

# "AFTER ME THE DELUGE"

Posted on April 5, 2022 by Keghart



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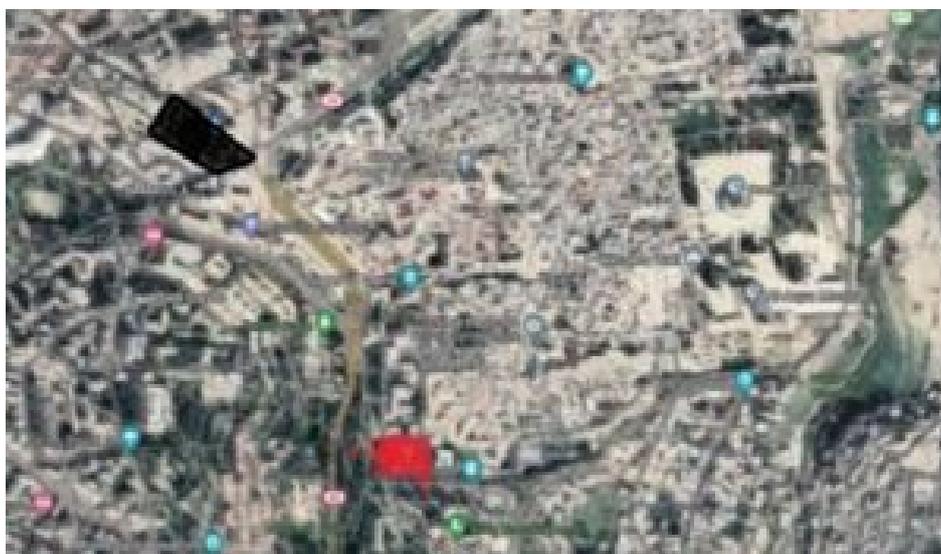
**By Hagop Hagopian**, Toronto, 5 April 2022

People who are familiar with the illegal and treacherous real estate transactions of Patriarch Nourhan of Jerusalem this past year should brace themselves for another real estate outrage engineered by the patriarch and his enforcer Fr. Baret Yeretsian, director of the patriarchate's real estate office.

Two weeks ago, Yeretsian, with an Israeli lawyer in tow, convened a meeting of the Synod (*Dnoren Joghov*) where he unveiled a plan which would see the lion's share of the patriarchate's West Jerusalem real estate holdings leased for 99 years to an Israeli developer.

The properties on Jaffa Rd. (the main artery of West Jerusalem's commercial center) and adjacent streets cover 15,000-square meters and include several two- and three-storey buildings which house shops and offices, including government offices. The lease would cover 120 businesses of a total 180. The unnamed developer plans to build a giant hotel on the site... it's all reminiscent of last year's Goveroun Bardez boondoggle which also entails the construction of an elephantine hotel on Armenian land. The West Jerusalem sites are double the size of Goveroun Bardez. Presumably, once the transaction goes through, the developer would give a lump sum to the patriarch. As in the case of Goveroun Bardez, Yeretsian is keeping a tight lid on the amount. If the transaction goes through, for the next 99 years the patriarchate will accrue no income from the 120 properties. This is tantamount to endangering Armenian financial presence in West Jerusalem.

#### **Map of part of West Jerusalem and the Old City**



***Shaded Black (top left corner): Part of the properties of the Armenian Patriarchate in West Jerusalem (Jaffa, Koresh and Shushan Streets)***

***Shaded in red (bottom in the middle): The Goveroun Bardez in the Armenian Quarter***

When several clergymen expressed their shock at Yeretsian's bizarre and odious proposal, Yeretsian typically exploded into a well hewn rage. The often-deployed ire is the uppity *vartabed's* favorite instrument of intimidation. That's when nauseating Nourhan—acting as a docile straight man to brackish Baret—suggested that the proposal be presented to the Sts. James Brotherhood at some undecided future date. It was a blatant and rehearsed *pas de deux* by the noxious pair. While last year the majority of the Brotherhood members opposed the Baret/Nourhan's Goveroun Bardez designs, Nourhan has been working hard since to create a more amenable Brotherhood Council: he dismissed five overseas bishops who had opposed the Goveroun Bardez project and became uncharacteristically chummy with the local Brotherhood members. Meanwhile, several Jerusalem clergymen who had opposed the Goveroun Bardez project were cowed and would now give the thumbs up to Baret's most recent conspiracy.



