



# Easter Alert





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**Jerusalem is the foundation of our vision and our entire life. She is the city to which God gave a particular importance in the history of humanity. She is the city towards which all people are in movement – and where they will meet in friendship and love in the presence of the One Unique God, according to the vision of the prophet Isaiah: «In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it (...) He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more» (Is. 2: 2-5). Today, the city is inhabited by two peoples of three religions; and it is on this prophetic vision and on the international resolutions concerning the totality of Jerusalem that any political solution must be based. This is the first issue that should be negotiated because the recognition of Jerusalem's sanctity and its message will be a source of inspiration towards finding a solution to the entire problem, which is largely a problem of mutual trust and ability to set in place a new land in this land of God.**

Kairos Document, Chapter 9.5



# Fasting is a spiritual process engaging pain and resurrection

***By Archbishop Atallah Hanna***

We have entered the period of the forty day holy fast. This is a period of preparation to receive the great Holy Week and the feast of the glorious resurrection. At this time we celebrate the victory of Christ over death and his resurrection when a heavenly light shone from the holy tomb to disperse the darkness of this world.

Lent, Holy Week, and the glorious resurrection are unique and distinctive in the city of Jerusalem and in Palestine. Most of the important events linked to the salvation that we celebrate took place in this holy area of the world.

The period of the holy fast has started. It should be accompanied by penitence, prayer, and supplication. During the period of Lent, we should concentrate on our prayers and supplications, read the holy book daily, read other spiritual books that nourish believers with the spiritual food needed for the fasting period, and prepare for the feast of all feasts and the season of all seasons.






In our Christian understanding, fasting is not merely ceasing to eat and drink; it should also include ceasing to do anything that may anger God such as sin, vice, and evildoing of any form. Of course, this should be the case not just during the fasting period but in our daily lives. We believe that fasting is a period of spiritual struggle as we head towards resurrection.

The first Christians in the early Christian age used to fast from eating to save some of their money for the poor and needy. We wish that this practice would exist in our churches. In the period of fasting in particular, we believe it is a duty to think of those who are poor, needy and suffering and to whom we should express our solidarity, sympathy, and practical support.

I suggest to the sons and daughters of our churches to pay attention to the human aspects during the fasting period so that fasting does not merely consist of giving up food and drink, but includes helping the poor, described in the divine book as little brothers of Jesus.

We call on our sons and daughters to visit homes during the fasting period, perform prayers in them, and provide any possible assistance. We call on our sons and daughters to visit hospitals, the homes of senior citizens, and charitable societies during the fasting period. Let our fasting be accompanied by





acts of mercy, good deeds, and solidarity with the needy so that we comfort them in their suffering, woes, and pain.

We must remember during the period of fasting, as well as during the rest of the year, that Palestine, the Holy Land, has been denied peace and justice as a result of the oppression, violations, and infringements of human dignity practiced against our people.

We are Palestinians and in the period of fasting we should think of our people who thirst for justice and peace in this Holy Land. We must make our voice heard so that our people can enjoy the freedom they deserve. This people is carrying the cross of pains and woes, walking its Golgotha path with the hope of a resurrection full of freedom and human dignity.

*In the period of fasting, we must state that we are not a denomination in our country, we are no minority in our Holy Land. We play a key part in the components of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the pains of our people are our pains, the sorrows of our people are ours, and the aspiration of our people for freedom is also ours.*

We pray to the Almighty in this holy season to protect our country and people. We pray that the justice that is so absent may be realized in this Holy Land. Our people deserve to live in freedom and peace just like all other peoples of the world.

In this holy season we look at our Arab neighbors where pain, sorrow, tears, and blood surround us. We stand by those who are broken-hearted, suffering, and bereaved.

We express solidarity with Syria in its anguish, and with Iraq, Yemen and Libya. We express solidarity with all victims of wars, violence, and terrorism in our region and elsewhere in the world.

We pray to God to accept our fasting; we pray that our supplications and prayers will be like incense ascending to





the heavens with our true repentance. We pray for Palestine, the Holy Land, and for this Arab region which is dominated by turbulence, violence, and instability.

I wish a blessed fasting to all those who are fasting, and pray to the Lord to enable all of us in our country and elsewhere to receive the Holy Week and glorious resurrection with hearts full of love, faith, and hope.

We are sons and daughters of hope and will not surrender to frustration, hopelessness, and despair. We look at the empty tomb from which the light of resurrection shone and pray to God that this divine light will lighten all our hearts so that we become real servants of our church, our people, our Holy Land, and humanity as a whole.

### **Archbishop Atallah Hanna**

Hanna was born on 6/11/1965 in the town of Al Rama in the Upper Galilee. After finishing high school in Al Rama in 1983 he joined the Orthodox Seminary in Jerusalem. In 1984 he left to Thessaloniki in Greece where he studied Greek and then joined the College of Theology at the Thessaloniki University from which he graduated with distinction in 1990. He was ordained a monk in 1990 at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem. He contributed to the development of the unified curriculum for Christian religion teaching at Palestinian schools. Archbishop Hanna participated in many local, regional and international conferences and advocated for the Palestinian question in all forums.

He is a member of many committees and organizations in addition to his membership in several Christian and ecumenical institutions. He played a role in the Christian-Muslim dialogue. He was elected unanimously as the Archbishop of Sebastia in 2005.







*Kairos Palestine would like to thank all the contributors for their help in compiling this Easter Alert, especially Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP), Passia, Al-Haq, His Grace H.B Patriarch Michel Sabbah, Archbishop Atallah Hanna, Rev. Dr. Hana Katanacho Rev. Dr Mitri Raheb, , Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac*

*A heartfelt thank you to Loay Sababa for the inspiring photos included.*





# Maundy Thursday

"Jerusalem is the heart of our reality. It is, at the same time, symbol of peace and sign of conflict.

While the separation wall divides Palestinian neighborhoods, Jerusalem continues to be emptied of its Palestinian citizens, Christians and Muslims. Their identity cards are confiscated, which means the loss of their right to reside in Jerusalem. Their homes are demolished or expropriated. Jerusalem, city of reconciliation, has become a city of discriminations and exclusion, a source of struggle rather than peace."

Kairos document, Chapter 11.8



# Trump's Declaration on Jerusalem and Its Effects

*by Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi,  
Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem*

When US President Trump, in blatant ignorance of the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and of the international consensus on Jerusalem, triggered a storm in the Middle East on 6 December 2017 by announcing the US's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and his intention to move the US embassy to the city from Tel Aviv, he sent three main messages:

- To the Palestinians: Jerusalem is off the negotiation table (which was seconded by the 2 January 2018 Knesset bill that requires a special two-thirds majority vote - as opposed to the previous absolute majority - to relinquish any part of Jerusalem to the Palestinians under a future peace accord, as well as by Trump's statement at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 25 January that Jerusalem is «off the table»).
- To the world: International law and consensus are irrelevant when it comes to Israel and the US-Israeli agenda.
- To the Government of Israel: Go ahead to aggressively implement your plans for "exclusive" control over the city.

Israel, in fact, has always been working on the ground to reflect the recognition now spelled out by Trump and to weaken the possibility of East Jerusalem becoming the capital for the future Palestinian state. Right after the 1967 occupation, Israel unilaterally imposed its law upon East Jerusalem and claimed it as part of Israel (a move that the international community has never recognized). It illegally confiscated large areas of Palestinian lands to build Jewish-only settlements and hamper any Palestinian development. It moved government institutions (including the parliament and the Supreme Court) to the occupied eastern part, and it set up a comprehensive system of repressive measures aimed at making the Palestinians' daily




lives unbearable in order to drive them out of the city.

