations in partnership with similar religious communities and institutions, and to affiliate with international associations of religious communities and institutions. In connexion with the exercise of this freedom, and in line with international human rights law, members of the Catholic Church have the right to communicate and visit coreligionists and fellow believers, both at home and abroad.
6. Freedom of the Catholic Church to observe rights and customs of religion or belief, alone or in association with others, and use customary facilities ordinarily used in religious rites, including the right to write, print and publish religious books and texts, and to import or export them as required. Where the public authorities control the supply of raw material, or the relevant means of production and distribution, this right should be respected by ensuring these articles and other facilities are made available locally or by providing the authorization for their purchase or production.
7. The right of Catholics to marry in accordance to marriage rites and

customs prescribed by the Canon law. In this regard, the State of Palestine recognizes under its legal system the civil effects of such marriages.

8. The right to burial and the corresponding right of religious communities to perform burial rites pursuant to the prescriptions of their religion or belief. This right encompasses the designation of land for the purpose of establishing a cemetery, and civil authorities shall have the obligation to provide legal protection as required to cemeteries and other legitimate burial places.
9. The right to observe and respect holy days and days of rest in accordance with one's religion or beliefs, granting to Catholics, working in the public sector, time for the Mass obligation on Sundays and Official Holidays , as is the custom.
10. The right of access to places of worship, the right to make religious pilgrimage to Christian Holy Sites in the country or abroad, the right of the Church to organize pilgrimages and conduct them in coordination with the relevant Palestinian authorities, and the right to equal legal protection for all forms of worship and for all places of worship and holy sites.
11. The right to refuse to take an oath of a religious nature contrary to one's religious beliefs.
12. The right of those in military service, or in analogous forms of service, to continue to enjoy religious freedom, and the corresponding duty of authorities to facilitate this freedom, *inter alia*, by making possible regular and appropriately frequent access to a minister of the respective religious community.
13. The individual's genuine "conscientious objection" as a practice consistent with the right to freedom of conscience, belief and religion.
14. The right of prisoners to continue to enjoy complete religious freedom, and the corresponding duty of the rehabilitation and correctional authorities to enable them to practise their religion, including by allowing the regular and frequent visits of chaplains, and respect for the privacy of conversation and the secrecy inherent in sacramental confession.
15. The right of hospitalised persons and of all other persons in situations of confinement for whatever reason and of whatever kind, to continue to enjoy religious freedom, and the corresponding duty of the

respective authorities to enable them to practise their religion, including by allowing visits of chaplains, or by facilitating free access to a minister of the respective religious community.

16. The right of parents and guardians to provide for the religious and moral education of their children and wards that is in accordance with their own religion or their own conviction or indeed their own preference for the quality of education of their children and wards.

- § 4. Both parties re-affirm their determination to implement and safeguard the rights provided for in §§ 1-3 above in accordance with provisions specified in the present Agreement or in any future agreement between the Parties.

Chapter III

ECCLESIASTICAL RIGHTS RIGHTS TO SELF ORGANIZATION, JURISDICTION AND PERSONNEL

Article 5

- § 1. The State of Palestine acknowledges the Church's freedom to carry out its religious, moral, educational, social and charitable mission. The implementation of this mission shall be in accordance with Palestinian Law when required by the nature of the matter.
- § 2. The Church has the freedom to organize its internal affairs, including the appointment, transfer or dismissal of all office holders, ministers of religion, and all other personnel in the service of the Church.
- § 3. The civil jurisdiction of the Catholic ecclesiastical courts, as recognized in Palestinian law, shall remain valid as it stands at the time of signing of this Agreement. Any future modification to this status should be mutually agreed.

Article 6

- § 1. Authority to address matters pertaining to the contents and meaning of Canon Law or to the internal organization of the Catholic Church or concerning the Heads of the Dioceses or other ecclesiastical

circumscriptions and the Heads of other Church Institutions directly depending on the Holy See is vested in the Papal Representative.

