

ISRAEL: Archbishop Pizzaballa: the law to 'silence' mosques would represent a "dangerous precedent"

Agencia Fides (20.12.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2i12ZX5> – Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, Apostolic Administrator of the vacant see of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, expressed his disapproval regarding the project supported by the Israeli government to take away the speakers from Israel mosques used to spread the Adhan, the call to Islamic prayer, usually made by the muezzin five times a day from the minaret. "I believe that this is a dangerous precedent. I hope that this bill does not go ahead. There are other ways to solve the problem of noise pollution", said Archbishop Pizzaballa on the occasion of the pre-Christmas press conference held yesterday, Monday, December 19, at the headquarters of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The bill, approved by the Ministerial Commission for legislation in mid-November and now under consideration of Parliament, was motivated by the need to protect Israeli citizens from the "noise". The legislative initiative was defined by Palestinians as a provocation, which – according to Palestinian President Abu Mazen – is likely to "make the region plunge into an abyss".

During yesterday's press conference Archbishop Pizzaballa also cited the story of the Cremisan Valley, where the separation Wall wanted by the Israeli government was built "despite our numerous appeals to the Israeli authorities". The expropriation of the lands of Christian families designed to

build the wall – added the Archbishop – “represents a seizure of their heritage”. Outlining also the assignment guidelines received by the Pope as Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Pizzaballa stressed that “our local church here in the Holy Land also recognizes its own need for spiritual renewal, and is entering a period of reform in terms of administration, organization and pastoral work”.

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