

Bethlehem, January 15th 2016

Dear Kairos Friends around the world,

6 years ago, Kairos Palestine "A Moment of Truth: A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering " was launched as a Palestinian Christian cry to end the injustice Israeli Occupation. In definition Kairos is a Greek word meaning “a moment in time” or “the right or opportune moment (the supreme moment).” Therefore The Kairos document is an evergreen document, it is always in time and is always a mean in which we can make a change and aim for a better, more aspiring future.

With this newsletter, we’re sending you our beloved New Year’s greetings. Looking back to the last year, it has been a very challenging one for Kairos Palestine and a very sad one for Palestine. We indeed see a continuation of a wave of violence following the attacks on Temple Mount and the burning of a Palestinian family by Israeli settlers last autumn. Kairos is in the process of developing a new strategy for the years to come, of course to be able to react to the recent developments with a proper, fact-based and peaceful call for resistance as well as to spread the thoughts of the Kairos Document here in Palestine and around the world.



Yet the challenges denying us our very life continue to amplify. On Dec. 16th, Bethlehem and its surroundings faced a confiscation of further 100 dunums to the east, choking the city geographically and economically. These confiscations are pursuant to many other Confiscations in surrounding villages and towns to the west of the city, least of which are the confiscations and closure of olives groves in the area of the Cremisan ministry. These confiscations further reduce the land available to the Bethlehem region to less than 13 % of its geography, source of livelihood and normal mobility.

These illegal and criminal escalations are imposed in the shadow of continued Israeli settlers' invasions to the Dome of the rock compound, especially aggressive during the last few months, supported by the army of occupation. These violations and aggressions in the occupied city of Jerusalem clearly are transforming the conflict into a religious confrontation. As Ban Ki Mun stated on Dec. 16th, religious confrontation was a main incitement to the Palestinian uprising against the occupation in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the occupied territories.



The Kairos Palestine Document reminds us to have hope, when hope is so evidently distant. That's the reason why we should all continue our strong efforts to fight the injustice of occupation and all related war crimes, Israeli authorities are imposing on Palestinians. Here on the ground in Palestine and worldwide, the Israeli-Lobby in your countries needs as much resistance as we need it against the government of our occupier.

With this letter we want to share with you some of the recent developments in Kairos Palestine and hope that we can count on your solidarity!

Kairos Palestine's 6th Anniversary



On December 4th, Kairos Palestine celebrated its 6th anniversary. After a very successful international conference last year, the focus was on the local Palestinian communities this year. Over 150 guests participated in discussions with Kairos Authors and Heads of Palestinian Churches, including Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan and Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah. “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8.32) was the theme of the conference which sought to debate four pertinent issues to shed more light on the context of occupation and discuss important obstacles to real peace and reconciliation. The four subjects discussed were: Jerusalem: the city of peace or conflict; Christians and Muslims together: present and future; On the Jewish Nature of the State: meaning and implications; Inequality and discrimination against Palestinian citizens in Israel. A report of the conference will be published online.

Christmas Time in Bethlehem

Our Communication Officer Muna Nassar has written an excellent article about the Christmas spirit in Bethlehem for “ThisWeekInPalestine” magazine, which takes you on a journey through the old streets of Bethlehem in the most special time of Christmas. [Go to This Week in Palestine](#)

Christmas Alert 2015



We'd like to thank all of our friends who supported us in the distribution and translations of this year's Christmas Alert. We got great responses and thank each one of you supporting our message of Hope, Faith and Love around the world. [The Alert is available online in Arabic, English, French, German and Danish.](#)

Kairos Palestine's Tree of Resistance

"They build walls, we build hope!"
(Vera Baboun, Mayor of Bethlehem)

Christmas 2015 has been a very special one for Palestine. We celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace in the city of Bethlehem, where peace is far away. Together with political parties, non-violent activists, friends and tourists, Kairos Palestine sent a message to the world this Christmas. Aside from the usual Christmas decorations; the glittering lights and the huge Christmas tree placed on Manger Square, a different kind of tree was also installed and celebrated to reflect the Palestinian realities of occupation but also of hope and resilience. An uprooted ancient old olive tree from the expropriated Cremisan Valley, decorated with tear gas canisters launched by the Occupation forces against Palestinian protests, was also placed on Manger Square in addition to a poster exhibition of the painful uprooting of millennium olive trees. Pilgrims from all around the world have been seeing a different Christmas tree on their way to Nativity Church in the City of Peace, Bethlehem.



Kairos Youth Workshop 2015

In November, Kairos Palestine organized a Youth Workshop together with our partners JAI, Wiam and Sabeel. In two days, 22 youngsters from all around Palestine studied the KP Docu-

ment carefully, expressed their thoughts, opinions and fears with Kairos authors. Moreover, a discussion took place about the role Palestinian Christians play, the nature of the non-violent resistance in the context of increased and growing Israeli hostility.

Kairos Women Meeting 2015

In preparation for the Kairos plan to work with women opinion makers, a meeting was held at the local Greek Orthodox church in Beit Sahour with about 70 local Christian women, many of whom represent women organizations. The meeting discussed the agenda, principles and action plan proposed by the Kairos document and how it may influence the role of Palestinian women through self-empowerment and creative resistance. Issues related to the boycott of the occupation, education, civil responsibility and religious tolerance and cooperation were discussed with plans to pursue the debate on regular basis and at a wider scale.

News about BDS



The global efforts are remarkable, even though success seems small; there is still hope and a slow development towards more justice. The BDS-movement achieved important breakthroughs: EU decision to label settlement products is a step in the right direction though we regret that a lot of countries do not follow the EU decision.

