

*KF 1937 letter to Patriarch*

*[Translator's note: words in brackets are mine. Some sentences and words are unreadable and had to be deduced from context. She uses the word hurmeh for woman, which is very archaic for Christians. This is probably a draft letter, the original of which was sent to the Patriarch. Salim Tamari]*

San Frisco 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1937

His beatitude his lordship the Patriarch

After kissing your hand and requesting your good blessings, I come to you in search of help.

I am Katerina daughter of Abdallah Sa'adeh from Bethlehem. I married Sliman Farhat from Ramallah in Los Angeles, California in November 1921. I have been with him for 14 years and have begotten from him three children. One of the children, Jirgis Sliman Farhat, 15 years of age, is in Ramallah [with his father]. The [other] two children are with me in San Frisco, California.

My husband Sliman left to the country [Palestine] two years ago to bring our son Jirgis and come back here. After he left I received from him, or rather received a paper from my brother in Bethlehem. I told my brother and the convent [possibly El Deir] to write to your beatitude and ask them [unreadable] to send me and the children a tawlun [possibly some kind of permit] so that I can join them.

Until this hour I received nothing from them or from you. I am in astonishment and pain. I cannot believe this is happening to me. He is doing to me what he did to his [previous] woman. [Unreadable sentence]. He had a girl from her who is [now] six years old. When he married me he claimed that he was single. I had no idea that he was already married. It took me two years after our marriage to find out that he had a woman [hurmeh] and a girl, both now living in Los Masura [unreadable].

The government in this country [unreadable sentence]. I swear to you that when I married him I had no idea that he was already married. Now it's been two years since he left me with the children and not a penny for support.

I beseech you my lord to intervene in the name of justice and truth. Is it permissible in our religion, we in the Rum Orthodox community, for a man to treat his wife and children in this manner? Is it permissible for a man to marry a woman in every country he visits? This must be forbidden in our religion, and I want you to say a word of justice here.

Are we women like old clothes, whenever a man chooses he would take off his clothes and put on a new suit? Waiting for your reply,

Katerina Farhat