



No. 30, August 2005

NEWSLETTER

The Center For Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land

P.O. Box 11328 Jerusalem Tel: 972-2-2742321 / 972-2-2750134 Fax: 972-2-2750133
E-mail al-liqa@p-ol.com Web: www.Al-LiqaCenter.org

August 2005 Israeli Unilateral Withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Some Settlements in the West Bank A Trap or A First Step toward Peace

Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip and from some settlements of the West Bank is seen as either a trap for Palestinians or a peaceful overture toward them. It is true that Israel has declared its intentions to evacuate all of its 21 settlements in the Strip beginning in August, but Israel is planning on the other hand to control the borders, airspace, and coastline of the Strip thus keeping the area under the mercy of the Israeli military. Palestinians see Israeli unilateral plans as a ploy to devour more of the West Bank. The land of the West Bank will be devoured further through colonial settlements, bypass roads to serve the settlers, and building the "Separation (Apartheid) Wall/Fence". This "Wall/Fence" which is gradually confining West Bank cities and towns within prison walls and much higher prison watch towers. Thus, Israeli unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and some settlements in the West Bank, a golden opportunity for peace and a first step toward the implementation of the "Road Map" sponsored by the Quartet: The U.S, U.N, European Union, and Russia, is only a trap. For example, Israel's controversial greater Jerusalem plan to build 3500 new housing units for two new neighborhoods that would link the settlement block of Ma'ale Adumim to Arab East Jerusalem is seen by Palestinians as yet another sign of Israeli designs in the West Bank and Arab Jerusalem. Accordingly, Israel intends to gobble more West Bank lands in return for Sharon's unilateral disengagement plan.

continued on page 12

Celebration of the Golden Jubilee of H.B. Michael Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, President of Al-Liqa's Board of Trustees



See pp. 2,3,4

Contents

A Trap or a first step toward Peace	1
Al-Liqa' Center's Celebration of HB Patriarch Michael Sabbah's Golden Jubilee	2-3
Aliqa' Center's Study Day	4
International Activities	5
Publications	6-9
From Dialogue of Texts to Dialogue of Souls	11
International Activities	12

Al-Liqa' Center's Celebration of HB Patriarch Michael Sabbah's Golden Jubilee

Friday, July 1, 2005

Bethlehem

Tens of Palestinians representing all sectors of Palestinian society attended this laudatory celebration of HB Patriarch Michael Sabbah's Golden Jubilee. In his welcoming address, the moderator, **Mr. Lawrence Sammour**, praised Patriarch Sabbah's humility, courage, and positive attitude towards the other as well as his distinguished stand on crucial national issues. He was followed by a greeting from **Sheikh Abd-al-Majid 'Ata**, Mufti of Bethlehem, who pointed out his personal knowledge of Patriarch Sabbah as President of Bethlehem University and as a man serving all Palestinians, both Christians and Muslims. He reminded the audience with Patriarch Sabbah's visit to the Duheishah Refugee Camp which had a positive impact on the refugees.

The celebration began with a panel comprising lectures that focused on Patriarch Sabbah's theology and philosophy. **Rev. Dr. Mounib Younan**, the Lutheran Bishop in Jordan and the Holy Land, commented on the importance of the Arabization of the Latin Patriarchate, Sabbah's theology of the land in light of the Palestinian Problem, Sabbah's ecumenical spirit which led to the realization of two programs: 1) **Ecumenical Accompaniment in Palestine and Israel**, and 2) **The establishment of the Jerusalem Ecumenical Center**.



Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury spoke eloquently of the content of the first Pastoral Letter dated 15 August 1988 in which Patriarch Sabbah pointed out clearly the milestones of the road ahead in his career as a newly appointed Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem



focusing in his Pastoral Letter on faith, peace, dialogue, the parish, and on priests and nuns. Fr. Rafiq paid special attention to the issue of "Man" in the Pastoral Letter of Patriarch Sabbah.

Dr. Geris S. Khoury focused on Patriarch Sabbah's understanding, interpretation and practice of local theology as reflected in his commentary on "Local Theology, in Al-Liqa's first session of the conference on Palestinian Contextualized Theology on July 2-4, 1987. Patriarch Sabbah was always keen on keeping the parishes in the Holy Land abreast of his theological and pastoral directives. Dr. Khoury, in addition,

quoted from the writings of Patriarch Sabbah on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, peace, justice, dialogue with Muslims and Jews, emigration, youth and on the role of a minority in building the nation.



