

Theft of offerings reported at Iviron Monastery on Mt. Athos; major police operation underway



A theft of offerings from the main cathedral (Catholicos) at the historic Monastery of Iviron, on the semi-autonomous monastic community of Mt. Athos, was reported overnight on Thursday, with subsequent reports noting that five suspects subsequently abandoned the items in a forest near the Monastery and fled to a nearby gorge.

A large police detail arrived at the scene, with police helicopters also dispatched to locate the perpetrators.

The offerings were taken from a renowned icon, the Panagia Portaitissa, also known as the Iviron Theotokos, painted by Luke the Evangelist and venerated as a wonder-working icon.

One of the suspect reportedly broke into the Cathedral where the icon is displayed, but was spotted in the early morning by the Monk assigned as the deacon.

Reports from the town of Karyes, just outside the boundaries of Mt. Athos, in northern Greece, point to an increase in shop thefts, often the work of organized gangs of foreign nationals, while such instances are now being reported by the Monasteries themselves.

The current suspects are, initial reports state, Romanian nationals.

Mt. Athos Governor Kostis Dimtsas was also notified of the incident.

