

Iranian-Born Pastor Joins Over 2,000 Christians From 70 Nations for Celebrated Jerusalem March Event

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After a two-year hiatus due to the corona pandemic, the traditional Jerusalem March during Succot returned Thursday, featuring thousands of colorful Christian pilgrims who are in Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles celebration held each year by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

Mayor of Jerusalem Moshe Lion was joined by ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler to kick off the popular March through the heart of the capital city, as tens of thousands of Israelis looked on.

The Jerusalem March is the highlight of the week-long Feast gathering, and the ICEJ national delegations once again were the largest and most colorful group in the holiday parade. This year's Christian marchers included a delegation from Egypt, as well as an Iranian exile waving a Persian flag from before the Islamic revolution to express his hope for restored peaceful ties with Israel.

"It was beautiful to represent my country in the Jerusalem March today," said Peyman Motjtahedi, an Iranian-born, Feast pilgrim who now serves as a worship leader in a large church in Dallas, Texas. "This was a very important part of my first visit ever to Israel, and I was thrilled to see the amazing reaction of Jewish people I met along the route. When I told them I loved them as an Iranian, they were shocked. Several people had tears in their eyes, especially the Persian Jews who recognized my flag."

“What a joy for our Christian pilgrims to be back in the Jerusalem March greeting Israelis along the streets of the capital city after two years of corona travel restrictions,” ICEJ President Dr. Juergen Buehler told Mayor Lion as they led off the March this afternoon. “People who came now after two-and-a-half years of COVID say they are amazed at how much Jerusalem has changed.”

“Yes, there is no argument that Jerusalem in these days is under big development in all areas,” Mayor Lion says. “But I must tell you we missed you these two years. And now you came here to the March, and we are very happy to host you.”

Manasa Kolivuso, a pastor from Fiji, said: “It was such a treat for me to meet all the Israelis today along the March route and to tell them we support and pray for them. This is my first time to Israel and we are already talking about chartering a whole flight from Fiji for next year at Succot.”

This year’s Feast gathering has drawn over 2,000 Christians from more than 70 nations, signaling the return of Christian tourism to Israel after two years of corona lockdowns and travel bans.

The Feast will end with the Christian pilgrims going down to the western Negev on Sunday for a special solidarity rally and tree-planting ceremony with the local Israeli communities in the Gaza border area.

All content of this year’s Feast will be available online for several months. To register for online access, click here:

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