However, while these Israeli policies and practices have been in place for decades, Palestinians, especially in Jerusalem, fear that they will be increasingly imposed. They also see that Trump's declaration carries deep symbolic meaning by essentially imposing a "solution" for one of the core issues in the conflict. From there, it is not a big step to continue violating the historic-religious status quo, particularly with regard to Jewish intentions on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.<sup>1</sup>

Today, the illegally annexed area of East Jerusalem is home to at least 324,000 Palestinians and some 204,000 Israeli settlers,<sup>2</sup> an estimated 3,000 of whom live in the midst of Palestinian neighborhoods (especially in Silwan, Ras Al-Amud, At-Tur, Sheikh Jarrah, and the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City).<sup>3</sup> While Palestinian housing and development needs are totally disregarded,<sup>4</sup> East Jerusalem is dotted with settlement projects and the settler population grows steadily. Recent estimates suggest that settlers make up some 38.5%






of East Jerusalem's population and 38.7% of the city's Jewish population.<sup>5</sup>

What makes things even more difficult are the Israeli checkpoints cutting Jerusalem off from its West Bank neighbors and the requirement that non-Jerusalemite Palestinians apply for hard-to-obtain permits to enter the city. Despite the International Court of Justice's July 2004 advisory opinion, which reiterated that East Jerusalem remains occupied territory and that the route of the separation wall<sup>6</sup> violates international law, the wall Israel has been constructing since 2002 measures 139 km around Jerusalem, of which only 3% lies on the Green Line.<sup>7</sup> In several Palestinian areas (Kufr Aqab, Ras Khamis, Shu'fat camp, Ras Shahadeh, and Dahiet As-Salam), the wall severs entire neighborhoods or a significant portion of them from the city. This has the effect of not only separating Palestinians from the city but also from some 140,000 fellow Palestinian Jerusalemites,<sup>8</sup> leaving them without municipal services. Other areas (Al-Jib, Bir Nabala, Al-Judeira, Beit Hanina Al-Balad and Walaja) are completely encircled by the wall, accessible only via underground passages or checkpoints. At the entrances to





several more centrally located neighborhoods (e.g., Isawiyya, Jabal Mukabber), checkpoints have been erected in recent years. Further, Israel has institutionalized a regime of systematic discrimination and oppression against the city's Palestinian population affecting every aspect of their daily lives. For example, Palestinian neighborhoods receive only 12-13% of the municipal budget although Palestinians constitute at least 37% of the population,<sup>9</sup> Building rights are denied and house demolitions are on the rise. Since 2004, 746 Palestinian housing units have been destroyed in the city, 61 of them alone in 2017.<sup>10</sup> Palestinians are constantly threatened with having their residency rights revoked and of being arrested. At least 14,595 ID cards have been taken from Palestinian residents since 1967.<sup>11</sup> Some 2,436 Jerusalemites were imprisoned in 2017 alone, one third of them children; 550 Palestinians from East Jerusalem were held in Israeli prisons.<sup>12</sup>

In order to ensure that these discriminations and human rights violations are not further escalated and that Trump's declaration is not taken as a carte blanche for Netanyahu's right-wing government, it is high time that the international community live up to its legal and moral obligations under international law and refrain from any actions which may, even implicitly, be seen to recognize Israel's unlawful annexation of East Jerusalem and its exercise of sovereignty over the entire city.

### **Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi**

The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) was founded in March 1987 in Jerusalem as an independent think tank not affiliated with any government, political party or organization. PASSIA seeks to present the Palestinian Question in its national, Arab and international contexts through academic research, dialogue, training, and publication. From the beginning, the Question of Jerusalem has been a primary focus of PASSIA's activities. PASSIA endeavors that research undertaken under its auspices be specialized, scientific and objective and that its symposia and workshops, whether international or intra-Palestinian, be open, self-critical and conducted in a spirit of harmony and cooperation.



## Footnotes

1. The recent announcement by the Jerusalem municipality that it will start collecting arnona (municipal property taxes) from multi-purpose properties owned by the UN and by churches is also seen by many observers as a first step in this direction.
2. Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2017, 2017.
3. OCHA, The Humanitarian Bulletin, August 2017.
4. In 2016, only 15% of building permit requests by East Jerusalem Palestinians were approved (UNSCO, Briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East, 24 March 2017) and for over 10 years not a single outline plan has been advanced by Israeli authorities in Palestinian neighborhoods.
5. Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2017.
6. Referred to by Israel as "Jerusalem envelope" or "security barrier".
7. OCHA.
8. ACRI, East Jerusalem: Fact and Figures 2017, May 2017. In recent months, there has been much discussion in Israel to sever these neighborhoods out of the Jerusalem municipality in order to get rid of tens of thousands of Palestinians and thus change the demographic balance in Israel's favor.
9. ACRI, East Jerusalem 2015: Facts and Figures, May 2015.
10. [https://www.btselem.org/planning\\_and\\_building/east\\_jerusalem\\_statistics](https://www.btselem.org/planning_and_building/east_jerusalem_statistics); also see: Hoffman, Bygil, "Comptroller Criticizes Discrimination in Jerusalem," Jerusalem Post, 22 November 2016.
11. Interior Ministry Data provided to Hamoked ([http://www.hamoked.org/files/2017/1162151\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hamoked.org/files/2017/1162151_eng.pdf)).
12. <http://addameer.org/news/palestinian-prisoners-organizations-israeli-occupation-forces-detained-around-7000-palestinian>.



# Theological reflection on Trump's speech


*By Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb*

The Christmas story starts with an imperial decree signed by Caesar Augustus. As I was watching President Trump's address, I could not help but think of the so-called Balfour Declaration signed 100 years ago when the British empire promised Palestine to the European Jews as their national homeland. Trump's address was indeed another such imperial decree recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Again and again we, the Palestinian people, are sacrificed at the altar of imperial politics. In that sense nothing is new for us Palestinians. New is seeing a US administration not honouring their own commitments and agreements signed by the different administrations (both Republican and Democrat) in addition to abandoning international law and isolating itself from the larger international community. This is not only a disappointment to over one billion Muslim people for whom Jerusalem is Holy, but also a blow to an even larger Christian community that has kept a vision for an inclusive Jerusalem shared by two peoples and three religions.








The situation is very volatile. The whole West Bank and Gaza are in rage. The Palestinian people are in a state of mourning, mourning justice that was lost in the alleys of power. Yet we do not believe in the power of Caesar but in the power of Christ, born in Bethlehem under occupation and crucified in Jerusalem by Roman authorities. Most of the Caesars brought only bloodshed, destruction, and animosity to Jerusalem because they were not able to realize “what makes for peace.”

No decree will deter us from working for a just peace in Jerusalem. We will continue to raise the next generation of creative leaders for Jerusalem and to grow hope all over Palestine. This is Christ’s legacy in this country and we are determined to keep it alive. As we walk the Via Delarosa, we continue to await the light of right anchored in the resurrection.

