

# A STUDY RESOURCE FOR CHRISTIAN GROUPS BASED ON THE KAIROS PALESTINE MOVEMENT

A 7.5 hour course of study (5 x 1.5 hour sessions)

## **Overall aim of the resources:**

To develop a response to supporting non-violent resistance to occupation in Palestine as part of the Kairos Palestine movement.

The sessions aim to encourage an engagement with the Palestinian people through greater understanding of the reality of their lives under occupation and to challenge us as Christians and human beings to take action to uphold dignity and human rights.

## **Who is the study course for?**

Any group of Christians wanting to develop a response to injustice.



The material in this pack is free to use in an educational context concerning Palestine and Israel subject to acknowledgement to the author. [karencholmeley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:karencholmeley@yahoo.co.uk)

Free download: <http://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/resources/prayer-and-theology/>

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# Introduction

## Study outline:

### Session 1

- What is Kairos Palestine?
- Who are the Palestinians?

### Session 2

- The historical context of the Palestine/Israel situation

### Session 3

- The reality of life under occupation for Palestinians
- Israeli actions and international law and conventions

### Session 4

- Why is the situation of the Palestinian people relevant to me?

### Session 5

- Building bridges to peace – faith, hope and love
- Ways to support the Palestinian people in their non-violent resistance against occupation

The resources are prepared in the spirit of the Kairos Palestine document reflecting its message of faith, justice, hope and love. Materials are taken from Israeli, Palestinian, Canadian and UK sources. The personal testimonies were told to the author by Palestinians living in West Bank and Jerusalem.

This resource pack is put together by Karen Fairfax-Cholmeley, Duns Tew, Oxford.

Karen Fairfax-Cholmeley first worked as a lawyer before changing to work in adult and community education as a teacher, trainer and manager for 30 years. She worships at St. Mary Magdalene, Duns Tew, Oxfordshire. Her parents were married in Jerusalem in 1942 while her father was serving in the British Army and her mother teaching at Jerusalem Girls' College. Her fundamental belief in the rule of law and universal application of human rights led to an early engagement with Palestinian/Israeli issues. In 2013 she undertook research in West Bank as part of a Masters Degree in Education and International Development at the Institute of Education, London exploring how the sharing of stories in Christian Palestinian families helped children develop their sense of identity and notions of citizenship.

Thanks to families in Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jerusalem who shared their stories and Rev. Sara Iles, Nidal Abuzuluf, Rev. Dr. Janet Wootton, Rev. Dr. Graham Adams, Patsy McCarthy, Olwen Smith, Debbie Chaloner and the Bloxham group for their challenges and contributions to ideas and resources.

Resource pack updated March 2017

## Introduction

The session leader does not have to be an “expert” in Palestinian/Israeli affairs but needs to have read in preparation at least:

“Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth”

<http://www.kairospalestine.ps/>

“Time for Action: A British response to A Moment of Truth”

<http://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Time-for-Action.pdf>

“The Wall has been broken down” (Kairos Palestine Netherlands/Friends of Sabeel Netherlands)

[http://www.henriveldhuis.nl/LocalFiles/Israel\\_Palestijnen/Muur\\_afgebroken/Muur\\_afgebroken.html](http://www.henriveldhuis.nl/LocalFiles/Israel_Palestijnen/Muur_afgebroken/Muur_afgebroken.html)

### Structure of the sessions:

Share aims of the session

Opening prayer

Input using text, narratives, pictures and DVD clips

Activities and discussion (with action planning session 5)

Reflection and prayer

Share aims of next session

### Before the first session:

Print off a participant resource pack and handouts for each session for each participant.

### Before each session:

Do background reading as necessary

Familiarise yourself with the session outline and notes

Set up the room

Check equipment needed for the session

### During the session:

Welcome people and guide them through the session plan, bearing in mind:

- Be focused throughout the session on the aims/outcomes of that session
- Watch the timing of activities and keep the session moving
- Allow silence – it encourages reflection and is a creative part of learning
- Summarise to help people understand key points
- Let discussion flow and embrace differences of opinion. Be prepared to bring discussions to a close where they are moving too far from the aims of the session and/or going on too long
- Encourage all participants to take part in discussions where they want to and gently discourage over participation by individuals

**After the session:** Evaluate the session with 1/2 people – how did it go, how did you feel, what did you learn for leading the next session?

**Equipment:** Some sessions need a computer with internet access and facilities to show a film.

## Introduction

### Useful reading

Kairos for Palestine (2011) Rifat Odeh Kassis

Occupied Territories (2014) Garth Hewitt (founder of the Amos Trust)

Married to Another Man: Israel's dilemma in Palestine (2007) Ghadi Karmi

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2007) Ilan Pappé

The Palestine-Israeli Conflict (2011) Rabbi Prof Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dr. Dawoud El-Alami (attempting to lay out both sides of the story)

Britain in Palestine: The Story of British Rule in Palestine 1917 – 1948 (2012) Karl Sabbagh and Anne Lineen

Orientalism (2003) Edward Said (an analysis of Western attitudes towards the East and how these affect European imperialism and racism)

Seven Pillars of Wisdom (1935) T.E. Lawrence

Current resources on the Sabeel-Kairos UK website: <http://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/resources/prayer-and-theology/>

## FOREWORD

A few years ago, I attended a conference of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, in Beirut, as a speaker. The Christians I met, from Iraq, Iran, Palestine, and all over the Middle East, were thoughtful and gentle people, many facing appalling situations, but also with hope – ‘hope against all hope’. The Palestine Kairos document (which uses those words) had only just come out, and was at the heart of our discussions.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to travel to the south of Lebanon, to be with a family in a small village. I was deeply impressed by the great, rolling landscape: hills that have seen thousands of years of human life, both fruitful peace and barren conflict. Through this majestic landscape ran the razor wire and lines of tanks that mark the boundary with Israel/Palestine. And down in a narrow valley was the little Christian village that I was visiting, almost abandoned, as the great majority of the population has gone to live elsewhere.

