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Patriarchate of Jerusalem issues strongly worded statement in defense of Christians' rights to worship, participate in Easter services



The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem this week congratulated its congregations and all the faithful on both sides of the Jordan River, on the occasion of upcoming Easter and the Saturday of the Holy Light.
At the same time, and in a strongly worded statement, the Jerusalem Patriarchate stated that "…we affirm our strong and renewed commitment to our natural right to celebrate our holidays along with our communities, families, and to participate together in prayers at our churches in the Old City of Jerusalem, including the basic right of all our communities to access the Church of Holy Sepulcher and its vicinity during Easter festivities including Holy Light Saturday."

The Patriarchate is vigorously protesting against police restrictions on freedom to worship, and what it terms as unacceptable methods of dealing with the God-given right of Christians to practice rituals and have to access their holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Still in the Holy Land, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Theophilos III, on Monday received Greece's visiting environment and energy minister, Costas

Skrekas, at the Patriarchal see, whom His Beatitude briefed on what he called the harassment faced by Christians.