### **Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb**

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is the founder and President of Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem. He served as a Senior Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem from June 1987 till May 2017. And was the president of the Synod of the ELCJHL from 2011 till 2017. The most widely published Palestinian theologian to date, author of 18 books. His books and numerous articles have been translated into eleven languages. The 55 year-old multilingual contextual theologian received many prizes for his ‘distinguished service to the church and the society’; the prestigious Wittenberg Award from the Luther Center in DC (2003). The well-known German Peace Award of Aachen in 2007. And the German Media Prize in 2012. And the latest was the prestigious Tolerance Ring Award in Cologne-Germany, November, 2017. The work of Dr. Raheb has received wide media attention from major international media outlets and networks including CNN, ABC, CBS, 60 Minutes, BBC, ARD, ZDF, DW, BR, Premiere, Raiuno, Stern, The Economist, Newsweek, and Vanity Fair. Dr. Raheb holds a Doctorate in Theology from the Philipps University at Marburg, Germany. For more information, please visit [www.mitriRaheb.org](http://www.mitriRaheb.org)





*“When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him... Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” Luke 22:14-23*

**Reflect:** What will it mean for me to eat of the bread and drink of the cup today, both in remembrance of Jesus who lived the kingdom’s ethic at the cost of his life and in solidarity with my Palestinian sisters and brothers?

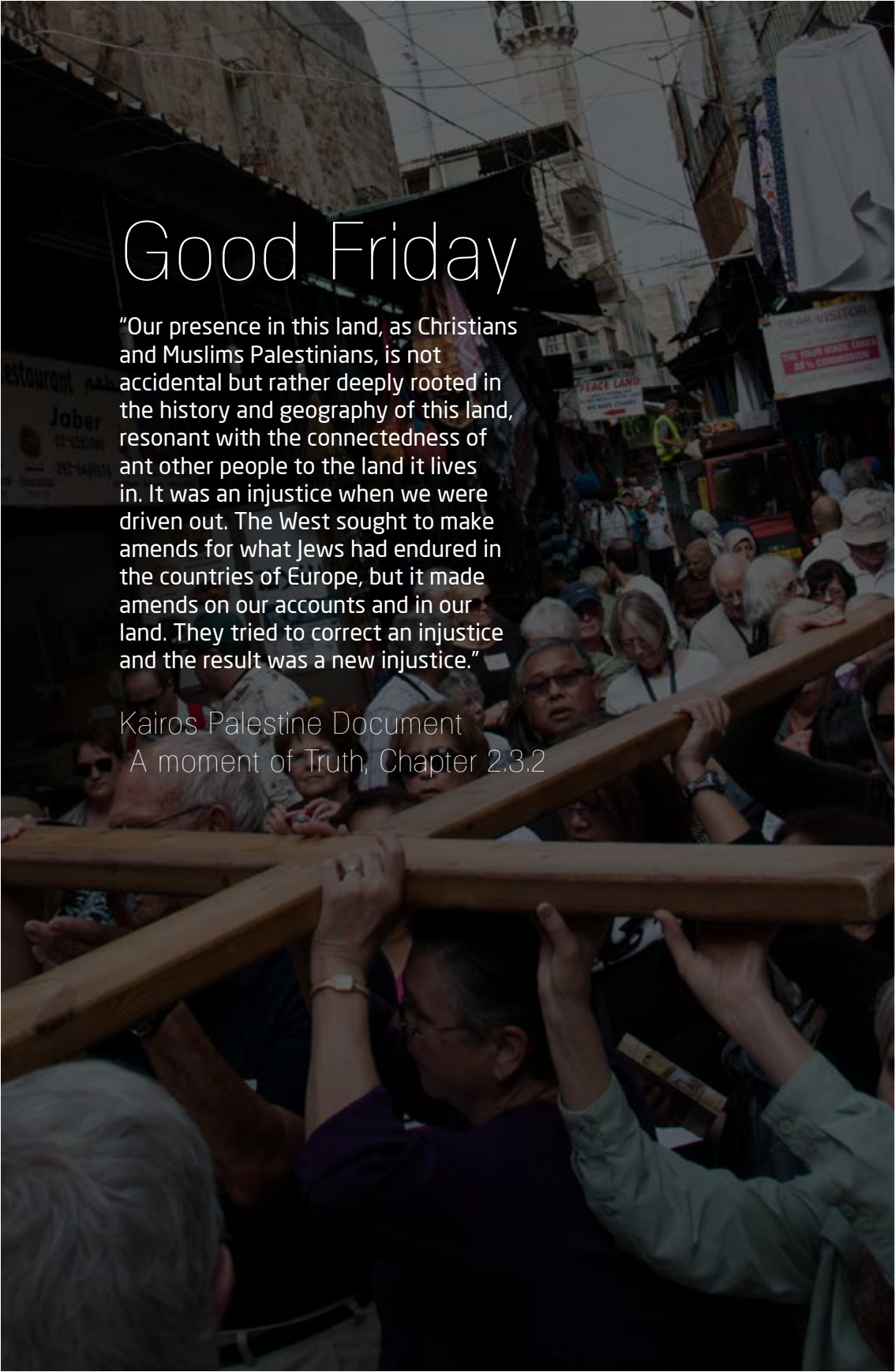
**Pray:** Bread of Life, taken, blessed, broken and given, strengthen me for the long-haul work of re-mem-bering your body, the Church, and to share in the cost of your kingdom coming. Amen.

**Act:** Consider not receiving the Eucharist today as an act of solidarity with West Bank and Gazan Palestinians - Muslim and Christian - who cannot attend their places of worship in Jerusalem.

# Good Friday

"Our presence in this land, as Christians and Muslims Palestinians, is not accidental but rather deeply rooted in the history and geography of this land, resonant with the connectedness of ant other people to the land it lives in. It was an injustice when we were driven out. The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our accounts and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice."

Kairos Palestine Document  
A moment of Truth, Chapter 2.3.2






# Changing Jerusalem through Residency Revocations

*By Al-Haq*

Jerusalem is often described as a holy city, a sacred space for three faiths. Phrases such as “coexistence” and “shared access to sites” are endlessly repeated as ideals, but in a vacuum divorced from the reality on the ground. Without acknowledging or working to alleviate the current situation, these expressions will continue to be recited as the city is emptied of its Palestinian Muslim and Christian residents.

While this may sound extreme, the facts - and Israeli officials - speak for themselves. Israel has repeatedly affirmed Jerusalem as its undivided capital, in contravention to international law and world opinion.<sup>1</sup> Israel also has a stated demographic objective of a 70/30 ratio of Israeli Jews to Palestinians.<sup>2</sup> In order to consolidate its control over the city and achieve its “preferred” population, Israel has implemented a variety of policies and practices, ranging from home demolitions to land confiscation. While these policies form part of a coercive environment leading to the transfer of Palestinians, Israel has applied more direct measures, including the revocation of Palestinians’ residency.






Following its occupation in 1967, Israel created the status of “permanent residents” for Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Palestinians were thus immediately treated as foreign visitors, rather than as individuals with an inherent right to live in their own city. With this baseline, Israel began implementing administrative measures to revoke the status of Palestinian East Jerusalem ID holders. As a first step, any Palestinian with a Jerusalem ID who lived abroad continuously for seven years or acquired the citizenship of another country would have their residency revoked.

