

PROTEST AGAINST THE VIOLENT ACTIONS OF THE ARMENIANS

The Patriarchate of Jerusalem condemns the Armenian's unacceptable violent behaviour, demonstrated at the God-receiving Cave in Bethlehem in the Basilica of the Nativity.

On Saturday evening, January 5/18, 2020, the Armenians breached the centuries-long right of the Rum Orthodox to enter the Cave and place the Orthodox Icon of Theophany above the Star on the Holy Altar, when the Feast is on a Sunday.

It's to be noted that, one week before the feast, the Patriarchate had submitted an application with all the clarified rules and evidence regarding these Ecclesiastical traditions to the Palestinian Authority, co-signed by His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III and the Custos of the Holy Land Father Francesco Patton.

The efforts of the Palestinian Authority, led by the Chairman of the Supreme Presidential Committee for Christian Affairs Minister Ramzi Khouri, did not convince the Armenians at the beginning of the Orthodox Vespers that they had illegally invaded the Cave. The Armenians used verbal and physical violence against the Orthodox Fathers, who had entered the Cave according to the Status Quo right, and caused bodily harm to our clergy, especially Dragouman Archimandrite Mattheos.

With the intervention of the Palestinian Police, the Icon was finally placed on the Holy Altar above the Star according to the right of the Orthodox. However, the Icon did not remain there for the full duration of Vespers, while the Patriarchal Representative of Bethlehem, His Eminence Archbishop Theophylaktos attended the Service with humble determination.

The Patriarchate formally protests against the blatant actions of the Armenians and reserves the right to claim its right by

all legal remedies. The Patriarchate thanks the Palestinian Authorities for all their support. The Patriarchate is also grateful to the local youth congregation for its help and solidarity.

From Secretariat-General