It’s all one landscape. The hills and valleys roll on. But we have split it and divided it, scarred it with fences and walls, and built great settlements, while driving whole populations into exile or worse.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of times of justice and fairness (Isaiah 11:1-5, 42:3), of people being able to build homes and live peaceably in them, enjoying the fruit of their labour, and seeing their children grow up to live in peace (Isaiah 65:17-24). He even foresees a time when the lion and the lamb will lie down together and a little child will lead them (Isaiah 11:6-9, 65:25). Jesus quoted words from Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry, speaking of release for the captive, and freedom for the downtrodden (Luke 4:16-19). To his followers he gave the command to love (Luke 10:27) and forgive (Matthew 18:21-2). This is the hope and longing that lies at the heart of that landscape, and at the heart of our world.

This resource uses first person testimony and documented evidence to explore the real life of the Palestinian people. Taking the word Kairos (meaning a God-given time) from the Kairos document, the sessions and worksheets help us to understand what it means to live in *this time*. It includes information, prayer and worship, points for discussion and – notably – challenges to action.

No person or group will be able to work through these pages without experiencing transformation. This is the work of God through the same Spirit that inspired the prophets to speak of justice and peace, and that comes to us in Jesus, offering the greatest gift the human race can have, the gift of love. If God can work this transformation in us, the challenge is for us to share in transforming our world.

Rev Dr Janet Wootton

Director of Learning and Development for the Congregational Federation  
Chair, International Congregational Fellowship Theological Commission

**Kairos Palestine – a study resource**



**BEFORE THE SESSION: Resources needed:** Flipchart or large sheets of paper (A2), flip chart marker pens, post-it notes, candle, matches

Resources for the session:

- Handout 1 - Opening prayer
- Handout 2 - Excerpts from Moment of Truth and Time for Action
- Handout 3 - Pictures of Palestinians
- Handout 4 - Testimonies

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (20 minutes)**

**INTRODUCE** yourself and ask participants to introduce themselves and share why they are interested in Palestinian/Israeli issues

**GIVE** each participant a participant resource pack.

**REFER** participants to the overall aim of the study sessions:

- to develop a response to supporting non-violent resistance to occupation in Palestine as part of the Kairos Palestine movement

**REFER** participants to the aims and outcomes of this session.

Aims:

- to examine the call of the Kairos Palestine movement
- to develop understanding of who are the Palestinians

Outcomes:

- better informed about the purpose and background of the Kairos Palestine movement and UK involvement
- a clearer idea of aspects of Palestinian identity

**OPENING PRAYER** (use this prayer to open all sessions).

**REFER** to the opening prayer (handout 1) and **INVITE** participants to join in the final section.

**SHARE** This is a prayer for courage used at a recent Skype meeting of the international Kairos core group. <http://www.unjppi.org/prayers.html>

God,

You ask for our courage to protect the powerless  
but we prefer to remain safe, preserving ourselves for future challenges.

You ask us to speak out for justice  
but we whisper, in case we are heard.

You ask us to stand up for what is right,  
but we would rather blend in to the crowd

You ask us to have faith,  
when doubting seems so much easier.

Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,  
only when it is convenient to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
only with those who make it easy to do so.

Together we pray

**God forgive us and renew us;**

**Inspire us and challenge us**

**So that we might risk the journey, to your kingdom with you,**

**Amen**

**ASK** participants in small groups/pairs to discuss what they hope to get from the sessions and write on a post-it note.

**STICK** post-it notes on flipchart (keep the flipchart to re-visit in session 5)

**SHARE** hopes as a whole group.

#### **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY KAIROS? (30 minutes)**

**SHARE** information about the definition of “kairos”. Emphasize that recognizing kairos means acknowledging that the time to act for justice is now.

The word kairos comes to us from the Greek word for time. Contrasting with chronos, meaning ordinary or chronological time, kairos means holy or God-given time, time laden with meaning and choice. Kairos signals a time of crisis and new possibilities, a time of repentance, renewal and decisive action. This can be a pinnacle moment, such as the current challenges to churches and communities presented by globalization. Kairos can also be a stream of moments, daily injustices that call us to act in God’s name. Every time we read the signs of our world and see injustice, the very meaning of faith is at stake in our response. **Recognizing kairos means acknowledging that the time to act for justice is now.** Many times throughout this century, Christians have sought to name a kairos. In the mid-1980s, a group of Christians in South Africa seized upon the image of kairos to express their sense that the struggle against apartheid had brought South Africa to an historic crossroads. They believed that they were confronted by a fundamental religious and political choice, that genuine hope for the future required a commitment to struggle against apartheid, and that the church was called to condemn apartheid and witness to hope for justice.

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Article-HistoryOfKairosMovement.pdf>

**ACTIVITY:** Can you identify any kairos moments in your life? Ask anyone to share if they wish to.

**SHARE** background to Kairos Palestine document “A Moment of Truth”

In 2009 Christians from different denominations in West Bank and Gaza came together and formed “Kairos Palestine”. They made an ecumenical call to the outside world and published a document - A Moment of Truth – a cry of faith, hope and love from the heart of the Palestinian people from which the following words are taken

**REFER** to handout 2 and **ASK** a participant to read out excerpt 1.

“We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country under Israeli occupation, with a cry of **hope** in the absence of all hope, a cry full of **prayer** and **faith in God**....we proclaim our word based on our Christian faith and our sense of belonging, a word of **faith, hope and love**.

We declare that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights.

We say that our option as Christians in the face of the Israeli occupation is to resist. But it is **resistance with love** as its logic.....

Our numbers are few but our message is great and important. Our land is in urgent need of **love**.

Our love is a message to the Muslim and to the Jew, as well as to the world.

Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: Are you able to help us get our **freedom** back? For this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain **justice, peace, security and love**”.

