

Why Thousands of Christians Will Pilgrimage to Israel

Over coming days, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem will welcome over 5,000 Christian pilgrims from some 90 nations for its 37th annual celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, which begins on Sunday evening, October 6, at the Ein Gedi oasis and then moves up to Jerusalem's Payis Arena for the remainder of the week of Sukkot.

This year's Feast will feature several dozen pro-Israel Christian parliamentarians and government officials from more than 20 countries. Many of these visiting officials are affiliated with the Israel Allies Foundation, while several African nations are sending government delegations to represent their countries at this year's Feast. The ICEJ also will host the largest ever groups of pilgrims from Chinese and Spanish-speaking countries, continuing the trend in recent years of increasing attendance from Latin America and Asia.

"We are thrilled to have such a diverse array of Christians from around the globe arriving in Jerusalem this week to take part in our Feast celebration," said Dr. Jürgen Bühler, the ICEJ's Executive Director. "This includes over 500 Chinese pilgrims, our most ever, and a similar record number from Spanish-speaking countries. These are evangelicals who love Israel and are working in their nations back home to build support for the Jewish people. This Feast will no doubt strengthen their resolve to stand in solidarity with Israel, especially as they interact with like-minded Christians from all over the world."

Senior Israeli officials will address the Sukkot gathering and welcome the Christian parliamentarians and pilgrims to Jerusalem.

The week-long festivities are once again Israel's largest annual tourist event and the largest solidarity mission to Israel this year, injecting an estimated \$16 million into Israel's economy.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded during the first Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in October 1980, in response to the last 13 national embassies leaving Jerusalem under threat of an Arab oil boycott. Today, the Christian Embassy is considered the world's largest pro-Israel Christian organization, with established branches in over 85 nations and a reach into more than 160 nations worldwide.