***A view of Jaffa Street: the St. James sign (U3) is engraved on each store***

If we step back and ponder about what's going on in Jerusalem and consider the bizarre conduct of Baret we could easily conclude he is a covert member of the hotel developer's board or that he is being blackmailed into promoting the project.

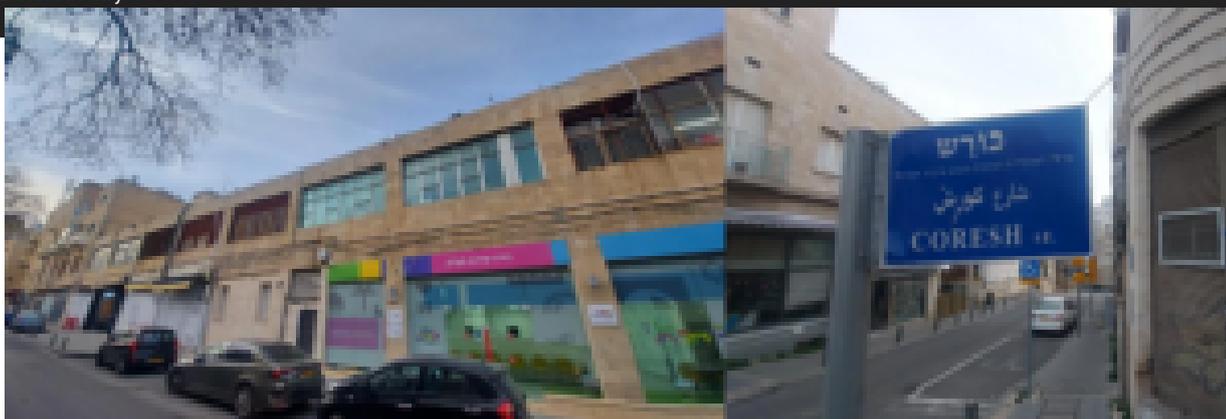
The writing is on the wall: because the remaining 60 properties will not generate sufficient income to cover the patriarchate's expenses, patriarchs would be forced to sell all or most of the Armenian properties in West Jerusalem. Wayward Baret's lease would result in the near demise of Armenian

financial presence in West Jerusalem and in a severe shrinkage of Armenian institutional presence in the Holy Land. Finally, the destruction of the Armenian economic base would relegate Armenians to a second-class status. It's worth remembering that Jerusalem real estate prices can compete with that of Manhattan and the Armenian properties happen to be at the heart of the much-coveted West Jerusalem. The Baret-Nourhan duo is responsible for similar outrageous transactions in Ramle and in Old Jaffa.



the operation to liquidate two-thirds of Armenian properties in West Jerusalem is successful, the patriarchate will depend for its survival on the diaspora. While diaspora has for a millennium acted as an ATM for the patriarchate, nowadays repugnant Nourhan and Co. can't depend on the generosity of the diaspora.

Jerusalem Patriarchate watchers are at a loss when they try to explain the inexplicable behavior of the so-called patriarch and his henchman. Baret had an impoverished and troubled Jerusalem childhood. It's possible that his behavior is rooted in his turbulent childhood, his dubious career in North America and his forced return to Jerusalem. The surprise is Nourhan and his role as yes-man to a questionable character such as Baret...a clergyman who is still a *vartabed* more than fifty years he was ordained. Of the two obese clergymen, who is the boss? Who is the underling? Nourhan's snoozing behavior echoes King Louis XVI's notorious "Après moi, le déluge" ("After me the deluge"). Meanwhile, Baret's actions will deal a death blow to what Armenian Jerusalem means to the Armenian Nation. The pair have openly sworn to strip off all patriarchate properties. They have also declared a vendetta against the Jerusalem Armenian community which finds their reign intolerable.