In 1995, Israel further increased pressure on Palestinians in East Jerusalem by imposing its “center of life” policy. Under this policy, Palestinians have to prove that Jerusalem is their “center of life” by providing documents such as electricity bills, rental agreements and school registration. If individuals cannot provide such documents (even if they have not gained another citizenship), Palestinians are vulnerable to having their residency revoked. This effectively makes them “illegally” present in the city of their birth and/or residence, bars them from travel, and likely leads to their transfer to another area of the West Bank.<sup>3</sup>

The “center of life” policy comes alongside other Israeli






measures that serve to: exacerbate unemployment and poverty among Palestinians; create a housing shortage in East Jerusalem due to a discriminatory planning process; and isolate East Jerusalem from other Palestinians due to the Annexation Wall, checkpoints and other obstacles. Israel's Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, instituted in 2003 as a temporary order but renewed annually since, also places undue pressure on Palestinian East Jerusalemites who marry spouses from the other areas of the West Bank, Gaza, or from so-called "enemy states"<sup>4</sup> by freezing family unification permits.

In total, Israel simultaneously requires Palestinians to prove their residency in order to maintain their ID, but employs measures to ensure that staying in Jerusalem is as challenging as possible on all levels; economic, social, political, and cultural. Since 1967, more than 14,500 Palestinian East Jerusalemites have had their residency revoked. It has been estimated that if the dependent children of individuals who lost their ID were included, the number of individuals who had their residency revoked would reach 86,000.<sup>5</sup>

The international community's silence in the face of Israel's targeting of Palestinians in East Jerusalem established a climate of impunity. As such, Israel continued to develop its policy of residency revocation. In 2006, the Israeli Minister of Interior first used the criteria of "breach of allegiance" to revoke the residency of three Palestinian parliamentarians and the former Palestinian Minister of Jerusalem, citing the 1952 Entry into Israel Law. The Palestinian parliamentarians and Minister appealed the decision. However, as the case was pending the Minister of Interior moved forward with more revocations based on "breach of allegiance," effectively a measure of collective punishment. Four Palestinian youths had their residency revoked in January 2016 for "breach of allegiance."<sup>6</sup>

In September 2017, the Israeli High Court ruled that the "Minister of Interior did not have the authority to revoke residency status on the grounds of breach of allegiance," but essentially gave the Israeli Knesset six months to enact another arrangement in the case of the Palestinian politicians.<sup>7</sup> A bill that seeks to amend the 1952 Entry into Israel Law is currently




in its first reading in the Knesset. Under international law, as the occupied population Palestinians do not owe a duty of allegiance to the Occupying Power, Israel.

In addition to “breach of allegiance,” in October 2015 Israel adopted further collective punishment measures targeting East Jerusalem, which included the revocation of residency rights of so-called “terrorists.”<sup>8</sup> Importantly, Israel did not define the term “terrorist.” Israeli officials have used this term in a sweeping manner, including labeling youth who throw stones “terrorists,” in order to employ strong-handed measures against Palestinians.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, family members of Palestinians accused of an attack have had their residency and family unification permits for Jerusalem revoked.<sup>10</sup>

The looming threat of residency revocation, whether administrative or punitive, leaves Palestinians vulnerable to having the most basic rights swept from under them: the right to their home, their family, their employment, their ancestral heritage and city. As Palestinians continue to be treated as foreigners in their own country, and as the reality of what occurs in Jerusalem is ignored by the international community, an unlawful transformation of the city is taking place. The international community, including state and non-state actors, must move away from rhetoric and empty statements on Jerusalem, and take urgent action to ensure that the inherent dignity and rights of Palestinians are upheld.

**Al-Haq** is an independent Palestinian non-governmental human rights organization based in Ramallah, West Bank. Established in 1979 to protect and promote human rights and the rule of law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), the organization has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.





## Footnotes

1. US President Donald Trump's declaration on Jerusalem in December 2017 stood in contrast to decades old US policy, as well as to the position of nearly the entire international community.
2. Trapped by Planning, Israeli Policy, Planning, and Development in the Palestinian Neighborhoods of East Jerusalem, BIMKOM, p.20. Available at <http://bimkom.org/eng/wp-content/uploads/TrappedbyPlanning.pdf>
3. The Jerusalem Trap, Al-Haq, available at <http://www.alhaq.org/publications/publications-index/item/the-jerusalem-trap>
4. These states are Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran.
5. Third Generation Law: Altering Jerusalem's Palestinian Demographic, Palestinian Vision, available at <http://palvision.ps/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/3g.pdf>
6. Hamoked Update 6 November 2017, available at <http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates1932>
7. Id.
8. Israel Security Cabinet Measures, 13 October 2015, available at <http://mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/2015/pages/security-cabinet-approves-anti-terror-measures-13-oct-2015.aspx>
9. Israeli Minister of Justice has stated "A stone thrower is a terrorist, and only an appropriate punishment can be a deterrent, punitive, and just." Palestinians could be jailed for up to 10 years, even if 'harmful intent' is not proven. See Knesset increases stone-throwers' sentence, 21 July 2015, Times of Israel, available at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-increases-stone-throwers-sentences/>
10. Field Report: Collective Punishment in Jabal Al Mukabir, Al-Haq, 25 January 2017, available at <http://www.alhaq.org/documentation/weekly-focuses/1097-field-report-collective-punishment-in-jabal-al-mukabir>





## When Christ weeps Luke 19: 41-48

**By Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac**

*41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it*

*42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes."*

*43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.*

*44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."*

*45 When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling.*

*46 "It is written," he said to them, that "My house will be a house of prayer', but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"*

