

## News and Current Events :: Christian leaders in Holy Land say friction with Israel at its worst

**Christian leaders in Holy Land say friction with Israel at its worst - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2004/8/28 19:30**

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JERUSALEM - Christian leaders in the Holy Land say their deteriorating relationship with the Israeli government is causing an unprecedented crisis in their ability to minister to the faithful, maintain holy sites and help the needy.

They say the Israeli government has delayed issuing work permits and visas to Christian clergy and church volunteers from abroad.

Israel now wants to tax church property, which some leaders say is a thinly disguised attempt to take over land.

Relations between the government and Christian leaders are so strained that U.S. representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and dozens of other Christian groups wrote President Bush in May asking him to intercede.

Israeli officials concede there is friction but deny trying to drive out or suppress Christians.