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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF JEWS FROM EGYPT

P.O BOX 230445 BROOKLYN, NY 11223

TEL 718-339-7007

<http://www.hsje.org>

info@hsje.org

JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (JCC) OF CAIRO
MS. MAGDA HAROUN PRESIDENT
13 SABIL EL KHAZINDAR STREET
MIDAN AL-GEISH, ABBASSIA,
CAIRO, EGYPT

April 28, 2013

Dear Ms. Haroun:

We at the Historical Society of Jews From Egypt were happy to hear of your election to the Presidency of the Cairo JCC. We look forward to working with you on matters of mutual concern. We were particularly encouraged when you showed everybody on Egyptian TV the very poor condition of the Bassatine cemetery, and hope that something will be done about it soon. We have not met you, and hope to do it someday soon, but we can tell you have the energy and the motivation to raise Egypt's awareness of its important historical Jewish component.

We understand your position, and we ask you to try to understand ours.

As you know, our goal is the same as yours: To salvage the Egyptian Jewish heritage so that future generations can be aware of it and benefit from it.

Our principle is this: Anything that can be used by living Jews should be used by living Jews throughout the world. Anything that cannot be used by living Jews should be kept in good condition and displayed as historical treasure.

For example, the comparison of our Judaica artifacts with the Pyramids and Sphinx is faulty. Ancient Egyptian artifacts cannot be used today for worship or for any practical matter. It is therefore logical that they should remain in Egypt and be displayed in museums. But our Torah scrolls, prayer books, libraries, artifacts, and communal archives CAN be used by Jewish communities elsewhere, and therefore should be. That is why they were created. That is their reason for being. They do not belong in museums. They belong in synagogues to be used daily by living Jews.

You are no doubt aware that, after the Holocaust, European communities gave Jewish congregations throughout the world whatever Torah scrolls and Jewish artifacts had survived the Nazi rampage, so they could continue to be used every day for study and worship services. What few communities were left in Europe had far more Torah scrolls than they needed for themselves. Jews have always helped one another keep the faith alive, even across large distances.

Furthermore, please note that what is left of the Jewish heritage in Egypt does not belong to you personally, or to the JCC, or to the Egyptian government. It belongs to the Jews From Egypt, wherever they may be, as they paid for it in cash and were forced to abandon it. You are the custodian of these assets, not their owner. We ask you to keep this important point in mind. We ask that you not sell, disperse, give away, or reassign any of them.

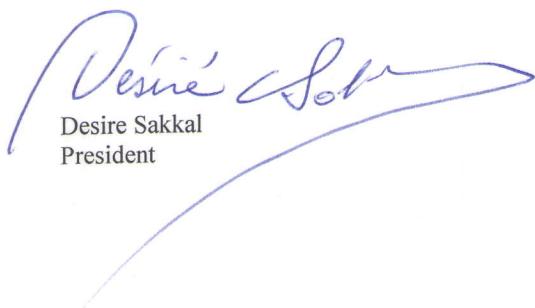
It would be right for you to act only after seeking the advice of your fellow Jews who were born in Egypt, and their descendants, rather than the advice of any other group, Jewish or not, that has no personal or historical connection with Egypt and its Jews. We hope you will do so.

We look forward to hearing more of your views on these matters soon. We in the United States can petition our government to act in ways that are beneficial to your goals and ours.

Wishing you a successful tenure in your difficult position, we remain

Sincerely yours,

Sam M. Mizrahi
Secretary


Desire Sakkal
President