February 4-5, 2025

DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

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President Trump is meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, who is also expected to meet with Members of Congress on Thursday, on the Gaza ceasefire deal and other regional plans.

This momentous visit heralds the importance of the US-Israel bilateral relationship and our mutual interest in a stable and secure Middle East.

The enduring presence of the Christian Churches in Israel is also of mutual importance to the US and Israel, and can play a positive, practical role in ensuring that stability.

Right now, their presence is at risk with several municipalities in Israel having initiated legal proceedings, frozen accounts, and withheld annual school funds in order to compel the Christian Churches to pay alleged municipal taxes. All of which is contrary to historical and contemporary agreements that afford the Christian Churches a special legal and tax status.

This status allows the Christian Churches to invest in services that benefit society – churches, eldercare, hospitals, schools, etc. – and that supplement the work of the state. The absence of exemptions would be financially debilitating to the Christian Churches, compromising these social services and harming the Christian and other populations in Israel and the Palestinian Territories that rely on them.

The absence of exemptions would also limit, if not end, the Christian Churches ability to care for the Holy sites in Israel that are available free of charge to pilgrims from the United States and around world.

The Christian Churches have appealed to Prime Minister Netanyahu to intervene as before and suspend the legal proceedings, and to re-establish a special committee to identify a sustainable resolution. For more information, please see the attached letter with enclosures.

Our request is that this issue is addressed with the Prime Minister during his visit and included as part of our ongoing dialogue with Israel.

Thank you, again, for your consideration.

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