**SHARE** background to Kairos Britain “Time for Action”

In response to the Kairos Palestine call, a group of Christians from different theological backgrounds met on Iona and Kairos Britain took root in 2012 with the publication of “Time for Action” urging active engagement with non-violent resistance to bring an end to the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people.

**ASK** a participant to read out excerpt 2 from handout 2

“The kairos moment is here **now**..... It is a call to anyone who embraces **non-violent resistance to injustice**. It is a call to listen to the same Spirit who inspired and shaped the US civil rights movement, and the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. It is a call to **compassion, justice and equality**, issued in the strong faith that, even when the cause appears most hopeless, God’s light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it” Time for Action, 2012



## Kairos Palestine – A study resource SESSION 1 OUTLINE AND LEADER NOTES

**ACTIVITY:** As a whole group, **ASK** participants to identify the key words in the excerpts from the two documents in handout 2 that distil Kairos Palestine e.g. the words highlighted in bold (hope, prayer etc.)

On a sheet of A2 use the keywords to **COMPLETE** the sentence: **Kairos Palestine is.....** e.g. Kairos Palestine is non-violent resistance to injustice.

### **WHO ARE THE PALESTINIANS? (30 minutes)**

**ACTIVITY:** **ASK** participants to write 2/3 words which they have noticed the media often use to describe Palestinians e.g. Muslim, diaspora, terrorist

**SHARE** the words as a group and write on sheet of A2

**REFER** to handout 3. **ASK** participants to identify what is happening in the pictures, who is portrayed and what the picture tells us about Palestinian identity and way of life.

Picture 1 Yassar Arafat – politician and leader

Picture 2 Nader Al-Masri – athlete from Gaza

Picture 3 Elderly Palestinian Arab and Jew sharing time together

Picture 4 Family sharing a meal together

Picture 5 Celebrating Easter

Picture 6 Woman held in the queue at Qalandia checkpoint on her way to Jerusalem from West Bank

Picture 7 Jesus Christ - Palestinian Jew

**DRAW OUT** Palestinian people care for the same things as us – they have heroes (pictures 1, 2), no one ethnicity or religion defines Palestinian identity, there are Palestinian Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians (picture 3), family and religious celebrations are very important to Palestinians (pictures 4, 5) but there is an undercurrent of sadness and frustration (picture 6) due to the lack of freedom with peace and justice. For Palestinian Christians their physical connection with Jesus Christ is a very important part of their identity (picture 7).

**SHARE INFORMATION** on Palestinian Christians

“Many people think that all Palestinians today are Muslim but there is a small but important minority of Palestinian Christians who speak Arabic. In 1948 Palestinian Christians made up 9% of the population. In some areas, such as around Bethlehem, they had always formed the majority and provided mayors and members of the local councils. Christian numbers have now decreased to about 1.0 % of the population, some 171,000 people in total: 120,000 in Israel, 50,000 on the West Bank and less than 1300 in Gaza. Their presence is being threatened by the constant conflict and harassment. They feel their situation to be unbearable and hopeless. Many of them, therefore, are emigrating to Europe or the United States. Nowadays about 70% of the Palestinian Christians live abroad”

*“The Wall has been broken down”* Kairos Palestine Netherlands/Friends of Sabeel Netherlands.  
Joint Advocacy Initiative, Beit Sahour

**REFER** participants to handout 4. **ASK** a participant to read out Testimony 1.

**Testimony 1** *“When I was 12 (1980s) we went to live in the US. On my first day at school, the teacher, wishing I think to introduce me to the class, asked me where I came from. I replied “from Palestine” to which she replied: “but there is no such place.”*

**ASK** participants if they can explain why the teacher took this view.

**SHARE** information on geographical Palestine

Palestine has been a country under occupation for the last 600 years. It was part of the Ottoman empire from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of World War One when, in 1918, Palestine became a British mandate. In 1948 as the British pulled out, the United Nations divided the historic Palestinian lands between Palestine and the newly created state of Israel. Even at that stage Palestine obtained no independence as its allocated land was administered by Jordan. At that stage separate Palestinian identity more or less disappeared. In 1967 following the 6 day war, all the Palestinian lands came under Israeli occupation and remain so to this day. In official documents and reporting, those Palestinian lands comprising East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza are referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). No element of an independent, free Palestine exists today.

**ACTIVITY: SHARE** stories from Palestinian Christians living in West Bank

**ASK** 3 participants to read testimonies 2, 3 and 4 from handout 4

**Testimony 2** *“My grandmother was a housewife. There were no jobs after World War One and my grandfather worked in Chile for 8 years. He left the family [in Palestine]. My mother when she was four, she and her sisters did sewing. There was not enough food. They ate bread and onions. When my mother had a pencil smaller than an inch and said, “I want another one”, my grandmother said, “no, it’s still working”. They suffered a lot from poverty, life wasn’t easy. That’s why they found everything precious. My father was middle class, he went to university. My mother made uniforms for the neighbourhood and tailored trousers for me up to university. I have four brothers and three sisters. My mother is eighty-seven now. During the first intifada my husband was out of work for 5 years when the jewellery business where he worked finished. Thank God I went to university and I’m a teacher because, if not, with my husband out of work, what would happen to the family?”*

**Testimony 3** *“We have a legacy, I’m proud of re-telling our legacy, our arrival here and how we [his family] made money here, how we bought extra land, how we made the first factory for arak (alcoholic spirit). We used to own, we established the factory and this is a success for us. The family has emigrated to the US so we don’t have the factory still. There was a big recession here [Palestine] in the 1930s and things [were] very hectic and bad. My grandfather decided, he had business in Jaffa too, they used to have an outlet for selling arak and tobacco. It was a huge step for someone from Ramallah to invest in Jaffa, a major city and port. Things went badly, [so] two of my father’s uncles*

*[went] to try their chance in the US. One of them came back with a PhD in medicine and he was the first person from Ramallah to study medicine in the US and he became mayor of Ramallah and died early at the age of forty-two/forty-three. Another turning point, all the family turned out to help send him to school in USA. At that time, it was difficult and expensive. He opened a clinic and became the mayor. I'm very proud".*

