

Jerusalem Patriarchate: Silwan Land Grab Violates Church Rights and Jerusalem's Historic Christian Presence



The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem expressed grave concern over the Israeli raid and land grab targeting its Church property in Silwan on June 15, 2026. During the operation, the Patriarchate's representative was forcibly removed, his equipment was confiscated, trees were uprooted, and the property was enclosed with fencing and gates. The Patriarchate said the incident constitutes an unlawful and illegitimate seizure of established Church property in the heart of Jerusalem.

The Patriarchate affirmed that the land, Parcel 6 of Block 29985, is registered in its name under official records, lies adjacent to an ancient monastery, and contains historical, archaeological, and religious features. It said the seizure of this private Church property, with its Christian heritage and religious significance, sets a dangerous precedent for Church rights in Jerusalem. The Patriarchate added that reliance on a municipal gardening order issued on April 18, 2019, whose term expired in April 2024, provides no lawful basis for uprooting trees, removing the lawful caretaker, sealing off Church land, or denying the Patriarchate access to its own property.

The Patriarchate stated that the events in Silwan fall within a wider pattern of escalating assaults aimed at weakening the indigenous Christian presence in the Holy Land. It noted with deep concern the rising Israeli attacks against Christians and churches amid unacceptable international tolerance. In 2024, 111 Israeli attacks or acts of violence were recorded against Christian clergy, nuns, worshippers, and church communities, including 35 attacks targeting churches, monasteries, and religious symbols.

In Gaza, the Patriarchate recalled the Israeli army's strike on the compound of Saint Porphyrius Church on October 19, 2023, which killed 18 civilians, and the strike on Holy Family Church on July 17, 2025, which killed 3 civilians and injured Father Gabriel Romanelli.

The Patriarchate affirmed that protecting Church property is a spiritual and historical trust, and that "Blessed are the peacemakers" begins with respect for law, property, holy places, and the dignity of Jerusalem's authentic Christian presence.







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