04/04/2022

Statement of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem on the Illegal Seizure of the Little Petra Hotel



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS
OF LOCAL CHURCHES OF JERUSALEM

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April 2, 2022

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.'" (Psalm 122:6–7)

The seizure of the Little Petra Hotel by the radical extremist group Ateret Cohanim is a threat to the continued existence of a Christian Quarter in Jerusalem, and ultimately to peaceful coexistence of the communities of this city. The Heads of Churches have repeatedly warned of the illegitimate actions of extremists, who have followed a pattern of intimidation and violence.

In occupying the Greek Orthodox Church's property, the Little Petra Hotel, Ateret Cohanim has committed criminal acts of break-in and trespass. They act as if they are above the law, with no fear of consequences.

This issue is not about the individual properties, but about the whole character of Jerusalem, including the Christian Quarter. The Little Petra Hotel stands on the pilgrim route for the millions of Christians who visit Jerusalem each year. It represents Christian heritage, and speaks of our very existence in this place.

Israeli radical extremist groups like Ateret Cohanim are already targeting and hijacking our beloved Old City of Jerusalem and imposing their illegitimate and dangerous agenda on all sides. We refuse this and we say: this will lead to instability and tension at the time when all are trying to de-escalate and build trust, to build towards justice and peace. Acts of coercion and violence cannot lead to peace.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches in Jerusalem