

# SCANDAL AT THE ARMENIAN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

*Posted on August 31, 2021 by Keghart*



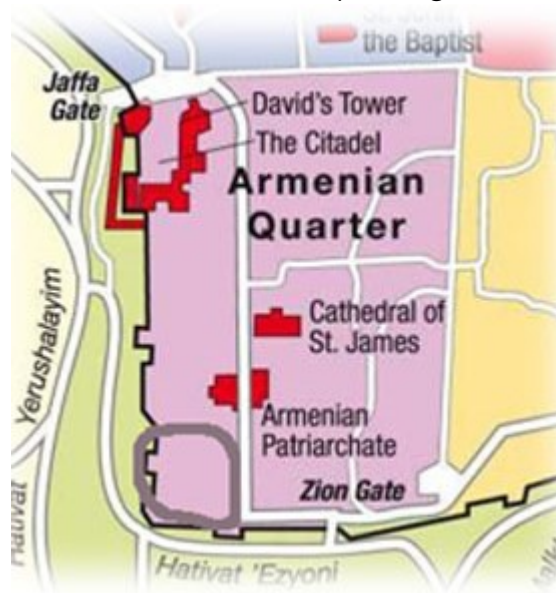
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## Keghart.org Editorial, 31 August 2021

An alarming news was leaked few weeks ago about the secret and illegal transaction of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This new scandal involves the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Jerusalem Archbishop Nourhan Manougian and the Director of the Real Estate department of the Patriarchate Fr. Baret Yeretsian.

The story started in 2019 when rumors circulated concerning a real estate deal between the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Municipality according to which part of the Armenian Quarter would be rented out to the Municipality for 5 years. In March 2020 Patriarch Manougian and Fr. Yeretsian signed a 10-year contract with the Jerusalem Municipality giving away the 'Goveroun Bardez' area located in the historical Armenian Quarter to be used as a parking lot for Jews heading to the Western Wall in the Old City. This new parking lot was officially opened in May 2021.



In July 2021, a new contract was signed between the Armenian Patriarchate and an Australian businessman called Dany Rubinstein according to which 'Goveroun Bardez' which is the entire southwestern section of the Armenian Quarter would be leased for 99 years to that businessman. The plan is to construct a hotel on that land within the next 5 years giving in return a very small percentage of the profits to the Armenian Patriarchate.

According to verified sources from the Holy Land, the Patriarch and Fr. Yeretsian negotiated and finalized the deal without the consent of the Synod (Սինոդ). The Synod was not convened for the past 3 years and did not vote for this deal, bluntly bypassing legal and jurisdictional procedures and laws that govern the Patriarchate.



### ***'Goveroun Bardez'***

Patriarch Manougian seems to be under the misapprehension that Armenian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem belongs to him, and that he can do anything on matters related to the status of that oldest and most sacred Armenian Diaspora land. For his own good, he should be disabused of that false notion. He is the 97<sup>th</sup> steward of the Armenian real estate of that Holy Land, a temporary mandate entrusted to him by the Armenian Apostolic Church and its community in the City of Jerusalem. In fact, the Armenian Quarter and other "Patriarchate-owned" real estate don't even belong to the Armenian Church or to the St. James Brotherhood. They are the possessions of the Armenian nation. Every last inch of Holy Land Armenian property was purchased through the donations of Armenian pilgrims, nobility, kings, and charitable organizations over a millennium. Twice in recent centuries, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem was bankrupt and was close to losing all its real estate. It was rescued by Armenian merchants and regular Armenian patriots.

Every inch of the Holy Land falls under strict local and international laws hence no one has the right to split up that one entity into different trading parts. The lawless Patriarch should convene the St. James Brotherhood's Synod which, according to reliable sources, would reject the illegal lease signed by the Patriarch along with his right-hand man Rev. Baret Yeretsian, and under duress by Archbishop Sevan Gharibian.

\* ***An enlarged map of the Armenian Quarter in relation to the rest of the OLD City may be viewed at***  
[\*\*\*ԵՐՈՒՍԱԴՆԵՍ. ՆՈՐ ԱՏԱՀՈԳՈՒԹԻՒՆ ԱԸՆ ԱԼ\*\*\*](#)

## Comments



**Vahakn** – 2021-09-16 10:07:09

Reading the Keghart reports about the events at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, it's clear that: 1. Patriarch Nourhan who had given his word that he would not sign 99-years leases did just that recently when he granted a 99-year lease for the construction of a hotel in Armenian Church-owned Goveroun Bardez by developer Dany Rubinstein. 2. The Patriarch and his right-hand man Fr. Baret Yeretsian had no right or authority to sign the lease. 3. The Patriarch and Fr. Yeretsian co-signed the lease in secret...without informing the Sts. James Brotherhood's General Assembly which is the only body that can approve/diasprove such leases. 4. For his efforts, Patriarch Nourhan received a \$1 million gift from Mr. Rubinstein. This is a pittance when the true value of the transaction is considered. 5. Will the Patriarch withdraw his signature? Will Israeli courts agree that the Patriarch had no authority to sign the deal? 6. Will Patriarch Nourhan take his \$1 million and resign?



