

Sabeel's Call for the Peace of Jerusalem

⁴¹ As {Jesus} came near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.'" (Luke 19: 41-42)

During this World Week for Peace in Palestine-Israel convened by the world Council of Churches as a joint action for a just peace, we, Palestinian Christians want to send a message to all our brothers and sisters in the world that focuses on Jerusalem:

Due to its significance for the whole land, the city of Jerusalem has come to encapsulate the hopes, desires, and dreams of millions of people that are concerned for its well-being and the well-being of all its inhabitants. Jerusalem has been a symbol, model, and paradigm par excellence of peace throughout its history. And today, what happens in and to Jerusalem is an omen for the whole country. It can be an omen for good or bad, for conflict and disaster or for peace and neighborliness.

In its present situation, Jerusalem cannot, in any way, stand for or represent the dreams that its citizens wish for it. Today's picture of Jerusalem continues to be one of occupation by Israel, discrimination against and oppression of its Palestinian inhabitants and the denial of their human and political rights. Today's Jerusalem cannot even come close to the hopes, desires, and dreams that its people long for. What the Israeli government is doing through its policies of Judaizing the city and displacing its Palestinian citizens and replacing them with Jewish settlers is a recipe for disaster.

Therefore, we reiterate our vision for the peace of Jerusalem:

1. We call on all the countries and governments in the world to make it abundantly clear that Jerusalem cannot be the possession or monopoly of the state of Israel; it is occupied territory and geographically located between the two states of Palestine and Israel; and so politically speaking, it must be shared equitably by both of them.
2. Religiously speaking, Jerusalem is equally significant to the three religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All attempts by the occupying Israeli forces to give advantage to the rights and privileges of Jews above those of Christians and Muslims must be considered null and void by the international community.
3. We call on all countries and governments in the world to pressure Israel to stop establishing and expanding the illegal settlements in the heart of Palestinian neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, to remove the wall that envelops the city and all the checkpoints that have isolated Jerusalem and made it inaccessible to its own people – Palestinian Christians and Muslims.
4. We call on all countries and governments to pressure Israel to respect and uphold the human rights of all the people of the land and to work for the end to the Israeli occupation and for the freedom and sovereignty of Palestine through peaceful and nonviolent means.
5. We call on all churches around the world to continue to pray and advocate for the peace of Jerusalem. In faithfulness to Jesus Christ's message of justice, peace, and reconciliation, we call on all Christians to use their biblical interpretation and theology for the purpose of peacemaking and not as a cover-up for injustice.

It is time for the Palestinian people to be free and to live in dignity and peace. It is time for peace based on justice to be achieved. It is time for the establishment of the Palestinian state in accordance with the demands of international law and UN resolutions. IT IS TIME FOR PALESTINE!

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