

Holy See and League of Arab States Sign Agreement

Interreligious Dialogue Initiatives Given Focus

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 23, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Vatican Secretariat of State signed a memorandum of understanding today together with the League of Arab States.

A Vatican press release reported that this agreement was signed in the Apostolic Palace by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, secretary for relations with states, and Amre Moussa, secretary general of the league.

The statement explained that this agreement, which came into effect with the signatures of the two parties, "further consolidates the bonds of cooperation that exist between the Holy See and the League of Arab States, especially on the political and cultural levels, in favor of peace, security, and regional and international stability."

"Moreover," the report continued, "it proposes instruments of consultation between the two parties, giving attention also to initiatives of interreligious dialogue."

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Pope's Secretary of State was present to represent the Holy See, along with other Vatican officials, including Monsignor Fortunatus Nwachukwu, Monsignor Alberto Ortega; Monsignor Christophe El-Kassis, Monsignor Nicolas Thevenin and Monsignor Lech Piechota.

A delegation from the League of Arab States was headed by Walid Al Gargani. Some member countries of the league were also represented by their ambassadors to the Holy See.

The League of Arab States, seated in Cairo, was started in 1945, and is comprised of 22 countries, including: Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Kuwait.

Pope John Paul II sent the first apostolic delegate to the league in 2000. Currently, this position is held by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, who is also the apostolic nuncio in Egypt.

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