Freedom of religion: Bonino meets with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch John X Yazigi

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Minister for Foreign Affairs Emma Bonino met today in Rome with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, John X Yazigi, who expressed his appreciation for the Minister’s frequent stances in favour of the rights of Christian minorities being persecuted in the Middle East, and particularly in Syria. Their talks centred on the conditions of the Christian population in Syria and Italy’s efforts on behalf of freedom of religion and interfaith dialogue. Patriarch Yazigi underscored how the war and sectarianism were growing concerns for Christians in Syria who, nevertheless, continued to maintain a collaborative relationship with the moderate Islamic world. There is a desire on the part of Christians, he added, to stay in Syria even under such extreme conditions, and the hope of those who have been forced to flee to neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to return to their country when that becomes possible.

Minister Bonino outlined our country’s lasting commitment to the promotion of mutual respect and understanding among cultures, religions and civilisations, dwelling in particular on Italy’s role in the most recent multilateral initiatives: adoption of the resolution on religious freedom by the 67th UN General Assembly and the 22nd session of the Council on Human Rights; the recent approval of EU guidelines on the same matter; collaboration with the Office of the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide; and the presentation of a new EU resolution on religious freedom during the latest session of the General Assembly.

Source :
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