

THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM FACES REPEATED ATTACKS ON ITS PROPERTY, ESPECIALLY IN JERUSALEM

A video clip circulating on social media revealed on Thursday 20/7/20, Israeli radicals lying on a “couch” inside the lands belonging to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate on the Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and they attack the Patriarchate employee refusing to leave the land, and they bid him and the patriarchate of insults, and they claim to be right without others with this Orthodox land.

The Patriarchate issued a statement shortly after the wide circulation of this video on social media, in which it said that this painful video revealed little of what its property has been exposed to in general, since many years of frenzied attacks by radicals, and exposed a small part of the ongoing suffering, war and battles between the Patriarchate and the far right-wing groups with the aim of protecting its property and rights in the face of the radical tendencies and provocative attacks of these groups.

The Patriarchate affirmed that with the increase in the attacks on the Patriarchate’s property, His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, issued instructions to appoint permanent guards for the targeted sites. He also instructed the legal team in the Patriarchate to follow up diligently and decisively.

The Patriarchate’s statement placed great responsibility on the official authorities that fail to follow up on the attackers on churches and their property, especially when the attackers are from the far right, which made these radicals

persist in their attacks.

It is noteworthy that the property of the Patriarchate on Mount Zion includes a cemetery for the community of the Greek Orthodox Church, a church, a seminar high school, and a playground belonging to the school, in addition to an ancient church that is considered one of the oldest rock-hewn churches in the world. It was a haven for Christians to hide from persecution by the authorities while performing their rituals at the dawn of Christianity.

The statement stated, "A large number of Orthodox sites have been exposed, and are still at risk, from attacks by radicals who write slogans offensive to Christianity, Christ, and Christians, and throw paint on their walls as part of the disgraceful acts, attacks, and behavior they practice against Christian sanctities and property in general, and Orthodox property in general, and the Orthodox in particular. The statement also indicated that the Israeli authorities, unilaterally, have published, since the seventies of the last century, a regulatory scheme in which the lands of the Patriarchate on Mount Zion have been classified as public areas, and that despite this unjust decision, the Patriarchate has succeeded over the past many years in preventing the confiscation of these historical and strategic properties of high religious and cultural status and value.

The Patriarchate stressed that it will not hesitate and will do its best not to allow these radicals or those who stand behind them or support them to gain any foothold in these properties, stressing that the permanent presence and presence of the Arab Islamic and Christian people alongside the monks and the guards of the Patriarchate in this region is the most important guarantor to deter the persistence of these radicals, especially with the absence of the will to deter them by the official Israeli authorities.