

Torah case moves to secular court

by UPI

LOS ANGELES - An Orthodox rabbi in California says he's turning to a secular court in his fight to keep four Torah scrolls sought by the widow of another rabbi.

Rabbi Samuel Ohana, 73, claims a Jewish court in Los Angeles erred in January when it ordered him to give the scrolls to Rita Pauker, the widow of Rabbi Norman Pauker, who died in 2002, the Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday.

Ohana, who is taking the case to Superior Court, said Rabbi Pauker gave the scrolls to Ohana's Sherman Oaks congregation in 1998 after Pauker's North Hollywood synagogue closed. Pauker's widow claims the scrolls, which contain the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, were on loan.

Ohana also has appealed the ruling of the religious court in Los Angeles to a higher religious court in Jerusalem, which Pauker's lawyers say have no authority to rule on the matter.

The rancorous public airing of the case is highly unusual because such matters usually are kept confidential within the Jewish court system, rabbinical lawyers told the Times.

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