**Testimony 4** *"I told my children about my father's coffee business. Always I used to tell them that their grandfather had one brother and one sister. The brother, because of the bad situation here when the Ottomans invaded this land and stayed 400 years, was forced to leave Bethlehem and he went by ship to Honduras and he lived and died there. My father left school early and he worked as a shift cook or helper at the Casa Nova Hostel in Bethlehem. He used to make meals and he stayed there until he was a young man and then he decided to leave cooking. He bought, with a little money, a shop and one machine for coffee. He began to bring green coffee here and roast it. The coffee came from Brazil. They used to go to Amman and order it. We were under Jordanian rule in this period. He used to go to Amman and bring the coffee and roast it here in our house. Little by little, he bought more machines for roasting and he began working and then he used to roast all kind of nuts. He bought the first car and he hired a worker and driver. With a bicycle, he had no licence to drive a car, he went from our house here to his shop in Bethlehem, to the market and bring [brought] whatever was needed on his bicycle. And he hired another worker in order to sell the coffee products in Bethlehem and little by little he had enough money and bought another car, a taxi in order to have more income and, thank God one day my father was able to sell the coffee products to all West Bank and Jordan".*

**ACTIVITY:** as a group, **SHARE** reactions to hearing the stories and seeing the pictures and whether they confirm or contradict the stereotypical views of Palestinian identity.

**DESCRIBE** aspects of character they demonstrate e.g. resilience in adversity, ambition, Christian.  
**ADD** such words to the list made earlier of descriptions of Palestinian identity.

#### **REFLECTION AND PRAYER (10 minutes)**

**SHARE** The Kairos call

The Kairos call challenges British Christians to be aware of the present situation in Israel and Palestine, to reflect prayerfully on it, and to respond, faithfully and courageously.

**LIGHT** a candle. 2/3 minutes for silent reflection.

**ASK** if anyone would like to share a comment/reaction to the session.

#### **CLOSING PRAYERS:**

Spirit of the living God,  
Come afresh on your holy land.

Help your people to restore broken relationships.  
Give them patience to break down barriers of suspicion and mistrust;  
ability to discern personal prejudices and the courage to overcome fear.  
Teach them to respect each other's integrity and rights  
so that your kingdom may be established on earth.  
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

A prayer from *Rt Rev Riah Abu El-Assal, from In God's Hands, WCC*  
<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/prayers-middle-east-gaza-iraq-syria.aspx>

And Lord, we ask that over the coming weeks you may guide us in seeing ways that we can support the Palestinian people in their non-violent struggle for dignity and human rights. Give us courage to follow the prophet Micah's words and strive to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. Amen

**SHARE** aim of next session:

- To develop understanding of the historical context of the Palestine/Israel situation

**LEAVE-TAKING**



**BEFORE THE SESSION: Resources needed:** Flipchart or large sheets of paper (A2), flip chart marker pens, candle, matches, IT equipment to show introductory film  
<http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/category/about-israelpalestine/>

Resources for the session:

- Handout 1 – Events and dates
- Handout 2 – Disappearing Palestine maps
- Handout 3 – Testimonies of displacement
- Handout 4 – Balfour Declaration

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)**

**REFER** participants the aim and outcome of the session:

Aim: to develop understanding of the historical context of the Palestine/Israel situation

Outcome: improved understanding of the historical context of the Palestine/Israel situation

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**INVITE** participants to use the text in handout 1 session 1 and join in the final section

God,

You ask for our courage to protect the powerless

but we prefer to remain safe, preserving ourselves for future challenges.

You ask us to speak out for justice

but we whisper, in case we are heard.

You ask us to stand up for what is right,

but we would rather blend in to the crowd

You ask us to have faith,

when doubting seems so much easier.

Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,

only when it is convenient to do so,

only in those places where it is safe to do so,

only with those who make it easy to do so.

Together we pray

**God forgive us and renew us;**

**Inspire us and challenge us**

**So that we might risk the journey, to your kingdom with you,**

**Amen**

**THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PALESTINE/ISRAEL SITUATION (55 minutes)**

**ACTIVITY:** In 2 groups, **ASK participants** look at handout 1 and match dates to events. **COME TOGETHER** as a whole group and **ASK participants** to share any information they know about the dates and events.

Events	Dates
Balfour Declaration	2000
El nakba	1967
British Mandate	1922
Oslo Peace Accord	1947
The 6 day war	1917
Intifada(s)	1987
Separation barrier	2015
Creation of the State of Israel	1993
United Nations vote on the partition of Palestine	1948
	2002

**SHARE** key points from background notes to further elucidate dates and events (key passages relating to dates and events in handout 1 are highlighted).

**BACKGROUND NOTES – History**

Contrary to a popular misconception, the conflict in Palestine/Israel is neither hundreds of years old nor is it primarily religious. At the heart of it is a struggle for the control of land. Zionism, which emerged in nineteenth century Europe, is an ideology of Jewish nationalism. A key factor in the birth of the Zionist movement was anti-semitic persecution in Europe and Russia. But in choosing Palestine as the place for a Jewish state, the Zionists were on a collision course with Palestine’s Arab population (Muslim and Christian).

In 1900, the population of Palestine was about 96% Arab, and 4% Jewish. **In 1917, British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour revealed that the British government supported “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”.** The Palestinian Arabs – at that stage still over 90% of the population – were simply referred to as the “non-Jewish communities”. Following the dismemberment of the defeated Ottoman Empire after World War 1, **in 1922 Britain obtained a mandate from the League of Nations for the civil administration of Palestine.** Jewish immigration into Palestine increased dramatically through the 1930s and ‘40s, as a result of intensifying persecution in Europe that culminated in the Nazi Holocaust.