**Appo Jabarian** – 2021-09-10 11:15:36

This email was sent yesterday. Re: Request of a copy of the "Goveroun Bardez" land lease agreement Dear Sir/Madame of Media Relations Dept. of Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In the wake of news coverage in Keghart.org and subsequent articles by Professor Andrew Demirdjian and Appo Jabarian in USA Armenian Life and Hye Kiank Armenian Weekly, an eruption of a major public interest occurred among the members of the American Armenian community — and for that matter the entire Diaspora. Therefore, it has become a necessity to share urgently with our readers a copy of the "Goveroun Bardez" land lease agreement reportedly executed between the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the municipality of Jerusalem and/or an Australian businessman. Can you kindly email ASAP a copy of the "Goveroun Bardez" land lease agreement? Best regards, Appo Jabarian If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 818-468-8117 or at appojabarian@gmail.com. Best regards, Appo K. Jabarian Executive Publisher / Managing Editor USA Armenian Life Magazine (English-language edition) Hye Kiank Armenian Weekly (Armenian-language edition) New York Office: Fresh Meadows, NY 11365, USA --- C:818.468.8117 T: 917.979.8111 F: 818.241.7929

**Lilit** – 2021-09-10 05:09:15

Ամոթ ձեզ, սրբապիղծներ և անառակներ: Այսքան տարի շարունակ վաճառեցիք ու թալանեցիք մեզ հազարամյակներից ի վեր Աստծո կողմից շնորհ արված սրբությունները, 1000-ամյակների մեր շինությունները փողի դիմաց տալիս եք [...] ու ծպտված [...], իբր չգիտե՞ք: Հանում եք մեր հայերին իրենց պապենական տներից ու շահավետ գործարք կնքում այլոց հետ: Ձեզ դրա համա՞ր են վստահել այդ սրբությունները, [...] ծնունդներ : Բացի [...] ու կոռուպցիայից, ուրիշ ի՞նչ եք արել այսքան ժամանակ: Ամոթ-աբուռ ունեցեք և հեռացեք: Դու, որ պատրիարք ես կոչվում, [...] ու [...], Աստծուց չե՞ս վախենում, որ [...] ] չես դադարում չարիք գործել: Իսկ դու, որ պարետ ես կոչվում, [...] ու թալանով զբաղվելուց Աստծո դատաստանից չե՞ս վախենում: Թե ձեզ թվում է, որ ինչ անեք, պատարագ կմատուցեք ու կներվեք... ոչնչություններ: Չեք մարսելու: ՀԻՇԵՔ ՄԵԿԸՆԴՄԻՇՏ. ԹՈՒՅԼ ՉԵՆՔ ՏԱԼՈՒ, ԼՍՈՒՄ Ե՞Ք..ԹՈՒՅԼ ՉԵՆՔ ՏԱԼՈՒ: ԱՄԲՈՂՋ ԱՇԽԱՐՀՈՎ ՄԵԿ ԽԱՅՏԱՌԱԿ ԵՔ ԼԻՆԵԼՈՒ ՈՒ [...] ԷԼ ԱՐԴԵՆ ՉԻ ՓՐԿԻ ՁԵԶ: ԱՅՍ ԱՆԳԱՄ ԿՈՒԼ ՉԵՆՔ ՏԱԼՈՒ: ՀԵՌԱՑԵՔ, ԶԱՆԻ ՈՒՇ ՉԷ: ՉԻԻԻԻԻԻ ՍՏԱՑՎԵԼՈՒՈՒՈՒՈՒ, ԼՍՈՒ՞Մ ԵՔ: [...] ՁԵԶ!!! Մի մեծ խումբ հայաստանյան հայերից պատրաստ է ստորագրելու:

**Gevorg Mkrtchyan** – 2021-09-10 04:43:43

Remove or [...] those p...s. Millions of dollars are stolen, our children are defiled, [...] I demand to publish their reports. Where is the money they receive from all over the world and take bribes on the spot? Paret's ugliness is no longer a secret all over the world Why does he continue to rule? It is necessary to expel those vile creatures, that scarecrow and patriarch.

**Hayrapetyan** – 2021-09-10 03:37:16

This is just a disgrace. How can you be so shameless? Do not be afraid of man, fear God!! Stop for a moment and think... What do you do with the heritage of our centuries? SHAME ON YOU, T...S!!!