- § 2. The Papal Representative shall communicate to the competent offices of the State of Palestine the territorial boundaries of Dioceses and other ecclesiastical circumscriptions and shall likewise communicate to the State of Palestine the appointment and cessation from office of bishops and heads of other ecclesiastical circumscriptions or of other Church Institutions under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See.
- § 3. For the avoidance of doubt, a hierarchical relationship between two or more Church Institutions, among them or with the Holy See as hierarchical superior of any and all Church Institutions, cannot, due to the hierarchical relationship only, make any Church Institution liable for the actions or omissions of any other Church Institution. Without detracting from the above principle, the Holy See will continue to ensure that Church Institutions act responsibly and dutifully at all times.
- § 4. Authority to address internal matters concerning the local Church and other ecclesiastical office holders, ministers of religion and all other personnel in the service of the Church's mission, is vested in the Heads of the Dioceses or other ecclesiastical circumscriptions and the Heads of other Church Institutions.
- § 5. The Heads of the Dioceses or other ecclesiastical circumscriptions shall communicate to the competent offices of the State of Palestine the territorial boundaries of the Parishes, and shall likewise communicate to the State of Palestine the appointment and cessation from office of the Parish Priests and of the Heads of other Church Institutions, as well as of other ecclesiastical office holders such as the members of the ecclesiastical courts, as well as any changes freely made in these matters by the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

Article 7

- § 1. The State of Palestine recognizes the legal personality of the Catholic Church and of all canonical legal persons deemed by the Canon Law of the Church to be legal persons, and recognizes that they are governed in their internal matters by the relevant provisions of Canon Law.
- § 2. Any matter concerning the identity of the head, of the presiding office or of any other official or functionary of a canonical legal person, or

their authority or their powers to act on behalf of the legal person, is governed by Canon Law.

- § 3. The Papal Representative shall keep a register of canonical legal persons having their seat, whether principal or secondary, in the State of Palestine, and of their principal officers, and shall inform the competent Palestinian authorities of the contents of this register.
- § 4. The law which regulates any legal transaction or other legal acts in Palestine between any canonical legal person and any party shall be the law of the State of Palestine, without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph (5) of this Article.
- § 5. Without derogation from the generality of paragraph (4) of this Article, particular transactions by a canonical legal person concerning immovable property or other kinds of property, taking into account the pertinent provisions of Canon Law, depend on a prior written permit of the Holy See in accordance with its written decisions as issued from time to time. The Papal Representative will communicate to the relevant Palestinian authority the above-mentioned decisions. Such kind of transactions as referred to in this paragraph shall not be considered valid by the State of Palestine unless the above-mentioned permit of the Holy See is provided.
- § 6. The Holy See shall facilitate the presence and work of residing and visiting Palestinian officials, representatives, or envoys for the purpose of following up bilateral relations between both Parties.
- § 7. The Holy See shall grant the premises of the diplomatic mission and representatives of the State of Palestine the immunities, privileges and exemptions in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and other applicable international rules and practice.

Article 8

- § 1. In consideration of the prerogatives given by the Holy See to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Custos of the Holy Land, and in virtue of the special international significance and capacity of their office and the dignity attendant upon it, the State of Palestine shall grant them privileges and immunities similar to those granted to diplomats accredited to it for the duration of the term of their office.

- § 2. In connection with § 1 above, the respective seats of residence within the territory to which this Agreement applies, of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and of the Custos of the Holy Land, like the seats of residence all the Patriarchs of the Eastern Catholic Churches, shall enjoy immunity similar to that of premises of diplomatic missions.
- § 3. For the purpose of this Article, the Papal Representative shall communicate to the competent offices of the State of Palestine the office holders and seats referred to above in sub-paragraphs 1-2, the appointment and cessation from office, as well as any changes freely made in these matters by the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

Article 9

- § 1. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Custos of the Holy Land, the bishops and other heads of ecclesiastical circumscriptions, as well as the Parish Priests shall always have access to places and persons under their jurisdiction or which they serve.
- § 2. The same ecclesiastical office holders shall always be able to communicate freely with other ecclesiastical authorities and with all individuals under their authority or whom they serve.
- § 3. The provisions of §§ 1 and 2 above are to be construed as establishing that no restrictions can be made in those cases to the right of freedom of movement and communication that applies generally to all ministers of religion, office holders and personnel of the Church.

Article 10

- § 1. The State of Palestine shall endeavour to grant the necessary multi-entry and residence permits to all ministers of religion and all other personnel who need them when required for the full-time service of any ecclesiastical canonical legal person, upon certification by either the Papal Representative, or the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Custos of the Holy Land, any head of an ecclesiastical circumscription or the principal officer of a canonical legal person. Such permits will be issued in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law.
- § 2. The same certifying ecclesiastical authority shall immediately inform the competent office of the State of Palestine whenever the need for the service of the Church of persons currently in possession of the same

permits referred to in § 1 has ceased for whatever reason, within the period for which the permits are valid.