When the **UN voted for Palestine to be partitioned in 1947**, over half of the land was allotted to the proposed new Jewish state, even though Palestinians comprised over two thirds of the population and only 6% of Palestine was under Jewish ownership. The Jewish leaders accepted the proposed plan but the Palestinians rejected it. Britain, who had been controlling the territory, withdrew and

war broke out between the Jewish forces and Arabs from within Palestine and the surrounding countries.

**In 1948, following military victory, the State of Israel was established.** Up to 80% of the Palestinians who would have been inside the new Jewish state's borders were expelled. As many as 530 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed. This is why **Palestinians refer to the creation of Israel as the Nakba ('catastrophe' in Arabic).** Palestinian lands were limited to East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza all of which fell under Jordanian and Egyptian rules in succession.

**In 1967, during a war with the neighbouring Arab states, Israel ousted Jordan, taking possession of the whole of Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip,** beginning its military rule of what became known as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Currently about 4.7 million Palestinians live in the OPT. Soon after the occupation began, Israel began to expropriate land and create Jewish settlements. These settlements have been established and expanded, by successive Israeli governments, in breach of international law.

**In 1987, Palestinians under Israeli military occupation rose up in what became known as the First Intifada** (literally, 'shaking off' in Arabic). Stone-throwing Palestinians confronted Israeli soldiers, while many communities adopted classic civil disobedience tactics.

**In 1993, the Oslo Peace Accords were signed,** establishing the Palestinian Authority (PA) in small pockets of the OPT with power to exercise control over tourism, direct taxation, health, social welfare, culture and education in some areas of the West Bank and Gaza. The OPT was divided into three territorial zones. The centres of the six largest towns in West Bank were declared as Area A and placed under PA full civil and security control. Israelis are forbidden by Israeli law to enter these areas. In Area B (23.8% of West Bank but no Israeli settlements) there is Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. In Area C (60% of West Bank) there is full Israeli civil and security control, except over Palestinian civilians but including Israeli illegal settlements. Roads connecting the new settlements are for Israeli use only. Israel determines the status and rights of all Palestinians through the control of the population registry. Although the PA issue identity cards to OPT residents they are citizens of no land and remain stateless in international terms. The PA has some control over the Palestinians but none over the land.

The claim was that arrangements under Oslo would be an interim stage towards full Palestinian statehood, but by 2000 the Israeli settler population in the West Bank had grown by 50% (three times the population increase in Israel itself) – despite UN Security Council Resolution 242, passed in 1967, which had already requested, but with no result, the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict.”

At the end of **September 2000, another Palestinian uprising began (the Second Intifada).** It was triggered by the visit of Ariel Sharon and hundreds of security forces to the site of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, one of the holiest places for Muslims. In the first 30 days of the Second Intifada, over 120 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces across the West Bank and Gaza, without one Palestinian attack inside Israel. The violence quickly escalated. Israeli forces inside the OPT invaded Palestinian towns and refugee camps, deploying tanks, helicopters and F-16s. Palestinian

suicide bombers targeted buses and restaurants in Israeli cities. By the end of 2006, 4400 Palestinians had been killed, and around 1000 Israelis.

**In 2002, Israel began work on the Separation Wall in the OPT**, officially calling it a security measure. However the Wall's route, looping around the West Bank and East Jerusalem to include significant Jewish settlements, suggested a land grab. The judges of the International Court of Justice ruled in July 2004 that the Wall is contrary to international law and must be dismantled.

**In October 2015, there was an escalation of Palestinian/Israeli violence with some attacks by Palestinians on Israelis in occupied East Jerusalem and Israel.** Reactions by the Israeli Defence Force saw a violent crackdown against Palestinians in East Jerusalem and major towns in the West Bank such as Hebron, resulting in some people describing the situation as **“the third intifada”**.

In December 2016, the UN passed a further resolution which condemned as illegal under international law, Israeli building of settlements on Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. In response there has been an increase in illegal settlement building.

Sources: <http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/category/about-israelpalestine/history/>, author's Masters dissertation (unpublished) , JAI, Beit Sahour

**REFER** participants to handout 2 – Disappearing Palestine maps. **ENCOURAGE** participants to share their reaction to “disappearing Palestine”.

**WATCH** introductory guide/video on the background to the conflict produced by Jewish Voice of Peace from Kairos Britain website (6 minutes 30 seconds)

**ASK** three participants to read the testimonies from Palestinians displaced by the conflict (handout 3)

**Testimony 1** *“When the Jews came [1948] we left everything. I was about fifteen. We escaped, we wanted to go to Egypt but came to Beit Sahour. There was one truck with twenty seven families. One the way we slept for one night in a mosque. When the truck stopped we didn't know where we were but some people from Beit Sahour asked who we were and we came to my aunt's [house]. Some other families stayed in Beit Sahour and others went on to Lebanon, some to Gaza, Jordan. We stayed with my aunt for four months. She was a teacher at the Evangelical school and was the only one who worked so she paid for everything. At first my father did not want to buy land because he thought it was only two weeks and they would go back [to Beersheva] but eventually when they couldn't, he bought land in 1987. When my father died he said: “I who had all this land, die in this little room”. I still have the key and the house papers [registration documents]. The houses have disappeared now [in Beersheva]. They say that it's a police station now”.*

**Testimony 2** *“On the third day of the war [1967], there were some [Israeli] planes overhead. I was seven and [because of the planes] we were hiding in a cave, a place where my grandmother used to raise the chickens. We'd left our house in Beit Jala. We hid there, everyone, our neighbours were sleeping together in the cave. My mother left my youngest brother at home because he was asleep and there was a bomb which came in through the window near him and he wasn't hurt. All the men*



came to my mother and said, “your house, there was a bomb”. My mother was crying and wailing and we ran to the house and thank God, he was there and it just missed him – a miracle. After that she called my father who was in Kuwait and we were afraid that it was, would be like the first diaspora of 1948. He came with my uncle from Kuwait on foot to Jordan, they were hiking. They came to take us, the media told of massacres but this was exaggerated.

