

# **THE APPEAL OF THE CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM REGARDING THE JAFFA GATE HOTELS**

On Monday, June 23/July 6, 2020, the Churches of Jerusalem under the lead of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos made the following statement for rendering justice and the return of the Jaffa Gate Hotels Imperial and Petra to their rightful owner, the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

## **Joint Statement from the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem**

We, the Heads of the various Churches and Christian Communities in Jerusalem, stand united in our commitment to the Status Quo which governs the status of the Holy Sites and the protections of the Churches. This is recognised by all the religious and political authorities in this Holy Land, and has always been upheld by the governments of our region.

The case of Jaffa Gate threatens this Status Quo. We are concerned by the recent judgment of the District Court of Jerusalem, which dismissed evidence demonstrating the Greek Orthodox Church's case, without even examining it. We strongly support the efforts of the Greek Orthodox Church to secure justice.

We view the attempts by radical groups to secure property at Jaffa Gate as a systematic attempt to undermine the integrity of the Holy City of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, to obstruct the Christian pilgrim route and to weaken the Christian presence. They do not only affect the Greek Orthodox Church, whose properties are at the centre of the case. This case is just part of a concerted effort by a group opposed to the Christian presence in Jerusalem to increase tensions between

communities, and to harm the harmonious diversity for which Jerusalem should be known.

We ask the Israeli government to act to secure the integrity of the Christian holy sites, the Christian heritage and patrimony, and the rights of the residents of the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem.

These are places to which over two billion Christians around the world look to as the geographical heart of their faith; they are places which millions of Christian pilgrims visit each year; and they are the places in which the Christians of this shared Holy Land live out their faith. We do not see this case as a mere property dispute, but one over the entrance, heart and continued function of the Christian Quarter as a place of living worship and pilgrimage.

Together with the Prophet Amos, we cry: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

**From Secretariat-General**