**Armenian Patriarchate** – 2021-09-07 07:39:37<https://armenian-patriarchate.com/2021/09/07/communique-september-7-2021/>

**Karine' Samaan** – 2021-09-05 00:16:26

Where is the Armenian community of the Old City? This is worse than the war with the Azeris. At least the former was a foreign enemy, here it's your own flesh and blood.

**Vera peterson Keuroghlanian** – 2021-09-02 20:43:13

It is a very sad day for all Armenians. This should have never happened. I hope and pray some of our leaders will take action and try to take our land back. Our holy grounds should not be on sale ever. I grew up at the Vank and have fond memories and I have tears reading the article. SAD DAY for us Armenians.

**Avak** – 2021-09-02 13:40:41

One of the great Armenian clergymen of Jerusalem in the 20th century was the late Bishop Guregh Kapigian. He said the following regarding the importance of Jerusalem's Armenian Quarter to the Armenian nation. "Իւրաքանչիւր քարին վրայ պիտի գուրուրանք, սեր եւ հոգատարութիւն պիտի տանք որպէսզի այս հաստատութիւնը գոյատեւէ յաւիտեանս յաւիտենից:" Եպիսկոպոս կիւրեղ Գաբրիւեան The current Patriarch should manage the Armenian Quarter with Bishop Kapigian's words in mind. Avak

**Ara Manoogian** – 2021-09-02 12:12:57

Back in 2012, when my uncle, Patriarch, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, was on his death bed, it became crystal clear that Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, was very corrupt, as was the election that would eventually bring him into the throne. At that time this parking lot deal was being discussed and blocked by the Synod. The deal was being discussed and negotiated with a representative of a church in the U.K. that their representative told me about in a casual conversation and while their representative was intoxicated. The representative presented as a done deal. When I sounded the alarm to clergy I knew in the Synod, that deal was addressed and killed, since it was a similar deal as this article addresses, that the Synod was not informed about. I should also add that at that time, Archbishop Nourhan Manougian and a small delegation took a trip to Turkey to discuss lands that had been willed over to the St. James Brotherhood of Jerusalem that were in the hundreds of pieces of land. Archbishop Nourhan Manougian had made a statement to the small delegation that they must sell all those lands and buy a hotel that will provide an income. I would strongly suggest that not only should this deal be killed and those who carried it out be kicked out of the brotherhood, but that someone investigate the lands that the brotherhood inherited that are found in Turkey.



**Dikran Bakerjian** – 2021-09-02 11:20:45

Shame on them, they have no ethics or religious beliefs. We, the community are very frustrated of their unlawful acts. We as local Armenians deny and protest of their unchristian ways to deal with our ancestors' lands, giving it away so cheap. We have serious problems with the two mentioned, they are chasing us to Israeli courts to expel us from our ancestral homes. The matter is becoming so serious that we shall take severe actions towards them.



**Vahakn** – 2021-09-02 08:58:48

Good question. If they are coerced, is the "enforcer:" the government? It's no secret that the government is aggressive in "Judaizing" the Old City of Jerusalem. by grabbing non-Jewish lands, changing the status of non-Jewish/Israeli lands, and facilitating the land grab of settlers. A few years ago it took a large slice of Armenian Church land (St. Phillipos Fountain) allegedly to make it part of Jerusalem's Green Belt. Of the three main Christian groups (the others are Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox) which are pressured by the government, the Armenian Church is the most pliable.



**Houry Ellezian** – 2021-09-01 21:34:33

The question is: are they doing it by free will or being coerced into this?



**Vahakn** – 2021-09-01 20:22:40

As someone who has been to Jerusalem a number of times, I know that such long-term (99 years) leases have a history of becoming permanently lost to the Armenian Patriarchate. An example of this is the police station. Once owned by the Patriarchate, it was lost forever as its 99-year lease became permanent. Now, few people in Jerusalem know that the police station was an Armenian Church property. There are other examples. In other words, Gouveroun Bardez will also be lost to perpetuity. The Patriarch and Fr. Yeretsian know this sad fact more than anybody else.



**Avak** – 2021-09-01 10:50:30

Joseph, What in the editorial sounded gossip to you? It is straightforward. Gives names, dates, and expresses its opposition to the Patriarch's wrongheaded and destructive decisions.



**Joseph** - 2021-09-01 00:53:16

Is this another gossip by the new publisher of the (formerly) respected Keghart?



**Diran** - 2021-09-01 00:00:36

Dear Chris, What does "Ahmot eh!" refer to? What the patriarchate has done or the article?  
Diran



**Chris** - 2021-08-31 20:39:39

Ahmot eh !