An especially remarkable moral and justice-driven success has been the decision of the Pension and Health Benefits Fund of the United Methodist Church in the US to divest from five of the biggest banks in Israel. We most heartily thank the UMC and the UM Kairos Response for their conscientious work in their churches and among their delegates that lead to this decision. [The press release from UMKR can be read here.](#)

Our friends from Germany are campaigning against the cooperation of the prestigious Robert Bosch foundation and the Jewish National Fund. RBF has asked JNF for consultations and support in developing projects in Africa, indeed very cynical – people there have already enough experience with human rights abuses, Apartheid regimes and evictions. [Join the campaign and download the petition here.](#)

You can stay up-to date with a lot of information on BDS in the “[PIEF-Kairos Palestine Core group for BDS](#)” on Facebook, which is coordinated with the help of our friends at the Palestinian-Israeli Ecumenical Forum.

Olaf Palmes Award to Rev. Mitri Raheb

Kairos' Co-Author Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb has been awarded the Olaf Palmes Minnesfond Price, together with Haaretz journalist Gideon Levy! The price is awarded in memory of the Swedish politician Olaf Palmes, a devoted activist for Human Rights, opposing apartheid regimes and advocating a non-alignment policy towards superpowers, including a fast-forward policy on decolonization.



From the press statement: "As preacher and pastor in the Lutheran church, Mitri Raheb sends a clear message to the young generation of Palestinians: "We want you to live, not die, for Palestine." In a Bethlehem confined on three sides by the walls of the occupying Israeli power, and with Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture that he founded and his innovative artistic education in film, art, and drama, Raheb has made it possible for young people to investigate their Palestinian identity, to nurture beauty, and to invest in a culture of life as tools for a creative resistance against suffocating confinement and nation building."

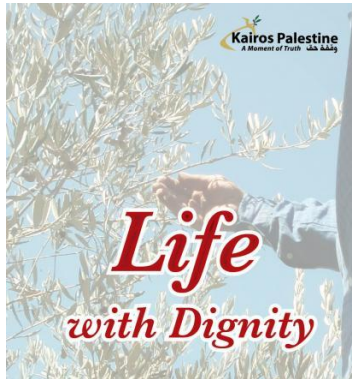
Congratulations Rev. Mitri and thank you for being such an important voice of Hope for Palestinians! We congratulate ourselves for the award being also given to Gideon Levy, an important, adamant and ceaseless voice for peace and reconciliation, a world-renowned Israeli journalist and speaker for truth and justice. Congratulations to Gideon for a well-deserved award.

Ordination of Kairos Member Rev. Munther Isaac

On January 3rd, the Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land has been sent a new pastor! Dr. Munther Isaac, academic dean at Bethlehem Bible College and a Kairos Palestine board member, has been ordained as a pastor of the Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land by Bishop Munib Younan, Head of the Lutheran World Federation. He encouraged Rev. Munther Isaac to serve God in these bleak and dire times and especially the Palestinian people and Palestinian Christians. In his homily, Rev. Munther said: "In the face of these challenges, I believe that we need more than ever to return to our evangelical roots, to announce the Gospel of Christ; God's power of salvation to everyone who believes. We also need more than ever our unity as Christians in this land and sincere love for each other and for our country."



Life with Dignity – new Kairos publication



"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not despairing" (2 Cor. 4:8)

Kairos Palestine has published the conference proceedings of the “Life with Dignity” conference which was held in Bethlehem in December 2014 and was jointly organized by Kairos Palestine, Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and the Alternative Tourism Group. We are very pleased to present to you a precious collection of meditations, biblical reflections, academic papers, opinions and witness- es around the Kairos agenda and spirit and related to theology and justice, creative resistance, ‘come and See’, advocacy, religious extremism and more. Kairos authors, friends form the Global Kairos Groups for Justice, Church leaders and other Kairos friends ensured the success of the conference and now, an interesting and invigorating publica- tion. Please review and make good use of the [digital edition online](#). Hard-copies are available at Kairos Palestine's office in Bethlehem. [Contact us](#) for more information.

A sincere expression of appreciation to all local and international authors who shared willingly their expertise, analysis, experiences and hopes for a better future for all the oppressed as they aspire for a just peace with equity. Special thanks to Board members, staff and volunteers for all their support and to Tina Whitehead for meticulously editing all the papers.

Come & See

The Holy Land attracts pilgrims from around the world who join biased tours that are strongly promoted by the Israeli government which exclude any exposure to the occupation of Palestine and its people. We’d like to thank all the groups who came & saw the other side of the story in the last months, learning about the situation on the ground and discussing efforts towards a just peace!

- United Methodists Kairos Response
- Group de St. Herblain
- EAPPI 58th and 59th team
- Group “La Vie”
- Leaders of Mission Organizations Norway
- Danish Church Aid
- Peace builders USA
- The Ecumenical Pilgrims Route of Women Germany

- Kairos Britain
- As well as many Pilgrim- and Tourist Groups from around the world!

Contact us if you're coming with a group or as an individual and want to see the reality of occupation and get into dialogue with Palestinian Christians!

Let us all continue to advocate and highlight the message of Kairos Palestine, now more than ever! 2016 will be a special year, a year of jubilee. Let us all together campaign for freedom from oppression and want in Palestine and injustice everywhere! Let this be a year for the 'Unity of the Oppressed'. We can share campaigns, expose the truth and stand by it, struggle for justice and peace and sustain the creativity of the spirit. Together we are strong, and together we can make an important difference for the work of justice and peace.

Yours truly,

Kairos Palestine