



## **A Call to our Palestinian people for Collective Actions, Steadfastness, Resilience, and Hope in the Face of Adversity**

*"You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth. "*

*Psalm 104:30*

Bethlehem, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we mark the 15th anniversary of the Kairos Palestine Document, and approach the season of Christmas, we are reminded of the ongoing struggles that our people face. This document, which began as a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering, continues to resonate deeply in the lives of every Palestinian, particularly those who have borne the brunt of more than seven decades of Israeli occupation, apartheid, and committing genocide. As we reflect on the birth of the Prince of Peace, we are reminded that the message of justice, dignity, and reconciliation is as urgent as ever. The Kairos Document remains a declaration of our collective will for justice, peace, and freedom for all.

Yet, here we are, 15 years later, amidst a continuing genocide, a year and two months into the brutal genocidal war on Gaza and the West Bank. The international community and many churches around the world remain silent, and the suffering endures. As Christians, we are called to walk closely with our brothers and sisters, to stand firm in our faith, and to embody the very resilience and hope that have sustained our people through these trials. This is the time to reaffirm that our presence in the land of our ancestors is not accidental but rooted in the history and geography of this land and must encourage one another to stay, to remain steadfast, and to continue our collective struggle for freedom and justice.

In this critical moment, the role of the Church in Palestine is more vital than ever. While we deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of our churches in serving the community - providing spiritual support, relief, and supporting resilience- we must recognize that more is needed. Our community is facing existential challenges, and we need the Church to speak truth to power and to walk even more closely with its members, to be a source of spiritual strength and also a source of practical support and solidarity.

We ask our Church leaders, priests, and laypeople to work together to foster resilience within our congregations. Encourage our people to stand firm in the face of oppression, to find strength in prayer, and to rely on their faith as a source of endurance. But also, let us not forget that practical acts of solidarity are essential. Churches should organize efforts to support families who have lost their land, homes and loved ones, assist those in need of medical care and mental health support, and provide resources to help people rebuild their lives in this time of devastation.

Kairos Palestine, the most extensive Palestinian Christian ecumenical non- violent movement, is based on Kairos Palestine document: A Moment of Truth, launched in 2009, affirming that the Palestinian Christians are part and parcel of the Palestinian nation, calling for peace to end all suffering in the Holy Land by laboring for justice, hope and love, embraced by the Christian community, signed by all historically recognized Palestinian Christian organizations, and endorsed by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.



We also call for the creation of safe spaces within our churches where Palestinian Christians can come together—to grieve, to pray, and to strategize on how to continue their resistance and struggle in a peaceful and dignified manner. These spaces can serve as hubs for dialogue, for strength, and for the societal unity we need in these times of division.

As Christians, we are called to remain resilient and to cultivate resilience among one another. The road ahead will not be easy, and the suffering may increase, but we must hold fast to the hope that God is with us, and we must be reminded of our Lord's promise that *"He has overcome the world"* (John 16:33). We heard Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabah in the 15th anniversary of the Kairos Palestine conference speaking:

*"In the face of genocide, dispossession, and ethnic cleansing, we say a word of condolence, steadfastness, and hope to our people in Gaza and in all of Palestine. Be patient. God will shine upon us one day with His justice and peace."*

In these dark days, let us be the light for one another. Christian resilience is about enduring the hardships and acting in solidarity with others, regardless of their faith. We must be mindful that our brothers and sisters in other faith communities, particularly Muslims, are also enduring unimaginable suffering. Civic peace and solidarity with all our citizens are critical. We must intensify efforts to collaborate, to foster interfaith cooperation, and to work together for the common good of all Palestinians.

In this advent time and while we are preparing ourselves to celebrate Christmas, Palestinian Christians must continue to be the voice of peace, justice, and reconciliation in a divided world. This is a time for us to deepen our faith, to engage and to unite people despite political and religious differences, and to strengthen the bonds of unity among all components of Palestinian society. In the spirit of resilience and steadfastness, we urge our churches and communities to strengthen their pastoral care and offer regular support to those living in fear, especially families who have lost loved ones or homes; to organize prayer meetings, counseling, and support groups for emotional and spiritual healing; to advocate for Justice on the international stage; to speak out against the ongoing occupation, the forcible displacement of Palestinians, and the human rights abuses we continue to face.

We also urge to help amplify the voices of the voiceless by raising awareness in international circles; to promote Interfaith Solidarity and strengthen partnerships with secular, Muslim and other faith communities; to organize joint initiatives for peace and social justice to show that we are united in our shared struggle for freedom and human dignity; to encourage Community Resilience and Self-sufficiency among Palestinians and to continue and strengthen the developmental programs and initiatives. And finally, to mobilize the Global Church and to call upon the global Christian community to continue standing in solidarity with us.

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Dear brothers and sisters: We are now at a critical juncture, and the strength of our community depends on our solidarity with one another. We call upon our Churches to stand firm in faith, to encourage one another, to support one another, and to work tirelessly for peace and justice. May we always remember that we are part of a larger, global movement for justice and that our hope, rooted in God's love and righteousness, will one day lead to the fulfillment of His promises for peace, freedom, and dignity for all human beings.

In His name, we remain steadfast, believing in our right to life. We renew our faith in God and say: *"I believed, even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted.'" (Psalm 116:10).*

We pray to God for you and for all our afflicted land, that He may fill it with His justice and peace.

## **Kairos Palestine**

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