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**JOINT STATEMENT BY THE THREE ARMENIAN CLUBS OF JERUSALEM  
HOYETCHMEN, HOMENETMEN AND PARESIRADZ (JABU)**

20/05/2023

Jerusalem

In the past several weeks, many peaceful protests have been held by the Armenian Community of Jerusalem against the fraudulent leasing of Armenian real estate properties, in particular "Cows' Garden" (Goveroun Bardez). It had become public knowledge that the said real estate had been covertly given away in an illegal 99-year lease to the XANA GARDES organization. The impact of the illegal lease on the Armenian Quarter would be immeasurably detrimental to the presence and the national ethos of the Armenian presence in the Holy Land.

The Armenian Community utterly rejects the illegal 99-year lease of the historical "Cows' Garden" and its environs. The illegal lease poses a great threat to the ubiquitous mosaic of the Holy City.

Consequently, we urge the Patriarch to revoke the contract and rescind all other promised contractual deals regarding the Cows' Garden and the Armenian properties in general because the Armenian Quarter is the natural link to other Quarters in Jerusalem.

The Armenian Community is ready to submit any assistance to the Patriarch to revoke the contract.

The Armenian Community at large expresses and acknowledges with gratitude the efforts exerted by His Majesty King Abdullah the Second of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and His Excellency the President of Palestine, Dr. Mahmoud Abbas, who reaffirmed their commitments to the integrity of the Armenian Quarter, as well as maintaining the Armenian and Christian presence in Jerusalem.

We also call upon the relevant stakeholders and in particular, the Republic of Armenia and the Catholicos of all Armenians, Karekin II and to the Armenian communities worldwide to reach out to help and support the struggle of the Armenian Community in Jerusalem for transparency and justice.

We, Armenians, must unite and fight to protect our presence in the Holy Land which goes back to Fourth Century C.E. As a united community, we demand answers and transparency of all illegal contracts in order to revoke them, and to protect Armenian properties against all attempts of illegal sales. This will create an enhanced environment for Jerusalem Armenians to flourish, prosper and develop against all attempts of illegal seizure of Armenian properties.

Furthermore, it is imperative to note that the Holy Synod and General Assembly of the St. James Brotherhood never ratified this lease.

Many supportive statements have been issued by Jerusalem heads of Churches stressing the fact that the very presence of Christianity in the Holy City is being targeted and jeopardized by extremists. Finally, the contract isn't just a real estate matter: it is politics at the highest level. The agreement makes mockery of international law because it violates relevant covenants and decisions, which aim to preserve the status quo, governing Jerusalem. This international covenant protects the rights of the Armenian Church and Community.

The main questions to be asked of Patriarch Manougian are these: why was the land leased and to whom?

Finally, the illegal sale/lease contract should be revoked and presented to the Armenian public.

On behalf of the Armenian clubs in Jerusalem,

Homenetmen  
Hoyetchmen  
Paresiradz (JABU)