

We want to respond to the issue of transfer of the historical Armenian temple, Tandoyants Saint Astvatsatsin Church (Aghmashenebeli Avenue 38, Tbilisi) to the Patriarchate.

As it turned out, in 2017 the state transferred the Armenian temple to the property of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Many historical sources and facts confirm that before the Soviet confiscation the building belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church. Today works are carrying out in the temple area, which are changing the appearance of the monument and erase the historical trace and contribution of our Armenian fellow citizens.

We would like to mention that the issue of the Tandoyants Church is not a separate case; it is an obvious example and part of the unresolved problem of returning (restitution) of the property which was confiscated from the religious associations during the Soviet era.

We, the members of the Council of Religions, for many years talking with heartache, that the state does not demonstrate the will to return religious buildings to their historical owners. Meanwhile, most of the monuments are collapsing, their appearance is distorted, the significant traces of numerous religion groups are erasing from the history of Georgia and the integrity of Georgian rich and diverse culture is violating.

We appeal to the Georgian authorities:

- Immediately stop the ongoing impact on the Tandoyants Church,
- Fairly study the history of the abovementioned church and ensure its return to the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church in Georgia,
- In the shortest possible time take realistic steps to return the historical property confiscated during the Soviet era to religious associations,
- To support the preservation and presentation of the Georgian rich religious, ethnic and cultural diversity,
- Be attentive to the cultural heritage of Georgia and its outstanding attributes, to the buildings of faith of the different religions.

Religious Associations of the Council of Religions under the auspices of the Public Defender of Georgia

