

6 March 2015

B'nai B'rith Writes to Greek Orthodox Church in Israel Following Torching of Seminary

B'nai B'rith World Center Director Alan Schneider wrote to the Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, elder secretary-general of the Jerusalem Patriarchate of the Greek Orthodox church, to condemn the torching and defacing of a Greek Orthodox seminary in Jerusalem.

The letter stated in part, "Coming at a time when more and more local Christians wish to integrate more fully as equal citizens in Israel, as they recognize the benefits they enjoy living here compared to the surrounding countries where Christians are persecuted today, these acts threaten to reverse this positive recent development."

This attack will not stop interfaith cooperation in Israel. In the meantime, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in Jerusalem, Theophilos III, has agreed to address the B'nai B'rith World Center's annual Yom HaShoah ceremony recognizing the heroism of Jewish rescuers. This year, the event will recognize Chief Rabbi of Volos Moshe Simon Pessach who initiated the rescue of his community. The rescue—that resulted in the survival of 75% of the community—was made possible through the cooperation of the bishop of Volos, who was recognized in 1997 by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations," recognizing the great personal risk.