Since the

pusillanimous priests of the Sts. James Brotherhood have proven themselves too timorous to stop the depredations of the treacherous twins, it's high time Armenia and the diaspora mobilized to save Armenian Jerusalem. Catholicos Karekin should send a delegation to Jerusalem to investigate the maddening decisions of Nourhan/Baret. There's a precedence for such action. About thirty years ago Catholicos Vazken I sent a three-man delegation to Jerusalem to investigate the status of the patriarchate's properties during the offices of Patriarch Yeghishe Derderian. They stayed in Jerusalem for a month and made a thorough survey of the patriarchate's land holdings. It also happened just before the First World War when Patriarch Malakia Ormanian was sent by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople along with writer Vahan Tekeyan to investigate land issues and irregularities in Palestine.

As well, the media in Armenia and in the diaspora should dispatch journalists to Jerusalem to expose the activities of the duo.

If the Armenian Nation continues to be indifferent to Armenian Jerusalem, the sun will soon set on the 2,000-year-old community and 1,400-year patriarchate. It's the 11<sup>th</sup> hour for the first and the oldest Armenian diasporic outpost. Not stopping these the two clerical outlaws would dishonor our nation and our ancestors who built the glory that is Armenian Jerusalem.



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## Comments



**Mesrob** – 2022-04-12 23:04:50

Kevork. Sad, to say, your letter is void of substance. You claim to know the facts but you are not telling us those facts. Please do Keghart readers a favor and tell us the contents of the 99-year leases of Goveroun Bardez and the West Jerusalem buildings. You say Jerusalem residents are a reliable source for the truth regarding the outrageous leases perpetrated by Nourhan and Baret. However, the two so-called clergymen have not shown the leases to the Sts. James Brotherhood let alone the Armenian community members. Dozens of Jerusalemites have written to Keghart and condemned the criminal activities of Baret and Nourhan. The most outspoken member of the community (Serop Sahagian) has also written to Keghart and condemned Baret and Nourhan. By the way, when the Sts. James Brotherhood members haven't seen the leases, how come you presumably have? Are you a confidante of Nourhan or Baret, like Miss Soulahian who writes Nourhan's communique? You say there is no Hagop Hagopian in Toronto. What does that have to do with the Keghart articles? For all I know, Hagopian might be in Los Angeles, Beirut, or London. What matters is the content of what he writes and not his address. Nowhere does Keghart mention where Hagopian lives. Yet you assume he must be from Toronto because Keghart is published in Ontario. It must come as a shock to you that not all "New York Times" writers live in New York City. Some live in Beijing, London, Paris, and Jerusalem... Considering the absence of facts in your letter, I am surprised you bothered to write.



**K** – 2022-04-11 07:14:46

There is a freedom speech here. You should not cancel or disprove any comments.



**Kevork** - 2022-04-11 07:07:40

Well, I read over and over the same content and material on this site. I wish they have true facts about what happened in Jerusalem. You should obtain the correct information only from Jerusalem Residents. Secondly, There is no such person by Name Hagop Hagopian residing in Toronto, Canada. The Hagopian family resides in Jerusalem and have a great reputation. There is no such one from Hagopian family having any interest in posting about Armenians in Jerusalem. This is such false, information. Don't read this article. Finally, The Armenians if Jerusalem in the community of Diaspora will surprise with what will happen on the lands in Jerusalem. There is no such agreement happened. The main goal of the entire Armenian Community of Jerusalem is to build a hotel, Youth and elderly Center sponsored by Armenians in Diaspora . There is a delegation vising Jerusalem and meeting with the Armenian Community to push the project forward.



**Wahakn** - 2022-04-10 21:49:10

Our one and only hope saving our churches and monastery is the success of Palestinian uprising, otherwise we are fighting a losing battle against United state of Israel, the most powerful nation in the world today.