Article 11

- § 1. Priests, deacons who are destined for the priesthood, students for the priesthood enrolled in a major seminary, members and novices in Catholic religious institutes, are exempt from any form of compulsory personal service, including military service.
- § 2. Certification of the status of the persons comprised in the categories listed in § 1 above shall be made in accordance with Art. 6 § 1 above. The certifying authority assumes the obligation of informing immediately the competent office of the State of Palestine of any case of loss of a status conferring the exemption.

Article 12

- § 1. In the event of the application of the Criminal Code, the same consideration shall be accorded to ecclesiastical office holders as is accorded under Palestinian law to the holders of certain public offices, including in the matter of authority to decide to prosecute and in the matter of holding preliminary hearings prior to a decision to prosecute by the Attorney-General or another state prosecutor.
- § 2. The relevant Palestinian Authorities shall notify the competent ecclesiastical authority of the arrest or detention, by whatever name and under whatever law, of any person included in any of the categories listed in § 1 above.
- § 3. While under arrest or in detention, persons belonging to one or another of the categories listed in § 1 above, shall be treated with the respect due to their respective status or dignity, in particular when not yet finally convicted of any crime.
- § 4. Catholic Ecclesiastical and Religious Personnel shall not be searched without the appropriate permits in accordance with the law and informing the Church's competent authority. Such search shall be conducted with due regard to the religious dignity of the personnel.
- § 5. The seal of the sacrament of confession is recognized as inviolable by the relevant Palestinian Authorities. A Catholic priest shall not be questioned on matters connected with a confessional secret, including

in cases where such a priest appears as a witness or party before any Court.

Chapter IV

PERSONAL STATUS

Article 13

- § 1. All personal status laws applicable to members of the Catholic Church shall remain in force as currently recognized in Palestinian law, except in the event that they are altered by future mutual accord by the Parties in the interest of the public good and advancement of individual rights. For the avoidance of doubt this shall not derogate from the right of the State of Palestine to introduce civil personal status laws.
- § 2. Qualified Catholic ministers of religion may perform marriages in accordance with Canon Law, the civil effects of which shall be recognized in accordance with present Palestinian customs and laws.
- § 3. The State of Palestine recognizes the jurisdiction of the Catholic ecclesiastical courts in cases concerning matrimonial matters for marriages celebrated according to Canon Law, in accordance with present Palestinian customs and laws.
- § 4. The Ecclesiastical Courts have full competence in regards of adoption among Christians according to the Ecclesiastical Personal Status Laws, and the Civil Authorities will facilitate the procedures.

Chapter V

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AND SACRED PLACES

Article 14

The legal regime of the "Status Quo", including the rights of the Church and the obligations of the State of Palestine thereunder, shall remain in force and be maintained and observed in the Christian Holy Places where it applies.

Article 15

- § 1. The Catholic Church shall freely exercise her authority and canonical jurisdiction in all Holy Places, shrines, churches, chapels, cemeteries, other sacred places, religious houses and clerical residences. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not exclude the applicability of Palestinian law and jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters.
- § 2. The sanctity of the places described in § 1 above shall be respected at all times. The security forces shall not enter these places without coordination with the competent ecclesiastical authority, except in clear and immediate life threatening situations.
- § 3. Licensed personnel of the Church shall enjoy freedom in preaching during religious functions.

Article 16

- § 1. The sacred character of the Holy Places shall be respected and protected.
- § 2. Likewise respected and protected shall be the sacred character of areas and localities of special significance to Catholic believers, especially those frequented by Catholic pilgrims or where there is a particular concentration of shrines.

Article 17

- § 1. All forms of worship shall be constantly guaranteed.
- § 2. The freedom of pilgrimage to the Holy Land for Catholics is recognized as pertaining to the freedom of worship. Where applicable, the State of Palestine shall take due account of this in considering applications for entry permits into its territory for the purpose of pilgrimage.
- § 3. Since pilgrimages are acts of religious worship, there shall be no interference by non-ecclesiastical authorities in the guiding of pilgrims. Specifically Catholic pilgrim shall have the right to avail themselves throughout of any Catholic pilgrim guide duly authorized by the Church, and cannot be obliged to use the services of any other guide, in addition to or in substitution of such a guide.

- § 4. The Holy See shall make every endeavour, in coordination with ecclesiastical institutions and other institutions, to accommodate pilgrims in Palestinian cities and towns and to use the services of Palestinian guides duly trained and authorized according to Catholic Church standards to guide Catholic pilgrimages.

