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Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
The Holy See of Jerusalem
& The Near East

A Statement of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Holy Land

Regarding the Coptic Monastery of the Sultan (Deir El-Sultan) 24.10.2018

Following - Recent Events:

Following our previous statement dated 21/10/2017 and in conjunction to the events previously described, the Israeli government informed the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate on 10/10/2018, verbally, of the decision of the government of Israel to start the restoration of Archangel Michael Chapel in the Monastery of The Sultan (Deir El-Sultan). Such decision coincides only with the interests of the Ethiopian monks, neglecting our written objections and our request and rights to restore our property by a specialized local engineering and construction team assigned by the Coptic Church according to the local specifications, or at least allowing us to pay all the cost of restoration and supervision of the repair. Therefore, we have objected in writing the verbal decision to forcefully repair the Church.

On Tuesday 23/10/2018, the Israeli government allowed a group of workers to enter the Monastery of the Sultan to repair the Church without responding to our written objection and without considering the approval of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the sole proprietor of the Monastery, and a peaceful objection was organized in front of the door of the Monastery of the Sultan.

Another peaceful objection was organized on Wednesday 24/10/2018 at 6 am in front of the door of the Monastery of the Sultan adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to protest the entrance of the repair equipments and workers to Archangel Michael Chapel. Israel police officers tried to convince us to allow the repair, but we objected because of the Israeli government intentionally insisted on neglecting our requests. Then, we have been informed that excessive force would be used, if we do not agree. Our answer was that we will protect our Monastery until the last breath

The police started to use excessive force and violence by pulling and sweeping the monks and the deacons resulting in the injury of several monks with some injuries and bruises. Also, one of the monks was arrested and with the intervention of the Egyptian Ambassador, he was released without escalating the matter further. Despite all that, the repair work started without our approval. We have submitted complaints to the Prime Minister and the ministry of Justice against the violent behavior of the Israeli police in dealing with the peaceful Coptic monks.

We are exploring the possibility to go to court to request our right to restore our Monastery and implement the 1971 court order to restore the possession of the Monastery of the Sultan to the Coptic Orthodox Church. The court also ordered the police chief and the Ethiopian bishop to pay a fine because of the attack of the Monastery. We are coordinating around the clock with His Holiness the Pope, the Egyptian foreign ministry and the Egyptian Embassy.

We appreciate the support of the Egyptian Embassy in every step. Still all the efforts are going on to stop this infringement to the Monastery and the Coptic Orthodox Church.

We need the support of all the Coptic Orthodox in Egypt and worldwide. We are still exploring all the possible international political intervention to support the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Holy Land and limit the attacks on its holy properties and members.

Anba Antonios



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