

JERUSALEM ARMENIANS' COMPLAINT LETTER TO THE PATRIARCH

Posted on September 25, 2021 by Keghart



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23 September 2021

A group of Jerusalem Armenians has sent an open letter to Patriarch Nourhan Manougian of Jerusalem expressing their discontent with his management of the Patriarchate and particularly the Patriarch's recent real estate dealings. While the letter is addressed to Patriarch Nourhan, its second aim is to inform Palestinians of the Armenian community's displeasure with the Patriarch's external and internal policies.

His Beatitude Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem

Sts. James Brotherhood

We, the local Armenian community in the Old City of Jerusalem, and the Holy Land, raise our voice and declare:

The Status Quo of the Holy Places is considered since centuries a very delicate issue. Any change by any party is not acceptable and damages seriously for centuries the reputation of Armenian Patriarchs. Any change in the Status Quo in the Old City challenges and upsets the delicate political, religious, social and financial balance in the walled Holy City of Jerusalem and contravenes resolution No. 18/(1947) defining Jerusalem as *corpus separandum*.

Despite the fact that the local Armenians who live within the walls for hundreds of years face daily pressures to integrate forcibly (because of their cultural identity) always support their church to maintain the Status Quo. Despite their commitment to back their church they are taken to Israeli courts by representatives of the Armenian Church, instead of peacefully and amicably solving their problems out of court (James, 1-5).

The timing of Covid 19, represents an additional economic pressure on the society.

We call upon you to be a good shepherd. You should shepherd this community and mend the cracks and gather your sheep under your lead (John 10: 11-18).

And as spiritual sons of the Armenian Church we feel that you have abandoned your flock and left us to the wolves.

On the other hand, you do not listen to them, and you do not receive them. You do not support us socially, or through housing, employment for which we are in dire need, while our precious landed properties are being ravaged by foreign capitalists like greedy locusts at harvest time.

The problems and scandals are rising and affects adversely not only our society, but also the priests of the Sts. James Brotherhood. Honorable priests are being dismissed and replaced by uneducated and morally questionable priests.

Priests involved in scandals are offered powerful positions. The reputation of this institution is at stake and the reputation as well of our entire community.

As the oldest Armenian community in Jerusalem and as survivors of a genocide we feel deep shame

vis-a-vis in front of the Christian and Muslim communities.

Comments



Nora Bedrossian – 2021-10-01 01:04:03

The previous patriarch Yegishe Derderian sold the entire Armenian antiquities during his administration. Our current patriarch is selling The Armenian real estate of Jerusalem. The most valuable real estate NO money can buy in the world. These properties are NOT the property of one individual whether clergyman or not; it is the property of the nation of Armenia. Patriarch Nourhan Manougian must resign and rescind the sale of the real estate.



Mesrob – 2021-09-28 16:52:29

A reply for the third time to "Shushik"'s uninformed letter. First, she lowers the tone of this debate by writing "Anonymous letters are as [...] paper. She says the letter-writers who criticized Patriarch Nourhan and Fr. Yeretsian are biting the hands that feed them because they live in Patriarchate-owned rent-subsidized apartments. The houses don't belong to the Patriarch or to Yeretsian. They belong to the Church. The pair are the temporary heads of Armenian real estate in the Holy Land. Armenian civilians have been living in the Armenian Quarter free of charge or through reduced rent since the Genocide. That is seven or eight Patriarchs have provided assisted housing to the Armenian community because of dismal economic conditions in Jerusalem. I am not a member of the Sts. James Brotherhood. I have checked with Jerusalemites the editorial content of Keghart. They have verified the accuracy of the reports and have said Jerusalemites are closely following Keghart's coverage and are hoping Keghart's exposure of the scandal will have an impact on the misdeeds of Patriarch Nourhan and Fr. Yeretsian.



Margaret – 2021-09-28 11:58:32

Shushik (or whatever your name is), I have visited Jerusalem thrice, heard people, both "kaghketsis" and the ones living within the compound; right now I am in the company of two people from Jerusalem. What I have heard from them validates every single word that's said in the unsigned document. Absence of signatures does not negate the facts. The more bothersome expression in your comment is indirectly insinuating that the Patriarch and Fr. Baret are as if the owners of these lands, the living quarters are their properties, and people living there are fed by the "hands" of these two people. This is infuriating and insulting. These lands are not the private properties of the patriarchate. The patriarch and people in position are custodians of lands belonging to the Armenian nation. They are "azkabadgan" lands.



Shushik – 2021-09-28 06:42:20

Anonymous letters are as [...] paper. So the writers of the anonymous letter bite the hand that feeds them. Not very chic. They are free to live anywhere they like- nobody forces them to live in Church-owned houses. Are you a member of the Brotherhood, Mesrob, that you pretend to know all? In my view it is all slander and gossip, flames fueled up by one or two bigmouths.



Mesrob – 2021-09-27 13:18:41

I addressed this a few days ago. Why is it hard to understand the situation?, They didn't sign the letter because they live in Church-owned houses, paying subsidized rent. If they reveal their identities, they fear retaliation, meaning being kicked out of their homes plus being ostracised by the Patriarchate. When Sts. James Brotherhood members fear to express their opposition to the long lease, what do you expect from civilians? Mesrob



Sushik – 2021-09-27 07:50:32

It is very low that the writers do not sign with their name. It is also very low that this website continually attacks the Armenian Church.



Mesrob – 2021-09-26 01:41:46

Since many Jerusalem Armenians live in Patriarchate-owned properties, they would be reluctant to sign their protest letter fearing retaliation such as eviction. This is a logical assumption. What you call mudslinging is a natural reaction to Patriarchate illegal activities.



Yes hayem – 2021-09-25 11:29:42

Where are the names of the authors of these complaints? If they are so brave let their names be known. Stop enabling all this mudslinging.



Haigaz Stepanian – 2021-09-25 06:08:27

My name is Haigaz Stepanian and I lived at Ararat street # 9 . I visited my sister almost every year during the summer from the USA usually for two or three months. I have personally noticed the decadence and immoral behavior and lifestyle of several priests from our dear Armenian convent in Jérusalem, among them and at their head Nourhan Manougian and Pakrad and Baret including several others that showed inconsiderate and immoral behavior towards the "kaghkatsy" local Native Armenians who have lived for centuries in the old city . The bunch should be ashamed of themselves.