



Statement regarding the attack on Al Sultan Monastery

October 24, 2018

We, the Coptic Orthodox Bishops of North America, strongly denounce the abhorrent treatment of monks and deacons serving in the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem under the auspices of His Eminence Metropolitan Antonius of Jerusalem and the unlawful arrest of one of the monks, as they exercised their right for peaceful protest against the illegal seize of the Sultan Monastery in Jerusalem.

All the historic documents since the 19th century up to the 1971 Israeli Supreme Court ruling regarding the Sultan Monastery adamantly confirm that this monastery is the property of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. If and when this monastery needs repairs and restoration, the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is the only entity legally entitled to make this decision and implement what is needed for the monastery. This property was given to the Coptic Orthodox Church as a gift from Sultan Abd Al—Malik Ibn Marwan during his reign from AD 684—705 and has since be owned, legally and rightfully, by the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The Israeli authorities' neglect to comply with their high courts' decision, which gives all rights of ownership of the Sultan Monastery to the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, has further instigated strife and contention leading up to the incidences that occurred on Wednesday, October 24th, 2018. The unnecessary brutal use of force and arrest of one of the Coptic Orthodox monks in Jerusalem peacefully protesting on this day, and the disrespectful confrontation against His Eminence Metropolitan Antonius are unacceptable and evince the malicious assaults on the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, further exasperating conflict and dissonance between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church in this region.

Historically, the Coptic Orthodox Church has never been accused of initiating violence toward any other religion or denomination. For years, we have been patient in pursuing every legal and diplomatic means of resolving this issue between our Churches. The Sultan Monastery in



Jerusalem belongs to the Coptic Orthodox Church only, and the Israeli Supreme Court granted this ruling, as well. We will not surrender this monastery to anyone and we will not be intimidated by unlawful means or assaults.

Our plea for justice is first and foremost submitted before God. We demand full protection from the Israeli government and complete compliance with the Supreme Court ruling of 1971 to be implemented immediately. Coptic Orthodox congregations across the world will continue to support our plea and demand justice regarding this shameful display of brutality by Israeli authorities against the Copts in Jerusalem, which occurred this week. We will not cease to demand justice regarding this matter and we totally support His Eminence Metropolitan Antonios and the Coptic Orthodox Church in the Holy Land in all their effort to protect the rights of the Coptic Orthodox Church regarding Al Sultan Monastery

We ask God to intervene and resolve this matter peacefully and immediately, and we ask Him to protect His Eminence Metropolitan Antonios and all the clergy and Coptic Orthodox communities in Jerusalem.

HE Metropolitan Serapion

HG Bishop Youssef

HG Bishop David

HG Bishop Mina

HG Bishop Karas

HG Bishop Peter

HG Bishop Abraham

HG Bishop Kyrillos

HG Bishop Saraphim