Dr. Khoury stressed the fact that Patriarch Sabbah is a pioneer in local theology as seen in all his pastoral letters, sermons and especially his pastoral letter concerning "Reading the Bible in the Land of the Bible."



Mr. Mousa Darwish focused on Patriarch Sabbah and Christian-Muslim dialogue quoting in the process from the Pastoral letters of Patriarch Sabbah which call for interfaith dialogue and common living as children of one nation. He said that the appointment of Sabbah as the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem surprised many

who believed that an Arab cannot fill this important post. Mr. Darwish spoke of his personal acquaintances with the Patriarch, his admiration of him and the Patriarch's firm stand on the Palestinian Problem, and Christian-Muslim relations.

Dr. Bernard Sabella's presentation revolved around Patriarch Sabbah and the Palestinian problem as seen in his Pastoral letters, church sermons, and speeches at home and abroad, among other sources. According to the Patriarch, attaining peace between Palestinians and Israelis will not be realized until Israeli occupation comes to an end. The core of the problem is the military occupation of the other's land. And this is the basic evil which



leads to the absence of security and stability in the region. Within this basic context, the Patriarch's stand toward the birth of the Palestinian State, the issue of Jerusalem and Christian national identity can be understood.



Also, The celebration included a reading from the New Testament, which was chanted beautifully by Mr. Lawrence Sammour. **Mrs Shehrazad Awwad** recited a poem in commemoration of this occasion in which she pointed out the love of both Christians and Muslims for Patriarch Sabbah

At the conclusion of the panel, Dr. Geries S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa', presented H.B. Patriarch Sabbah, President of Al-Liqa's Board of Trustees with an Al-Liqa Golden Medalion.



The Celebration was concluded with a reception.

Al-Liqa' Center's Study Day at Mar Elias College's School of Theology- Ibillin

14 May 2005

Christians in Galilee Between the Crisis of Identity and Belonging



Palestinians of all walks of life in Galilee attended this study day. Following welcoming addresses by Dr. Geries S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa' Center, and Fr. Dr. Elias Chacour, President of Mar Elias College, proceedings of the day began. The first sessions which were moderated by Attorney Badira Khoury focused on "The Christian Arab Identity in Galilee", in which Bishop Dr. Boulus Marcuzzo and Dr. Hatem Khoury were the main speakers with comments by Fr. Dr. Elias Chacour and Dr. Johnny Mansour. Ms. Ola Qadado followed with a lecture on "The Identity of a Christian through His/ Her Relations with Others." Following a short coffee break, Attorney Mary Farah led general

discussions of the panel and lecture. The study day was concluded with a summary and recommendations of participants.



INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

At the invitation of the program "Justice, Peace and Human Rights" of the Middle East Council of Churches, a meeting was held in Amman, Jordan. In this meeting Dr. Geris S. Khoury and Dr. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abbad of Al-Liqa' took part in the proceedings of the conference titled "Peaceful Democratic Transformations in the Arab Region." It took place in the period between the 20th and the 23rd of May. Dr. Khoury addressed the issue from a

Palestinian Perspective of how Christianity and Christians would play a role in the democratic transformation in the Arab Region; while Dr. 'Abbad focused on Islam's role in the democratic transformations in the Arab Region. Dr. Bernard Sabella, a friend of Al-Liqa', focused on a comparative study of democratic trends as experienced by two Palestinian generations.

WEDNESDAY EVENING FORUMS

7 April 2005

Islam and Democracy

Al-Liqa' Center held the second panel on religion and democracy by focusing on Islam. Dr. Abd al-Rahman Abbad, a lecturer in Al-Tira College, presented Islam's view of democracy and pluralism while Sheikh Najeeb Al-Ja'bari, lecturer at Hebron University presented an Islamic approach in the making of an Islamic constitution.

21 April 2005

Pope John Paul II in the Palestinian Conscience

Al-Liqa Center commemorated the passing away of Pope John Paul II by holding a Wednesday Evening Forum on 21 April 2005. Lutheran Bishop Dr. Munib Younan, Rev. Dr. Maroun Lahham, Head of Latin Seminary in Beit Jala, and Muhammad Khalil El-Lahham of the Duheishah Camp discussed various aspects of the deceased Pope's life. Bishop Younan and Rev. Lahham shed some light on the personal qualities of the Pope while El-Lahham reminded the audience with the year 2000 and the Pope's visit to the Duheishah refugee camp and its impact on the residents of the camp and the Palestinian problem.

