

Issa Kassissieh's biography



Mr. Issa Jamil Kassissieh: Ambassador to the Holy See and to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, former Deputy Head at the Negotiations Affairs Department (NAD) of the Palestine Liberation Organization, working under the leadership of the late Dr. Saeb Erekat. Prior to his position at NAD, Mr. Kassissieh served as a Senior Policy Advisor responsible for foreign diplomatic relations at the Office of President Mahmoud Abbas. As an expert on Jerusalem, Mr. Kassissieh has been involved in both official and second-track negotiations with the Israelis. He served as head of the “European Desk” at the Orient House in Jerusalem (headquarters of the Palestinian Team to the Peace Talks) where he worked closely with the late Mr. Faisal Hussein, and was coordinator of the Palestinian team for multilateral talks and dealt with Jerusalem and church affairs. Mr. Kassissieh serves as member of the Presidential Committee on Christian Affairs, is a member of the Presidential Delegation to the Negotiations with the Holy See, and a member of the Presidential Committee for the Renovation of the Nativity Church. He holds a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government - USA, a master’s in diplomacy and statecraft from the University of Birmingham - UK, and a master’s in international studies from Birzeit University. He received the "Raymond & Josephine Vernon Book Award for Academic Distinction" at the John F Kennedy School of Government in June 2004. In June 2013, on behalf of the President of the Italian Republic, he was awarded the "Ordine della Stella D'Italia".

On 28 June 2024, Mr. Kassissieh was awarded by the Holy See with the “Grand Cross Medal of the Pian Order of Pius IX”.

On May 10th, he received the International Sant'Agata V.M. Prize and was concurrently appointed to the distinguished rank of Academic Senator of the Royal Academy Pope Benedict XV.

He is member of several philanthropic and civil society organizations such as chairman of the board at Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, and deputy chairman of the YMCA's board in Jerusalem. He often contributes o-peds and articles locally. Mr. Kassissieh was born in 1964. He is a Jerusalemite, married with three children.