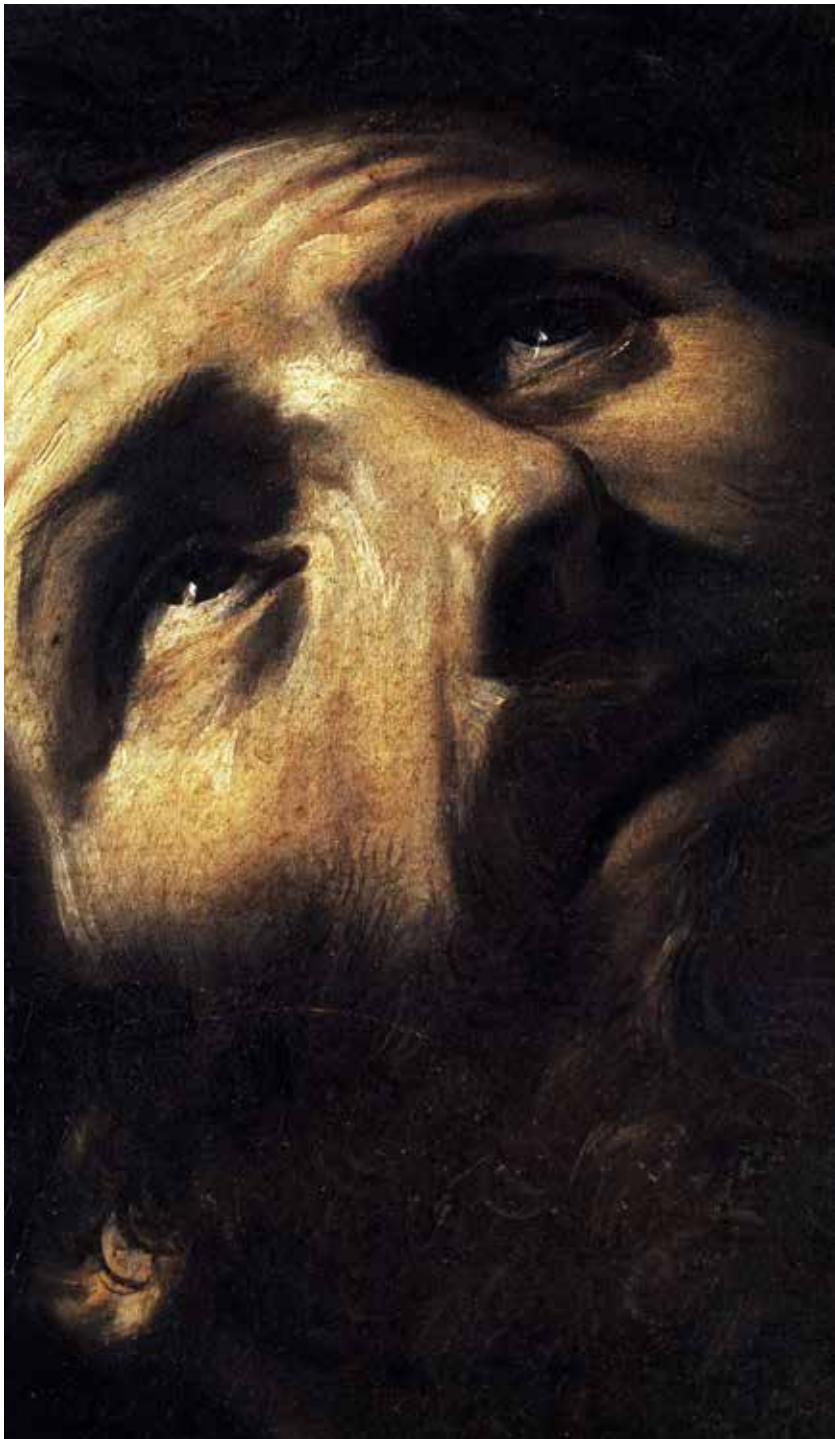
*47 Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.*


*48 Yet they could not find any way to do it because all the people hung on his words.*

We read in the Gospel how Christ wept over Jerusalem. The Nazarene Jesus, the man of the East, the leader, Christ, who has followers young and old, wept. The maker of miracles, the reviver of the dead, the one to whom all Jerusalem cried out "Hosanna, save us awaited king", wept.

The fact that this happened immediately after the triumphal entrance of Christ to Jerusalem adds to the bewilderment. Was Christ not happy with the reception he received from Jerusalem? Was he not happy with the crowds coming out to cheer him, even calling him the king who comes in the name of the Lord? Or maybe this is the reason why Christ wept! It was the crowd's attitude towards him because they did not know what they were asking for? As he said: "If you, even you, had only known







on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes”.

### **The question is: Why did Christ weep?**

Christ wept because Jerusalem did not understand that God is just and holy; “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing” (Habakkuk 1:13). God cannot tolerate or remain silent to evil and injustice. Christ had understood, maybe from the announcement of God his father, that the hour of Jerusalem had come and that it would pay for its sins. Maybe Christ wept because he knew that many innocents would die in the coming war and many would be displaced...Christ wept because Jerusalem, with its elderly and young, would pay the price.

Brothers and sisters, I know that we do not like to hear about this aspect of God. The book teaches us that God gives respite from time to time, but at the end there is judgment. Man harvests whatever he or she sows. Indeed, what nations cultivate is what they will harvest. Our land is the best witness to that for many oppressive empires came to our land and left. The meek are those who inherited the earth. Injustice cannot continue. God is just and most holy. For the oppressor this is unpleasant news to be avoided or not taken seriously. For the oppressed it is pleasant news and we have hope in the God of justice.

Jerusalem did not know what would bring peace to it. Christ visited it as a redeemer, but Jerusalem took him as a national and political liberator, deeming him to be a provider of bread and meat, not understanding that man does not live from bread alone. Jerusalem did not understand that Christ came to liberate it and grant it real liberty. It wanted Christ as a king who rules with the sword and avenges with the sword. Jerusalem sought force rather than meekness, failing to understand that the meek and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and justice will inherit the earth.

Jerusalem sought the logic of force and not the logic of the cross. Therefore when Jerusalem understood the real mission




of Christ, and the objective of his entrance to Jerusalem, they shouted: "Crucify him ...Crucify him".

Christ wept because Jerusalem traded with religion and exploited it for its own interests. As we read, when Christ entered Jerusalem, he said: "My house will be a house of prayer"; but you have made it 'a den of robbers."

It is said that hundreds of thousands used to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year during the feast. Jerusalem took this as an opportunity to make profit and exploited the pilgrims. If pilgrims wanted to sacrifice a sheep, merchants would sell them a sheep (instead of the pilgrims bringing the sheep with them from another country ). A tax had to be paid. Money with pictures on it was not permitted for use in the Temple and had to be exchanged. Thus, the Temple became a place for trade and not for prayer.

Jerusalem barricaded itself with religion. The people may have believed that "we are the people of God and Jerusalem is the city of God, and God is always with us", but this statement is very far from the reality. Indeed, Christ found religion in Jerusalem but he did not find faith. This religious fervor led political leaders to crucify the lord of glory.





How remarkable that the state of our earth today is not much different than that of two thousand years ago! Our earth is full of politics and religion, but what we are lacking is faith. This is the state of Jerusalem in our reading today!


If Christ returned to Jerusalem today, he might be welcomed by the city's Christians, Moslems and Jews, who would acclaim: Save us! Their objective is the rationale of force, racism, and revenge, and Christ will weep and weep over our condition! If Christ were to come to Jerusalem today, he would find a lot of religion but would he find faith? In Jerusalem today Christ is weeping at the racism and hatred in its streets. If Christ were to come to Jerusalem today, he would weep at the military rule in the city, and at the oppression inflicted upon its native people. We cannot enter Jerusalem, even for prayer. Many of the city's inhabitants have been displaced: problems with identity cards, problems with taxes; we all know the miserable conditions affecting Jerusalem. The city still does not know what would bring it peace. Only the chief of peace is for the peace of Jerusalem.

Brothers and sisters, when Christ weeps, we should stop and weep with him, and feel pity for the circumstances on our earth by praying as a first priority.

*Let us remember that Christ's tears were not the last word. His last word in Jerusalem was resurrection. The cross was not the last station: the empty tomb was certainly the last word. We weep with Christ for the state of our earth: we are crucified with him here so that we live with him in the resurrection. We do not lose hope: our God is one of hope. Will this God of justice and mercy find faith???*

To weep with Christ does not mean to feel pity for oneself, or hopelessness and surrender. Our mission is here, our land is here, and our message is here. Let us pray, work and preserve






our hope in the Lord of resurrection. Even if our week of pains is protracted, the dawn of resurrection will certainly come.

**Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac:** Palestinian Christian pastor, theologian, writer, speaker, blogger, and more importantly, a husband and a father. Munther wears many hats. He now pastors Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, and is at the same time the Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible. He is also the director of the highly acclaimed and influential Christ at the Checkpoint conferences, and is a board member of Kairos Palestine. Munther is passionate about issues related to Palestinians and Palestinian Christians. He speaks locally and internationally on issues related to the theology of the land, Palestinian Christians, and Palestinian theology. He is the author of “From Land to Lands, from Eden to the Renewed Earth: A Christ-Centered Biblical Theology of the Promised Land”. Munther is a musician. He plays the guitar and the flute. He is also an avid sports fan, specially football (aka soccer!) and basketball (NBA). Munther originally studied civil engineering in Birzeit. Realizing that numbers and construction sites are not his thing, he obtained a Master in Biblical Studies from Westminster Theological Seminary and then a PhD from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. Munther is married to Rudaina - an architect, and together they have two boys: Karam (4) and Zaid (2).





*Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:32-34*

**Reflect:** With whom do I need today to seek reconciliation through forgiveness and grace?

**Pray:** God of Forgiveness and Grace, who poured out your life for all, rid me of any hate I have toward the occupiers whose policies and practices I abhor and resist. Create in me a place where love, mutual trust, peace and reconciliation are possible. Amen.

**Act:** Enter into a place or relationship of despair and bring a word, a gesture of hope.



# Holy Saturday



**We also declare that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights, bestowed by God. It distorts the image of God in the Israeli who has become an occupier just as it distorts this image in the Palestinian living under occupation. We declare that any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty, subordinating God to temporary human interests, and distorting the divine image in the human beings living under both political and theological injustice.**

Kairos Document Chapter 2.5





## From Nakba to Israeli military law, no justice for Palestinian children


***By Khaled Quzmar, General Director of Defense for Children International - Palestine***

Palestinian children today understand the Nakba in new ways than the generation that first experienced it. Not only as a sudden and horrible event, but also as an ongoing crisis of rights.

Seventy years after Palestinian families were expelled from their homes during the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, violations against Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) are pervasive and ongoing.

Defense for Children International - Palestine (DCIP) began documenting rights violations against Palestinian children over 25 years ago. Our evidence has shown time and time again that the youngest





Palestinian generation is being born into a more bureaucratic military occupation than that of their parents and grandparents. For Palestinian children, modes of legality appear laughable. When they are detained, injured, come under restrictions on movement, or are evicted from their homes, they are told it is legal and necessary according to Israeli military law that governs the OPT.

When Israel carries out flagrant violations of international law, children see the international community condemn the illegality of Israel's actions, but do nothing to stop it from happening again.

The case of Fawzi J. shows us what being born into an ongoing crisis of rights can look like.

Fawzi is a 16-year-old Palestinian from the southern West Bank city of Hebron. The teen garnered international attention when a photographer captured over a dozen Israeli soldiers detaining him on December 7, 2017.

It was a little after noon when he was passing through the city center where clashes were taking place. As he tried to flee the area, Fawzi ran into Israeli soldiers who knocked him to the ground, blindfolded, and dragged him from the scene. For the next seven hours or so, Israeli forces ill-treated Fawzi, verbally and physically assaulting him, pouring cold water on him, and forcing him to sit on the wet, dirty ground.

Later, our lawyer would have to fight to secure Fawzi proper medical care for the shoulder fracture he sustained during his arrest.

He was charged with throwing stones, allegations he denies. Fawzi was released on \$2,900 bail and \$2900 third-party bond, but his case remains pending before Ofer military court. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that arrest and detention must only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. It also prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading


treatment or punishment.

Despite these protections, the Israeli military court system that Palestinian children are subject to systematically debases their rights. Since 2007, the U.S. State Department's annual country reports on human rights practices have included data and information on the ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention, and denial of fair trial rights in Israeli military courts.

Between 2012 and 2016, DCIP collected affidavits from nearly 600 Palestinian children who underwent Israeli military detention. Close to half of these children, 44.9 percent, were detained from their homes at night and three out of four said they experienced physical violence during their arrest. During the course of their detention, 40 percent went on to face threats or coercion and 91 children were held in solitary confinement for more than two days.

An estimated 500 to 700 Palestinian children will be prosecuted in Israeli military courts this year, as they have been in years past.





As the generation of Fawzi's grandparents faced forcible expulsion during the events surrounding the establishment of the state of Israel, the children of Fawzi's generation face the constant degradation of their rights under Israeli military law. He is among approximately 2.9 million Palestinians living in the West Bank, of which around 43 percent are children, who are subject to this law. Military law has applied to Palestinians in the West Bank since 1967, when Israel occupied the territory. Jewish settlers, however, who reside within the bounds of the West Bank in violation of international law, are subject to the Israeli civilian legal framework.


Accordingly, Israel operates two separate legal systems in the same territory.

While Fawzi was tried and processed in a military court, Jewish settlers, including children, living in nearby settlements in his hometown of Hebron are subject to civilian courts.

Not only does Israeli military law prevent Palestinian children from their right to due process, but also their right to movement, health, water, play, and too often, life.

As I write this, Israeli forces have already killed four Palestinian children by mid-February of this year..





Sixteen-year-old Musaab Tamimi was the first child to be killed in 2018. An Israeli soldier shot him in the neck with live ammunition as he was walking during clashes in the central West Bank.

In the vast majority of cases where Palestinian children are injured or killed in the OPT, DCIP has found that the Israeli authorities consistently fail to adequately investigate complaints filed against Israeli soldiers or settlers.

These conditions have resulted in a culture of impunity, which is deeply detrimental to the principle of every human's inherent dignity and equality.

The Kairos document released in 2009 stated: "We believe that liberation from occupation is in the interest of all peoples in the region because the problem is not just a political one, but one in which human beings are destroyed.»

Since the Nakba in 1948, international law has protected three, going on four, generations of Palestinian children on paper. But in reality, legal conclusions, advisory opinions, and resolutions by the United

Nations have yet to stop violations against Palestinian children. DCIP works first and foremost from the belief that the human rights of Palestinian children must be protected. Palestinian children, like all children, deserve a legal system ready to take on the worthy work of strengthening and solidifying, rather than stifling, their basic rights.

**Khaled Quzmar** is the general director of Defense for Children International - Palestine. Quzmar joined DCIP in 1995 as a lawyer representing Palestinian children in Israeli military courts, and rose through the ranks to become administrative and legal affairs director. He specializes in issues of juvenile justice and grave violations against children during armed conflict. He earned an LL.M in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland Galway.





## Holy Saturday

Every day I call on you, O LORD;

I spread out my hands to you.

Do you work wonders for the dead?

Do the shades rise up to praise you?

Is your steadfast love declared in the grave

or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

Are your wonders known in the darkness,

or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?

But I, O LORD, cry out to you;

in the morning my prayer comes before you.

O LORD, why do you cast me off?

Why do you hide your face from me?

From Psalm 88

**Reflect:** Where do I experience God's distance in my life, in the world? Who and what are my resources to which I can turn when I despair?

**Pray:** God, in the moments of your seeming absence, help me trust that you are at work in the dark of night to bring resurrection in the morning - in this life and the next. Amen.

**Act:** Sit for a time in quiet sorrow and solidarity with the people of the Middle East as, together with them, we await God's gift of new life.



# Easter Sunday

**"In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God's goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here "a new land" and "a new human being", capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters."**

Kairos Palestine Document - A Moment of Truth,  
Chapter 10





# Palestinian Orthopathos

*Rev. Dr. Hanna Katanacho*


Scholars of Christian faith always refer to the term Orthodoxy. In using this term, I mean correct belief and doctrines but not a specific church family. Palestinian orthodoxy has always opposed the teachings of Zionist Christianity; the theological-political polemics are ongoing<sup>1</sup> and indeed, should continue. Yet many have lost hope in changing the creed of the Zionist Christians, whose argument revolves around the centrality of Israel and ignores the most important foundations of the orthodox faith. They ignore the centrality of Christ who died and was resurrected for the salvation of the Palestinian and the Jew, and to extend the kingdom of God over all the earth.

