

**Messages from Palestinian Christian partners in the face of increasing attacks on  
Palestinians, and particularly on Palestinian Christian towns, villages,  
communities, holy sites and clergy**

**July 10, 2025**

**From Rifat Kassis, Coordinator of Kairos Palestine, Bethlehem, Palestine:**

We are witnessing a dangerous escalation of violence against Palestinian Christians, from the repeated attacks on Taybeh to the mounting harassment and land seizures in Bethlehem and surrounding areas. These are not random acts, but part of a deliberate strategy to erase the Palestinian, including Palestinian Christians, presence from this land.

Currently, in the Bethlehem Governorate, the situation is so alarming: iron gates are being installed and road blocks are placed to restrict our movement, land is being confiscated piece by piece, and entire communities are being cut off from their agricultural livelihoods. Settler violence is on rise with the protection of the Israeli army. This is a slow, deliberate form of ethnic cleansing, and other Christian villages are no exception. We call on Canadian churches to speak clearly and publicly: do not let our displacement happen in silence. Our Christian communities are under siege. We need your public solidarity, not just quiet concern. If the Church cannot defend the Christian presence in the land of Christ's birth, then who will?

Kind greetings.

Rifat

**From Zoughbi al-Zoughbi, Founder and Director and Citizen Diplomacy Program Director  
Wi'am, The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, Bethlehem, Palestine and President of  
International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR).**

In addition to what our brothers and sisters said and to reiterate some points and share the following:

*"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."*

*2 Corinthians 4: 8–10*

It is becoming increasingly hard to hold hope, as these words in Corinthians quickly turn into prayer. How can we hold and hope for peace while we wonder about our abilities to survive?

Violence has continued to grow and fester in the silence and inaction of world governments, who have continued to fail to take meaningful action to address the rising tides of violence through oppressive and western-government supported and funded practices and policies. Our brothers and sisters in Gaza have continued to suffer merciless bombardment, starvation, and devastation as the genocide continues onto its 642nd day, while in the West Bank the reality of

violence is ever-growing and realized. Illegal settlers, who for years have been above the law, and protected by the state, have grown more brazen and extreme in their violence against the nature, trees, and livestock, the buildings and sites of Palestinian cultural and religious heritage, and against the Palestinian people at large. Our suffering is enormous, our pain deep, and our fears beyond the realms of horror.

Many families, like my own, are deprived from family unification and are forced into choosing the loss, both temporary and permanent, of community or family. Our agricultural traditions, with some of our indigenous knowledge is lost in the continuing land theft, annexation, and settlement expansion. The economic situation is growingly unlivable with over 40% of Bethlehemites officially unemployed, with the real unemployment rates well over 60%. Food insecurity affects over 1/3 of our households, with another 1/3 food insecure. The violence against Gaza and its people, against Tulkarem and Jenin, against Hebron, and against Taybeh, against mosque and church, hospital and school, house and tent all serve to remind us of our deep vulnerability. None of us is safe until we all are. Our health is deteriorating, and our mental well-being and psychological state is worsening at an alarming rate. Palestinian Christians continue to face a silent genocide as dominant narratives erase us, and our churches and communities continue to be emptied as Palestinians continue to be displaced and are forced to leave by violent coercion and circumstance. What good are our old and holy stones to be in isolation, like a museum, without its living counterparts?

Yet, we hold fast still and are held in God's light and believe we will be kept from annihilation. Our presence will not wither. We hold onto faith and hope--hope is our nonviolent struggle which keeps us sane and steadfast, and faith empowers us to continue and is held in God and God's people that they will work for justice, and liberation of all. It is these values which keep us travelling on this less-travelled road, and that will ensure that peace and justice prevails, and that we--the living stones--will live on. Liberation is only held sustainably through global justice based in actionable universal human rights and shared collective responsibility.

With respect and agape,

Tarek and Zoughbi

Wi'am

**From Yusef Daher, Executive Officer, Jerusalem Liaison Office of the World Council of Churches:**

Our dear Father Bashar, member of Kairos Palestine, is the Catholic Parish priest in Taybeh. He has been complaining about the vicious settlers who are targeting the largest areas of land in Taybeh. At some stage, they even threaten people physically and twice set fire near the church school and properties.

This is part of a general recent policy and trend by settlers who feel protected by their far-right masters who have the majority of the government and as such, all the police and army too.

Our words are simple: We are undefended, bare, and without anyone to hear our voice. Palestinians need international presence and peace-keeping force on the ground in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

With thanks.

Yusef