H - 2022-04-06 16:05:16

It is more than an insult for the Armenian nation to have Baret and Nourhan be called Armenian. The people around these two, who can and should defrock them, are busy eating kebab in the convent. And unfortunately the few rebel priests, may have been bribed or beaten into silence. Easy to blame the Israeli authorities for weakening a strong Armenian community; We need to understand, not accept, what this government is doing is what is best for it. By any and all means. Why should it care who or what community owns the properties. Israeli authorities grab lands, confiscate, blackmail the vulnerable like Nourhan and Baret, and does what it takes to take over properties that legally cannot. The practice goes back to 1967 actually, when Taniel Kitishian's pottery factory on the south/east corner, inside the walls, was destroyed during the 1948 conflict. It sat in rubble in "no man's land" until 1967 on Armenian church property. Right after Israel occupied Jordanian Jerusalem, the rubble was cleared away and the church land was confiscated under the pretext of creating much needed "green zone". Who now remembers the land or Kitishian factory! Since 1967 it is outright illegal land grabbing in Jordanian Jerusalem, not forgetting "99 year old leases" of church properties in Palestine, now Israel proper. Armenians can protest against illegal occupation, lament loss of community properties that have been the jewel of the nation for centuries, and way before the State of Israel was established in mid 20th century to no avail. Because Israel can; Because Zionism never sleeps; it created the State, and reaches out to the needs of world Judaism. As it should; Israel has leaders and accountability; Zionism has long term plans, locally and globally. Right after 1967 occupation of Jordanian Jerusalem and the West Bank it took away the right of the strong Armenian community. This was achieved by blocking the decades old tradition of the church bringing young men to educate as future priests from Lebanon, Syria, Historic Armenia (occupied by turkey), and Cyprus; It blocked any Jerusalem born Armenian returning to settle down where they called home Jordanian Jerusalem or the West Bank; Thus weakening the community and the brotherhood. Opening the way ... Strangely Israeli authorities do not confiscate properties belonging to the Anglican Church. Mystery? Why blame others: We have a community mostly dependent in Jerusalem on pilgrim funded free housing; We have a diaspora created mainly as a result of the Genocide perpetrated by Ottoman Turkey and the successor denialist criminal Turkey. Still lives in and with the trauma of denials; We have a diaspora weakened by intermarriages, and assimilation; We have ten percent of historic Armenia ruled by ignorant, greedy people with Armenian names; This too will pass. What we need is Armenian Zionism. Nothing less. That has the nation's spirit and will destroy these two. Not forgetting the clergyman who provided the blue prints of the properties being leafed through, and who now live in the land of the free in total comfort among them privileged, who are ignorant of who their priest is. Now the question is: do we go into another total silence until someone or Keghart or breaks the news of more land grab?! Call to Armenian Zionism please. No fear and no tolerance for traitors.



**Souren Bekdjian** – 2022-04-06 03:54:37

Սփիւռք, Հայաստան եւ Կաթողիկոս պետք է շարժին եւ Երուսաղէմը փրկեն այս երկու անամօթ անձերէն: Այս ամիս Հայոց ցեղասպանութեան ոգեկոչման ամիս է իսկ այս երկու անձերը առ ու ծախի առարկայ կը վերածեն Հայ ազգին հարստութիւնները, իրաւունքները եւ պատմութիւնը: Ի՞նչ է տարբերութիւնը իրենց եւ Թուրքին միջեւ: Կը բաւէ այլեւս:



**Marty S.** – 2022-04-05 22:35:22

Thank you for sending this out and letting everyone know what is going on!



**Dikran B.** – 2022-04-05 22:31:12

Dikran B. What a SHAME the Armenian world is still dormant, it is becoming so serious that we might lose our 1400 years of history. WAKE UP, WAKE UP.