Other scholars have focused on orthopraxis i.e., correct practice on the grounds that a theology that lacks mercy and fails to care for the oppressed is a source of death rather than life. The theology of Zionist Christianity is the gospel of bad news, particularly for Palestinians. It is incomprehensible that the UN ceiling of ethics is higher than that of those who say they are followers of Christ. It is incomprehensible that humanitarian activities by unbelievers in God demonstrate more compassion than the Christian teachings.

In any case, Palestinian orthodox theology has not achieved its objective of changing the mentality of Zionist Christians. We have also failed to change the conduct and stance of many Christians, especially in the USA, who insist on the Israelization of our country, the Judaization of our holy sites, and the Americanization of followers of Christ among us by promoting a theology that lacks compassion for the Palestinian people. So, where should we go??? We should not abandon adherence to correct beliefs and practice. Despite the painful reality, I find my solace in Palestinian Christian orthopathos (right affection).<sup>2</sup> Orthopathos in Palestinian Christianity insists on communicating the pains of the oppressed and the suffering necessary to uphold truth and extend the kingdom of Christ. Our suffering cannot be sound unless we unite with Christ and assert the ethos of loving sacrifice manifested in the birth of Christ, his







life, death, resurrection, and ascension.<sup>3</sup> This form of love yields an unconquerable hope <sup>4</sup> that can defeat individual, societal, political and environmental evil.


Lord Christ says: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.

If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." (Math 5: 38-42).

Lord Christ presents us with four difficult situations that tempt us to depart from the ethos of love and replace it with vengeance.<sup>5</sup> First: if someone slaps us on the right cheek. If the offender uses his right hand, then the slap on the right cheek would be with the back of the hand. This is a humiliating physical attack that disrespects and diminishes our humanity, and provokes the desire for revenge. Second: if the offender starts the dispute and takes our clothing. In other words,






someone attacks us to steal our property so he steals an item of clothing, initiates a dispute, and causes us financial loss, plus loss of apparel and dignity. Stealing property, whether something large like land or small like clothing, provokes anger in us which may turn into a desire for revenge and to punish the offender. Third: Christ tells us about the Roman soldiers who occupied Palestine and subjugated its people to oppression and pillage. The Romans were strong and had a strong army. Christ talks about the Roman soldier who imposes his wishes on others by force and exploits others for his own interests without any consideration for their time or work. This soldier wants to tire others so that he can rest. This soldier, therefore, infringes on freedom of choice and imposes his power by force for his own interests. Depriving us of freedom of choice or exploiting us by force and intimidation creates the desire to seek revenge. Fourth: Christ talks about financial blackmail and taking from us what we gained through our labor. The Gospel of St. Luke says that if an offender steals our money (Luke 6:30) this may prompt the desire for revenge. Therefore, Christ spoke about physical assault, theft of property, attacks on freedom of choice and opportunism in stealing money. At the same time, Christ asserted his rejection of revenge or resisting evil with evil by adhering to hope and believing that love is stronger than evil.

Christ presents the culture of orthopathos as love that resists and defeats evil. We resist evil with orthopathos, which means that we equip ourselves with determination and suffer in order to transform the other from a perspective of love rather than from revenge.<sup>6</sup> This is what Christ did in choosing the cross despite the high cost when he was determined to transform the enemies of God and to reconcile with them. Making peace is more expensive than the cost of waging war. Peace entails suffering to change our hearts and those of others. As followers of Christ, we desire to change the oppressor from the bottom of our hearts because we are committed to justice and are ready to suffer to achieve it. This is a sign of hope. The blessing of God and his Holy Spirit lead us to affirm justice and to suffer for that. So, between the first slap and the probable second slap, we replace anger, revenge, bitterness, and jealousy with a determination to change the other and adhere to justice and righteousness. Thus, our mentality changes from that of victim





to missionary because we are sent by God to suffer in order to disseminate justice, peace, love and determination that resists evil and changes the evildoers, even if that entails ascending to the cross. This is what Lord Christ did and this is what the Kairos document announced by its adoption of a culture of love that overcomes our tendency towards hatred and revenge, and supports justice in the logic of suffering affection. In orthopathos we address the humanity of man by offering the left cheek. We underline the principles of mercy when we reveal the offender's extremism. We walk the second mile that Roman law does not require to find an opportunity for dialogue instead of building intellectual walls. We give what we have to expose the selfishness of the blackmailers in the hope of bringing them back to the correct path and exposing the prejudice of injustice. In this way, we call them to leave the circle of selfishness and enter the circle of love.

Our obvious suffering to change Israeli oppression on the lands occupied in 1967, and the racist discrimination against Palestinians who have Israeli nationality, and our suffering in confronting religious extremism among Jews, Christians, and Muslims, is an opportunity to expose injustice and disseminate love. Our determination to love the enemy is an expression of a Kairos moment through which we unite with the crucified Christ and experience the peak of despondency, while at the same time, we enjoy the summit of hope because Christ has risen. Were it not for his resurrection, we would not have clung to orthopathos affection. Palestinian orthopathos has clung to peace that does not depend on silencing the voice of righteousness but on exposing political and religious violence, and insisting on loving God and the enemy. This is proof of the presence of God in our churches and the approach of a new era that does not seek to dehumanize the enemy but to humanize them by insisting on our love for Christ. This divine love cannot be extinguished by the chill of hatred, nor can political and religious violence keep it on the cross, and it cannot be silenced by the failures of politicians. Those who love should hope and work painfully for a new day to rise, a new Palestine and the birth of a new society in which Palestinians and Jews live in justice and peace. This is not fantasy but a call to believe that Christ has risen, and with his resurrection, we can defeat all

forms of evil and can head towards a new world.  
Happy Easter

### **Rev. Dr. Hanna Katanacho's**

Rev. Dr. Yohanna Katanacho is currently Full Professor of Biblical Studies and academic dean at Nazareth Evangelical College. He is a Palestinian Evangelical citizen of Israel who studied at Bethlehem University (B.Sc.), Wheaton College (M.A.) and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M. Div.; Ph.D.). He has authored many books in English and Arabic including "The Land of Christ: A Palestinian Cry - 2013", "Praying through the Psalms - 2018." Katanacho is an Old Testament editor for Arabic Contemporary Commentary and Asia Bible Commentary. He is also one of the authors of the Palestinian Kairos Document.

