

Statement by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem on Egyptian Court Order Impacting the Monastery of Saint Catherine



“Show mercy to those who honor my memory”

St Catherine of Alexandria

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem was deeply troubled to hear of moves by the Egyptian Court Order to seize lands surrounding our monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai. The site where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and home to the protected relics of St Catherine of Alexandria, the monastery is the oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery and a profound sacred space for all Christians.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem asserts our ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Monastery, as it firmly falls under our protection. It is our sacred obligation to ensure that Christian worship continues on this holy ground, as it has done for 17 centuries. We condemn any infringement on the physical or jurisdictional status of our places of worship.

Furthermore, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem stands strongly for the right to worship

safely and freely. This requires access and safe passage for those making pilgrimage to our sites. It is a matter of freedom of worship.

The Monastery of St Catherine has been visited and revered by pilgrims for millennia. Granted a Letter of Protection, or Ashtiname, by Prophet Mohammed PBUH in 623 – and reaffirmed by Sultan Selim I in 1517 – the Monastery is an enshrinement of peace between Christians and Muslims, and a refuge of hope for a world mired by conflict. We call on the Egyptian Authorities to follow this most esteemed tradition and ensure the freedom of worship and access to our monastery. Let our monastery continue this embodiment of peaceful Christian witness, education, and welcome.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem acknowledges the official statements issued yesterday by the Egyptian authorities, assuring the sanctity and wholesome integrity of our monastery and the refrain from any infringement over it. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem will monitor the situation closely and will thoroughly look into the said court decision, and if needed, the Patriarchate will condemn and act upon any encroachment on the Monastery or infringement over access to this holy site.

en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info