Article 18

- § 1. The freedom of worship includes the right to build and maintain houses of worship and to acquire movable and immovable property for that purpose and to expose, in public, religious symbols, wherever the presence of believers requires it, in accordance with Palestinian law.
- § 2. All procedures connected with the application of § 1 above shall be expedited by all relevant authorities on the basis of the right therein recognized and with no adverse discrimination or prejudice in comparison with any other religion.

Chapter VI

CHARITABLE, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS; MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Article 19

- § 1. The Church shall have the right, subject to obtaining the required permits from the Palestinian Ministry of Education, to establish and to direct schools for any field of study or of any kind and grade. Likewise, the Church shall have the right to establish and to govern universities and other educational institutions at all level, which serve to promote the deeper culture and comprehensive development of the human person, and to complement the Church's own teaching activities. The exercise of these rights shall be in harmony and in accordance with the rights properly belonging to the civil authorities in the same fields.
- § 2. The Catholic Church has the right to train priests, teachers and staff for the furtherance of their religion or beliefs, and the right of charitable, educational, social and cultural institutions to operate in accordance with the law. Moreover, the Catholic Church shall have the right to bring priests, teachers and staff from abroad, in accordance with procedures laid down in Palestinian law.

Article 20

- § 1. Church educational institutions shall be subject to the authority of the Church. In particular, the State of Palestine shall recognize the Church's discretion in the matter of the appointment and dismissal of heads and other teaching and non-teaching staff, in the admission and dismissal of students, in determining the contents of the teaching curricula, in accordance with Palestinian law and provided the required approval or endorsement by the competent authority at the Ministry of Higher Education is obtained.
- § 2. In cases where Church educational institutions teach the curricula of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian authorities may exercise supervision in the measure necessary to ensure that the curricula are properly taught by the qualified teaching staff.
- § 3. Palestinian authorities funding of Church schools attended by pupils within the age range, to which compulsory education applies, shall be equal to that given to Palestinian schools. Outside of that age range, the State of Palestine funding of Church educational institutions shall not be inferior to that given to comparable institutions.
- § 4. Palestinian authorities will guarantee the right of Christian pupils to Christian religious education in public schools in coordination with the relevant ecclesiastical authority.

Article 21

Church educational institutions of any kind may at their sole discretion admit any student who applies, or whose parents or guardians apply, to attend them.

Article 22

The State of Palestine shall recognize academic degrees granted by pontifically recognized universities in accordance with applicable Palestinian law.

Article 23

- § 1. The Church shall have access to media controlled by the State of Palestine, on an equitable basis.

- § 2. Subject to relevant provisions of Palestinian laws, the Church shall have the right to own and operate different kinds of audio-visual and electronic means of social communication.

Article 24

The Catholic Church has the freedom to receive funds for its spiritual, religious, charitable, educational, social and cultural institutions, whether those funds have been donated or acquired, locally or from abroad.

Chapter VII

ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND TAXATION

Article 25

- § 1. The Church has the right to acquire, retain and administer property whether movable or immovable. This right may be exercised by any public ecclesiastical legal person in accordance with Palestinian law.
- § 2. The Church may acquire, retain, administer, develop, improve and alter property in any way under Palestinian law.
- § 3. All matters concerning ecclesiastical property, including contracts of whatever kind, shall be governed by Palestinian law subject to the provisions of Article 7.

Article 26

- § 1. The movable and immovable property of the Catholic Church for the purpose of religious rites and freedom of worship such as shrines, churches, chapels, other places of worship, monasteries and convents, religious houses, cemeteries and other sacred places and guesthouses owned by the Church shall be immune to confiscation, expropriation or seizure.
- § 2. The State shall not take, *inter alia*, by way of confiscation, expropriation or seizure, ecclesiastical property, except for a public purpose, on a non-discriminatory basis, and in accordance with due process of law ensuring, in particular, proportionality and the exhaustion of all other options to achieve that purpose by the least restrictive means. And for

the avoidance of doubt, the foregoing restrictions on the taking of property need not apply to judicial decisions in matters of private law and their execution.

