

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/700
13 June 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Seventh session
Item 10 of the agenda

QUESTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME
FOR THE JERUSALEM AREA AND
PROTECTION OF THE HOLY PLACES

Letter from the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop for Jerusalem and the
Near East to the President of the Trusteeship Council

Note by the Secretariat: The following letter dated 20 May 1950 from Jacobus, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop for Jerusalem and the Near East was received by the President of the Trusteeship Council and is hereby circulated to the members of the Council.

"Apostolic Blessings be unto you.

"Jacobus, By the Grace of God, the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Near East at Jerusalem, writes this to Your Excellency and prays God that He may preserve your life and bestows upon you the health and strength that you may do His will and that He may enlighten you in order that the Holy Land may be saved from its present Chaos, especially so in respect of Jerusalem, the Holy City you were chosen to study its future.

"You are undoubtedly aware that the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church is fully represented in this part of the world and it has its community and properties in the Holy Land, besides its prevailing rights and privileges in Jerusalem and in the Holy Sepulchre Church.

"We have always been following with deep interest, your steps in the meetings of the Trusteeship Council in the course of discussing the future of Jerusalem, its laws and its constitution, and have always been praying God to direct your steps into the right path.

"Now, and some two months ago we heard that your respectable Council has invited representatives of the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics and the Armenian Orthodox to attend the meetings of the Trusteeship Council during its session in

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Geneva and to comment there on the contents of the proposed constitution for Jerusalem.

"We feel sure we stand on the same footing with any other community regarding the representation of the Christian faith in the Holy Land. Should your Council discuss, in its coming session, the prevailing rights and privileges of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we must draw your attention here to the fact that the Copts enjoy equal rights and privileges as any other Christian community. I therefore find that if it were necessary to invite representatives of other communities to attend the meetings of the Council, it is equally necessary that I or any other representative chosen by His Beatitude, the Pope of Alexandria, should also be invited to attend.

"We address this to you for fear that you may receive wrong information about our rights, and we request to attend meetings of the Council on the same footing as those other representatives of the above-mentioned communities whom we hear had proceeded from Geneva to Lake Success for the June meetings of the Council.

"For further explanation we beg to inform you that our rights inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Gethsemane are all subject to the status quo which was valid during the Turkish regime and the British mandate, and which we do not desire to change, for we have inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre our properties, prayers, oil lamps, feasts, customs, including day and night censings and the procedure included in the status quo during the official and unofficial feasts.

"We submit this for your perusal, and we are prepared if necessary to attend your Council in its meetings for the discussion of the Holy City, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy Places in general.

"In conclusion we pray God that He may direct you and enlighten you to do what is good for His Holy City.

(Signed) JACOBUS

Jacobus
The Coptic Orthodox Archbishop
for Jerusalem and the Near East,
Jerusalem."