16 June 2005

Democratic Experience in the Municipal Elections in Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahur

Dr. Geris Khoury led the discussions revolving around the elections. Those attending and participating in the discussions included lawyers, politicians, college lecturers, business men, journalists as well as religious people. Elections were seen from different perspectives. Both positive and negative elements as well as excesses in the elections were stressed. However, there was a general agreement that these elections were the seeds and foundations of participatory democracy in Palestine.

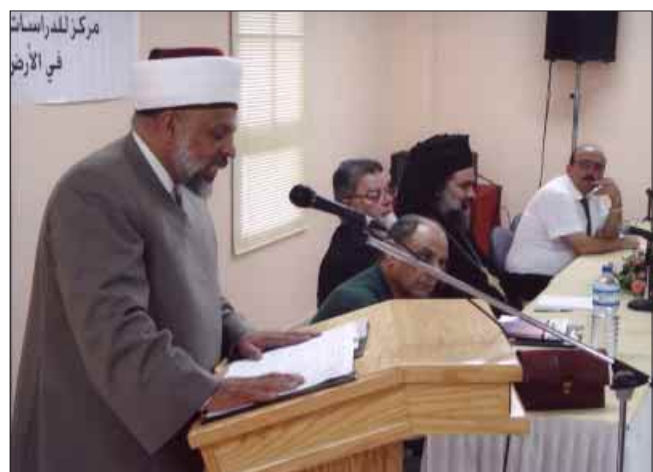
The 18th Session
of the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Conference
Titled

**FROM DIALOGUE OF TEXTS TO
DIALOGUE OF SOULS**

18th-20th August 2005
Bethlehem



At the invitation of Al-Liqa' Center, Palestinians of various sectors of society including Christian and Muslim clerics and lay people of all walks of life attended the three-day annual conference. The 18th session of the conference opened with inaugural speeches by Sheikh Tayseer al-Tamimi, the Chief of Religious Courts and Judges in Palestine, Fr. Dr. Elias Chacour, President of Mar Elias College in Galilee, and Fr. Dr. Atallah Hanna, spokesman for the Greek Orthodox Church, all of whom stressed national unity and Christian-Muslim solidarity. Fr. Chacour spoke also about his experience in Mar Elias College where Muslims and Christians are working, teaching and studying together. Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa'



Center, focused on the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. He warned fellow Palestinians not to be overwhelmed by this Israeli move, because the peace process faces major obstacles in light of Israeli designs over the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem.

Following a short break the conferees gathered to hear and to participate in the first panel of the conference titled "The Supremacy of Law and National Unity." Attorney Dr. Ibrahim Sha'ban focused on the cornerstones of supremacy of law that include the creation of a constitution, separation of power to prevent the concentration of all powers in one hand, the check on the



executive by the law, the protection of human rights and the establishment of a viable and effective judicial monitoring system. Dr. Nasri Qumsiya posed the question of whether laws do exist in the Palestinian National Authority areas and on the choice of laws we want be it secular or Islamic fundamentalist ones. Following the presentation an depth discussions was moderated by Dr. Nabil 'Adeeli.

An evening of Literature, music and cultural entertainment performed by Bethlehem Music Academy, followed a festive dinner.

On Friday 19 August 2005 proceedings began with a Christian-Muslim invocation presented by the Muslim Attorney 'Ali Rafi' from Galilee and by Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, at the end of which the



program of the day began with a panel on "The nation in need of citizens' participation." Professor Thiab Ayyoush, General secretary of the Palestinian Council of Higher Education, Dr. Geries S. Khoury, Director of Al-Liqa and Mr. Mousa Darwish, Deputy Director of Al-Liqa' , presented their points of view concerning the subject. Professor Ayyoush focused on philosophical, historical and practical aspects of participation, while Dr. khoury and Mr. Mousa, each in his own way, emphasized the importance of citizens' participation in building a democratic regime and a viable nation. Attorney Badira G. Khoury moderated the panel and the extensive discussions that followed.

