

October 12, 2015

Dear Jordan,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our brother, Jesus.

It is with deep concern that we write to raise the issue of increasing violence directed toward Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza. In 12 days of bloodshed, 23 Palestinians and four Israelis have died.

Violence has been on the rise since late July with the immolation of the infant, Ali Saad Dawabsha and the subsequent deaths of his mother and father. In and around Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the West Bank violence is escalating fueled in large part by these murders and other attacks by settlers and the Israeli military against Palestinians. Another key factor that has fueled tensions has been the aggressive moves by the Israeli government with restricted access to the Al-Aqsa compound. This, in turn, has fueled Palestinian fears that Al-Aqsa could become like Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. Additionally, over the summer the Israeli military has increased the pace of home demolitions and taken other actions such as the extension of the illegal path of the Wall in Cremisan.

Meanwhile, in Gaza, Israeli forces killed seven on Friday. On Saturday, two children, aged 11 and 13 were shot dead by the Israeli military. On Sunday, a 30 year old pregnant mother and her three year old daughter were killed by an Israeli rocket attack that demolished her home. This is on top of several hundred cease fire violations by the Israelis since their devastation of Gaza a year ago. Meanwhile, reconstruction of Gaza has barely begun because of ongoing border closures.

With the violence in Syria and resultant refugee crisis it seems Israel is once again using a major world event to escalate repression of Palestinians while the world is focussed elsewhere.

The work of the denomination over the summer such as quietly sending Ecumenical Accompaniers to Susyia was an important action. Also, the information provided by GCO with regard to Cremisan was greatly appreciated.

We write to urge you as the spiritual leader of the denomination to ask that you help keep the denomination's attention focused on the lead of the General Council this summer to expand and broaden the Unsettling Goods campaign in support of our Palestinian brothers and sisters who continue to cry out from their experience of decades of suffering. We encourage you to add your voice to other religious leaders around the globe expressing concern with the escalating violence and urging the Israeli government to end their illegal occupation of Palestine.

Peace, Salaam, Shalom, Paix,
Steve Berube and Marianna Harris
Co-chairs: UNJPPI

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