



Date: March 25th, 2025

**Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
President of The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA
P.O. Box 4469
Washington, DC 20017-0469**

Your Eminence/Your Excellency,

With heartfelt thanks to God for the recovery of His Holiness Pope Francis, we, Kairos Palestine; Palestinian Christian clergy and community leaders of all Churches in Jerusalem, address you with deep sorrow and urgency regarding the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) joint resource with the American Jewish Committee's "Translate Hate document". This decision comes at a time of immense suffering for our people, as tens of thousands are being killed, starved, and displaced under Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and the West Bank including East Jerusalem—actions condemned by leading international and Israeli human rights organizations.

It has also been adopted without any form of consultation with Palestinian Christians, rendering us invisible and nonexistent in a discourse that directly impacts our lives and communities. The document's failure to address hate speech propagated on the Israeli side renders it fundamentally biased, effectively turning it into a form of hate speech against Palestinians.

As followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are called to speak truth to power and stand for justice. Jesus Himself declared, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). This document misrepresents our struggle and seeks to silence voices advocating for truth and justice in the Holy Land. It negates also the immense injustices inflicted upon Palestinians, including the indigenous Christian community whose presence in the Holy Land is on the verge of extinction.

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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It is essential to affirm that our criticisms of Israel’s policies and the actions of its leaders are not directed at Jewish communities or Judaism itself. Israel and its policies must not be conflated with Jewish identity, and our call for accountability is not an expression of antisemitism. Rather, it is a moral and just demand for peace, security, and dignity—for Palestinians and for Jewish communities alike. True justice does not come at the expense of one people over another but ensures the safety and rights of all. In this context, adopting the Jerusalem Declaration or the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism is highly problematic, as the IHRA’s definition dangerously equates Zionism with Judaism - despite the fact that thousands of Jews around the world reject Zionism as a political ideology.

The document claims that accusations of settler colonialism and ethnic cleansing in Palestine are “categorically false,” disregarding overwhelming evidence from organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B’Tselem and many Israeli historians, even many early Zionist figures such as Ze'ev Jabotinsky. It equates Palestinian resistance with antisemitism, a dangerous conflation that distorts reality and undermines legitimate criticism of Israeli racist laws and policies. We categorically reject all forms of antisemitism, just as we reject any attempt to use this charge to justify oppression and to criminalize our legitimate struggle for our basic rights and our right for self-determination.

Furthermore, the document’s selective portrayal of history omits the staggering Palestinian casualties in Israel’s wars against our people in their quest for freedom. Most egregiously, it ignores the current devastation in Gaza, where entire families—our families—have perished, and where churches sheltering the innocent have not been spared Israeli bombardment. Even Pope Francis has condemned this cruelty, lamenting, “So much cruelty. Children machine-gunned, schools and hospitals bombed.”

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By partnering in this document, the USCCB has alienated the indigenous Christians of the Holy Land, causing deep pain to a community struggling for survival. Ignoring their unalienable rights to live in their ancestral homeland and offering the State of Israel a justification for their forced displacement by considering their human and national rights as blood libels, only deepens this harm. We urge you to reconsider your stance and retract this endorsement. We need the Church's voice to stand with justice and truth, not with narratives that conceal suffering and excuse oppression.

In faith and hope,

Kairos Palestine Board of Directors;

H.B. Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah; Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, President of Kairos Palestine.

H.G Archbishop Atallah Hanna of Sebastia from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Mitri Raheb; Founder & President of Dar al-Kalima University of Arts and Culture & former pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem.

Rev. Dr. Fadi Diab; priest of St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Ramallah and St. Peter's Church in Birzeit and the Supreme Judge at the Ecclesiastical Anglican Court in Jerusalem.

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Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac; pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem and Beit Sahour, Director of Bethlehem Institute of Peace and Justice and director of the Christ at the Checkpoint conference.

Fr. Bashar Fawadleh; priest of Al Taiba Latin Church, former chaplain, Christian Latin Patriarchate Youth in Palestine.

Mrs. Hind Khoury; former Palestinian Ambassador to France and former Minister for Jerusalem Affairs.

Adv. Manal Hazzan-Abu Sinni; Human Rights Lawyer.

Ms. Lucy Talgieh; member of Bethlehem Municipality Council.

Dr. Muna Mushahwar; former co-moderator of Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the WCC.

Mr. Yusef Daher; Coordinator of The Jerusalem Liaison Office of the World Council of Churches.

Mr. Nidal Abu Zuluf; former director of the YWCA/YMCA Joint Advocacy Initiative.

Mr. Omar Harami; the executive director of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.

Dr. Yousef Alkhouri; Theologian and Academic Dean of Biblical Studies at Bethlehem Bible College.

Mr. Philip Jahshan, Journalist from Gaza.

Mr. Rifat Kassis; Board member and the General Secretary of Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice Coalition.

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Cc:

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Archbishop of Baltimore
Vice President, USCCB

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Mr. Joseph Hazboun, Regional Director

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Bishop John Stowe

President of the National Council of Pax Christi USA

HE Cardinal Pietro Parolin

Secretary of State / Holy See
Vatican City

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HE Cardinal Timothy Michael Dolan
Archbishop of New York

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