A luncheon followed the break for Muslim conferees to participate in the Friday noon prayers "Mixed marriages is a social and religious problem" was the topic of discussion for the afternoon session. Participants in the panel included Fr. Dr. Jamal Khader, Chairperson of Dept of Religious Studies at Bethlehem University, Shekh 'Abd al-Majeed 'Ata, Mufti of Bethlehem, Attorney 'Ali Rafi' from Haifa and Dr. Charlie Abu Sa'da, a lecturer at Bethlehem University. Ms. Makarem 'Awad of Al-Liqa's Board of Trustees moderated the panel and the animated but heated discussions that followed.





Rev. Dr. Jamal Khader pointed out Christianity's attitude toward mixed marriages while Sheikh 'Abd al-Majeed 'Ata stressed Islam's view of the problem. Attorney 'Ali Rafi' pointed out the negative impact of mixed marriages on society and on Christian-Muslim relation. Dr. Abu Sa'da emphasized the many social problems that mixed marriages cause. At the conclusion of the panel conferees were divided into small groups to discuss various aspects of mixed marriages and

their implication at the end of which each group's spokesperson presented the conclusion of his or her group.

At the end of the group discussions, a festive dinner was held with Christian and Muslim invocations and speeches.

On Saturday 20th of August, 2005, the conference began with a Christian-Muslim invocation by Rev. Dr. Rafiq Khoury of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and by Dr. Abd Al-Rahman Abbad, member of Al-Liqa's Board of Trustees, followed by a panel presentation on Democracy and quota system in the Palestinian elections." Minister Jamal Shobaki, the head of the Palestinian election commission, focused on the pros and cons of the quota system emphasizing the need for the quota system to correct already existing inequities concerning women and minorities.

Rev. Dr. Rafiq Khoury examined the quota system and the inequities that exist while Dr. Mouna



Matar of Bethlehem University talked about her own experience as a woman candidate in recent municipal elections where she won elections without having to revert to the quota system. Dr. Abd al-Rahman 'Abbad moderated the panel as well as the prolonged discussions that ensued from the presentations.

In the second and last panel of the conference, a presentation on "A two-state solution to the Palestinian Problem in the Arabic context," Dr. Mahdi 'Abd al-Hadi, Director of PASSIA-Jerusalem, was very pessimistic concerning the



two-state solution in light of Israeli pre-emptive measures of colonial settlements, Israeli greater Jerusalem scheme and the cantonization of the West Bank following Israeli unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Muhammad Farhat of Jerusalem Open University was also pessimistic concerning the future of the two-state solution. The panel and discussions that followed were moderated by Engineer Anwar Hilal of Beit Sahur. At the conclusion of the conference, conferees put forth

the final communiqué which comprised of the following:

1. The Conference calls on decision makers to enforce the law without any exception.
2. All state institutions must be subjected to the Supremacy of Law.
3. Judiciary authorities must be given a free hand without any interference from influential people or centers of power.
4. The dangers of mixed marriages on Palestinian society must be publicized.
5. Special care and attention must be given to young people who will carry the burden of responsibility in the future.
6. Palestinian discourse must be unified through national dialogue to avoid the danger of internal strife.
7. All sectors of society including labor unions, educational and professional institutions are urged to participate fully in building the nation.
8. The quota system must be examined thoroughly and objectively so that it can positively serve the nation when it is needed.
9. Our legislative body must be monitored to make sure it can protect all the people including minorities,
10. Freedom of expression in the press, radio and television must be expanded.
11. Conferees extend their congratulations to our people in Gaza on the occasion of the end of Israeli military occupation and the demise of Zionist thought that rejects the dismantling of colonial settlements under the pretext of "The Promised Land."

Al-Liqa' Center Most Recent Publications

Al-Liqa' Quarterly Review

Vol. 20, no. 1 & 2 (2005) This issue of the Arabic language publication comprises a variety of issues facing both church and society and especially those revolving around the local church in Galilee which was the proceedings of the 12th session of the Conference on Theology and Local Church in December 2004.

There are also several other topics that are included such as "Democracy and Christianity" and the "Separation Wall" that is confining Palestinians in the West Bank behind prison walls and watch towers. The content, in addition, includes religious documents, and documents about sectarian strife in Al-Magar in Galilee and a book review.

