

## PROTECTION OF PUBLIC ORDER AND SECURITY ON MOUNT ATHOS

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**Summary:** Protection of public order and security on Mount Athos is associated with geographical features of the terrain, historical facts, diplomatic pretensions and conflicts, and above all the spiritual needs of the Orthodox monastic community that exists there for centuries. Mount Athos is still inaccessible and isolated peninsula, with no road network that would connect all the monasteries. The monks who live on Mount Athos are originally from most different parts of the world, so linguistic and cultural differences can be also one of the challenges for police forces of Mount Athos. Since the beginning of Mount Athos' history, monks were living in lodgings of different size and construction quality (cells, sketes etc.). All these monastic lodging types exist until today. Some of them are situated in very isolated and desolate areas. Protection of these objects is difficult, especially if we know that in many such monastic cells we can find precious gifts that believers, including many rulers, donated to the monks. The monks on Mount Athos since earliest times formed some kind of organization with its own, separate legislative, administrative and judicial powers. In all periods of history of Mount Athos protection of public order and security was in some way under the jurisdiction of monastic administrative organs. When the civil authorities were introduced to the Holy Mountain in the 17th century one of their main duties was to supervise the protection of public order and security on Mount Athos. Today the Civil Governor of Mount Athos took full responsibility for the protection of public order and security. Under his rule are units of the Greek police, which are distributed throughout the peninsula. The Hellenic Police (including the forces in Mount Athos) is facing challenges, like the lack of manpower, equipment and vehicles. In addition, there appeared new challenges specific to the Mount Athos: illegal immigrants and increased traffic intensity due to the large number of visitors. From the above it can be concluded that the current system of protecting public order is not able to protect sufficiently the monasteries of Mount Athos and their dependencies. The author concludes that the Hellenic Police forces in Mount Athos should be supported by other orthodox countries and their police forces without a violation of Greek sovereignty over Mount Athos. That would be the most efficient way to eliminate the lack of manpower, equipment and resources, and also to achieve a higher level of protection of the monks of non-Greek origin.