15/11/2020

Foiling a new scheme of the radicals: Patriarch Theophilos pays two million shekels owed by the tenants of the Petra Hotel

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III announced on 14 November, the success of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in foiling a new scheme of the radicals to take over the Petra Hotel in Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem.

The Patriarchate is following a strict plan for defending its properties in Jaffa Gate against the radical group ‘Ateret Cohanim’, which falsely claims ownership of the Orthodox properties.

The plan works in two parallel defence paths. The first, is fighting through, till the very end, in the legal battle of the current case, which has reached the Supreme Court. And the second, providing all types of help to enable the tenants to remain

standing firmly in these properties, because in the unfortunate scenario where the Patriarchate fails in the first line of defence, the properties will still remain occupied and under the control for the current tenants.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem explained that following the latter path of defence the Patriarchate, last Thursday, paid two million shekels to the Jerusalem District Court, on behalf of the tenants of Petra Hotel, to stop the court from ruling in favour of the radicals, a situation which would have enabled them to take over the hotel.

His Beatitude noted that the Patriarchate, and during his time, had previously paid 400,000 shekels to the tenants of the Petra Hotel, to allow them to pay their debts to the relevant Israeli local authorities, but they unfortunately didn't; which led the debt to accumulate to enormous amounts as time passed.

With the tenants not paying their dues, the Jerusalem District Court appointed a Liquidator to collect the debt, and that Liquidator was non-other than Advocate Avi Moshe Segal, one of Ateret Cohanim's attorneys.

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem tried to pay the tenants' debt to the Israeli local authorities directly, but the Liquidator, Mr. Segal, obtained a decision from the court preventing the relevant authorities from negotiating with the Patriarchate. It was obvious that the Liquidator's strategy would eventually lead Ateret Cohanim to cover the tenants' debt in exchange for acquiring their rights in the Petra Hotel, which would mean that the radicals would take over the Petra Hotel and use it as they please, and that is the disastrous scenario the Patriarchate is trying to avoid; for this reason. The Patriarchate paid this huge sum of money despite the financial hardships that it is going through, especially in light of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the exemption granted to the tenants of the Patriarchate's properties throughout the Old City of Jerusalem for this year.

His Beatitude affirmed that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem is fully prepared to do anything and everything to save and defend its properties in Jaffa Gate, and the Church properties in general. He also stressed that protecting the Christian presence in Jerusalem is not achieved through slogans but by real actions.

— en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info