

His Beatitude Theophilus III,
Patriarch of Jerusalem and all Palestine
Jerusalem Patriarchate

His Beatitude Archbishop Nourhan Manougian
Patriarch
Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Fr. Francesco Patton, ofm,
Custos of the Holy Land

March 13, 2018

Your Beatitudes, Your Excellencies, Your Graces,

We write today to express our fervent solidarity with you, your churches and the entire Christian community in the Holy Land as you face repeated challenges to the Status Quo that ensures a Christian presence in this most holy of places.

We affirm your protest against the recent efforts to confiscate church lands or tax church properties whose function is integral to the churches' mission. These efforts contravene the historic Status Quo that has prevailed in Jerusalem for centuries.

We note with grave concern that the ability of a number of the churches to continue their important activities already has been impaired or even halted by tax liens against several of their bank accounts. These acts stifle the immediate work of the church as well as create a long-term situation that threatens the very existence of the Christian community in the Holy Land. We join you in advocating strongly against these proposals. We will continue to press the Israeli government on your behalf.

We pledge to you our unwavering support for all peaceful and lawful measures you may undertake to ensure the preservation and flourishing of your communities both now and in the future.

Your sisters and brothers in Christ,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
Ecumenical Director and Legate,
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America
(Eastern)

His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston
President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop
Episcopal Church (United States)