



## **Lemkin Institute Statement on the Attack on the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem**

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention strongly condemns the recent brutal attack on the Armenian Quarter in East Jerusalem by armed mobs associated with an Israeli-Australian businessman Danny Rubenstein. We reiterate the call from our previous [statement](#) to protect the cultural heritage of the Armenian Quarter and respect the will of its residents, who continue to resist the forcible development of their land.

The most recent incidence of violence occurred on December 28, 2023, when an armed mob of about thirty people associated with Israeli-Australian businessman Danny Rubenstein attacked the historical area called Goveroun Bartz (the “Cows’ Garden”), injuring several Armenians, including a priest and students of the Theological Seminary. According to the local [activists](#), two Armenian residents were arrested by Israeli police while none of the attackers were apprehended. This incident, together with [others](#), occurred after a controversial land development [deal](#) was canceled by the Armenian Patriarchate in November. The deal, originally signed by the Armenian Patriarchate in July 2021, would have granted Danny Rubenstein’s company, XANA, rights to build a luxury hotel on the property, destroying many historic buildings in the area. The deal was canceled after the Patriarchate faced pressure from the local Armenian community, the greater Armenian Diaspora, and Palestinian authorities. Since November, XANA has sought to claim the Cows’ Garden by use of force.

Prior to the attacks in the Armenian Quarter, there were other incidents in which Israeli extremists harassed Jerusalemite Armenians. For instance, on January 29, 2023, an Armenian [restaurant](#) in the Christian Quarter of East Jerusalem was attacked. Continuing harassment and attacks on Jerusalemite Armenians together with coercive and possibly illegal construction in the

Cows' Garden pose an existential threat to the oldest Armenian Diaspora community in the world. This threat is very alarming, especially after the tragic fate of the 4000 year-old Armenian community in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), where, in September, Azerbaijan forcibly displaced more than 100,000 Artsakh Armenians – the entire Artsakh population – from their ancestral home to Armenia.

In the context of the violent climate against Christians in Israel fueled by Prime Minister Netanyahu's far-right government and the ongoing genocide against Palestinians unfolding in Gaza and the West Bank, attacks on the Armenian Quarter can be also viewed as another attempt by Israeli extremists to create a homogenized Jewish ethnostate in Palestinian territories. It is crucial for international organizations and the UN to keep an eye on the tense situation in the Armenian Quarter and protect the 1600-year-old neighborhood and its inhabitants from violence and elimination.

The Lemkin Institute wishes to stress that such events contribute to an environment conducive to mass atrocities and genocide; recognizing and responding to these warning signs promptly is essential for preventing further escalation against Armenians. Moreover, we fully support the resistance of Jerusalemite Armenians and call on relevant authorities to ensure the safety and territorial integrity of the Armenian Quarter and the rest of East Jerusalem by all necessary means.