“We packed our bags and went to Kuwait but this was a very deep experience for me. When we left the area I saw horrible things – pots, pillows, mattresses, clothes, burnt hands, turned over tanks and cars. It was gloomy and horrible and at the edge [border] between Palestine and Jordan, at Jericho in the Jordan valley, there was a wooden bridge [across the river] and a young man carried us children from one side to the other. Anyone who fell into the water, it was very high, they drowned. I remember there was a man who fell down but they couldn’t get him because they had to move the next person, there were a lot of people. It was a very sad period for me, I can’t forget it, my memory, the blood, the sick people”

**Testimony 3** “My name is N A-A. I am a 47 year old farmer and government employee and have a family of 6 members. We live in the village of Doha, near Bethlehem. I own 8 dunums of land (8000 square metres) in the area of Cremisan west of Bethlehem. The Israelis built the colony (settlement) of Gilo 500 metres from my land. They threaten my ownership with expansion, confiscation, particularly the newly re-established construction of the Israeli apartheid wall in that area. In February 2016, the Olive Tree Campaign supported me with the planting 80 olive trees. The same day, settlers came and uprooted the trees and threw them outside the field, claiming that the land is “Israeli State Land”, where they also plan to establish a settlers’ national park”.

### **THE BALFOUR DECLARATION (15 minutes)**

**SHARE** background to the Balfour Declaration. **STRESS** there was no lobbying from the Palestinian

The Declaration was the fruit of twelve months’ negotiations between a group of British Zionist leaders and British government officials, the latter guided by a remarkable mixture of imperial *Realpolitik* and ‘Restorationist’ feelings. By 1914, the persuasive, Russian-born president of the English Zionist Federation, Chaim Weizmann, was on familiar terms with half the British cabinet. But it was only after David Lloyd George became Prime Minister at the end of 1916 that the Zionist cause made real headway. In addition to Lloyd George, some other cabinet members supported the Zionist vision, including Balfour (Foreign Secretary), Lord Milner (former imperial consul in Africa) – as well as a large group of Foreign Office officials and government advisors which included Sir Mark Sykes. They saw substantial advantages in the creation of a pro-British Jewish Palestine in a post-war Empire. Underpinning their strategic concerns was a romantic/biblical appeal of the return of the Jews to Zion, part of their evangelical Victorian upbringing, although many of them were agnostic. They had an exaggerated view of the wealth and influence of World Jewry and hoped that Britain’s official adoption of Zionism would increase support for the Allied cause in the USA and Russia. However America had already joined the war in April 1917 and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in October 1917 in effect meant Russia was no longer a useful ally. Cabinet members Lord Curzon and Edwin Montagu (Secretary of State for India and a non-Zionist Jew) opposed the Declaration, but were out-voted. The House of Commons was not consulted.

<http://www.balfourproject.org/the-balfour-declaration/>

(copy of the original letter known as the Balfour Declaration, the text of which was sent to British Zionist leaders is on display at Waddesdon Manor, Bucks)

**ASK** one participant to read out the first paragraph and a second participant to read out the second paragraph of the declaration (the text as sent to British Zionist leaders) (handout 3)

**ASK** one participant to read out the first paragraph and a second participant to read out the second paragraph of the declaration (the text as sent to British Zionist leaders) (handout 4)

*(Paragraph 1) “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object,*

*(Paragraph 2) “it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country”.*

**EMPHASIZE** that the Declaration carried a responsibility not “to prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”.

**SHARE:**

The international Kairos call challenges us to take action through a three stage process – **confession, repentance and speaking truth to power.**  
Kairos Britain: “Time for Action” page 12

**ACTIVITY: DISCUSS** as a group, personal reactions to the promises contained in the Balfour Declaration and responses to the Kairos staged call to action in relation to the Declaration.

**REFLECTION AND PRAYER (10 minutes)**

**LIGHT** a candle. **SHARE**

The Kairos Palestine document names faith, hope and love as central to its call. One of the founding contributors to the document Rifat Odeh Kassis describes in his book *Kairos for Palestine* those three element as “the stones of our path towards peace and justice”. He describes faith not as passive dependence on God but working with God to end the injustice and oppression of the Palestinian people – in other words, faith in action (p.105). Kassis, R. O. (2011) *Kairos for Palestine*. Baday/Alternatives Palestine/India.

**TAKE** 2/3 minutes for silent reflection.

**ASK** if anyone would like to share a comment/reaction to the session.

**CLOSING PRAYERS: INVITE** participants to join in the highlighted responses

Pray not for Arab or Jew,  
for Palestinian or Israeli,  
but pray rather for ourselves,  
that we might not  
divide them in our prayers  
but keep them both together

in our hearts.

When races fight

**peace be amongst us**

when neighbours argue

**peace be amongst us**

when nations disagree

**peace be amongst us**

where people struggle for justice

**let justice prevail**

where Christ's disciples follow

**let peace be our way**

**Amen**

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/prayers-middle-east-gaza-iraq-syria.aspx>

And Lord, we ask for your strength and guidance to take up the Iona call to be aware of the present situation in Israel and Palestine, to reflect prayerfully on it, and to develop an understanding of it so that we can respond, faithfully and courageously. Amen

**SHARE** aim of next session

- to increase understanding of the reality for Palestinians living under occupation

**LEAVE-TAKING**



**BEFORE THE SESSION: Resources needed:** candle, matches, IT equipment and internet to show Youtube clip on child detainees <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2f5tPd3NtFO>

Resources for the session:

- Handout 1 - Reality 1 Illegal settlements
- Handout 2 - Reality 2 Restriction on movement
- Handout 3 - Reality 3 Refugees
- Handout 4 - Reality 4 Emigration
- Handout 5 - Reality 5 Jerusalem
- Handout 6 - Reality 6 Administrative Detention

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)**

**REFER** participants the aim and outcome of the session:

Aim: to increase understanding of the reality for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation

Outcome: greater understanding of the consequences for Palestinians of living under occupation

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**INVITE** participants to use the text given out in session 1 and join in the final section

God,

You ask for our courage to protect the powerless

but we prefer to remain safe, preserving ourselves for future challenges.

