

## Material Compilation

### World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel - 16-23 September 2023

(Including UN International Day of Peace, 21 September)

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

During this week which includes the International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to bear a common witness by participating in worship services, educational events, and acts of support in favor of peace and justice for Israelis and Palestinians.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations around the world to join for a week of prayer for just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

With the formation of the newly appointed Jerusalem Liaison Office Advisory group (JLOAG), the themes for WWPPI are pointed out by the group members. A preparatory team is invited then by JLO in cooperation with the WCC Middle East Executive desk, and the Communications department. With other invited members, the preparatory team will help produce the resources of the three WWPPI pillars (Educate, Pray, and Act) to be used during the week.

#### **WWPPI 2023 theme:**

While commemorating 75 years of Nakba (Catastrophe) of the Palestinian people since 1948, the preparatory committee of this year's WWPPI questioned the injustice in all this for the family and have chosen the following biblical verse to lay down the issue as presented by Jesus Christ:

***"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."***  
***Matthew 8:20***

From this verse the committee proposes the following theme from WWPPI 2023:

#### **No place to lay my head!**

It is more of a challenge than a question. A challenge for Palestinian families as well as other peoples facing difficulties to a uniting home. Under this theme we anticipate not only stories of pain but also stories of resilience in finding solutions. The right of family for home should be sacred. Home, is after all, where the family lay their heads in security and in peace.

**WWPPI 2023 outcome:**

WWPPI material usually comes out in three forms, and this is not expected to change:

**Educate:**

- East Jerusalem Fact sheet – EAPPI 2023 – Attachment 1
- Story: Give me my Life, Let me live - Attachment 2
- Story: Looking for light at the end of the Tunnel – Attachment 3
- [UNOCHA 2023 Highlights](#):
- Other EAPPI fact sheets as they come

**Pray:**

- Reflection from Bishop William Shomali – Attachment Pray 1
- Prayers from different languages and corners of the globe – Attachment Pray 2
- **Global Ecumenical Service (In progress)**
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**Act:**

- In cooperation with St Yves, the Catholic Legal support unit we present a draft material good for act / resolutions at UN and Church forums. - Attachment ACT 1

## **Attachment Educate 1**

Ecumenical Accompaniers inspect the remnants of a demolished home in Anata - East Jerusalem. Photo: WCC EAPPI.

### **East Jerusalem Demolitions April 2023**

#### **Overview**

Between the period that the Oslo Agreement was signed on the 13 September 1993 and the 31 December 2022: Israel demolished 2,787 structures in East Jerusalem including 213 donor-funded structures, and it displaced 5093 persons including 2,582 children. These included homes; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities; and agricultural structures.

44% of the demolitions, amounting to 1,213 structures, happened during the last five years (2018-2022). The scale of demolitions skyrocketed following the implementation of Amendment 116 to the Planning and Building Law at the end of 2018, also known as the Kaminitz Law that increased severity of penalties for “building violations.” Essentially, Israel is taking aim at Palestinians through this law, that does not apply evenhandedly to Israelis.

Palestinians are not granted the construction permits needed for natural growth and development, and when they build without permits they open themselves to demolitions. According to the Jerusalem Municipality’s “2020 Plan,” a meager 12% of the East Jerusalem land is allocated to Palestinian construction, while 42% is allocated to settlement construction.

Overall, no less than 20,000 structures in East Jerusalem have demolition orders, but the exact number is impossible to ascertain because demolition orders are often challenged and are either upheld or frozen in court before implementation. In Silwan, for example, 60% of the structures have demolition orders to make way for a settlement and an archaeological park, but the community is challenging it through 6,000 court cases where the outcome is unlikely to be in favor of Palestinians.

Israel’s demolition policy constitutes a breach of International Law. Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits any destruction of property that is not absolutely necessary by military operations. Article 53 also calls for the protection of all moveable assets within the home such as furniture, money, cars, and equipment. Israel does not recognize East Jerusalem Palestinians as protected civilians in an occupied territory where the Fourth Geneva Convention applies, and therefore handles the demolitions as an internal administrative matter carried out by the municipality. Unanimously, UN resolutions since 1967 have said that East Jerusalem is occupied territory, beginning with Security Council Resolution 242 that affirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war.

The number of demolitions during each of the last five years were broken down as follows:

The 5-year numbers included 320 self-demolitions imposed on the Palestinians, and were broken down as follows:

#### **2022 East Jerusalem Demolitions Compared to the Rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

959 structures were demolished and 1,021 persons including 500 children were displaced in the occupied Palestinian territories during 2022, out of which 246 structures were in East Jerusalem and whereby 411 persons were displaced including 203 children.

Overall during 2022, East Jerusalem amounted to 25% of the demolitions and 40% of the displacement. Moreover, East Jerusalem children amounted to 40% of the displacement in the occupied Palestinian territories.

140 donor-funded structures were demolished in the occupied Palestinian territories, of those 13 were in East Jerusalem and amounted to 9% of the demolitions.

Home demolition in Um Tuba-East Jerusalem. Photo: WCC EAPPI

### **First Quarter of 2023 Compared to Previous Period**

During the first quarter of 2023 (1 January – 28 March 2023), 95 structures were demolished and 149 persons displaced in East Jerusalem including 88 children. During the first quarter of 2022, 52 structures were demolished and 98 persons displaced including 50 children. The first quarter of 2023 in East Jerusalem, compared to the first quarter of 2022 saw a 55% increase in demolitions, 66% increase in the number of displaced persons, and 56% increase in the number of displaced children.

### **Local Voices Collected by the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)**

- *“Home demolitions are the outcome of extreme discrimination in Israeli urban planning laws. Lack of zoning plans (which leads to an inability to obtain permits, meaning unauthorized construction and subsequent demolitions) is an intentional policy to further the demographic aims of Israeli decision-making since the annexation of East Jerusalem. Essentially, if Palestinians have no opportunity for legal construction, then they will run out of space and leave the city. The humanitarian impact on families, children, and neighbors, and the community as a whole is immense. Israel must halt these measures of dispossession and to secure a sustainable solution which will safeguard the families' rights to their homes, communities, and city.”* - Rachel Schwartz, Ir Amim Coordinator of International Public Outreach. 27 March 2023.
- *“They destroyed my home and the dreams of my children.”* - Woman from Sur Baher whose home was demolished. 14 March 2023.
- *“Where are human rights? Where is the United Nations? Where is Europe and the United States? Our homes and trees are being destroyed. They want to kick us out.”* - Man from Wadi El Joz whose home was demolished. 12 March 2023.
- *“My wedding was happiness mixed with pain. I had ambitions and beautiful plans—to leave my parent’s home just like every normal bride does.”* – Bride from Silwan whose home was demolished shortly before the wedding. 16 November 2022.

### **Call for Action**

Churches worldwide, international non-governmental organizations, the UN, and world governments call upon the government of Israel to:

- Give Palestinians in East Jerusalem the needed permits to develop their neighborhoods and communities as done in West Jerusalem.
- Stop the policy of demolition of Palestinian homes and structures in East Jerusalem.

- Pass fair, sustainable, and equitable urban planning regulations in East Jerusalem.

## **Attachment Educate 2**

### **Give me my life, let me live**

#### **Written by Hana Zoughbi Kirreh**

Christine, 23, is from the West Bank. She met a young man from Jerusalem when she was studying at one of the Palestinian universities in the West Bank. As their emotions towards each other grew by time and a sincere love flourished into their hearts, they decided to get engaged. At this point, they didn't think of any barriers that might stand in front of them. When talking about love, there was no time to think about the so-called "centre of life" law and the family reunification complications when a young man from Jerusalem decides to marry a West Banker. With passion and eagerness, they decided to get married; they had their own dreams and expectations. They decided to live in Jerusalem, travel abroad, and Christine dreamt of driving her own car in the streets of Jerusalem. She wanted to get a residency permit like her husband to go on with her life and work, and have children, and to be able to visit her family and relatives freely without any trouble.

Christine got married to the man she loved and always wanted. They had a very beautiful wedding ceremony at a church in Jerusalem, but unfortunately not many of her close friends, relatives and extended family were able to attend. Restrictions of movement and lack of permits for the invitees did not allow them to pass through checkpoints and attend Christine's well-organized wedding. And hence the challenges and complications started. Many questions came into her head: "What would happen if my permit expires?" "Can I still stay in our beautiful apartment in Jerusalem under one roof with my husband?" "Can my parents, brothers and sisters come and visit me in my apartment in Jerusalem?" Now there is no time for love under such stress and barriers. It is time to think how to overcome this and stay strong.

To understand what is happening with Christine and her husband, we must know the background of their story. Unfortunately, Palestinian women from the West Bank married to Jerusalemites suffer a lot due to a military occupation that controls their lives, deprives them of exercising their human rights and makes it hard for them to move freely. Nevertheless, the Israeli law makes it hard for Palestinians to marry and live with whom they choose. Their dignity has been taken by force from them; thus, women are considered the most vulnerable within the Palestinian society.

Israel has always been using intimidation and double-standard measures to terrorize and frighten citizens and thus minimizing the number of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Permanent residency differs significantly from citizenship. The primary right granted to permanent residents is to live and work in Israel without the need for special permits. Permanent residents are also entitled to social benefits provided by the National Insurance Institute and to health insurance. A permanent resident in East Jerusalem married to a woman from the West Bank or Gaza Strip must submit, on behalf of the spouse, a request for family unification. If these spouses couldn't provide the required documents to the Ministry of Interior, the women will be in danger of suffering the loss of their permits or revocation of their residency status, resulting in separation from their husbands and their children.

The family unification procedure consists of two complicated phases. First, couples need to prove that the "centre of life" for them is Jerusalem, and to present a clean criminal record. Usually, if all goes well, this procedure lasts approximately five years with lots of fees paid to a lawyer, who facilitates the reunification process with the Ministry of Interior and other relevant parties. Second, if the application is approved, the

applicant receives a temporary permit that lasts for 15 months, which may be renewed for an additional 12 months, without obtaining any social and civil rights. If at any time the application for renewal is rejected or family unification is not approved, married women are not allowed to stay within the municipality boundaries of Jerusalem and are obliged to move behind the Separation Wall. They usually move to area C.

If the husband or one of the family members is suspected of being politically active or is involved in any security activities, his wife, mother, and sisters are the ones who are punished and a residency revocation is filed against them as a punitive measure imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities. Many non-governmental and human rights organizations continue to challenge this policy of residency revocation, as it only affects the Arab residents, proving its discriminatory nature. In addition, through public advocacy and legal work, these organizations actively protest against the Citizenship Law which currently makes it extremely difficult for Palestinians from the West Bank to gain residency or citizenship while making it effortless for Jewish immigrants from Western countries that are thousands of miles away.

The consequences of not having residency status are many. The hardest measure is that from time to time, women have to go to the Population Authority Office and ask the District Coordination and Liaison Bureau for a permit to remain in Israel and live with their husbands under one roof.

Palestinians from the West Bank marrying a Jerusalemite can't drive in Jerusalem or have a bank account or have an ID card. Women must buy their own health insurance, which costs a lot of money.

Travelling abroad is another issue where the couple must use two different airports to travel.

"Ban on Family Unification" - Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order). This Legislation deprives Palestinians with Israeli citizenship or residency from extending their legal status to a spouse holding a Palestinian Identity card and passport, and denies them their right to live together by choice.

Although the law was originally enacted as a temporary order, its validity has been repeatedly extended by the Israel parliament (Knesset) making it in effect a permanent law. Thousands of Palestinian families have been affected by the law, forced to split apart, move abroad, or live in Israel in fear of constant deportation. Of course, Israeli Jewish settlers living in the occupied Palestinian Territories are excluded from all this hassle.

Israel's law blocking family unification destroys the lives of thousands of Palestinians and hinders movement and right to life.

Hopefully the international community and the heads of churches can exert real pressure on the Israeli government to abide by international laws.

### **Attachment: Educate 3**

#### **Looking for light at the end of the tunnel**

My experience with Israel's Interior Ministry began more than 25 years ago, whereby I have been seeking an ID card for my wife who hails from the West Bank. I am a Palestinian from East Jerusalem and I have an Israeli ID card—which gives me the status of a foreign resident in the city of my ancestors and where I was born. I was a young man when I first submitted the residency application for my wife, but not knowing that my entire life, year after year, will be dominated by the struggle to remain a family together in the same place—a status not taken for granted by many Palestinians from East Jerusalem.

When I first submitted the application, I received a brief letter of basically one-and-a-half lines. It said that the application was rejected for "security reasons." I immediately thought, if the state institutions

have security issues against us, then they can easily have us arrested, but since they did not, the claim is totally unsubstantiated. I had to hire a lawyer, and to pay a huge sum at the time—\$3,000—so the lawyer would talk to the Interior Ministry and have the ministry review the application.

I remember a time when my wife and I were newlywed, and she did not have the right to reside in Jerusalem, so she stayed in Ramallah while I stayed in Jerusalem. It turned out that this was only the tip of the iceberg.

When I was allowed to resubmit the application, I had to stand in line in front of the Interior Ministry at 3:30 am, due to the huge crowds, and because the office admitted the last group at 7 am.

I stood in line, time and again, whenever a document was requested from me, and whenever I was given an appointment to review the application. I remember the time when it became 7 am and I was turned back, and had to come again the next morning to try my luck.

I remember the time when I was pushed by the security officers against a metal barrier, and I went home with my back bruised. I remember a time when I made it into the office, only to have the clerk sitting there shout at me. I could not take it anymore, and I asked to see the manager because I wanted to file a complaint. I told him that I had been waiting in line since 3:30 am, in the midst of the shoving and security checks, and the last thing I expected at his office was a clerk who shouted at me. He spoke excellent Arabic, he listened and was polite and compassionate, and was unhappy about the situation but it seemed there was nothing he could do to help me.

I remember when my eldest daughter was born. I was told at the Interior Ministry that she cannot receive a Jerusalem ID for “security reasons.” It was a struggle to get her registered and to receive an ID card. Now she is a college graduate, but we still have a temporary status for her mother.

The worst of all incidents, that I will never forget, when they gave us an appointment and it was three months in advance. We were elated; we had an appointment! We started preparing our file and collecting every shred of evidence that we are living in Jerusalem: telephone bills, water bills, electricity bills, letters from our employers, tax documents, and children’s school certificates. A few hours before the appointment, my mother died, so I asked my wife to take the file and to go the Interior Ministry. There, they asked her about my whereabouts. My wife said, “He cannot come because his mother had just died.” They insisted that I come, and I had to leave my dead mother and go there.

Nowadays the entry arrangements have eased up and the office moved to a larger space, and there is an online system for reservations. Still, it takes a long time to get an appointment. Nothing has changed at the policy level, and getting a Jerusalem ID for a Palestinian remains a dream.

After all those years and long struggle, my wife has a temporary status in Jerusalem. We renew the status each year but it can be rescinded anytime. To travel to Jordan, we go through separate lanes and meet again abroad, and to travel through the airport I go by myself because my wife is not allowed to. Our children travel with me, not with their mother, because they have Jerusalem IDs. Most likely, my wife will never be allowed to stay with her husband and children in Jerusalem peacefully.

According to Hamoked Israeli human rights organization, approximately 13,000 families in East Jerusalem and Israel have one spouse who only has a temporary permit due to the ban on family unification. The overwhelming majority of these families are living in East Jerusalem.

The “Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law” passed by the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, on 31 July 2003, froze the family unification rights for thousands of Palestinian families of which one of the spouses is a Jerusalem resident or a Palestinian citizen of Israel. The law has caused anguish and deterioration of life conditions for large sectors of the Palestinian community in East Jerusalem. Demographics were

openly discussed during the debates over the law. Beside all security concerns, the law aims clearly at limiting the demographic presence of Palestinians within Israeli territory, particularly within the illegally annexed East Jerusalem.

### **Attachment : Pray 1**

#### **Reflection : By Bishop William Shomali**

“Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” (Mt. 8: 20)

For the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (WWPPI 2023), Bishop William Shomali, the General/Latin Patriarchal vicar for Jerusalem and Palestine reflects from personal experience on the theme, “No place to lay my head.”

It is obvious that our house, whether big, small, fancy or modest, is our shelter and our sanctuary. It is a place where we feel security, receive and give love, welcome friends, and feel the warmth of communicating with them.

For many, the house of our childhood is like a haven or even a piece of heaven.

Every family is entitled to have their own house. It is a basic human need. Not having one is an indicator of poverty and deprivation, while being expelled from one own’s house is a form of injustice and oppression.

In the year 1967, some months after the Six-Day War between Israel and the Arab states, my mother, who was living in the Bethlehem area, decided to go to Jaffa of Tel Aviv for an important visit. She was born there and lived there until the year 1948. The so-called war of independence between Arabs and Jews, called the Palestinian Al-Nakba, obliged them to escape. They hoped to come back two weeks after the war ended. My mother was then 22 years old.

She remembered well her former house in Al-Ajameh quarter. Once in Jaffa, she headed immediately to the house, where she lived and cherished the memories of her childhood.

She knocked at the door and asked kindly to visit the house. She was allowed in after she introduced herself. The new inhabitants were Jewish immigrants from Bulgaria.

Not invited to sit down, she could not spend more than 10 minutes, enough to inspect all the rooms. Nothing changed since 1948. During all the visit, a terrible silence prevailed. Some tears fell from her eyes. She bid farewell, thanked her hosts, and left with sadness.

When she told us the story, she added: “I wished they would have invited me for a cup of coffee, and to remain in the house a little bit more.”

My mother’s story makes me sympathize with the thousands and thousands of refugees who left their houses without compensation or hope of return, the Ukrainian families who escaped their houses destroyed by an insane war, the Syrian and Turkish families whose houses were completely destroyed by the last earthquake, the families of young Palestinians whose houses were destroyed because their sons committed a suicide attack against Israelis, to the Jerusalemites who seek a license to build on their own land but cannot because their land is deemed to be green. In the best scenario they might need at least 10 years to change its nature from green to brown and red (re-zoning which costs fortunes and is unaffordable for one family).



Houses in Jerusalem are very expensive. It is the same more or less in the major cities of the world.

We kindly ask governments to help the poor classes to have their own houses.

The poor will then feel more dignity and equality, and will become better citizens. With the money spent on destructive weapons, every human being can have his own house.

Jesus, who said, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” (Mt. 8: 20)—only he can fully understand the misery of the families deprived from having a house or from the use of their own house.

We, together, pray to Him to inspire governments and authorities to care for this basic human right.

Bishop William Shomali

Jerusalem

## **Attachment : Pray 2**

### **Prayers of Intercessions:**

#### **(French) Words of Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah:**

Seigneur Jésus, tu as vécu avec tes disciples sur terre. Tu les as laissés pour un bref moment dans la tristesse, puis tu leur as envoyé ton Esprit qui leur a redonné la vie pleine. Seigneur Jésus, remplis-moi de ton Esprit, de ta joie, avec laquelle je puisse vivre tous les moments, de vie et de mort, dans ma vie sur cette terre. Amen.

#### **(Arabic) Words of Bishop Atallah Hanna (by Mayada)**

نصلي من اجل مدينة القدس المدينة المقدسة في الديانات التوحيدية الثلاث والتي من المفترض ان تكون مدينة للسلام ولكنها اليوم ليست كذلك فهي مدينة صراع و عنف و كراهية و عنصرية ونحن بدورنا نقول لكل القوى السياسية في العالم اعيدوا للقدس سلامها واعملوا من اجل صون هويتها ورسالتها فلا يجوز ان يعامل الفلسطينيون فيها ومقدساتهم بهذه القسوة وبهذه الممارسات الظالمة التي لا يمكن تبريرها بأي شكل من الاشكال.

#### **(Armenian) Carla**

#### **English ( Mrs Nora Carmi)**

We, the Indigenous believers of YOUR LAND clearly understand your saying : "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head" because the injustice and inequity has not ceased to exist for two millennia. In fact, the situation has worsened and the past 75 years of the ongoing Nakba are concrete proof.

Man, human being, refuses to understand that the Almighty created us in God's image to live your word of truth justice and peace among all the Creation, starting from your land.

You gave us the vision and the way. Is it not the time before it becomes too late to practice your teachings at home, in civil society, in political arenas and the church?.

Many in your land are committed to do so despite the difficult challenges.

Yes, we can do it if we join our minds and hearts to preserve the world and our dignity.

In the name of our triune God, help us.

### **(Spanish) Milen from EAPPI Colombia**

Divinidad,

Pedimos por tu continua ternura, protección y fortaleza para todas las familias en Palestina ocupada. A diario las familias, corazón de la comunidad Palestina, resisten con dignidad y coraje el impacto de la ocupación militar israelí. Una ocupación, que por 75 años, ha buscado separar y romper los vínculos de amor e identidad como familia de madres, padres, hijas, hijos, parejas, hermanas, hermanos y de todas las generaciones. También, pedimos por el Programa Ecuménico de Acompañamiento para Palestina e Israel -PEAPI- y por todas las personas que hacen parte del programa como acompañantes ecuménicos, integrantes de las oficinas y de las coordinaciones del programa. A diario, el Programa -PEAPI- es testigo de la resistencia y compromiso de cada familia palestina por permanecer unida basado en su derecho a vivir sin ocupación y en paz.

This is what the prayer says:

Divinity,

We ask for your continued tenderness, protection, and strength for all the families in occupied Palestine. Every day the families, the heart of the Palestinian community, resist with dignity and courage the impact of the Israeli military occupation. An occupation that, for 75 years, has sought to separate and break the ties of love and identity as family of mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, couples, sisters, brothers and all generations. Also, we ask for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel -EAPPI- for all the persons who are part of the program as members of the ecumenical companioner teams, the offices and coordination. On a daily basis, the EAPPI Program witnesses the resistance and commitment for each Palestinian family to stay together, based on their right to live without occupation and in peace.

### **Africa. By Dudu Masango**

What can we do differently today to scrape the plate, to gather up all the good things around us and begin enjoying the journey of life? Your people have suffered long enough, loved ones have been separated from each other.

Lord our faith in you will not be shaken. We know that you Lord answer all prayers of those who come to You faithful. You answered our prayer and this one you'll still answer! Your people are becoming homeless daily, the Land that You gave is slipping away from them! It is through you and by you that they will have a place to lay their head on. Hear us good Lord and let only your power to reign.

Amen

### **North American from Rev. Anne Hoganson**

God of Courage and Compassion,

We pray for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel,  
the land long called holy by so many.

Awaken us to the cries of those living under military occupation;  
whose homes have been demolished,  
whose villages have been destroyed,  
whose land has been confiscated,  
who have no place to safely lay their head.  
Holy One, embolden us to act with love.

Inspire us to listen for the voices calling for change;  
Palestinian and Israeli,  
Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and many other faith traditions,  
Advocates, activists, artists, academics, unions, churches, and more.  
Holy One, embolden us to act with love.

Encourage us to stand boldly with those working toward a just peace;  
who desire freedom, equality, and dignity for all who inhabit this land,  
who desire a fair and generous sharing of the earth's abundance,  
who seek to dismantle systems of oppression and violence.  
Holy One, embolden us to act with love.

God of Grace and Goodness,

There is room for all in the shelter of your love.

May the land called holy once again be a safe and sacred place for all.

In the name of the risen Christ, we pray. Amen.

*Written by Rev. Anne Hoganson (minister of The United Church of Canada, regional representative for Canada on the International Coordinating Committee for Global Kairos for Justice Coalition, Coordinating Team member with United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel – UNJPPI)*

## **UK**

Among the Rubble

Compassionate God,

In our minds, we pray among the rubble,

the unholy mess of demolitions

in the land we call Holy.

In our hearts we hold

families who have lost their homes,

children who have seen their schools destroyed,

communities which no longer have a clinic.

We pray for them as they weep for all that is lost.

We pray that they will not lose hope.

