

Cave of the Patriarchs, the Biblical Tomb of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Faces Sudden Closure After Court Ruling

Israel has ordered preparations to close the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron within 14 days after funding for the sacred biblical site became legally unavailable.

The Ministry of Religious Services directed administrators to halt entry for worshippers, visitors and tourists; lock the entrances; dismiss employees; and cancel scheduled events and ceremonies. Officials must also coordinate with the IDF, Israel Police and Border Police to secure the site after civilian operations cease, according to Israel365 News.

The order follows a Supreme Court ruling that suspended budget requests approved by the Knesset Finance Committee. The site had relied partly on coalition agreement funds that were never formally included in Israel's state budget.



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"It is important for me to clarify and emphasize unequivocally that the ministry is not holding back or shirking its responsibility towards the Tomb of the Patriarchs, which is a heritage site with a top religious and historical importance," Ministry Director General Yehuda Avidan wrote.

"As long as there is no existing and approved funding source, our hands are tied, and there is no option to create monetary commitments out of thin air," he added.

The ministry said it "deeply regret[s] reaching this

unfortunate situation," but must proceed with closure preparations unless officials secure an authorized funding source.

Approximately 1 million people visit the site each year.

The Cave of the Patriarchs, also known biblically as the Cave of Machpelah, is identified as the burial place of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. Genesis 23 records Abraham purchasing the property from Ephron the Hittite for 400 shekels of silver.

Jewish tradition recognizes it as Judaism's second-holiest site after the Temple Mount. Since 1967, the complex has been divided between Jewish and Muslim worshippers.

A full closure would suspend regular Jewish access to the ancient site for the first time in decades.

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