



"يسيرون ولا يكلون"

"They will run and not grow weary"

Kairos Palestine 10th Anniversary Conference

Conference Statement & Call to the Church
November 29, 2019

Meeting in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, we are over 350 persons— women and men, young and old, lay and clergy, Palestinians and friends from all over the world—reaching out to the Church on the Tenth Anniversary of Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth.

Since the launch of A Moment of Truth ten years ago, life in Palestine has rapidly deteriorated under the illegal occupation by the State of Israel. The oppression is more aggressive and brutal. Our imprisoned and besieged sisters and brothers in Gaza, non-violently gathering in the March of Return, were the targets of a bloody and deadly response. Settlements continue to expand. Threats of annexation of the Jordan Valley and the settlements themselves grow without a word of condemnation from the major powers. We are experiencing the continued dispossession of our land, our freedom and our human rights.

Add to this, three more appalling developments: U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; the U.S. Secretary of State's announcement that the U.S. government no longer deems West Bank settlements to be "inconsistent with international law"; and the State of Israel's recent adoption of the Nation State Law which clearly reveals that *de facto* apartheid has become *de jure* apartheid. The failure of the peace process is further evidence that the current *status quo* is unsustainable.

While there have been strong, prophetic responses from the global Church over the past ten years and we thank God for our growing partnerships with faith-based and secular coalitions here in the region and around the world, we lament that there are still many who use the Bible to justify the occupation and who unquestioningly support the State of Israel. For the most part, the global Church is failing us.

We are standing as if on the edge of a cliff, looking into an abyss.

In the face of these challenges, our commitments as outlined in A Moment of Truth have not changed, echoing the vision of the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem reiterated twice during the peace processes in 1994 and 2006: "Different solutions are possible. The city of Jerusalem might remain united but sovereignty in this case must be shared, exercised according to a principle of equality by both Israelis and Palestinians." In response to exclusive ideologies and theologies, we join our voice to those of many others—Jews and Muslims—who call for a world in which all are treated as equals, believing this is the only guarantee of a just and lasting peace.

So, like those who stand watch upon the tower, we repeat our call and cry out again for your solidarity, your earnest prayers and your commitment to *take action*. Stand up and speak out in your own setting to insist on a just peace.

- Vigorously defend the rights of Palestinians and those who stand in solidarity with us to resist the occupation, including your support of all forms of creative and nonviolent resistance including BDS that pressure Israel to end the occupation and your active rejection of attempts to label this resistance as anti-Semitic;
- Clearly condemn theological positions that justify the privilege of one people over another;
- Recognize Israel as an apartheid state in terms of international law, especially with passage of the Nation State Law, insisting that no one has exclusive claims to any land because of religion, race and/or ethnicity and that all human beings are created in the image of God and entitled to equal rights and treatment;
- Speak out against religious extremism in any form, including attempts to create any religious state in our region;
- Boldly challenge religious partners to include the occupation and injustices in Palestine and Israel as part of any interfaith dialogue;
- Invest resources in and lead campaigns for church leaders and pilgrims to visit Bethlehem and other Palestinian communities in partnership with the Palestinian tourism sector to increase the number of persons who will witness the results of occupation; challenge exclusive Israeli narratives and itineraries promoted through monopolized tourism as an instrument of the occupation;
- Dedicate resources to include and open space for youth and young adults to empower a new generation of Palestinian Christian leaders who are committed advocates and who prophetically speak a message of truth as articulated in the message of Kairos Palestine.

Let your resistance to injustice everywhere—especially now in Palestine and Israel—be courageous and informed by the logic of love.

Know that ten years after the first call of Kairos Palestine, we resist fainting and becoming weary and falling exhausted. Empowered by the equal love of God and joined together with others in God's community of grace—coming on earth as it is in heaven—we mount up with wings like eagles (Isaiah 40:31). We run and grow not weary. We walk and faint not.

God's design for universal justice, peace and provision may be delayed, but it will not be deterred.