**Vrezh S.** – 2022-04-05 17:14:08

Assertion and speculation The secrecy surrounding the contracts lead one to the obvious conclusion that they are illegal/unlawful. Why are Nourhan and Baret promoting these two damaging leases? 1- They are being blackmailed. 2- Greed (personal financial gain). 3- Being prodded by the authorities as another step in Judaizing Jerusalem. 4- They are selling our hard-earned patrimony. They are worse than the Turks. Vrezh S.



**Hovsep Gureghian** – 2022-04-05 10:27:35

Այն բոլոր խանութները շինուած են մեր նախկին Պատրիարքներու օրով. Նուրհանը ո՞վ է որ զանոնք ծախէ: Անոնք Հայ ազգին կը պատկանին. արդեօ՞ք այս երկու անամօթ անձերը չեն գիտեր որ Երուսաղէմի Պատրիարքութիւնը այս կալուածներու վարձով կ'ապրի: Այս ի՞նչ խայտառակ վիճակ է. ասոնք ինքզինքնին տեսած են որպէս վաճառականներ...



**Hovanes Boyadjian** – 2022-04-05 09:24:27

I can't believe that a bully is intimidating the entire Armenian community both in Jerusalem and the Diaspora. If nothing is done to stop this man, Bared, then we all deserve what is in store for us. Complaining about it is worthless and feeble. THIS MUST STOP!



**Mardiros M.** – 2022-04-05 04:36:02

One wonders why Diaspora luminaries, celebrities, organizations have done nothing so far that I know of to stop the egregious scandal of "Goveroun Bardez"; if they had intervened then possibly this second act of leasing highly valuable properties would not have been cooked up.



**Ara Manoogian** – 2022-04-05 03:16:48

It's very sad to see that these two un-holy beasts have usurped so much power, that they can somehow sell off the properties belonging to the Armenian church. It should be noted that both Nourhan and Baret, were not trusted by my uncle, the former Patriarch, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian. I myself interacted with both of them and can attest that they both are corrupt and money hungry. There is nothing holy about them and in fact, they both resemble what I imagine the devil would look and act like. I should add that Nourhan, before being elected to the seat he occupies, made sure that everyone thinks my uncle was in a comma, when in fact he was not when he passed away from what the doctors told me was blood poisoning, caused by a blood transfusion, which was supposed to be done in a hospital, but was done in a nursing facility. The day that my uncle died, we were informed of his passing when we arrived to see him, and were greeted by the head of the Franciscan church. My uncle died alone, with no one from the brotherhood by his side, since when they received news that he was dying, Nourhan rather than sending someone to the Franciscans' nursing facility, he called for a meeting of the brotherhood. And no one called us, who were 10 minutes away, so we could at least be there with him before he died. I was the last to see my uncle, about 30 minutes after his death in a pool of his own blood, from bedsores he had from his lack of care. He was left to die in the Franciscan nursing home, which is understaffed and he was among 12 others in their care. The day before his death, as he had seemed to have recovered from his blood poisoning, we had the consent of the doctor at the Franciscan nursing facility to bring a private nurse to care for my uncle. The reality is that what my uncle was subjected to in his last months of life is a reflection of who Nourhan is. Btw, the doctor at the Franciscan nursing facility told me just prior to my uncle's death, that no one looked into or determined why he got sick in the first place. When I insisted on an autopsy, it made Nourhan and others in his circle very nervous. They did everything in their power to prevent the autopsy, and went so far as having all of his organs removed.



**Zabel Karakashian** – 2022-04-05 03:09:36

Վայ քեզ քաղաք որ Թագաւորդ ՄԱՆՈՒԿ Է Այս ինչ խայտառակութիւն



**Armenag Derderian** – 2022-04-05 02:09:13

This is a crime against the Armenian Nation! What a shame. Ո՞ր է Հայ ժողովուրդը, ո՞ր է կաթողիկոսը, ո՞ր է Հայաստանը: Երուսաղեմի ապագան անորոշութեան մէջ է այս երկու խայտառակ անձերուն պատճառով: Պետք է կասեցնել այս ծրագիրը: