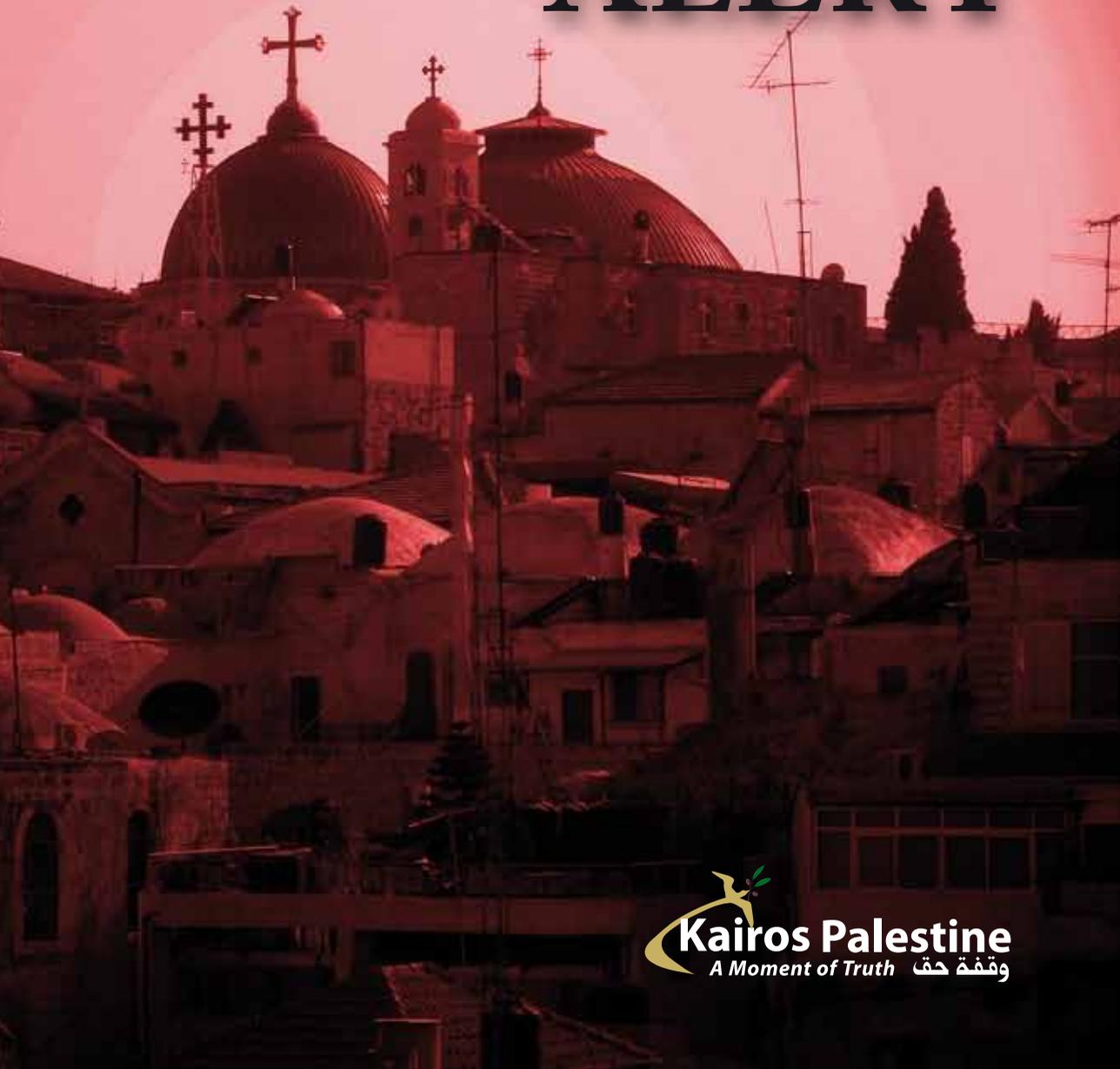


Kairos Palestine

EASTER ALERT



Kairos Palestine

**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

Introduction

By Rifat Odeh Kassir

Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, “Listen, we’re going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true.” Then Jesus had his disciples bring him a colt, and they threw their cloaks over it for him to ride. The news of his arrival rippled through the city, and crowds poured out onto the road to see him.

For me – as for most Palestinians, both Muslims and Christians – Jerusalem is the city we love most and visit least. As a little boy, I remember traveling to Jerusalem with my late father along the old road – a trip that took many hours due to the “no-man’s zone” that forbade us from directly accessing the divided city. Despite the obstacles that existed even then, I remember going to Jerusalem as a deeply happy event. It meant eating the sweets we couldn’t find in our village, and visiting the holy places we’d only heard about in school and church. Or else it meant going to the doctor, since most doctors were based in Jerusalem at that time. In any case, my sentimental relationship with the city is strong.

When the First Intifada broke out in 1987, Jerusalem was sealed off to those of us who lived in the so-called West Bank, and we had to obtain special permits in order to enter the city. Legally, visiting Jerusalem became impossible for me; because I was a past political prisoner, I was put on some kind of state blacklist, and so the Israeli authorities wouldn’t grant me a permit. Since 2002, I have not returned to Jerusalem. My 29-year-old son, Dafer, has never visited it at all, although he has probably traveled around half the world. Being barred from Jerusalem is a great emotional and psychological loss to me and to my family.

For Palestinian Christians, Jerusalem is marked not only by symbolic richness, but also by symbolic tensions. First of all, although Jerusalem is considered to be sacred for Christians all over the world – the place of Jesus’s crucifixion and resurrection, the birthplace of Christianity itself, the site of the first churches and the historical destination of pilgrimages – it is in many ways a normal city for us, Palestinians. It is our political capital, and has traditionally been an economic hub, a center of tourism, health services and education. In this sense, then, my relation to Jerusalem as a Palestinian Christian is twofold: it is, for me, both the universal sacred place where people go to pray and connect to the holy sites and the capital of my country, Palestine – even when the occupying state doesn’t acknowledge it as such. Even more powerfully, however, Jerusalem is the universal sacred place I cannot go to practice my faith, and the capital city I cannot visit.

Jerusalem is also a focal point of the Palestinian struggle: the place where our struggle began and where it will end. Its significance is symbolic on both a religious and a political scale, both for Palestinians and for Israelis.

According to international law, East Jerusalem is occupied territory, as are the parts of the West Bank that Israel unilaterally annexed to the district of Jerusalem.



The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Regulations of 1907 forbid occupying powers from altering the ways of life of occupied citizens; they likewise prohibit members of the occupying state from settling in the occupied territory. This means that Israel's actions in East Jerusalem, throughout history as well as today, constitute gross violations of international law. The violations themselves are copious and ongoing: historical expropriation (since 1967 and through the present day) of private Palestinian-owned land, paving the way for illegal Israeli settlements (referred to as "neighborhoods" in internal Israeli discourse) and demolition of Palestinian houses, leaving many people homeless along with discriminatory housing permit policies; Israel's "quiet transfer" policy, revoking the residency of East Jerusalemites who moved away from municipal borders and countless others.

Israel is not simply trying to find its place in Jerusalem. Rather, it is trying to monopolize Jerusalem (again, on both quotidian levels and on universal, sacred ones) and exclude Palestinian Christians and Muslims from the city. For us Palestinians, Jerusalem is a city for all three faiths: Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Its sacredness should not be stifled, and its holiest symbols – like the Al-Aqsa Mosque for Muslims, the Church of the Holy Sepulchers for Christians and the Wailing Wall for Jews – all deserve their space in this universal city. Any attempt to monopolize them is an attempt to monopolize that universality, and this is an effort we, all peoples, must resist.

In "A Moment of Truth," the Kairos Palestine document, we address Jerusalem both from a specifically Palestinian Christian perspective and from a universal human one. We state very clearly that Jerusalem is an occupied city; that the occupation of Jerusalem is a sin against God and humanity; and that it constitutes a defiance of His will as well as that of the international community. We also stress that Jerusalem should be the place of and model for reconciliation – not the locus of and reason for our conflict, which is the role it has today. Thus, we believe that the issue of Jerusalem should be the beginning of our reconciliation, and should absolutely not be left to the so-called "final" items on the negotiation agenda. Resolving the conflict over Jerusalem first will establish a model for the two nations themselves, as well as for resolving other conflicts between them; it will also encourage the growth and development of a just peace in our region.

No matter what, Palestinians must have the right to exert their sovereignty in East Jerusalem. No matter what, I am certain that the future of Jerusalem will dictate the future of the conflict itself. And no matter what, I hope, as the Kairos Document urges, that the very nature of Jerusalem – universal, sacred, and embracing – will be honored as we proceed. It has much to teach us.

In this Easter Alert, we choose to focus on Jerusalem and Jerusalemites: their reality, their plight, and their rights. We have connected with civil society organizations working in Jerusalem, as well as theologians, who have reflected on their longing for Jerusalem. We hope and pray that in this holy week, all Christians all over the world will turn their eyes to Jerusalem and its inhabitants; keep them in

their prayers; and work toward opening the eyes, hearts and minds of our occupiers. In other words, we are called to work toward lifting the burden of oppression and occupation, giving Jerusalem the opportunity to unite all peoples of faith in peace with justice.

Sisters and brothers, we are counting on you. With this Easter Alert, we request your help in turning the tide by engaging in these activities:

1. Please distribute and study materials and theological reflections within your own church communities to inform and educate them about the situation of your Palestinians brothers and sisters living under Israeli occupation.
2. Please share this Easter Alert with congregations and dioceses across your country.
3. Please send letters of solidarity and support for justice in Palestine/Israel to the Israeli embassies in your own country. For further information, see www.allembassies.com/israeli_embassies.htm
4. Please come and see. We pledge to share the truth of our reality with you, receiving you as pilgrims coming to pray; carrying a message of peace, love and reconciliation. You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike (Kairos Document 6.2)
5. Please inform us about the ways in which you have been involved with the Easter Alert by writing us at this email address: info@kairospalestine.ps

With your help and solidarity, we can finally live in peace with justice: the peace that all people aspire to, the peace that was announced in Bethlehem with the birth of Jesus and fulfilled in Jerusalem with the risen Lord.

Rifat Odeh Kassis

Kairos Palestine – A moment of truth, General Coordinator



Kairos Palestine would like to thank all the contributors for their help in compiling this Easter Alert, especially His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and His Grace Bishop Munib Younan; Hind Khoury, Ingrid Jaradat, Anica Heinlein, Jamal Talab Al Amleh, Suleiman Rabadi, Ingeborg Tiemann, Dima Samman, Yusef Daher and John Tleel.

Please note that the deadline for the submission of the texts was in February 2014. Updated numbers and figures can be found on the websites of the contributing organizations.



*Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!
Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!
Al Maseeh Qam! Haqan Qam!*

This proclamation of hope and eternal life is a perpetual greeting in the Holy City of Jerusalem, for the empty All-Holy Tomb of Christ physically stands before us as the heart and focal point of our mission here.

“And He said to them, ‘Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here; see the place where they laid him (Mark 16:6).”

It was from Jerusalem that the Good News spread to the world, like Holy Light spouting fire, from candle to candle, to diramed believers across every border and nation.

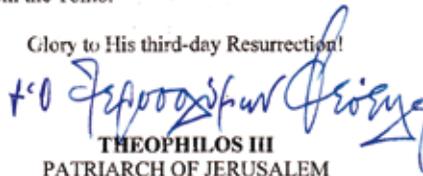
To His disciples, it seemed that all had been lost in the dark void of Christ’s death. But His resurrection on the third day, an act of philanthropy from God the Father, is a witness to humanity that life always overcomes death, light always overcomes darkness, and where there is divine love there is never a lack of hope.

In today’s world, there is no shortage of dark void. We, as the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Mother of Churches and as custodians of the very places of birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, are keenly aware of our privilege and responsibility to share the message of salvation with the world, especially to those who endure in the most troubled of places. As our region faces political turbulence, a refugee crisis, a deficit of human dignity, arrogance of the strong against the weak, and unpredictable challenges for future generations, we cleave to hope in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is our common purpose to serve the Christian congregations of the Middle East and in our beloved Holy Land, who are a “remnant chosen by grace (Rom. 11:5).” There is no better assurance than His resurrection that, despite the most dismal of circumstances, He defeats all death and brings forth life.

Our very existence is centered around the Life-giving Tomb, which is first and foremost the physical expression of the divine-human encounter, as well as a marker of our sacred history. As a result of Christ’s emancipation of our souls, the hallowed ground of Jerusalem impacts everyone immensely. Therefore, we welcome our collective task, which is to maintain the authentic character of our holy sites, so that all people may partake in their sanctity. We warmly welcome pilgrims and worshipers from every race and creed, from every corner of the globe, joyfully sharing His message of hope and renewal.

May the glory of God’s resurrection fill each of our hearts with joy; may this joy bring us together in love; and may our love for Him and one another instill within us peace. Let us earnestly pray, as one Christian family, for reconciliation amongst all peoples, not only in our Holy Land and Middle East region, but throughout all the world. Lord, illumine our hearts and minds with your radiant light, as the holy fire illuminates your empty cave. For only you bestow life from the Tomb.

Glory to His third-day Resurrection!


THEOPHILOS III
Patriarch of Jerusalem



The Kairos Easter Alert: A Reflection

By *Hind Khoury*

Even now in 2014, Jesus is still crying over Jerusalem as anguish and injustice continue to prevail.

In this City, three times holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims, there are occupiers and occupied, aggressors and aggressed, oppressors and oppressed. Sadly, injustice continues to be committed in the name of God where covenant and laws that bind us to our faith are conveniently overlooked.

As Easter approaches, we try to understand God's intentions for humanity delivered through the death and resurrection of our Lord. We need to examine again and again our obligations as human beings and as people of faith and conscience. Aren't the lessons of Easter particularly challenging? Aren't we guided to pursue the ideals of fellowship, courage, truth, non-violence, sacrifice, repentance, forgiveness and faith? Is it not our obligation to examine the relevance of these universal ideals to our lives and contexts and try to 'do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God' as prophet Micah instructed us to do? Isn't Jerusalem worthy of our labor and attention so that this city becomes the symbol of peace that is true and just?

Yet in our city we are denied access to our land for life and sustenance. Each one of us is targeted in our very survival and the integrity of our community, as in the integrity of our identity and our culture. Even our memory and our future are being hijacked. All these violations of the most basic God-given and human rights are justified through a culture of exclusion and a discriminatory, racist legal framework conveniently drawn by the authorities of the occupying power. One of the latest such laws, for example, decreed that Palestinian Christians are not Arabs in order to further divide and rule and confuse Palestinian cohesive identity.

Sixty five years since the NAKBA and 46 years since the Israeli occupation in 1967, we continue to suffer the exile of our refugees on one hand and the impasse of the so called 'peace process' on the other hand. Our city has become a most intolerable abode: it is a place where a foreign language is forced on us, where our land is expropriated in order to make do for overwhelming Jewish-only settlements, where our historic neighborhoods are strangulated, fragmented and where homes are demolished with the excuse that construction breaks the occupiers' laws.

In our city, we are residents only, with our residency rights revoked for leaving to study or work abroad. We suffer policies that weaken the local economy, that deny us decent housing and increase poverty and unemployment especially among the young and the educated. We endure the disastrous effect of the apartheid wall, built in our

midst, separating Palestinians from Palestinians, isolating us from our workplace, schools, hospitals and sites of worship. Our future and the future of our children is in total jeopardy. We are all guilty until proven innocent by the security forces and criminalized for resisting so much hardship, discrimination, exile and siege.

In our city, identity and culture are distorted to further weaken the very fabric of our society. School curriculums impose the occupiers' narrative, unchecked leakage from our schools amounts to 15%, while drug abuse pervades the city destroying families and killing the future of many of our children. A foreign language is forced on us and our city suffers isolation from its organic extension in the rest of the occupied territories by artificial and concrete walls and barriers.

All these violations including many more are justified in the name of exclusive rights to the land, an arrogant understanding of election, and an unchecked sense of righteousness. As a result, the religious significance of this city, three times holy, is threatened. This culture of exclusion promotes a Jewish God that is different from the Christian or Muslim God, and in the process threatens the essence of monotheism and thousands of years of revelation in this land. This development furthers the abuse of religion for political purposes and contributes to enflaming conflict, polarization and violence, and endangers regional and world peace.

In further escalation and obstruction of all efforts to conclude a fair political peace agreement, the Israeli government is now adamant that no peace can be reached unless we Palestinians recognize Israel as a purely Jewish state. While this demand is a perversion of history and a distortion of the universal values of our monotheistic faiths, it is also a spin of historical facts and of the land's natural diversity where attaining peace can only be concluded in a culture of inclusion and coexistence.

This new Israeli demand comes to hijack the legitimacy of Palestinians on their land. Other measures include the denial of Palestinian rights to worship especially in Jerusalem. Most Palestinians are forbidden to reach the city for prayers, a reality that is particularly painful to us, as the guardians of religious traditions in the land for millennia. In the last few years Israeli authorities imposed an additional measure by closing off the Old City of Jerusalem especially during Holy Week of Easter under the banner of security, an excuse that Israel regularly uses to justify and deepen its occupation measures. Slowly but surely, as Palestinian Christians are strongly discouraged from the practice of the centuries-old traditions, our holy sites may soon become museums to enrich incoming tourism and the Israeli economy.

As we celebrate this coming Easter we wonder: Isn't God's Covenant availed to all his children? Shouldn't our labor be focused on building the real peace in Jerusalem, the symbol of eternal peace? Shouldn't this city more than any other proclaim the one



and only God, and the Love that guides believers to become light unto the nations and the salt of the earth?

The world issued enough denouncements and regrets and passed too many resolutions in condemnations of so much injustice. Yet, impunity prevails and so far nothing was concretely done to contain human greed and power mongering of the occupation. Enough is enough. Now is the time for action and righteousness; the time of right over might; the time to build and to heal; the time for justice, honesty and mercy; the time to redeem human dignity and the time to nurture virtue and hope.

For this coming Easter, let us pray and labor for Peace from Jerusalem. If achieved it can help us salvage the true meaning of peace, so far abused to serve material interests and military and economic power. This should be our pledge to a new moral order that makes us truly human.

Hind Khoury

Hind Khoury is a Palestinian Christian, a mother of three adults and married to a local architect. She worked for over twenty years in the economic development of the Palestinian Occupied Territories. In 2005 she was appointed as Minister of Jerusalem Affairs for the Palestinian Authority and later the Palestinian Ambassador to France.



Palestinians in Jerusalem: A Matter of Freedom and Justice

By The Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem

Two events in the past 100 years have affected Palestinian lives in Jerusalem more than anything else: the comprehensive ethnic cleansing of Muslim and Christian Palestinians from the city's western neighbourhoods and adjacent villages by Israel in 1948, and the Israeli occupation and annexation of the eastern parts of the city in 1967.

Jerusalem under British rule (1917 – 1948) was a city characterized by substantial ethnic division and inter-communal conflicts. Like elsewhere in the country, these were caused mainly by the efforts of the Zionist movement—with the support of the British Mandate authorities—to achieve political control through the acquisition of land and the settlement of large numbers of European Jewish immigrants. Whereas the size of the Jewish population grew rapidly in this period, the large majority of the land remained in the ownership of the indigenous, predominantly Arab population.

The Jerusalem of that period was also a city with considerable social mobility. Ethnic diversity, institutions representing various local and foreign interests and the coexistence of diverse religious and secular trends gave the city a cosmopolitan character.¹ A growing urban, Arab Palestinian middle class had left the crowded Old City and built spacious homes in new neighbourhoods, such as Talbiya, Baq'aa and Katamon, in the south-western parts of town, while adjacent Arab villages, such as Lifta, Deir Yassin, Ain Karim and al Malha, were rapidly becoming integrated into the city's economy and labour market. Communal, inter-ethnic conflict was tempered by a fair amount of mutual dependence and local solidarities, as neighbourhoods, businesses and real estate were also shared by Muslim, Christian and Jewish Palestinians, in particular in and around the Old City. The life of this Jerusalem was cut short in 1948.

Racial separation and domination: Israeli-Jewish West Jerusalem (1948 – 1967)

In November 1947, the United Nations adopted a plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state after the end of the British Mandate. It also recommended that Jerusalem should remain undivided and under international control. The local Palestinian population rejected the division of their country by the UN. Armed conflict turned into war in May 1948, when Arab states intervened in response to the declaration of the establishment of Israel.

¹ Salim Tamari (ed), Jerusalem 1948. The Arab Neighborhoods and their Fate in the War, Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Badil Resource Center, 2002, Introduction.



Before and during the war, Zionist militias and later the Israeli army expelled the entire non-Jewish population from Jerusalem's western neighbourhoods and adjacent villages to make space for Israeli-Jewish (West) Jerusalem. In what Palestinians refer to as the Nakba ("catastrophe"), up to 80,000 Muslim and Christian Palestinians from the area of Israeli municipal (West) Jerusalem became refugees, seeking shelter mainly in the eastern parts of the city, elsewhere in the West Bank, and in Jordan². In response, the Jordanian army expelled in July 1948 the entire Jewish community (up to 2,500 persons) from the Old City to West Jerusalem.

In December 1948, the United Nations called for the return of all persons displaced in the war, restitution of their property and compensation for losses and damages.

Eastern Jerusalem came under Jordanian rule after the war. Jewish property there, including 192 homes and other real estate, mainly in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, was seized by the Jordanian Custodian of Enemy Property, and vacant Jewish homes were used to house Palestinian refugees from western Jerusalem.³ The Jordanian Custodian issued contracts of protected tenancy for this purpose, and Palestinian tenants had to pay rent to the Custodian. Whereas Jordan preserved, thus, the ownership title of the Jewish owners and their future right to repossession, Israel chose a different path.

Immediately after the war, Israel adopted a series of discriminatory laws that stripped Palestinian refugees of their status as citizens, making them stateless with no right to return; allowed systematic and irreversible confiscation of Palestinian property, and transferred confiscated Palestinian property to the permanent ownership of the Israeli state and the Jewish National Fund for the benefit of Israel's Jewish population.⁴ Israel expropriated the western Jerusalem Palestinian refugees in this manner, including some 10,000 urban homes and 35km² of land, equal to 60-80 percent of Israeli municipal Jerusalem after 1948.⁵ Most of these properties and their owners remain recorded in a UN register completed in 1964.

Israeli occupation, colonization and racial domination of East Jerusalem since 1967

Israel's 1967 occupation of the remainder of the Palestine, including eastern

2 Terry Rempel, "Dispossession and Restitution in 1948 Jerusalem", in S. Tamari (ed.), supra, p. 211.

3 Nazmi Ju'beh, "Focus, Jewish Settlement in the Old City of Jerusalem after 1967", *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 8, No.1, 2001.

4 Including: Law of Return (1950), Israeli Citizenship Law (1952), Entry to Israel Regulations (1974), World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency «Status» Law (1952), Covenant with Zionist Executive (1954) (1971), Keren Kayemet Le-Israel Law (1953), Absentees' Property Law (1950), Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law (1950) and the Land Acquisition for Public Purposes Ordinance (1943). See also, Adalah: <http://adalah.org/eng/Israeli-Discriminatory-Law-Database>

5 Terry Rempel, "Dispossession and Restitution in 1948 Jerusalem", in S. Tamari (ed.), supra, p. 213, 216-217.

Jerusalem, was planned in advance: a claim for sovereignty was legislated into Israeli law in 1948,⁶ and an Israeli military government for the area was ready in 1964.⁷ Immediately after the occupation in 1967, Israel annexed the eastern Jerusalem neighbourhoods together with land belonging to 28 Palestinian communities, among them the towns of Bethlehem and Beit Jala – in total approximately 70km² of occupied Palestinian territory that became known as East Jerusalem.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem by incorporating it into the boundaries of its Jerusalem municipality and extending its domestic law into the area. By doing so, Israel deprived East Jerusalem Palestinians of the protections of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They subjected them to the same discriminatory laws that had been used to ethnically cleanse and dispossess the Palestinian population of western Jerusalem in 1948. Also due to the annexation, Israel gained control of the pre-1948 Jewish properties in East Jerusalem that had been administered by the Jordanian Custodian.

As East Jerusalem was populated exclusively by Palestinians when it was occupied and annexed in 1967, Israeli authorities have since then worked to change its demographic composition and establish Israeli-Jewish domination, through expropriation and forced transfer of Palestinians, and the establishment of Jewish settlements. This policy of population transfer has been guided by the official doctrine of 'demographic balance'. Formulated by the Inter-ministerial Committee to Examine the Rate of Development for Jerusalem (Gafni Committee) in 1973, it defines the ratio of 30% Palestinians and 70% Jews as the objective of Israeli policies in 'united' (West and East) Jerusalem.⁸

47 Years of Population Transfer

Israeli-Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem

Number (est.)	200,000 = 45% of the population
Location	16 large urban settlements; 2,000 in and around the Old City

Settlers in "Greater Jerusalem", West Bank

Number (est.)	152,000 = 30% of the population in West Bank districts of Jerusalem and Bethlehem
Location	The "settlement blocs" of Giv'at Ze'ev, Kokhav Ya'akov, Ma'aleh Adumim and Gush Etzion

6 Area of Jurisdiction and Powers Ordinance, No. 29 of 5708-1948.

7 Tom Segev, 1967. Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East, Metropolitan Books, 2007, p. 458.

8 B'tselem, A Policy of Discrimination: Land Expropriation, Planning and Building in East Jerusalem, 1995, p. 30 – 38, 45 – 48. Also: Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, 'Jerusalem Master Plan 2030: Implications and Threats to the Palestinian presence Jerusalem': www.aidajerusalem.org/uploads/01_07_10986663827.pdf



Since the beginning of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in the mid-1990s, Israel has, moreover, established “Greater Jerusalem” in the adjacent West Bank, i.e., an Israeli-Jewish metropolitan area extending to Ramallah in the North, the Dead Sea in the East, and Hebron in the South. Israel has annexed this area de facto by establishing four large clusters of Jewish settlements⁹ (“settlement blocs”), applying Israeli law to the settlements, and constructing the Wall and a network of highways that tie the settlements into West Jerusalem and Israel.

Consequences for Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem

Stripped of their land and homes, evicted to make space for Jewish settlements:

Israel has expropriated at least one third of the Palestinian land in East Jerusalem, mainly by treating owners living in the West Bank as “absentees” with regard to their Jerusalem property, and by confiscating land for alleged “public” purpose and then allocating it for Jewish settlements. Thousands of Palestinians have evicted and Palestinian homes and heritage destroyed.

In the wake of the 1967 war, for example, Israeli military demolished entire neighbourhoods in the Old City, including the Mughrabi Quarter, and expropriated the land. Approximately 5,000 Palestinian inhabitants, including many 1948 refugees, were evicted, and their homes demolished, in order to create space for Jewish worshippers and the new, expanded Jewish Quarter.¹⁰

In and around the Old City today, demolitions and archaeological digs are

**47 Years of Israeli Population Transfer:
Forced transfer of Palestinians**

Palestinians in East Jerusalem (est.) 246,000 – 293,000
The exact number is unknown because of the (fear of) forced population transfer.

A population of multiply displaced persons:

Approximately **40% are 1948 refugees**, mainly from western Jerusalem
One quarter (61,000 – 70,000) of all Palestinians in East Jerusalem today have been forcibly displaced **in, from and back into** the city since 1967.

Most of the above (74%) were **forced to leave** in the past –mainly for lack of housing-- and then **compelled to return** between 2006 and 2012 -- mainly by fear of losing their “permanent resident” status in Jerusalem.

At least 16,000 (26%) were forcibly **displaced inside** the city between 2006 and 2012, mainly due to home demolitions, forced evictions and difficulties with access to services caused by the Wall.

The total number of Palestinians **permanently transferred from Jerusalem since 1967**, without the option of return, is **unknown**. Among them are some 44,000 who were excluded from the 1967 Israeli census or had their Jerusalem resident status revoked by the Israeli authorities.

Sources: *Displaced by the Wall*, Badil and IDMC/Norwegian Refugee Council, 2006; Unpublished survey commissioned in 2012 by OCHA (published with permission of OCHA-oPT); official Palestinian and Israeli population statistics.

9 B'tselem, A Policy of Discrimination, supra; also: Usama Halabi, Israel's Absentees' Property Law: application of the law in occupied East Jerusalem, Civic Coalition-Jerusalem, 2013: http://civiccoalition-jerusalem.org/system/files/absentee_property_brief_e_final.pdf

10 Civic Coalition-Jerusalem, Submission to the International Fact Finding Mission on the Israeli Settlements, “Israeli colonization and forced population transfer in the Old City of Jerusalem and their impact on the human rights of the Palestinian people”: http://www.civiccoalition-jerusalem.org/system/files/documents/ffm_civic_coalition_final_october_2012.pdf

carried out in Silwan by the Israeli municipality in conjunction with Jewish settlers for the so-called “City of David National Park.”¹¹ Nearby, in Sheikh Jarrah, settler organizations backed by Israeli authorities and courts, are evicting Palestinian refugees from their homes by force, and by taking advantage of an Israeli law that allows claims for pre-1948 properties in East Jerusalem - but not in West Jerusalem where the properties of the refugees are located.¹² In Beit Safafa on East Jerusalem’s southern border, Palestinian habitat is systematically destroyed. The Palestinian community is being bifurcated by a large new highway constructed on land confiscated from them, in order to expedite Israeli movement to and from the Jewish settlements in the southern West Bank.¹³

Stripped of status and rights in their city:

Most Palestinians are deprived of their right to enter, return and live in occupied East Jerusalem. Approximately 30,000 Palestinians, residents of the Israeli-annexed area, were absent/displaced at time of the 1967 Israeli population census. Israel did not record them and excluded them from its population register. In Israeli terms, they—and their descendants—do not exist; they have no legal status in Jerusalem and no right to return.¹⁴ The right to establish a home in Jerusalem, moreover, is denied to almost the entire occupied population, because Israel restricted lawful residence to Palestinians recorded as physically present in 1967 census and their descendants. Since the mid-1990s, finally, free access to city from the occupied West Bank, even for short term visits—for reasons of business, medical care, education, worship or other—has been denied to more than 4 million Palestinians, because Israel has institutionalized a discriminatory “Jerusalem closure policy” composed of military orders, magnetic cards, access permits, checkpoints and the Wall.

Jerusalem Palestinians: “foreigners” subject to deportation:

Also based on the 1967 census, Israel created the special category of “Jerusalem Arabs” who were registered in the municipality’s population register and permitted to stay in East Jerusalem. These Jerusalem Palestinians are, however, deprived of both, their Palestinian nationality and secure civil status in their hometown. The status of “permanent residents” (blue Israeli ID cards) accorded to them under the Entry to Israel Regulations (1974) is usually granted to foreigners on long-term stay in Israel. It entitles to Israeli social benefits, public services and participation in municipal elections, but does not convey an unconditional right to stay, register children or unite

11 Civic Coalition-Jerusalem, Fact Sheet: Silwan

12 Civic Coalition-Jerusalem, Fact Sheet: Sheikh Jarrah

13 Civic Coalition-Jerusalem, Update and Urgent Appeal: Beit Safafa, <http://civiccoalition-jerusalem.org/press-releases/israeli-supreme-court-rules-allow-completion-illegal-israeli-settlement-highway-throu>

14 Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Eviction, Restitution and Protection of Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem, 1999.



with relatives in Jerusalem. For “permanent residents”, these are privileges subject to the discretion of the Israeli interior ministry. According to the Israeli interior ministry, 317,844 Palestinians held such “permanent resident” status in Jerusalem in 2012.

Permanent residency is revoked, if the ministry believes that a Jerusalem Palestinian does not have his/her “centre of life” in Jerusalem but lives in the occupied West Bank or elsewhere. Since 1967, Israel has revoked the Jerusalem resident status of at least 14,200 Palestinians, removing them from their population register and abolishing their right to return under Israeli law.¹⁵

Divided Palestinian families, unregistered children:

Permits to register children not born in Jerusalem, or to live in Jerusalem with spouses and children who are not residents or citizens of Israel, are also frequently denied. Unregistered Palestinian children are forced to live in legal limbo and forgo free public health services and education. Since 2003, family reunification in Jerusalem between Jerusalem Palestinians and their spouses and children from the West Bank or Gaza Strip is prohibited under Israeli law.¹⁶ Many Palestinian families leave Jerusalem to avoid forced separation.

Denied adequate housing and services:

Jerusalem Palestinians depend upon Israeli authorities for essential services. They do not have access to the public services of the Palestinian Authority (PA), because the PA is prohibited under the Oslo agreements from operating in the Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem. Israeli municipal and national authorities systematically prioritize development of Jerusalem’s Jewish population in particular the settlements, deprive Palestinians of their rights to adequate housing, health and education, and induce forcible displacement.

Systematic underfunding of East Jerusalem schools has resulted in a chronic lack of class rooms, facilities and equipment. Qualified Palestinian teachers from the West Bank are prevented from teaching in East Jerusalem schools by the Israeli “closure” policy. Due to discriminatory urban zoning and planning, moreover, Palestinians can build in only 13% of East Jerusalem. Most of this area is already densely populated and built on. Only 13% of the building permits issued by the Israeli Jerusalem municipality between 2005 and 2009 were for Palestinians.¹⁷ Palestinian structures built without permits, including homes and school facilities, are regularly demolished.¹⁸

15 <http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates1224>

16 <http://adalah.org/cng/Articles/1556/Family-Unification>

17 <http://www.acri.org.il/en/2013/05/07/ej-figures/>

18 UN OCHA Fact Sheet: East Jerusalem, Key Humanitarian Concerns, December 2012: http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_Jerusalem_FactSheet_December_2012_english.pdf

Home demolitions and the severe housing shortage force many Palestinian families to seek housing in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods behind the Wall or to leave the city entirely.

Persecuted for resisting De-Palestinization:

Under the Oslo agreements, Israel is to apply the Palestinian school curriculum in occupied East Jerusalem, and to permit political participation of Jerusalem Palestinians in Palestinian public affairs, including activities of PLO (but not PA) institutions. In reality, Israel systematically oppresses Palestinian freedom of expression and assembly. It also deprives East Jerusalem youth of the right to learn about their history, heritage and identity as Palestinians. Israeli authorities impose censorship on Palestinian school books and pressure on Palestinian schools to adopt the Israeli curriculum. Israeli law prescribes sanctions for boycotts and Nakba commemorations.¹⁹ Authorities regularly stifle public conferences and cultural events and have instigated a climate of fear through (threats of) summons and fines against Palestinian organizers, hosts and suppliers, and by tolerating Jewish settler violence against Palestinians, including children.²⁰ At least 31 Palestinian institutions have been ordered closed since 2001 under the pretexts of security and affiliation with the PA. Many Palestinian institutions and associations have relocated from occupied East Jerusalem due to fear of Israeli persecution.

The Civic Coalition for Palestinian Rights in Jerusalem is an alliance of over 20 Palestinian NGOs and grass-roots organizations. Established in 2005, the Coalition works to protect and promote the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights of Palestinians in Jerusalem through legal support, public awareness-raising and advocacy.



¹⁹ The Anti-Boycott Law and the “Nakba Law passed in 2011; see Adalah, Discriminatory Law Database.
²⁰ http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_ej_settlements_factSheet_april_2012_english.pdf



Jerusalem residency as tool of silent transfer

Palestinian Jerusalemites are treated as immigrants in their own city

By The Society of St. Yves

Imagine that overnight you lose the right to live in your house, your city, your country. Imagine that overnight your legal status becomes insecure. Imagine that overnight your presence in the city your family has resided in for generations is barely tolerated. This became reality for the Palestinian population of Jerusalem in 1967.

Shortly after occupying Gaza, the West Bank and Golan in 1967, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and applied its rule and law over the land. Instead of granting the Palestinian inhabitants of East Jerusalem citizenship, Israel gave them the status of permanent residency, thus practically annexing the land without its residents.

Thousands of Palestinians become absentees

Nevertheless, not everybody received this status: a census, which was done from house to house registering people who were present at home at that certain time, made sure that only those who were physically counted within the newly delineated Jerusalem municipality boundaries were considered as Jerusalem residents. Anybody else - who was away at work, was out of the city for any reason or had fled the horrors of war - was not registered and lost the right to be a resident of the city, notwithstanding the fact that until this moment he/she had lived in Jerusalem and had his/her family history and life conducted in it.

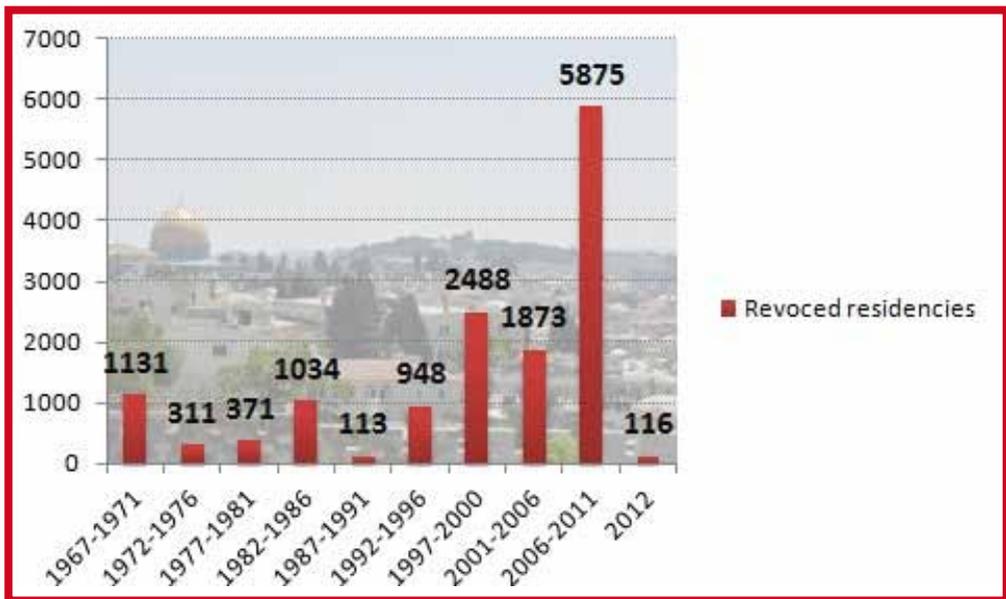
The status of Palestinian permanent residents of Jerusalem is precarious: Contrary to the “Law of Return” which applies to Jews and their descendants and grants them the right to immigrate to Israel at any time to become citizens immediately upon arrival, the “Law of Entry into Israel” applies to everybody else, including permanent residents. According to this law and its regulations, the status of permanent residency can be easily revoked if the resident leaves the country for more than seven years or if he gets permanent residency or citizenship anywhere else in the world.

These regulations paved the way for the Israeli authorities to start a systematic policy of residency revocation and identity card withdrawal. As the residency revocation is not only applied to Jerusalemites who lived more than seven years in third states, but also to those who reside in areas of Palestine (the West Bank outside the municipal borders of Jerusalem as well as the Gaza Strip), thousands lost their right to reside in their city: Between 1967 and 2012, 14260 Palestinians had their residency revoked and had to leave together with their families.

Social insecurity

The residency status has also other implications. Beside the fact, that Palestinian permanent residents pay full taxes and charges in Israel, their status does not grant them automatically the right to any social benefits which also includes state health insurance. Moreover, residents have to fulfill what Israel calls the “center of life policy”. At every major junction in their lives - such as registering their marriage, their children, the death of a spouse or simply the obligatory renewing of the ID card - they have to prove that their place of residency for at least two years has been in Jerusalem. To do so they must provide electricity, water, telephone and municipal tax (“Arnona”) bills as well as lease agreements. The birth documents of the children have to be from Jerusalem and school certificates have to prove that the children attend school in Jerusalem. If the Ministry of Interior, after reviewing the documents, has the slightest doubt about their center of life, their residency is in danger.

The necessity to prove the center of life for maintaining residency, coupled with the well-known restrictions on housing and freedom of access to the city, have not only resulted in serious languish in the quality of life of Jerusalemites. This has also lead to make housing addresses and ID types a serious hindrance in marriage choices and ordinary family lives, both for East Jerusalemites as well as their loved ones in the rest of Palestine.



Permanent residency as a tool of silent transfer

Israel's unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem gravely infringes upon the rights of the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and flagrantly breaches international law. East Jerusalem is occupied territory and Jerusalemites are living under occupation. Therefore, they are subject, as is the rest of the West Bank, to the provisions of international humanitarian law that relate to occupied territory.

Palestinian Jerusalemites, as the native population of Jerusalem, should be especially protected – however, reality is a different one: today Palestinians are hardly tolerated in their own city, and live always in danger of losing their right to reside in their home town. The battle of maintaining the Jerusalem residency despite of all obstacles has become a major issue in the life of Jerusalemites. Often it is lost. Therefore, the revocation of residency has become one of Israel's most efficient tools of silent transfer of the Palestinian population from Jerusalem.

The Society of St. Yves is the Catholic Center for Human Rights, working under the umbrella of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Through legal assistance and advocacy, the organization is countering human rights violations stemming out of the occupation. Main working fields are issues related to residency rights for Palestinians in Jerusalem, cases related to right to property and land in Jerusalem and the West Bank as well as cases which relate to freedom of movement for Palestinians.



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 neighbourhoods, 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 discrimination and exclusion, a source of struggle rather than peace.

Kairos Document, Chapter 1.1.8

Living Hopefully in a Hopeless Situation

By *Bishop Dr. Munib Younan,*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

Some people ask if I am optimistic or pessimistic in the face of such a complicated conflict and I always say that I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but hopeful. My hope does not come from Washington DC, Berlin, London, or Paris – it comes from the heart of Jerusalem and the empty tomb.

The narrative of Easter, the power of the cross and resurrection that took place in Jerusalem is the only source of our hope. On the Via Dolorosa, Jesus encountered all the dark forces that we experience in the Middle East today. He sacrificed himself so that we might hope and we can trust in his power.

We will not allow extremism, oppression, violence, bloodshed, hatred, walls, demolitions, settlements or confiscated lands to diminish our hope, to make us give in to despair. The hope of living with dignity, justice, and reconciliation will triumph over the dark forces we face.

This is the power of the cross today. This is the hope of Christians in Jerusalem and the whole Holy Land. This is the task of the universal Church to work with love and tenderness to protect life and the human rights of every nation. As long as the church of Christ in every land, especially in the Holy Land, claims this responsibility within the spirit of Easter, everyone who believes will be filled with hope.

I pray this hope will keep your hearts and minds focused on Jesus Christ, our Lord in spite of that which the world places in our paths. *And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:5)*

I close with the traditional Jerusalem Easter greeting: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

Bishop Munib Younan

Munib Younan, born in Jerusalem, is the elected president of the Lutheran World Federation since 2010 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Bishop of Palestine and Jordan in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land since 1998.



Jerusalem – The gate to the sky

By Land Research Center - Arab Studies Society

There isn't a city in history that has witnessed bloody conflicts and repeated destruction as much as Jerusalem. But despite it all, the Arab characteristics of the city remained predominant. However today Jerusalem is witnessing Israeli occupation, looting of property, confiscation of land, house demolition, forced displacement of Jerusalemite Arabs and falsification of history and heritage. In order to make the city Jewish, may be the greatest danger it has been subjected to throughout its long history.

Before the smell of gun powder had subsided after the 1967 war, and on 10th, 11th, and 12th of June 1967, the Israeli occupation demolished the neighborhood of Alsharaf Alarabi inside the walls of the old city (127 houses, stores and two mosques):



Picture of Alsharaf Alarabi neighborhood before and after 1967

Only two weeks after the end of the war on the 28th of June, 1967, Israel annexed most of the land in East Jerusalem - the least densely populated –, around 71 km² to West Jerusalem, announced the city of Jerusalem Unified under Israeli sovereignty and considered its Palestinian owners residents non-national citizens. These were the first steps of the Judaization of the city and imposed fait accompli. In 1980 Israel announced Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the state of Israel, a partial step on the way to the complete Judaization of the city, theft of its history and death of its future continuity.

All this in spite of the consensus of the international community in all institutions of the United Nations that East Jerusalem and the rest of the territories occupied in 1967 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are “occupied territory” and come under the Fourth Geneva Convention related to the protection of civilians, keeping their rights, their properties and land at time of war.

The Security Council resolution 252 of 1968 in response to the annexation of East Jerusalem stated that “all Israeli decisions and activities carried out in Jerusalem are illegal, and are considered null and void under international law including confiscation of land and real estate, and systematic classification of Jerusalemites and their identity cards”.

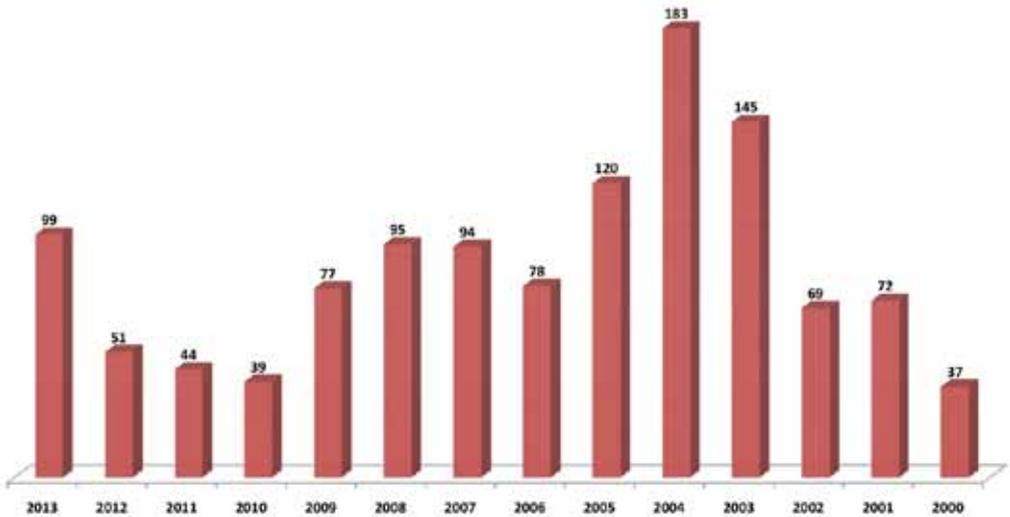
Since the start of occupation in 1967 the Israeli administration used all means to tighten control over East Jerusalem and change its Muslim and Christian character by establishing a Jewish character in its place. Decreasing the amount of land available to Palestinians for building to less than 12% of what they possessed, the percentage of construction was decreased to 30% of the land area, while the occupying municipality took control of about 87% of the land area for housing grants for Jewish settlers, to provide public services to them and give them a percentage of the construction of up to 300% of the land area, raising the number of Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem from zero in 1967 to about 290 000 Jews in 2012, while Palestinian Jerusalemites whose number in Jerusalem in 1967 was about 100 000 inhabitants increased to 285 000 people in 2012.

When Teddy Kollek, the first and most famous mayor of Jerusalem, said: “We didn’t leave any means unused to halt the Arab construction... and we didn’t use any means of halting Jewish construction”, it was as he just said: “We demolish the Palestinian construction for any reason, even if trivial ... and did not destroy the Jewish construction even if it was illegal”.

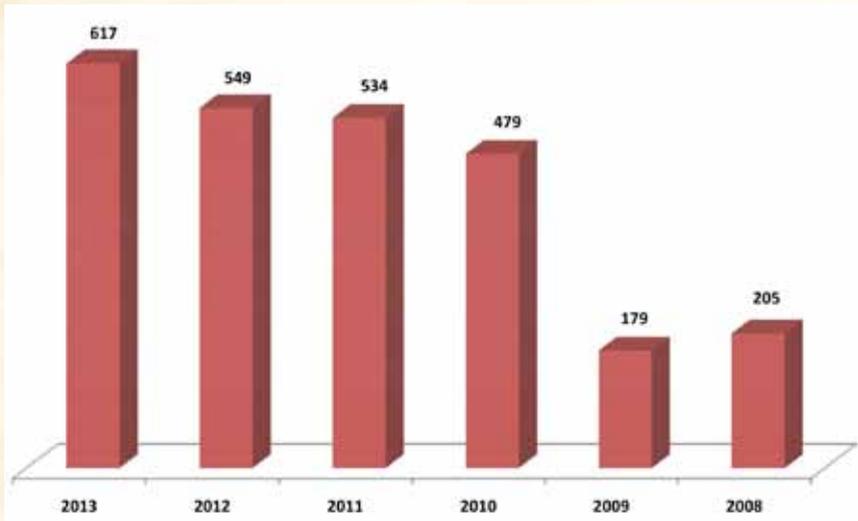
Yes, demolish the Palestinian construction for any minor infraction of the plans or even attempt to renovate a house without license, while legitimize Jewish settlement construction and re-chart them again to legitimize violations.



The chart below clarifies the number of houses demolished in East Jerusalem from 2000 to 2013



Houses demolished in East Jerusalem 2000 - 2013



Houses demolished in the West Bank including Jerusalem 2008 - 2013

The number of housing units demolished by the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Jerusalemites since 1970 until today is about (3500) which led to a dwelling forced displacement of approximately (24000) Jerusalemite citizens more than half of whom are children.

There are about 20 thousand Palestinian Jerusalemite dwellings threatened by demolition, while Palestinians need to build about another 50 000 housing units. At the same time the occupation constructed more than 45 settlements in Jerusalem and its surrounding areas; settlers live comfortably in spacious constructions and are provided with all the services they need on usurped land from owners who barely have land.

Judaization comes in the form of persistent attacks on Christian and Islamic religious areas; besides the threat of the Aqsa Mosque being divided, the excavations around it and the tunnels under it that could lead to its demolition. There are already plans for the Temple and an evident golden menorah to be placed nearby, while experiments to produce the perfect sacrificial calf are being conducted in a nearby settlement on the way to Jericho.

Also the land of the Orthodox Patriarchate and its possessions are under threat in order to gain control of its property in the old city or around it; examples are the attempt of burning the Latroun Monastery as well as desecrating the Church of Resurrection, the Orthodox Monastery of the Cross, the Church of the Virgin Mary, Gethsemane, the Armenian church, and the Baptist as well as others, and attacks and encroachment on the land of Mar Elias for use of Jewish occupation.

This, as well as preventing the believers from praying at Al-Aqsa mosque, or in the Resurrection Church (Church of the Holy Sepulchre) even on holidays and religious



occasions - what kind of prayer can only take place with a permit and under the batons of spiteful soldiers?

Even historic cemeteries have not been spared demolition, desecration and seizure for building occupation settlement installations in their place.

Nevertheless, the people of Palestine, Christians and Muslims alike, are determined to preserve their rights in their land and their holy city, for they are the ones who climb the walls to enter their city and lay mats on the ground to pray and take pride in their Via Dolorosa as they walk in the footsteps of Christ, an affirmation of the right to their land and their commitment to it.

Land Research Center - Arab Studies Society – the Land Research Center – LRC- was founded in 1986 as part of Arab Studies Society. It is a nongovernmental nonprofit organization. LRC's activities cover the area of the West Bank- including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. In 2002, the Israeli occupation authorities sealed LRC's main office in the occupied city of Jerusalem for a period of 6 months, renewed automatically unless stated otherwise. However, LRC continues to work in East Jerusalem through a Jerusalemite staff. It also has offices in Hebron, Ramallah and Nablus.



A statement about Israeli Demolition of Patriarchate Property in Jerusalem

By Patriarch Fouad Twal

“Looking upon a painful and upsetting scene raises discontent and anger. There is no justification for the demolition, but when the municipality and the Israeli government enact demolitions and displace people from their homes, these practices increase hatred and endanger the future of peace. This land has belonged to the Latin Patriarchate long before 1967. The Patriarchate possesses the official deed, and all legal paperwork proving ownership. Even worse, the legal tenants of the property, Mr Salameh Abu Tarbush and his family, were taken by surprise by the demolition.

We are the rightful/lawful owners, and you will hear our voice before all governments worldwide, and we will take legal action in appropriate courts to rectify this injustice, to bring back justice and rebuild this home. We have willpower and a spirit of belonging to this land of our ancestors, this sacred land which is home of our past, present and future.”

In November 2013 bulldozers of the Jerusalem Municipality, accompanied by Israeli Security forces, demolished the property on the Jerusalem-Hebron road, near the northern checkpoint number 300. This was a residential property of about 140 square meters, on which lived a family of 14 people. The home’s residents spoke about the displacement, which was carried out in the early hours of the morning, rendering them suddenly homeless. Their living situation is now tragic, in the open without shelter. The Red Cross is providing them with tents and assistance. The Patriarch’s statement came during his visit to inspect the demolished home. ²¹

Patriarch Fouad Twal, born 23 October 1940 in Jordan, is a Palestinian archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church, serving as the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem since June 2008. Twal is also the Grand Prior of the Knights of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and serves as the President for the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land.

²¹ From: “Patriarch Twal Condemns Israeli Demolition of Patriarchate Property”, [http://en.lpj.org/2013/11/06/his-beatitude-patriarch-fuad-twal-deplores-and-condemns-the-israeli-demolition-of-patriarchate-property/\(29.03.2014\)](http://en.lpj.org/2013/11/06/his-beatitude-patriarch-fuad-twal-deplores-and-condemns-the-israeli-demolition-of-patriarchate-property/(29.03.2014))



The Situation of Private Schools in East Jerusalem

Interview with Dr. Suleiman Rabadi, College des Frères Jerusalem

Conducted by Dr. Ingeborg Tiemann

Interviewer:

Dr. Suleiman, since 2005 you are the director of College des Frères Jerusalem, which comprises two schools under one umbrella: one school inside the Old City of Jerusalem right at the New Gate entrance and another one in Beit Hanina. You have a lot of experience how the situation for private schools in East Jerusalem changed during this period of time. But first please give us an idea about your school College des Frères Jerusalem: How many students are attending your schools and who are they?

Dr. Suleiman Rabadi:

We are a school under the umbrella of the The Brothers of the Christian schools, which run schools and universities all over the world. In our two schools in Jerusalem we educate all in all about 1600 students. 12 years ago we started to be co-educational. Nowadays 30 % of our students are girls. We have students of all Christian denominations and Muslim students; a little bit more than half of our students are Muslims.

Interviewer:

You are also familiar with the situation of other private schools in East Jerusalem, as you are cooperating with them in a network of schools. How many private schools are operating in East Jerusalem?

Dr. Suleiman Rabadi:

In East Jerusalem, there are currently 26 private schools. Most of them were established and are owned by institutions, partly church-related or in association with churches. All Christian schools are interconnected in a network.

Interviewer:

What are the main problems you see for private schools in East Jerusalem?

Dr Suleiman Rabadi:

Here we first have to refer to politics. The political situation reflects badly on students of all schools. The social fabric of East Jerusalem and the cultural life are deeply affected by this. For example, the neighborhoods are not safe anymore for the kids; only rarely do they provide safe playing places. There are drugs in the Old City and violence. As somebody who grew up in the Old City, I could see how familial life has disintegrated under different pressures of the socio-political situation. There is a lack of services to tackle these problems effectively.

Interviewer:

How does this show itself at school?

Dr Suleiman Rabadi:

During the years that I have been the Director of the school I continuously witnessed the diminishing and weakening sense of Palestinian identity among the students. This is reflected in tens of incidents at school. At our school we have 5 Social Workers who support the students whenever it is necessary and possible and we have 8 special education teachers working on learning difficulties. We want to support the kids as much as we can, not only with teaching them what they need for the future but also socially. We have different clubs in which the students can meet after school and be creative in theatre or Dabkeh dance. We invite other schools to participate in our clubs and events so that Palestinian kids from different neighborhoods can get to know each other. Our theatre group performs in the city because we want to give the kids a sense of belonging to the city so that they really live their cultural heritage as Palestinians.

Interviewer:

If I understand you right, besides teaching you and your staff see a social task for the school?

Dr Suleiman Rabadi:

Indeed, the city is collapsing little by little. We cannot close our eyes to this. We cannot watch this and do nothing. Therefore we are developing both our schools to be community centers for our kids, for their parents, and for the neighborhoods – providing them with safe places to meet and to be creative.

Interviewer:

What about your teachers? Are they also affected by the political situation?

Dr Suleiman Rabadi:

10 – 12 % of our teachers are from the West Bank. There is always a threat that their permits might be revoked for political reasons. Lately we had a problem: It took one full month for two new teachers to obtain permits for crossing checkpoints – with the consequence that we had to find replacements for them for that month. There is always a threat that a permit will not be renewed. This makes the situation potentially unstable.

Interviewer:

What are your wishes for the future concerning private schools in East Jerusalem?



Dr Suleiman Rabadi:

Frankly speaking, our financial situation is tough. The money which comes from the municipality and from the school fees covers only about 85 % of our expenses. Many parents of our kids can't pay fully the school fees; therefore we need to provide scholarships. So we are always in the Minus. But what can we do? For example, if I would decide to reduce some of the professional personnel to the minimum, it would save us money, but it comes at a heavy price: it would be at the expense of our students and of the quality of education. I don't want to do this! We try to tackle this financial problem with fundraising. With this, we are fighting a big fight, for the best of our kids, for our city, for ourselves as Palestinians. To answer your question: My wish is that the churches give us more financial support. I feel they really could do more.

Dr. Ingeborg Tiemann, Civil Peace Services Expert, since 2005 commissioned by AGEH/ Cologne in Palestine/Israel; she has been leading Civil Peace Services Projects in close cooperation with Palestinian experts at Bethlehem University and at Christian schools in East Jerusalem/ Bethlehem.

Dr. Suleiman Rabadi, is the Director of College des Freres since 2005. From 1983 – 2005 he was a Professor of History and Philosophy at Bir Zeit University.



The Situation of Municipality Schools in East Jerusalem

The reality of education in occupied Jerusalem:

A battle of resilience and presence

By Dima Samman

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. (Geneva, 12 August 1949):

Excerpt from ARTICLE 50:

The Occupying Power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children.

The Occupying Power shall take all necessary steps to facilitate the identification of children and the registration of their parentage. It may not, in any case, change their personal status, nor enlist them in formations or organizations subordinate to it.

Should the local institutions be inadequate for the purpose, the Occupying Power shall make arrangements for the maintenance and education, if possible by persons of their own nationality, language and religion, of children who are orphaned or separated from their parents as a result of the war and who cannot be adequately cared for by a near relative or friend.

Since the 1967 occupation of Jerusalem, the education system also paid its toll since there are multiple actors supervising this important stream, but as the following report describes, the Israeli control is yet another tool to force submission or to push towards emptying the city from its indigenous “permanent residents”.

The four types of schools existing in Jerusalem are: Islamic Waqf trusts/endowments, private schools affiliated to churches but serving the larger community, municipality schools (under direct control of the municipality of Jerusalem and quasi-governmental schools with efforts of total integration in the Israeli system.

Israel has pursued a plan for the destruction of the education sector in Jerusalem by striking at three main targets which are:

1. The students
2. The teachers
3. The education curriculum



1. The first target: The Students

The occupation authorities have put various obstacles in front of the student's right to obtain a free, good compulsory education, thereby flouting all international laws and conventions that guarantee this right, avoiding their legal responsibilities towards occupied people:

Depriving students easy access to school:

The separation wall and expansion resulted in the isolation of Jerusalem from the rest of the country and thus forced no less than 20% of students to have to pass through fixed or temporary barriers causing delay to academic lessons and sometimes losing a whole academic year, by preventing total access to Jerusalem, according to the mood of the soldier.

Depriving students from learning in appropriate school buildings:

The occupation has seized school buildings, given orders for the demolition of schools, and developed various obstacles to obtaining building permits for schools. They did not take into account the natural population increase that led to overcrowding in classrooms and negatively affected the teachers' performance, the students' ability to comprehend and the education process in general. The reality of school buildings is tragic because of a great lack in classrooms amounting to 1500 rooms. Most school are rented in residential buildings, a great number of which are scattered and not in the same building. This doesn't convey a feeling of being in a learning environment, does not comply with education regulations (health or psychological), when they lack various educational facilities, such as recreation grounds, play grounds, halls, labs, libraries, etc.

Depriving the students from enjoying their right of expressing identity, culture, heritage and worship practice:

The Israeli authorities prevent the Jerusalemite students from holding celebrations and prohibit them from heading in groups to the Dome of the Rock to perform their religious rituals, because they don't have permits to do so. They also place various obstacles to hinder completion of their university studies, and do not recognise the certificates issued by the universities in the city of Jerusalem.

2. The second target: The Teachers

The occupation authorities refuse giving teachers who hold West Bank identities the

necessary permits to enter Jerusalem. They stop them at checkpoints, arrest, humiliate and impose fines on them when apprehending them without permits and prevent some of them from travelling outside the country.

Their percentage prior to the year 2000 was 60%, and now they make up less than 28% which has a negative effect on the quality of education since they are the most experienced and professional, in their different specializations.

A severe shortage in specializations among especially male staff at the waqf endowment schools reflects negatively on the educational process and the quality of education, which is what the occupation authorities want.

3. The third target: The Education Curriculum

Academic books and student activities:

Attempts to judaize the curriculum have not ended since the annexation of Jerusalem in 1967 to the present day. Rabid media campaigns on the Palestinian curriculum, which entered Palestinian schools for the first time in 2000, where providing same education on both sides of the nation, included:

- Palestinian ownership and privacy was denied to Palestinian students over the years.
- Educational curriculum seminars including national, social and “balanced” programs.
- Replete with positive values and principles far from racism, hatred and violence and counterfeiting.
- Talks about the land, rights and equality.

Israel accuses the Palestinian curriculum of incitement calling for violence and hatred of Israel, and increased international voices demanding the curriculum be studied and analysed, and financial aid from donor countries that were funding the printing of books were seized. A strict censorship of the book contents followed accusing Palestinian curriculum to hinder the peace process.

Israel re-prints the Palestinian academic books and deletes all that refers to the Palestinian national belonging:

Deleted were lessons and poem verses, passages, words, questions and verses from the Koran, national symbols and topics about the Palestinian right of return, settlements and the migration of Israeli settlers to Palestine, barriers, the uprising (“Intifada”), destroyed villages, Zionism as a political movement of racism, the development of the spirit of resistance and jihad glorifying martyrdom and prisoners, steadfastness,



loyalty to the land and the nation, patriotism, cultural heritage, the burning of the Palestinian Al-Aqsa Mosque and information about leaders such as Saladin and others.

A book by Professor Nurit Peled-ElHanan (researcher and professor of psychology at the Hebrew University) entitled “Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education” (2012) exposes Israeli racism in curriculum. The book offers a detailed presentation of racial discrimination against Arabs and Palestinians. After studying their curriculum over 13 years (1996-2009), Professor Nurit is behind the establishment of the Russell Tribunal to prove that Israel is a State of “apartheid” and she calls for its boycott economically, culturally and academically.

Israel imposes “Matriculation” (Bagroot) on five schools in occupied Jerusalem in 2013-2014:

Occupation authorities arrived to the conviction that it is difficult to Judaize the Palestinian curriculum at once, so they followed the cluster system, which opened class branches to teach the Israeli curriculum in five schools in occupied Jerusalem, considering them the weakest link, as their performance of education is not at the required level.

The imposition of hanging the Israeli Declaration of Independence on the walls of Palestinian schools in a prominent place in the school. Jerusalem schools received a letter on 17 March 2011 from the Israeli Ministry of Education (the Department of Education in the Arab sector) directed to all (principals of Arab schools) obliging them to hang the Israeli Declaration of Independence on the walls of their schools

Conclusion

The reality of education in Jerusalem is a fertile ground for delinquency among youth (which constitutes 55% of the Jerusalem community), and thus the rise in proportion of alcohol and drug abuse, where Jerusalem recorded the highest percentage in the world which is 7.8%, while the ratio in the world is no more than 6.2%.

To combat the Judaization scheme of education in Jerusalem, a number of resolutions were taken by the Palestinian Ministry for the academic year 2014-2015 that include modifying the Palestinian curriculum to suit the needs of the students, amending the general secondary exam system, purchasing new school buildings and endowments and starting awareness-building campaigns about the Judaization plans to brainwash the minds of students. Serious efforts of planning and coordination in the whole Jerusalem framework would include activating the role of media, obtaining the support of parental committees and the backing of the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and all Arab and Islamic countries and

institutions, and encouraging the steadfastness of the Jerusalemite Society for they are the armor of the religious, cultural and educational heritage. More important is the reaching out to international bodies and alliance of human rights organizations to expose the violation of laws and international treaties by Israel.

Dima Samman

Dima Samman is a poet and General Director in charge of the Jerusalem Affairs Unit in the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education.



Quotations of His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem

About price-tag-attacks from Israeli settlers:

“We experienced and still experience “Price Tag crimes”²² in our country, especially in Jerusalem. All these acts are abhorrent, whatever their targets are, and they undermine the efforts of all those in our country who are working for reconciliation and peace. These despicable acts, that are also directed against Christian Holy Sites and cemeteries, are not only intolerable deeds of desecration; they are unworthy of our contemporary society that seeks to be built on the principles of mutual respect, on freedom of worship, and on peaceful coexistence.”

Respect for and rights of pilgrims (international and locally)

“Today more than ever Jerusalem and the Holy Land are the destination of so many. We warmly welcome pilgrims of every faith and religious tradition. The Holy Land continues to exercise a tremendous influence on the human soul. This factor alone makes our attentiveness to the integrity of Jerusalem, the Holy Land and the Holy Places of supreme importance. In this regard we, who live here, are privileged to be part of this unique multi-cultural and multi-ethnic heritage.

Freedom of worship:

“We are all required to take renewed steps to ensure the safety and well-being both of pilgrims and of the members of our communities, as well as to guarantee their rights and privileges that are sanctioned by our common sacred history. We have to be especially attentive to this at the times of religious festivals, so that all pilgrims may have access to the Holy Places and can participate in worship. In order to avoid repeating the mistakes of bitter experiences in the past, there is more that can be done both to facilitate access to the Holy Places for pilgrims from a distance as well as from our local communities and to deepen our commitment to the democratic value of freedom of worship. These great religious events are the best means for building peace and eradicating prejudice.”

²² Price tag policy is the name originally given to «acts of random violence aimed at the Palestinian population, and Israeli security forces» by fundamentalist Israeli settler youths who, according to the New York Times, «exact a price from local Palestinians or from the Israeli security forces for any action taken against their settlement enterprise». In recent years (2012-2013), dozens of such attacks have targeted Christian sites and the Christian community in Jerusalem.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Price_tag_policy (19.02.2014)

Commitment of the Church to the ministry:

“We shall serve for and guarantee the fundamental nature and mission of the Holy Places. The Holy Places are neither tourist attractions nor archaeological wonders. They are first and foremost the physical expressions of the divine-human encounter and the marks of our sacred history, and so they are always primarily places of worship that gather people together for the same purpose. Our common task, as religious and civic leaders, is to maintain this true character of our Holy Sites, so that all may drink deeply of their spiritual waters.”

Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem

Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem was born in 1952. He is the current Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem. He is the “Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and all Palestine.”



Easter: 14 Stations of the Cross

By Yusef Daher

Good Friday 2013, here we call it Great Friday.

I woke up. I prepared my children, so they could catch up with their friends and their youth group to the procession of the Way of the Cross in the Old City of Jerusalem. My wife was busy preparing the meat for the feast, which was three days away. She had not tasted meat for the past 40 days during Lent.

I was struggling between going down to the old streets of the Via Dolorosa and staying at home and watching the procession on Tele Lumiere satellite. But I knew I was just kidding myself. Of course I was reluctant to go there and fight my way to the procession and the Holy Sepulchre like I did every year.

Then I admitted: I am fed up with fighting the occupation and its too many barriers during these holidays! At that moment the agony of my Lord Jesus on His way of the Cross struck me and told me: Go and bear with Him some stations. This is the day, this is Great Friday.

I took my wife and my three year old daughter Zeina and left the house. At the first barrier in the Christian quarter a border policeman told me to leave and to try other streets. I told him that I will not go anywhere because I know my city very well and I know I will not get through any other barrier. The policeman got nervous and so did I. We shouted and our arms hit each other while my daughter Zeina was still on my arm. Friends from the adjacent souvenir shops came and pulled me out of this fight. Two other police men did the same with their colleague.

We managed to go through the same street and pass the barrier moments after this incident; we just went through one of the shops. From there we went to the Holy Sepulchre Church and witnessed that on the plaza about 30 police men were driving tourists in and out of the Church through barricades.

Soon, the procession reached the plaza. The Custody of the Holy land and the Franciscan fathers entered the Church together, and then a small cross and a big cross, carried by the local Catholics, entered the Church. I, like the others, noticed that it was not over yet. The rest of the community and my other children had not arrived yet.

We noticed that policemen were blocking local people from entering the plaza, just from the Mouristan Street. It had already happened last year, and in the years before. The people were stopped for about 10 minutes. The whole procession was almost inside the church. Only tourists were allowed in and out. The young Palestinian

Christians could not bear this situation anymore. One girl slipped in, it was my daughter Muna (16 years old), her friend Lara was caught and beaten by policemen. And then the whole mass of people moved through the barrier, flooding the barrier. After the crowd was running to the church, one young man was still in the hands of the police. His name was Tamer Tams (20 years old) and he was arrested for some hours.

This is our way of the cross every year – 14 stations. With this I would like to thank every person who walks with us this road of our life under occupation. Some walk with us few stations and others walk with us the whole way. Thank you all and a Joyful Easter for all of you, your families and loved ones

Yusef Daher was born in in Jerusalem in 1966. He is currently the Executive Secretary of the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem in association with the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches. He is not only the author of many papers on Palestinian Christians and Jerusalem, but also one of the co-authors of the Kairos Palestine Document.

“Religious liberty is severely restricted; the freedom of access to the holy places is denied under the pretext of security. Jerusalem and its holy places are out of bounds for many Christians and Muslims from the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Even Jerusalemites face restrictions during the religious feasts. Some of our Arab clergy are regularly barred from entering Jerusalem.”

(Kairos Document, Chapter 1.1.5)



The Ceremony of a Miracle

By Dr John Tleel

It has been known since time immemorial, and even today, 2014, that the Holy Fire is unique in the world. Great and Holy Saturday, when the Holy Light emerges from the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem remained and remains a mystery. Interpretations and explanations, beliefs and fantasies continue to occupy the minds of simple people, as well as big minds of all times.

The ceremony is enriched with several extremely symbolic and historic components, which elevate the atmosphere to the highest religious and unique emotional human conditioning. I intend to concentrate myself only, on my deep personal conviction on the momentary moment when earth meets heaven, only once a year.

According to the official and historic Rum/Greek Orthodox tradition of the Holy Light, the Patriarch after the traditional three litanies in the Rotunda, around the Holy Edicule, already sealed, doors of the Edicule are opened and the Patriarch enters, disrobed of his ceremonial vestments and carrying four bundles of virgin candles of which two are fit in specially made silver sheaths. The doors of the Edicule are closed and the Patriarch enters the Holy Tomb Chamber. The Church is in complete darkness, Jerusalem is in darkness, the world is in darkness. The Patriarch kneels, and he prays before Christ's empty Holy Tomb. All this constitutes a ceremony of great Rum Orthodox Christian Religious significance and importance that takes place the day before Sunday of the *Anastasis*, the Resurrection. Without the Ceremony of the Holy Light, Jerusalem is like any other city in the world.

Never ever, in the 2000 years history of the Church of Jerusalem, as far as I know, the Church of the Resurrection, the Mother of all the Churches, deviated from the Ceremony (*Τελετή*) of the *Hagion Phos* (Holy Light).

But, the Holy Light/Fire becomes a miracle, a great miracle, when and after it emerges, after the thaumaturgical prayer, after it has been seen, seen and witnessed by the crowds, when the Patriarch comes out of the Edicule, clutching two flaming bundles of candles and he raises the burning bundles and blesses the crowds, and when the bells of the Holy Sepulchre start ringing announcing the Good News. There was a time when the Holy Light almost failed to appear; even today the crowds are anxiously waiting, impatiently waiting, why until now, one minute makes a difference, two minutes, and all get relieved, full of thanks to God and speed to have their candles lit, to be blessed, to take the Different Light from all the other lights of our unstable and embattled region and the world of today, to their homes, to their shops, towns, cities, and countries of the region and abroad. The Palestinian Christian Boy and Girl Scouts are ready to parade, drum and play their bagpipes, proudly displaying their

huge bundles of candles lit with the Holy Fire, and the joyful pandemonium in the streets of the Old City and around it is at its peak.

It is a heavenly Gift for Jerusalem, the holiest city in the world and especially for its citizens, regardless of convictions; all of a sudden a modest ceremony converts to a miracle. The joy, the exaltation, the ecstasy, the voices of the crowds, the instantaneous and spontaneous spreading of the flames, the smoke and the humanly inconceivable safety of candles never causing any fire, even when the British Mandate transformed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre into a woodland for consolidation pretexts and reasons or any accident when the church is full and packed with local citizens and pilgrims.

For our Palestinian history and contemporary context in general, the present, still under long abnormal conditions, the almost desecration of the Old City, especially during the Holy Saturday, must end for the sake of peace.

“Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed”

Blessed are they that have seen and yet believed.

*Blessed are also all that have seen or not seen that consciously or unconsciously,
Willingly or unwillingly have believed or not.*

Dr John N. Tleel

Dr John Tleel was born in 1928. In 1945 he graduated from the Rum(Greek) Orthodox classical Gymnasium of St. Dimitrios, in the Old City. He is a doctor of Dental Surgery, French Faculty of Beirut, 1949. He is a Palestinian who became a refugee, from just around the corner outside the New Gate inside the Old City. He is the author of “I am Jerusalem” 2000, 2007.



**Kairos Palestine –
A moment of truth**

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Kairos Palestine is a group of Palestinian Christians who authored “A moment of Truth” – Christian Palestinian’s word to the world about the occupation of Palestine, an expression “of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering”, and a call for solidarity in ending over six decades of oppression. The document was published in December 2009.

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.







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