



May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Kairos Palestine Call to  
The Holy See (Vatican), The World Council of Churches and  
Church Leaders Worldwide for Solidarity and Action

*Thus says the LORD: Act with justice and righteousness and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed.*

**Jeremiah 22:3**

The Christian Palestinian Initiative, Kairos Palestine, urges the Christian community worldwide to act justly and speak the truth about Israel's oppressive policies and practices, especially regarding violent attacks on Palestinians in Jerusalem and Israel's deadly assault on the people of Gaza.

The latest cycle of violence began after Israeli security forces denied access to the Damascus Gate plaza, a popular gathering place for Muslims breaking their daily fast, and Israel's subsequent violation of the status quo when security forces and settlers attacked fasting worshipers on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest site for Muslims, allowing extremist Jewish groups to gather provocatively to celebrate the 1967 capture of East Jerusalem.

At the same time, Israel's courts again ruled in favor of radical settler groups, threatening some 500 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem with forced displacement from the homes they have lived in for decades. The bias of the Israeli courts and their discrimination against Palestinians in favor of Jewish settlers is part of a larger plan to ethnically cleanse Palestinians and non-Jews from Jerusalem. Kairos Palestine is also actively monitoring the status of church properties near Jaffa Gate and impending forced displacements in the neighborhoods of Sheik Jarrah and Silwan.

Kairos Palestine, the most extensive Palestinian Christian ecumenical non-violent movement, is based on Kairos Palestine document: A Moment of Truth, launched in 2009, affirming that the Palestinian Christians are part and parcel of the Palestinian nation, calling for peace to end all suffering in the Holy Land by laboring for justice, hope and love, embraced by the Christian community, signed by all historically recognized Palestinian Christian organizations, and endorsed by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

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We insist that the latest violence be seen in its broader context.

Israel's decades-long, brutal occupation of Palestinians has been shaped by a growing system of punitive racist policies, laws and practices. We don't ask you to take our word for this. Civil society groups such as Human Rights Watch and the highly respected Israeli human rights organization B'tselem have recently declared that Israel is an apartheid state.

As much as one might question the response from Gaza military factions – and though we do not condone any act of violence and we mourn the death of every life – we must interpret these acts in their context. Gaza has been under Israeli siege for more than 14 years. It is time to lift this siege and give the people of Gaza the opportunity to live as other human beings. Furthermore, there is no justification for the outrageously disproportionate Israeli response that has left many dead, including children and hundreds of injured. Yesterday's ground incursion into Gaza on the part of Israel's defense forces will lead to even more death and the total destruction of civilian buildings, streets and other infrastructure.

Kairos Palestine repeats, still again, our 2009 word to the international community: "...stop the principle of 'double standards' and insist on the international resolutions regarding the Palestinian problem with regard to all parties." As long as the international community does not have the political will to take concrete actions against Israel, it will continue to breach international human rights and humanitarian law with impunity.

We therefore call on the global Church and the international community to call things by their names, to speak truth to power, and to side with the oppressed. Shallow diplomacy serves only to empower the oppressors. Given such violent and severe escalations, empty words of condemnation are not enough. We do not need calls for calm and toothless church statements that "call for peace."

This is yet another *Kairos* moment calling people of faith to take prophetic actions.

Kairos Palestine affirms its position that Jerusalem is a sacred city to all the monotheistic religions, and that everyone must enjoy the freedom to worship. We also affirm our position regarding our Israeli neighbors: "Our future and their future are one. Either the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both. We call on Israel to give up its injustice towards us, not to twist the truth of reality of the occupation by pretending that it is a battle against terrorism. The roots of 'terrorism' are in the human injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation."

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Kairos Palestine urgently calls upon the Holy See, the World Council of Churches, the ecumenical movement and all churches to demand that every country meet its responsibility to put pressure on Israel to immediately stop the deadly air strikes and ground attacks against civilians in Gaza and to stop its ethnic cleansing policies that target Jerusalemites.

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