Article 27

- § 1. Transactions and property of canonical legal persons and Church institutions, owing to their religious, moral, educational or charitable mission, shall be exempt from all kinds of taxation and levies.
- § 2. For the avoidance of doubt, the above exemption shall not apply to any property or other party who is leasing, using or benefiting in any manner from movable or immovable property belonging to the Church or any ecclesiastical public legal persons. Such property or other party shall be subject to taxation in accordance with Palestinian law.
- § 3. Upon signing this Agreement, all unpaid taxes owed by the Church and any canonical legal persons, and which conform to the above exemption, shall be waived.
- § 4. Following the signing of this Agreement, the Parties shall establish a joint commission to study all questions pertaining to the application of the provisions of this Article, and to propose, if necessary or useful, a supplementary agreement or additional protocol to be signed by the Parties.

Article 28

- § 1. Bishops, priests, deacons, consecrated men and women of religion shall receive their personal allowance from the Church in return for their ecclesiastical services, and this allowance shall be exempt from income tax. Such exemption refers to the amounts provided by the Church to its staff indicated above to ensure their living with dignity as their vocation requires.
- § 2. Upon signing this Agreement, the Parties shall establish a joint commission to study all questions pertaining to the participation of the persons belonging to the categories listed in § 1 above, in compulsory social security plans.

the avoidance of doubt, the foregoing restrictions on the taking of property need not apply to judicial decisions in matters of private law and their execution.

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- § 1. Transactions and property of canonical legal persons and Church institutions, owing to their religious, moral, educational or charitable mission, shall be exempt from all kinds of taxation and levies.
- § 2. For the avoidance of doubt, the above exemption shall not apply to any property or other party who is leasing, using or benefiting in any manner from movable or immovable property belonging to the Church or any ecclesiastical public legal persons. Such property or other party shall be subject to taxation in accordance with Palestinian law.
- § 3. Upon signing this Agreement, all unpaid taxes owed by the Church and any canonical legal persons, and which conform to the above exemption, shall be waived.
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- § 2. Upon signing this Agreement, the Parties shall establish a joint commission to study all questions pertaining to the participation of the persons belonging to the categories listed in § 1 above, in compulsory social security plans.

Article 29

Articles 27 and 28 above shall not be construed as justifying the abrogation of additional rights, subsidies or exemptions in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Palestinian laws.

Chapter VIII

FINAL CLAUSES

Article 30

Entry into Force

This Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the second month after both Parties have notified each other in writing through diplomatic means that the constitutional or internal requirements for the entry into force of this Agreement have been met.

Article 31

Consultations and Amendments

- § 1. In case any difficulties in the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement arise, either Party may request mutual consultations to develop appropriate measures to ensure the fulfillment of this Agreement. Such difficulties shall not derogate from the Parties' obligation to uphold their commitments in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement until the time those difficulties are settled.
- § 2. Any dispute that arises between the Parties shall be settled between them in good faith and in the spirit of cooperation with a clear intention of resolving matters efficiently.
- § 3. This Agreement may be amended by written mutual consent of the Parties. Unless otherwise agreed upon, such an amendment shall enter into force under conditions similar to those of the previous Article 30.

Article 32

Review

Both Parties shall meet in order to review this Agreement on request or at the end of five years from the date of its entry into force, unless they notify each other in writing that no such review is necessary.

The foregoing represents the agreement reached between the Holy See and the State of Palestine.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

Signed in duplicate at the Vatican on the 26th day of June of 2015 in the English language, both copies having equal validity.

For the Holy See

For the State of Palestine

✠ *Paul R. Gallagher*

Riad Al-Malki

Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher
Secretary for Relations with States

Dr. Riad Al-Malki
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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NOS AUTEM EANDEM CONVENTIONEM, QUAM DILIGENTER INSPEXIMUS AC VOLUNTATI NOSTRAE CONFORMEM INVENIMUS, RATAM HABEMUS ET CONFIRMAMUS.

IN QUORUM FIDEM SOLLEMNE HOC RATIHABITIONIS DOCUMENTUM NOSTRA SUBSCRIPTIONE MUNIMUS EIQUE SIGNUM NOSTRUM APPONI IUBEMUS.

DATUM ROMAE, APUD SANCTUM PETRUM, DIE XVI
MENSIS SEPTEMBRIS, ANNO MMXV, PONTIFICATUS
NOSTRI TERTIO.

Franciscus

We hereby approve and confirm the same Agreement, which we have diligently examined and found in keeping with our will.

In confirmation of which we append our signature as the solemn ratification of this document and have given instructions that our seal be added to it.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 16 of the month of September, in the year 2015, the third of Our Pontificate.