



Jerusalem, Nov. 4th, 2025

**Statement On Speaking the Truth: In Support of Bishop Azar and the Word
“Genocide”**

On Reformation Day in Jerusalem, a day meant for repentance, renewal, and truth, those very virtues caused offense. During the service at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, dared to speak honestly about what Palestinians are living through.

He asked:

“But what does Reformation look like after two years of genocide? What does Reformation mean when we look at a world, a country, that is so broken? What does Reformation look like when children are separated from schools, worshippers from churches, families from each other by military checkpoints and barricades? When people are falsely imprisoned? When families are still searching for their loved ones under rubble?”

For uttering these words, Abraham Lehrer, vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, walked out of the service. German church and political representatives quickly echoed his indignation, condemning not the devastation in Gaza, but the courage to name it.

This small scene reveals a much deeper tragedy, the moral collapse of much of Western Christianity’s institutional response, and the apathy of some Western Christians to Palestinian suffering and reverting to the colonial habit of demonizing the victim.

The Word “Genocide”

We Palestinians did not invent this word. We did not write its definition. The world did, and the West, in particular, after the Holocaust, gave it moral and legal force through the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

[Kairos Palestine](#) is the most extensive Palestinian Christian ecumenical non-violent movement. It 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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Now, when we use that very definition to describe what is unfolding before our eyes, we are told it is unacceptable. When Western governments and their allies commit the crime, they rebuke those who name it. This is moral corruption.

This is not only hypocrisy; it is racism, a denial of our equal humanity, as though human rights and moral outrage belong only to others, never to Palestinians.

And yet, the world itself has recognized what Bishop Azar named:

- Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, concluded that Israel’s actions meet the *threshold of genocide*.
- Craig Mokhiber, director at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, resigned in protest, writing that “a textbook case of genocide is unfolding before our eyes.”
- The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry (June 2024) found *reasonable grounds to believe that Israel has committed acts of genocide*.
- The International Court of Justice, in its January 2024 ruling, affirmed South Africa’s genocide case against Israel as *plausible*.
- Israeli Jewish scholars — Omer Bartov, Raz Segal, Neve Gordon, Ilan Pappé, and Jeff Halper — have all used the same word.
- Human-rights organizations — B’Tselem, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Al-Haq — have documented patterns consistent with genocide under international law.
- As the BBC reported in October 2024, *more than 800 scholars of genocide and international law* — including leading academics from universities around the world — issued a joint statement warning that Israel’s assault on Gaza “bears the hallmarks of genocide” and called on states to fulfill their duty to prevent it.
- And in September 2025, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) — the world’s leading body of genocide researchers — formally declared that Israel’s actions in Gaza meet the legal definition of genocide under the 1948 Convention (*The Guardian*, Sept 1, 2025).

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When Bishop Azar used the word *genocide*, he was not exaggerating. He was being faithful, faithful to reality, faithful to justice, faithful to conscience.

German Hypocrisy and the Crisis of Moral Credibility

We recognize that many Christians, theologians, and citizens across Western nations, including Germany, have stood with us in solidarity, often at great cost. Yet their witness remains marginalized within dominant political and ecclesial structures that continue to enable injustice. That the loudest protests came from German representatives is astonishing. For the German government and some church leaders to rebuke a Palestinian bishop for naming genocide, while their own state supplies weapons to Israel, is the height of hypocrisy.

Germany, of all nations, should know that silence before extermination is complicity. Yet today, while tens of thousands of Palestinians are annihilated, Germany prosecutes protesters, bans art, censors journalists, and smears voices for justice. This is not repentance for past crimes; it is repetition through complicity.

When a nation that once committed genocide funds another and suppresses those who cry out, it forfeits moral authority. When a church that celebrates Reformation protests a sermon rather than injustice, it betrays its own confession.

We Palestinians do not need moral lectures from those complicit in our suffering.

“Never Again” Has Become “Yet Again”

As for Abraham Lehrer, his departure is disappointing, not because he disagreed, but because it symbolizes the tragic distortion of memory. *Never Again* was meant to be a universal moral vow, never again for any people, anywhere. But today it has become *Yet Again*.

The Jewish community, which rose from the ashes of genocide, the Holocaust, should be the first to cry out when genocide happens again. And indeed, many are. We are profoundly grateful for courageous Jewish voices, Jewish Voice for Peace, Independent Jewish Voices UK, Rabbis for Ceasefire, Breaking the Silence, and prophetic individuals like Ilan Pappé, Avi Shlaim, Miko Peled, Norman Finkelstein, and Gideon Levy, who have spoken out with moral clarity. They embody the conscience of prophetic biblical faith.

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The Failure of Christian–Jewish Dialogue

This episode also unmasks a long-standing problem: the corruption of Christian–Jewish dialogue. What began as a sacred process of reconciliation has been weaponized into a tool of silence. Churches, especially in Germany, have been blackmailed by the leaders of Christian-Jewish dialogue into complicity, told that to name Israeli apartheid or genocide is antisemitic, that to side with the oppressed is to burn bridges. Such “dialogue” no longer serves truth or reconciliation. It serves power. It sanctifies injustice.

True dialogue cannot exist where one party must renounce its humanity to participate. It must be grounded in honesty, not fear. When dialogue becomes a shield for oppression, it ceases to be dialogue; it becomes idolatry.

Prophetic Courage and the Call to Truth

In this context, Bishop Azar’s words were not political provocation but prophetic faithfulness. His sermon declared:

“When international communities ignore Palestinian suffering, that is a call for Reformation. When Palestinian Christians are pushed out of their indigenous homelands, putting our churches at risk of becoming museums, that is a call for Reformation. When the dominant global narrative dehumanizes Palestinians and ignores Palestinian Christian existence, that is a call for Reformation.”

The bishop spoke the truth, and it caused the same kind of discomfort that truth always causes. This is not a scandal. It is a moment of truth, a reminder that the church’s task is to speak truth to power, and to choose justice over comfort. Bishop Azar’s words were not an attack. They were a mirror. And perhaps that is what many cannot bear: to see themselves reflected as complicit in the suffering of the children of Gaza.

We at Kairos Palestine express our support and gratitude for the prophetic courage of bishop Azar and stand in solidarity with him.

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