

The Voice of the Church Echoes in the European Parliament: Saint Catherine's Monastery Under International Spotlight



In a significant development concerning Saint Catherine's Monastery in Mount Sinai—one of the most ancient symbols of Christian spiritual and historical heritage—the European Parliament has raised alarm over a critical issue threatening the continuity of this historic monastery, which is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited monasteries in the world. This follows a recent Egyptian court ruling ordering the expropriation of parts of the monastery's land.

During the plenary session of the European Parliament held on 16 June, MP Giannis Maniatis, Vice President of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, delivered a formal intervention warning of the consequences of the ruling, which “has made the Egyptian state the sole owner of the site,” noting that the monks have effectively become “temporary guests” holding residence permits not exceeding one year.

The European MP stressed that the decision poses an existential threat to the historic monastery, which dates back fifteen centuries. He called for the inclusion of

the case on the agenda of upcoming parliamentary sessions, taking into account the substantial economic aid the European Union provides to Egypt.

In the same context, His Eminence Archbishop Damianos of Sinai, head of the Autonomous Church of Mount Sinai, sent an official letter to Mr. Nikitas Kaklamanis, President of the Hellenic Parliament, expressing his full support for the Greek position. He emphasized that “justice and history cannot be erased by any court ruling, no matter how powerful.”

His Eminence highlighted in his letter the importance of the points raised by the President of the Hellenic Parliament in his address to his Egyptian counterpart, describing them as “crucial” to ensuring a just outcome that preserves the dignity and historical rights of this sacred site.

Archbishop Damianos expressed his confidence in the Greek political leadership—represented by Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis—commending their diplomatic skill in handling this sensitive matter.

His Eminence also called for emergency sessions of the relevant committees in the Hellenic Parliament—including the Committees on Culture, Defense, Foreign Affairs, and the Committee on Greeks Abroad—to follow up on the matter closely and inform parliamentarians of its legal, cultural, and religious dimensions.

The Archbishop enclosed with his letter a detailed document titled “The Full Truth Regarding the Attempts to Dismantle Saint Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai,” which provides a comprehensive historical account of the crisis and its developments.

This joint ecclesiastical and diplomatic initiative represents a clear commitment to defending Saint Catherine’s Monastery—not only as a Greek spiritual heritage site, but as a global human treasure inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and a living testament to the deep ties between the Orthodox world and the Egyptian state.

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