# SILENCING US WITH THEIR SILENCE

*Posted on June 16, 2023 by Keghart*



**Category:** Opinions

***The Goveroun Bardez ("Cows' Garden") Controversial Contract Raises Questions while Patriarch Nourhan's Silence Forces the Jerusalem Armenian Community to Seek Credible Answers.***

For several months now, the controversial 99-year lease of Goveroun Bardez has been the center of turmoil within the Jerusalem Armenian community, Armenia, and the Armenian Diaspora. Despite numerous demands for clarification/transparency, the contract has remained shrouded in secrecy, fueling concerns and raising suspicions. The frustration grows as Patriarch Nourhan maintains silence while the leading figures within the patriarchate stonewall justified inquiries.

Members of the Armenian community, both in Jerusalem and abroad, have sought elucidation regarding the details of the contract. We strongly believe the contract's content should be made public, considering its negative implications for the community. However, the Patriarch, along with Fr. Koryun Baghdasaryan, the new director of the real estate department, have refused to disclose concrete information. Instead, they have claimed lawyers are working on the issue and that a contract reversal is imminent.

The ongoing delays and false hopes advanced by the Patriarchate escalate the frustration and skepticism of the Jerusalem Armenian community. We question whether these tactics are deliberate attempts to silence the community into complacency, hoping the controversy would eventually fade away. The constant delays and promises of legal actions against those involved in the contract have led many of us to doubt the sincerity of the Patriarchate's intentions.

The Patriarch has seemingly distanced himself from the crisis. It leaves us to speculate that he is surrounded by key figures within the Patriarchate, namely Fr. Koryun Baghdasaryan, Fr. Zakaryan, and Fr. Aghan Goghyan, who have become *de facto* administrators. It has been widely alleged they intend to bury the controversial contract into oblivion while orchestrating their own elevation to the ranks of bishop and thus hold the Patriarchate in their grip.

The Armenian community of Jerusalem is entitled to clarity and transparency regarding the controversial contract. It is of crucial importance that the Patriarchate addresses the concerns and inquiries raised by the community, rather than avoid them. By remaining silent and withholding information, the Patriarchate risks eroding the trust and confidence the community places in its leadership.

The refusal of the Patriarch and Fr. Koryun to disclose the contents of the contract undoubtedly give credence to the suspicions held by the Armenian community at large. Moreover, the constant delays and false hopes advanced by the Patriarchate further contribute to the suspicions surrounding the dubious contract. These tactics only serve to create uncertainty and frustration within the community, as we begin to question whether the leadership is committed to resolving the issue or if it is attempting to sweep it under the rug.

Goveroun Bardez has been a part of the Jerusalem Armenian heritage since 1550s. We have inherited it from our forefathers through their selfless devotion. As part of the Jerusalem Armenian history, it cannot and will not be erased through the signatures of irresponsible and inconsiderate individuals who are entrusted with the guardianship of the sacred estates.

Concerned Jerusalem Armenians
Jerusalem, June 16, 2023

# Comments

**Vrej H. S.** – 2023-06-21 20:16:08
The best evidence that Nourhan and Baret/Khachig committed an illegal and criminal act is their silence re all aspects of the contract (How much were they paid? Where is the money? When was it signed? What areas have been sold or agreed to 99-year leases which is equivalent to sale because of Israeli laws, who are the signatories?) Nourhan says he didn't know what he was signing and that Baret/Khachig lied to him. What kind of person signs a 99-year lease without reading the contract? What Armenian Patriarch in charge of the most important Armenian real estate outside the RoA would sign a lease about the said lands without reading the contract? Nourhan is culpable for every misdeed related to the contract. For his admitted negligence (if he is not lying about the circumstances of the signing) he should be removed and defrocked. Considering his treacherous act, I wonder whether he is Armenian.

**Hagop** – 2023-06-18 19:52:17
Keghart readers know that in the past two years the site has published numerous editorials, articles, and columns to alert the Armenian public, including the Diaspora political parties and media about the dangers Armenian Jerusalem is facing. With one exception (Apo Jabarian's USA Armenian Life), the AGBU and the so-called political parties and their complacent organs have ignored the national calamity. Now that the 1,600-year existence of Armenian Jerusalem is threatened, several Johnny-come-lately media outlets are suddenly interested. But even then, rather than do original reporting, one of them has shamelessly reproduced an article written by an odar media outlet. Why do these Rip Van Winkle party organs call themselves Armenian media? Hagop Hagopian, Keghart columnist

**Harutiun** – 2023-06-18 10:59:44
I have yet to read any statement of any major diasporan organization on this matter. Instead, the AGBU continues to issue statements regarding Armenia's foreign policy vis-a-vis Artsakh, an issue far removed from their sphere of practical impact. The diaspora remians woefully unorganized and unconcerned about the Jerusalem fiasco. If the lease remians in force, Armenians have no one else to blame but themselves.



**Mesrob** – 2023-06-17 11:22:06
I mentioned to appeal to the Israeli court would be waste of time. I did so to save time, money, and spare us false hope. Israel is behind the plot to grab Armenian lands. There is no way a Zionist judge would decide against the Jewish acquisition of Armenian lands in Jerusalem. The Nazis had a word--Judenrein(?), it meant no Jews in Germany. Now Israel wants Christian- and Muslim-rein in the Old City of Jerusalem.



**H** – 2023-06-16 21:46:05
Without being in the know as to why he refers to it, Mesrob's prediction about the Israeli courts being biased, unfortunately may be correct.



**Mesrob** – 2023-06-16 20:50:45
While we wait for the recommendations of our lawyers, I hope they do not recommend that we take the case to the Israeli court. The Israeli government is party to the conspiracy to take the Armenian Quarter and any Israeli judge is a Zionist before being a judge. Even if in the unusual instance that an Israeli judge sides with the Armenians, he wouldn't last and a more amenable judge would be appointed. My point? Don't waste time and money on taking the case to an Israeli court., Take the case to the International Court, the United Nations and to the EU court.



**H** – 2023-06-16 14:06:22
The three new "clergy" aspiring to be bishops seem to have decided to join the crooks who lease and sell properties the church and Armenian nation own. They don't. If they too join those who work against the church for their own glory, they need to go as well. Falsely it seems, we had hopes for the priests named above.