You ask us to speak out for justice

but we whisper, in case we are heard.

You ask us to stand up for what is right,

but we would rather blend in to the crowd

You ask us to have faith when doubting seems so much easier.

Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,

only when it is convenient to do so,

only in those places where it is safe to do so,

only with those who make it easy to do so.

Together we pray

**God forgive us and renew us;**

**Inspire us and challenge us**

**So that we might risk the journey, to your kingdom with you, Amen**

**THE REALITY ON THE GROUND (70 minutes)**

**SHARE** information on views in the Kairos Palestine document about the reality on the ground for Palestinians

Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth is very clear that the reality for Palestinians is:

- Israeli occupation of Palestinian land
- deprivation of freedom with numerous inhuman consequences stemming from that.
- There is no genuine peace process. “They say: “Peace, peace when there is no peace”, (Jeremiah 6:14) (paragraph 1.1 page 4)

**ACTIVITY** : As a whole group, **SHARE** descriptions of reality on the ground taken from the Kairos Palestine document, personal testimonies and international reports.

**ASK** different participants to read out the descriptions in handouts 1 to 6 about life for Palestinians living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**REFER to** handout 1 - Reality 1 Illegal settlements

**Reader 1** “Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land, thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and constituting an obstacle to any political solution”. (Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.1.2 page 5)

**Reader 2** Despite international condemnation, there are now about 547,000 Israeli settlers in Occupied Palestine. Israeli settlement policy entails illegal seizure of Palestinian land, demolition of Palestinian houses and the separation of Israelis from Palestinians through physical barriers, road blocks, checkpoints and a segregated road system. Violence and terror by settlers against Palestinians is on the increase. Settlers block roads to prevent Palestinians moving freely, make arson attacks on Palestinian property, uproot crops and trees and generally harass Palestinians going about their everyday lives. Aggressive acts by armed fundamentalist settlers are protected by the Israeli army.

**Reader 3 – personal testimony** *A is a young Palestinian recently married. He lives with his wife in a newly built house in Area B near an illegal settlement. He says: “I’m not safe - safety is most important, more important than freedom because if you are not safe you are not free. I’m living in this house, anyone can come and shoot me. And no one will be taken to account. So every night I have to be awake very well. I sleep but I have to be awake for every movement that happens here round my house. If I hear a cat just walking outside, I have to check this is what’s going on because I’m not safe. To be safe is the most important need for the human being”.*

**Reader 4 – personal testimony** *I am a Palestinian farmer from Shoshahla village, south of Bethlehem. I live with my family in a very old house that is surrounded by 3 Israeli settlements. My*

*family suffers from continuous attacks perpetrated by Israeli settlers. Every couple of months settlers close off the road leading to Shoshahla, preventing the villagers from reaching their homes. The latest attack on my family involved the throwing of stones at our house and on the family members while they were working in the field. That same night a group of settlers set fire to the house. Thankfully, my family managed to escape the burnt house and fled to a neighbouring village. After bringing my family to safety, I returned to Shoshahla. Upon my return I was arrested by the Israeli police and was interrogated and kept in custody for 18 days. The fire has caused severe damage to my family house, leaving all furniture ruined. I do not receive any compensation for the loss of and damage to my property, nor did the Israeli Police undertake legal action against the settlers responsible for the arson attack. The case file was closed under ‘unknown perpetrators’.*

**Reader 5** Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories contravene UN resolutions and international law. For example

- Article 49 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention 1949 state that “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer part of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”.
- 1967 – UN Security Council Resolution 242 called for Israel to withdraw completely from the territories it occupied.
- 1979 - UN Security Council Resolution 446 stated that Israeli settlement in occupied Palestine had no legal validity.
- 2004 – International Court of Justice concluded that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories had been established in breach of international law. The issue of settlements remains one of the biggest stumbling blocks to any peace process.
- 2016 – UN Security Council Resolution 2334 reaffirmed that Israel’s establishment of settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem had no legal validity and was a violation of international law.

**REFER to** handout 2 - Reality 2 Restriction on movement

**Reader 1** – Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools or hospitals” (Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.1.3 page 5)

**Reader 2** – Freedom of movement for Palestinians is regulated by checkpoints, illegal walls, Israeli only roads and a permit and identity system which applies only to Palestinians. This is in denial of basic human rights and freedoms as defined under Apartheid Convention (1973), Article 2c. Palestinian land under occupation has been divided into three different categories for civil and security control.

Area A - Palestinian security and civil control. This covers the centres of major Palestinian towns and cities such as Nablus and Bethlehem. Palestinians are now living in Area A because there is less interference by Israeli security forces but there is huge pressure on housing.

Area B - Palestinian civil control and Israeli security control. This is a belt of land that surrounds most of the cities and the neighbouring Palestinian villages.

Area C - Israeli security and civil control. This makes up 60% of the West Bank and includes 87% of the very productive Jordan valley. Area C is all Palestinian land but Palestinians are forbidden to build on it and denied access to large parts of it. Instead more and more land is appropriated by illegal Israeli settlers and for the barrier wall.

**Reader 3 –personal testimony** *“I’m 26. We don’t have identity and we don’t have dignity. When I was at a checkpoint four years ago, I had to take off all my clothes. I entered the check box [at the checkpoint] and I rung it. So what’s the problem? The soldier asked me to take off my trousers. I said, “no”, he said, “you have to”. I took them off, I didn’t have dignity. From that time I believe we don’t have dignity. We don’t have dignity, my identity is a human being, not Palestinian, not Christian”*

**REFER to** handout 3 - Reality 3 Refugees

**Reader 1** “Refugees are also part of our reality. Most of them are still living in camps under difficult circumstances. They have been waiting for their right of return, generation after generation. What will be their fate?” (Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.1.6 page 5)

**Reader 2** There are now more than 7 million Palestinian refugees round the world made up of 3 main groups – el nakba of 1948, those made refugees during the 6 day war of 1967 and those who have left Palestine as a result of Israeli Government policies.