Al-Liqa' Journal

Vol.23 (December 2004) This latest issue of the English Language review focuses on critical issues facing Palestinian society. These include the threat of Christian Zionism, its impact on other heavenly religions and the stand of the Palestinian Church toward it. Other issues revolve around Palestinian theology and Israeli colonial settlements, Palestinian 2005 elections and the challenge of peace. There are as well reports on Al-Liqa's conferences, 2003 and 2004, and a document on the general pastoral plan of the Parish Synod of the Catholic churches in the Holy Land.



List and Prices of
Al-Liqa's Publications
 (1983-2005)

(All publications are in Arabic unless specified)

Christian - Muslim Dialogue Conference
 (1983 -2005)

1. Proceeding of the First Conference, Jerusalem, 1983 (221\$6 pages).
2. Second Conference, Jerusalem, 1984 (257 pages). \$6
3. Third Conference, Jerusalem, 1985 (257 p.). \$6
4. Fourth Conference, Jerusalem, 1986 (289 pages). \$7
5. Fifth Conference, Jerusalem, 1987 (206p.). \$7
6. Sixth Conference, Jerusalem, 1988 (216 pages). \$7
7. Seventh Conference, Jerusalem, 1989 (143 p.). \$6
8. Eighth Conference, Jerusalem. 1990 (143 pages). \$7
9. Ninth Conference, Jerusalem, 1991 (149 p.). \$7
10. Tenth Conference, Jerusalem, 1992 (143 p.). \$7
11. Eleventh Conference, Jerusalem, 1993 (82 p.). \$7
12. Twelfth Conference, Jerusalem, 1994 (154 p.). \$7
13. 13th Conference, Bethlehem. 1995. \$15
 (see no. 9 Miscellaneous)
14. 14th Conference, Bethlehem, 1996 (107 pages) \$7
15. 15th Conference, Bethlehem, 1998 \$7
16. 16th Conference, Bethlehem, 2001 \$7

Al- Liqa' Journal (in English)
 1992 - 2005

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| Vol. 1 - 1992 | Vols. 7/8 1996 | Vols. 18/19-2002 |
| Vol. 2 - 1992 | Vols. 9/10- 1997 | Vols. 20/21-2003 |
| Vol. 3 - 1994 | Vols.11/12 1998 | |
| Vol. 4 - 1994 | Vol. 13-1999 | |
| Vol. 5 - 1995 | Vols. 14/15-2000 | |
| Vol. 6 - 1996 | Vols. 16/17-2001 | |

Annual subscription:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Individuals | \$ 15 |
| Institutions | \$ 30 |
| Price per one issue | \$ 7 |

Al-Liqa' Arabic Language
Quarterly Review
 (1985 - 2005)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Year 1-Year 3 (3 issues each) | \$ 20 per Year |
| Year 4-Year 20 (4 issues each) | \$ 30 per Year |
| Price per one issue | \$ 7 |

Al-Liqa' Center's Documents
 (Available in Arabic and English)

1. Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land, (16 pages) \$ 4
2. In Jerusalem, Justice and Peace Embrace Each Other, (5pages) \$ 2

Palestinian Contextualized Theology
Conference (1987-2005)

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Proceedings of the First Conference, Jerusalem 1987 (196 pages). | \$7 |
| Second Conference, Jerusalem, 1988 (208 p.). | \$7 |
| Third Conference, Jerusalem 1989 (193 p.). | \$7 |
| Fourth Conference, Jerusalem, 1990 (234p.). | \$7 |
| Fifth Conference, Jerusalem, 1991 (174p.). | \$7 |
| Sixth Conference, Jerusalem, 1993 (125 p.). | \$7 |
| Seventh Conference, Jerusalem, 1994 (177 p.). | \$7 |
| Eighth Conference, Jerusalem, 1995 (199p.). | \$7 |
| Ninth Conference, Bethlehem, 1996
(Contained in Al-Liqa' Journal, Vol. 9/10, 1997) | \$7 |