#### Footnotes

1. For more, see: Yohanna Katanacho, *The Land of Christ: A Palestinian Cry* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013).
2. The term orthopathos was used by Samuel Solivan who connected it to Palestinian thought: *The Spirit, Pathos, and Liberation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 35 - 39.
3. A number of Palestinian theologians stress the importance of the cross as a lens for interpretation and as a space for theological brainstorming that reflects the Palestinian identity. See for example theologian Mitri Raheb's contribution and my interaction with it in my book in Arabic, "The Gospel by John: A Different Look" (Nazareth: Nazareth Evangelical College, 2017), 141-152. Mitri Raheb and Suzanne Henderson, *The Cross in Context: Suffering and Redemption in Palestine* (Mary Knoll: Orbis, 2017).  
For more on the relationship between hope and love, see: St. Augustine of Hippo, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Charity* (Hyde Park: New York Press, 1999).
4. John Stott, *Sermon on the Mount*.
5. I presented this concept of love and hope amidst destruction in my analysis of the Palestinian Nakba (disaster) spirituality. See: Yohanna Katanacho, "A Theology of Tears: Cry with Us." *IFES Word & World* 3 (2017); available from <https://en.ifesjournal.org/a-theology-of-tears-cry-with-us-e6700d8fcd>; Yohanna Katanacho "From Depression to Hope." *Cornerstone* 46 (2007): 16-17.





## Easter Sunday

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb... As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting to the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just at he told you." Mark 16:1-7

**Reflect:** Where is your Galilee? In what ways do you anticipate meeting Jesus there?

**Pray:** Release me, O God, from lingering doubts and fear to enter joyfully into the hallelujahs of resurrection joy, "He is risen! He is risen indeed!" Amen.

**Act:** Begin planning now to "come and see" the land of Jesus' life, death and resurrection for yourself - or to help another to "come and see." Expect to see Jesus in the people you meet there.



## Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed.

*By Patriarch Michel Sabbah*

«This is the day which God has made, let us rejoice and be glad» (Ps 118:24). It is Easter, the day of glory and new life for all humankind. The Lord Jesus Christ has defeated death and come to life again. Through his death and Resurrection, he re-created humankind: «So for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old order is gone and a new being is there to see» (2 Cor. 5:17).

But in the land of the Resurrection everything is still mired in the old. Death is still here, the spirit of war is still here, filling the hearts and the minds of all. The Palestinian people are still under occupation and oppression, asking for their freedom and to be recognized as human beings, as free people just like all peoples of the earth.

But no one hears.

Brothers and Sisters, wherever you are, we address to you this Easter alert on the occasion of the Resurrection of the Lord, asking you to act for the sake of the land of the Resurrection, so that it becomes a land of life, freedom, peace and justice for all





its inhabitants.

This alert tells you about death realities which are our daily bread: discrimination, confiscation of IDs, exclusion from Jerusalem, a world of political prisoners, of fighting, hate and the death of old and young.


Jerusalem today is a city of war. From afar, President Trump could not understand the deep nature of Jerusalem, a city of God to be shared not dominated by one over the other. He did not understand and therefore made his declaration which provoked a great tempest. The international community refused it. But the tempest still rages.

In Jerusalem today, there is discrimination against Palestinians. A discrimination between the creatures of the God who loves all his creatures, Israelis and Palestinians alike. The Israelis, present masters of the land, have to rediscover the holiness of God and his love, and rediscover that, over all political disputes, Jerusalem remains a city of God and the city of his dwelling among all humans, hence a city to be shared by all in its holiness and government, while remaining a center of pilgrimage for the world.

This alert is an appeal addressed to all people of good will, everywhere in the world, to walk with us towards the light of freedom and life defeating death and hatred, instilling universal love which will allow peace to fill all minds, hearts and the land itself. We need peace-makers from all over the world who will inspire the death-makers in our land and transform them from death and oppression to life and justice.

We need the Spirit of God who renews the face of the earth (Ps 104:30) and changes the hearts of the people in it. We need the Spirit of God, the Spirit of justice, of love to make us share in the triumph of Jesus over death in order that we too may begin a new life.

Easter tells us that Jerusalem needs a new power to elevate it and all its inhabitants towards God in the highest, as says the apostle. «Since you have been raised up to be with Christ, you



must look for the things that are above, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on things above, not on the things that are on the earth», (Col 3:1-2).

Israelis and Palestinians alike have to know that as the people of Jerusalem they are to see God and all God's creatures as having equal dignity, offered equal resurrection and power over death, occupation and oppression. They are guardians of an earthly Jerusalem which should remain the image of the heavenly one: «Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. The world of the past has gone.» (Rev 21:1-4).

We want to see the end of the old world. We want to see a new world, a new earth, in which the face of God will be light and glory for all its inhabitants, in which God will be for all the source of freedom, justice, equality and love.

Here Jesus has risen from death, and renewed humankind. It is this deep human renewal which is needed in our Holy Land for the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Despite all the death surrounding us, penetrating into the deepest of our daily life, we celebrate the glory and the joy of the Resurrection. Jesus Christ is risen. This is the foundation of our hope. We believe in God who loves all his creatures, we believe in his goodness, might, and justice. One day he will manifest himself, he will enlighten the hearts of all, and revisit the land where he suffered, died and was resurrected. We wait for his coming back in glory, we wait for justice and peace and love. We keep resisting all kinds of evil threatening our existence and our freedom. We resist and we await the day when we all become «the disciples of God» and will be taught by his infinite goodness and love how to live in his land, in holiness, justice, equality, peace and love. We await the time when we will be truly in the land of the Resurrection and the new life.







Christ is risen.  
*Indeed he is risen.*  
I wish you a holy and happy Easter.

### **Patriarch Michel Sabbah**

H.B. Patriarch Michel Sabbah served as the Archbishop and Latin (Roman Catholic) Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem from 1987 to 2008. Patriarch Sabbah was ordained a priest for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in June 1955. He was a parish priest for a few years before being sent to the University of St. Joseph in Beirut to Study Arabic language and literature. Shortly thereafter, he became director of schools for the Latin Patriarchate. In 1980, he was named President of the Bethlehem University. In 1987, Pope John Paul II appointed him Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, making him the first native Palestinian to hold the office for centuries. Since 1999, Patriarch Sabbah has been the International President of Pax Christi, a Catholic organization promoting peace. Sabbah resigned as Patriarch in 2008. He is currently the Grand Prior of the Chivalric Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, one of the knightly orders founded in 1099. Patriarch Sabbah is a co-author of the Kairos Palestine Document and believes in pluralism and equality in order to preserve the dignity of human beings.



## Further Recommendations:

- Pray for justice in the region.
- Raise awareness about the root causes of the conflict, the rights of Palestinians, and the need to build a right-based political vision for peace-making. Study and educate others about Israel's system of occupation which prevents the self-determination of the Palestinian people and constitutes the root cause of Israel's systematic and protracted policy of forcible population transfer; likewise, seek to correct erroneous and prejudicial misconceptions of the Palestinian reality.
- Encourage your community to engage in concrete measures of solidarity with the Palestinian people and in concrete initiatives toward peace with justice. Join the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign (BDS) and undertake political measures that put pressure on Israel and other decision-makers until they respect their legal obligations to the Palestinian people, including the refugees. Likewise, urge communities in which you participate (church-related, business-related, academic or otherwise) to support the BDS campaign by divesting from companies that directly or indirectly support the illegal Israeli Occupation.
- Expand community-led advocacy work that intensifies public pressure toward Israel's accountability to international law. Churches, church-related organisations and civil society, particularly human rights organisations and legal experts, should continue efforts toward investigating and prosecuting Israeli perpetrators of international crimes and other complicit individuals/institutions. Promote the application of universal legal principles and best practice to foster robust mechanisms that will bring Israel into compliance with international law.
- Promote accountability of Israeli suspects of international crimes in domestic courts. States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have a legal obligation to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of war crimes in the territory under their jurisdiction.



