

Future of Jerusalem's Christian Quarter 'Under Threat'



Churches in the Jerusalem claim their presence in the holy city is under threat due to a legal ruling on the sale of buildings.

Israel's Supreme Court has ruled against the Greek Orthodox Church in a 14 year old case which looked at the purchase of properties at the entrance to the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem known as Jaffa Gate.

Church authorities say the buildings were sold by a rogue employee, who had no authority to do so, for \$2.2m despite their estimated value of \$6.7.

The employee, named as Nicolas Papadimas, has since fled the country.

A spokesman for the Greek Orthodox Church said: "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate is very disappointed by the Supreme Court ruling on Jaffa Gate.

"Our legal team presented a clear case of bribery and corruption at the hands of the Plaintiffs, Ateret Cohanim.

"It is depressing that such corruption is not regarded by the court as having a material impact on the sales that resulted from it."

With concerns over what the new owners will do with the buildings, the Greek Orthodox Church says it will continue to pursue the case by all legal means at its disposal.

The Church wants to ensure that the Christian character of the buildings continues in the future and that the access to the city's holy sites remain unimpeded for the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who visit each year.

In a statement of solidarity with the Greek Orthodox Church, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem said: "We call upon Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli Government, President Rivlin, world leaders and all people of good will around the world to join with us in pursuing an outcome in this case that maintains the Status Quo, preserves the secure presence of the Christian community of Jerusalem, and rejects the use of underhand and illegal methods to seize its properties."

– Source: [Pravmir](#)