Miscellaneous

1. Fr. Peter Madrous, **Paul the Apostle and the Man** (67 pages) \$5
2. Najib Nassar, **Under the Protection of the Arabs** (91 pages) \$5
3. Younis Amr, **Jerusalem the City of God** (152pages) \$5
4. Louis I. Hazboun, **Principles of Sociology of Religion** (162 pages) \$5
5. **Western Christian Zionism**, (43 pages) \$3
6. **Jerusalem Between Religious Freedom and Political Sovereignty**,(in English) (78pages) \$5
7. **Christian Feasts between Unity and Pluralism**, (96 pages). \$5
8. Qustandi Shomali, **El-Carmel** (534 pages) \$10
9. Jerusalem: **Palestinian Muslim- Christian Studies** (600 pages) \$15
10. Anton Shomali, **Collected Poem's** (255 Pages) \$7
11. Fr. Rafiq Shomali, **Contextualized Eastern Churches** (393 pages). \$7
12. Jamal Salsa', **Palestinian Poetical Message Between Religion and Nationalism** (174 pages) \$6
13. Thiab A. Ayyoush, **Social Problems: An Islamic Perspective** (212 pages) (in English) \$7
14. Sami Adwan, **Reality of Religious Education, both Muslim and Christian, in Palestinian Schools.** (404 pages). \$10
15. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, **Say Your Word and Go! Quick Inputs into Vital Files** (273 pages) \$7
16. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, **The Book of Days: In Search of the Lost Word** (159 pages) \$7

continued from page 1

A Trap or A First Step toward Peace

Furthermore, Israel through its unilateral measures since the June 5th War 1967, has been preempting final status talks concerning Jerusalem, the refugee problem, colonial settlements, water resources, and final borders. Likewise, Israel is not showing any flexibility in the status of 8000 Palestinians who remain in Israeli prisons. Besides, Israel refuses to withdraw from Palestinian population centers and rural areas which have been occupied since September 2000.

Each of these above mentioned issues is a time bomb threatening any possibility of Palestinian Israeli reconciliation. Violence which has taken the lives of hundreds of Palestinian and Israeli civilians since September 2000 does not seem to be ending despite Palestinian unilateral moves toward cease fire and renewed contacts between the two sides. As Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had warned earlier, "a very tiny spark" could trigger a major new round of violence. Israel has to choose between peace and land. It cannot have both.

On their part, Palestinians and Arabs, quest for peace is clear:

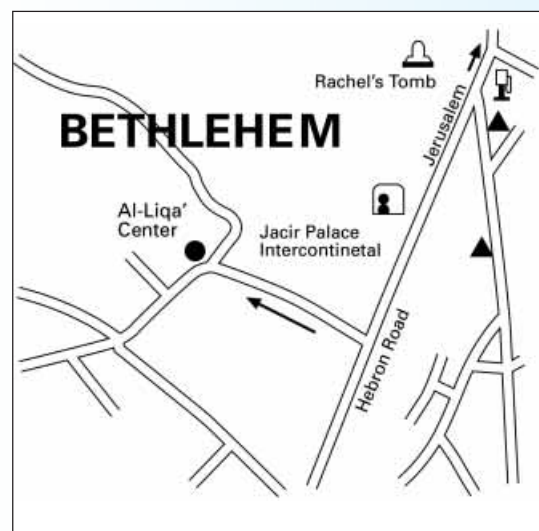
1. Withdrawal of Israelis from all Arab occupied territories, occupied Lebanese territory to the June 4, 1967 borders, and including.
2. The recognition of a sovereign Palestinian State with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital.
3. The just solution of the refugees, problem taking into consideration U.N General Assembly Resolution 194.

In return, Palestinians and Arabs will establish diplomatic relations and will normalize relations with Israel. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict there is an unprecedented opportunity for Israel to normalize relations with the whole Arab World. Israel cannot have both peace and land at the same time if it wants a comprehensive and a viable peace for the region.



Al-Liqa' Center

In Jerusalem, the city sacred to billions of diverse believers, a Palestinian interfaith initiative led to the establishment of "AL-Liqa' Center", a unique place of research, study and dialogue on the religious traditions, institutions and daily life of the people of the Holy Land and the region. The program includes, interfaith dialogue, Palestinian Contextualized Theology in the Holy Land, international activities, and the publication of journals, newsletters, books, and occasional papers. Patriarch Michal Sabbah, President, Board of Trustees, and Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director.



AL-Liqa' Center's New Headquarter 54- 56 AL-Quds Jerusalem Str.

The Center is now located less than 200 meters to the southwest of Rachel's Tomb at 54-56 AL-Quds Jerusalem Street. After passing the Jacir Palace Intercontinental to the right on the Hebron- Jerusalem Rd, take a right turn at the first intersection at the end of which AL-Liqa' Center is situated on the right side of the street.