

RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT

Introduction and Background

Realizing the increasing need for a better understanding of religious issues and the various religious communities, PASSIA decided in 1998 to establish a Religious Studies Unit devoted to.

Since then, inter-religious dialogue and activities have always had a special place in PASSIA's regular meeting program. Subjects discussed include the causes and consequences of problems within and between the established religious communities as well as the political repercussions of religious conflict and *vice versa*.

The PASSIA Religious Studies Unit combines the following activities, some of which held 'off the record' to allow for the frankest exchange and debates possible:

- Workshops and seminars on a specific topic, involving either members of the three monotheistic religions or only representatives of the Christian or Muslim community, aimed at finding common ground and mutual understanding.
- Participation in conferences, here and abroad, that deal with aspects of religion, belief and interfaith relations, or foster an open and free debate on religious issues and aspects as they concern the people in the Holy Land.
- Roundtable and brainstorming sessions, involving members of PASSIA's Religious Studies Unit and local and foreign counterparts from one or more of the three monotheistic religions, which usually include a guest speaker presenting a certain inter- or intra-religious topic, followed by a discussion.
- Documentation and publication of research studies or proceedings from meetings/seminars.

For meetings related to **Jerusalem** please see also the Chapter on Jerusalem.

■ MEETINGS:

30 May 2017, Legacy Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: Muslim-Christian Annual Iftar in Jerusalem

Organizer: Council of Waqf, Jerusalem



16 August 2017, Royal Palace, Amman

Topic: Jerusalem & Al-Aqsa Mosque

Organizer: Royal Court, Amman.



7 December 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Jerusalem - Capital of the Christian Faith

Participant(s): Presbyterian Church (USA)-PCUSA Group: Catherine Gordon, Representative for International Issues, Washington Liaison; Douglas Dicks, Facilitator for Education for Justice and Peace; Chris Iosso, Coordinator, Social Witness Policy; Ryan D. Smith, Director and Representative to the United Nations; Sara Lisherness, Director, Compassion, Peace and Justice; Philip Woods, Area Coordinator, Middle East and Europe; Rev. Victor Makari, Presbyterian Church (USA) Partnership Liaison.



■ **BRIEFINGS:**

1 August 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Jerusalem & Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Erman Topcu, Deputy Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey, Jerusalem.



1 August 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Jerusalem & Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Luigi Mattiolo, Consul, Deputy Head of Mission, Italian Consulate General, Jerusalem.



3 August 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The Haram Ash-Sharif Incident

Participant(s): Jamie Wheeler, Head of the Political Team, British Consulate General, Jerusalem.



14 October 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib, General Director of the Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Fouad Hallak, PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, Ramallah.



11 November 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib, General Director of the Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem



16 December 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib, General Director of the Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem.



■ **MEDIA:**

20 July 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Participant(s): Daoud Abdul Raouf, Al-Ain.

1 August 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Jerusalem & Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Participant(s): Christine Rinawi, Palestine TV, Jerusalem.



20 August 2017, Jerusalem

Topic: **The Al-Aqsa Crisis**

Participant(s): Arab News.



14 December 2017, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Conference in Istanbul**

Participant(s): TRT Arabia: Ahmad Jaradat; Mohammad Al-Sharif, Cameraman.