And we pray, too, for

the men who drive the bulldozers,

soldiers who beat back protestors,

politicians who sign the orders –

aware that such actions destroy their humanity.

Bless those who campaign against injustice;

bless the patient rebuilders;

bless those who hope against hope

that peace with justice will prevail

in the land that we call Holy.

Amen

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UK

### **Attachment: Act 1**

Title: A Resolution for the Protection of Palestinian Residency and the Prevention of Forced Displacement of Families

The World Council of Churches and the United Nations,

2023

Decades of Israeli settler-colonial and military occupation subjecting Palestinians to systematic human rights abuses. In many cases, these violations of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights aim to oppress Palestinians and force them to live a life without dignity under constant attacks that include: night raids of homes, land confiscation, home destruction and demolition, forcible transfer, separation of families, detention, and imprisonment. In addition, now more than ever systematic targeting of civil society organization and human rights defenders, restricting freedom of convictions and of access and movement, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly: This is supported with ruthless Israeli policies that enable settlement expansion at the expense of Palestinian rights contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, and human rights law. As a result, we have a manmade humanitarian crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). With limited access to opportunities for socio-economic-civil and political development, as estimated 2.1 million Palestinians (out of a total population of 5.5 million) are estimated to need humanitarian assistance in 2022.

Concerning Israel's permit regime: East Jerusalem (EJ) is home to around 382,000 Palestinians, constituting 38% of the city's population. The majority of Palestinians living in EJ have permanent residency; unlike citizenship, permanent residency status can be revoked under various Israeli punitive grounds and discriminatory laws such as "Centre of Life" is a phrase coined by the Israeli ministry of interior, and refers to one's primary place of residence, employment, and planned residence in the future.

According to the Israeli Ministry of Interior's figures supplied over the years, between 1967 and 2022, Israel revoked the status of 14,808 Palestinians from East Jerusalem on the grounds that their status "expired of itself." It is important to note that one revocation is way too many and is still a significant human rights violation. Center of Life policy legalizes forcible transfer which is a clear war crime under Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Family Unification: Fragmented & Separated; On 10 March 2002, the Israeli parliament (Knesset) passed the explicitly discriminatory Citizen & Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order); Year 2023 marks 20 years of renewal of the law: The law prohibits Palestinian residents of Jerusalem or citizens inside the "Green Line" from applying for family unification with their spouses who are residents or citizens of the Gaza Strip, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran. Any West Bank male spouses below the age of 35 and female

spouses below the age of 25 are barred from living with their spouse in Jerusalem or the inside the “Green Line.” A very low number of exceptions are made by the “humanitarian committee” appointed by the Interior Minister on “humanitarian” grounds but the quota of request approved shouldn’t exceed 58 applications per year regardless of number of applications submitted. According to figures provided by the Ministry of Interior between 2013-2020, the number of applications in process or rejected is 45% 3,735. The number has doubled in recent years due to a freeze in the law that allowed thousands more applications to be submitted but never looked into by the Ministry of Interior. This is alarming and has negative implications on denying thousands of Palestinian children registration.

The right to live in peace, safety, and dignity with one’s own family, to choose the person with whom they wish to form a family, is a fundamental right that Israel continues to strip from Palestinians. It has torn Palestinian families apart, subjecting them to perpetual fear, separation, and uncertainty.

Urgent action to address the situation:

- Acknowledging the rights of all people to self-determination, freedom, and security, as enshrined in international law and human rights conventions.
- Recalling the UN Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from occupied Palestinian territory, and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.
- Reaffirming the right of return for Palestinian refugees, as stated in UN General Assembly Resolution 194.
- Emphasizing the importance of protecting the cultural and religious heritage of Palestine, which is an integral part of the global cultural heritage.
- Calls upon all parties to respect the rights of Palestinian residents and to prevent the forced displacement of families.
- Urge the Israeli government to halt all settlement activities, demolitions of Palestinian homes, schools, cemeteries, etc. which are illegal under IL, and to recognize the rights of Palestinians to their property and land.
- Allow the international criminal court from investigating into the situation of Palestine & crimes of international law.

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