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Religious dialogue, peace concept discussed with US clergy

DAMASCUS, (SANA) – Vice-President for Cultural Affairs Najah al-Attar met yesterday with a delegation representing religious figures and peace-advocates in the United States on boosting dialogue among religions and cultures to serve all nations and the future of humanity.

Attar said that Syria is a country of religious and cultural co-existence and common respect among all religions.

"Syria is always open to the dialogue which is based on justice and truth," she added.

The Vice-President referred to the role which intellectuals and clergymen can play to enhance the language of dialogue and to solve conflicts and clashes through unifying their efforts to attain peace.

Members of the delegation who represent women's world initiative for peace said that their visit embodies the message of peace and aims to enhance dialogic and communication with Syrian officials and clergymen.

They expressed hope that their visit will form a turning point in the process of world peace through

achieving peace among religions.

The delegation voiced rejection to the US-administration foreign policy especially the war in Iraq.

The Grand Mufti Ahmad Bader Eddin Hassoun discussed yesterday with a delegation representing American religious figures the concept of peace as seen in different religions.

Hassoun reiterated that all people are partners in achieving peace.

"Islam prohibits all kinds of terrorism", Hassoun said, adding that Syria is a country of national unity.

The Grand Mufti said that American people do not know the truth about what's going on in the region because the Western mass media is keen on concealing the truth.

Members of the delegation expressed their satisfaction over the development and co-existence in Syria, asserting that they will convey the truth to the American people.

The world needs justice and respecting the others Expatriates Minister

Buthaina Sha'aban said during a meeting with a delegation representing the American clergymen.



She stressed that Israel's incessant attacks against the Palestinian people and its attempts to obliterate people's identity as well as its ignorance of the rights adopted by the international legitimacy are behind the region's problems.

Sha'aban referred to co-existence in Syria, noting clergymen's key role in disseminating values and justice and explaining the real image of the Middle East causes before the American people.

The Minister confirmed that Syria calls for enhancing human principles and

holding constructive dialogue.

The delegation expressed pleasure over the Syrian people's tolerance, referring to the fact that the US policy towards the region lacks credibility and does not serve the US people.

Meanwhile, in a meeting with the US clergy delegation, Information Minister Mohsen Bilal underlined the necessity to differentiate between terrorism and resistance against occupation. This can be done through a specific definition of terrorism, the Minister added. Dr. Bilal

reiterated that Syria condemns all forms of terrorism and rejects that Islam be linked with terrorism. This is in view of the fact that terrorism, as a phenomenon, pays no heed to any religion, race or nationality.

Dr. Bilal said that Syria has been calling on the United Nations since 1985 to define the concept of terrorism. The Information Minister confirmed that Israel practices state terrorism on daily basis against the Palestinian people.