By denying Palestinian refugees their right of return Israel is in breach of a number of UN resolutions including Resolution 194 of 1948 which says *“refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest possible date, and compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property”*.

**Reader 3 – personal testimony** *“In 1948, we left our home( in Jaffa), I was five years old. We went three families together in a pick-up truck. I remember my father saying they were burning the luggage with the people [in another truck]. Still in my head I have this, they were burning the people with their luggage. And we left and went to where my grandfather was. We suffered a lot, we didn’t have any money. My father worked with a British Oil Company. We brought a few things with us to live – [there were] five children, two sisters and three brothers and my parents. We lived in my mother’s father’s house. It didn’t have a bathroom, anything at the time. We came to Ramallah [although] we had no family here. We went to the Friends [Quaker] School, four classes and they used to give us supplementary food, a meal at noon because we were refugees. Sixteen years or more, the feeding programme continued and we also had the Centre for Milk – milk for the children. We got milk powder and we had from the churches egg yolk, dried and they gave dried yokes to the refugees. We called it the “peace egg”. My father gradually got better work and went to the office”*.

**REFER to** handout 4 - Reality 4 Emigration

**Reader 1** – “Emigration is another element of our reality. The absence of any vision or spark of hope for peace and freedom pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate. Thus the land is deprived of its most important and richest resource – educated youth”. (Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.3 page 6)

**Reader 2** Palestinian Christians are a disappearing minority. In 1948 they made up about 9% of the population of Palestine, now they are less than 1% and dwindling. 94% of the Jordan valley – about one third of West Bank – is now controlled by 9,500 settlers. Before 1967, 250,000 Palestinian lived there. This number is now reduced to 60,000.

**Reader 3- personal testimony** *“The settlements are expanding. They (the Jews) need the land without Palestinians. They think we have no right to this land. They believe we are not human*



*beings. Killing a non-Jew is like killing a rat or picking herbs you don't want – throw them away. They want us expelled like a cancer. Two weeks ago we were going for a hike in the country near Ramallah, 2 men and 3 women. Then we saw a settler, he was aiming his gun straight at us. We pretended not to see him and carried on (on our path)".*

**REFER to** handout 5 - Reality 5 Jerusalem

**Reader 1** "Jerusalem is the heart of our reality.....Jerusalem, city of reconciliation, has become a city of discrimination and exclusion, a source of struggle rather than peace (Kairos Palestine : A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.1.8 page 5)

**Reader 2** As an ecumenical accompanier reports: Occupation by Israel of the West Bank following the 1967 war included East Jerusalem. One of the first things the occupying administration did was a census of the people living in East Jerusalem. The census took place in July 1967, one month after the war. Those people who had fled because of the conflict or who were otherwise not there when the census was done were not allowed back. At a stroke, 40,000 Palestinians lost their right to live in Jerusalem. Those that were left were given a special blue identity (ID) - a residency permit, not Israeli citizenship. Although the blue ID is called a 'Permanent residency permit' the Palestinian holder has to repeatedly prove that Jerusalem is the centre of his or her life i.e. living and working in Jerusalem. They cannot vote in general elections or stand for the Knesset. Jerusalemites who leave for more than seven years lose it. They cannot pass their ID to a spouse or children. Jerusalemites who marry a Palestinian from the West Bank cannot have their spouse to live with them. Some Jerusalemites have a small dwelling in East Jerusalem and actually live outside the city boundary. If they are caught they will lose their IDs and their right to work in Jerusalem.

**Reader 3 – personal testimony** *"I have Jerusalem ID and live within the city boundary with one of my sons and his family. I work in Ramallah (in the Occupied Palestinian Territories) The Israeli authorities are always asking us what we are doing and you are always in danger of losing your Jerusalem ID. They visit anytime, often in the very early morning to check you are in the house or they call you at midnight. When they come, they look first in your bedroom to check what clothes you have there, then the bathroom to check if there's toothpaste, towels etc. and then into the kitchen – open the fridge to check if there's fresh food. Every 10 years we have to renew our ID and they have a great file on us – electricity, water, land tax – if they see we have used very little water that will go against us. Sometimes we leave the taps running to use up more water even though we have to pay for it.*

*"If everything looks OK they come every year or 6 months to check but you never know when they are coming. But if something is not OK then they come every week and call you every day at midnight. Sometimes they watch the house, when you come, when you go out. They ask you about your neighbours. If you say you don't know them, they say that's not the Arabic tradition you are always telling each other stories. They stop us on every item. They take photos of our coming and going. They build a file, you wouldn't believe it. You see it when you go for renewal of your ID".*

**REFER to** handout 6 - Reality 6 Administrative detention

**Reader 1** "and the prisoners? The thousands of prisoners languishing in Israeli prisons are part of our reality. The Israelis move heaven and earth to gain the release of one prisoner, and those



thousands of Palestinian prisoners, when will they have their freedom?” (Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 1.1.7 page 5)

**Reader 2** Administrative detention is detention without charge or trial that is authorized by administrative order rather than by judicial decree. Because this has clear implications for due-process rights, under international law it is allowed only in the most exceptional cases, as the last means available for preventing danger that cannot be thwarted by less harmful means.

However, Israel operates a system which denies detainees the possibility of mounting a proper defence and they can be held indefinitely without charge. Over the years, Israel has placed thousands of Palestinians in administrative detention for prolonged periods of time, without trying them, without informing them of the charges against them, and without allowing them or their counsel to examine the evidence. The Israeli authorities are increasing the use of administrative detention. Numbers rose from 150 people detained at the end of 2013 to a high of 584 people detained by the end of 2015.

In contravention of international law, Israel is the only country in the world which systematically prosecutes between 500 and 700 children a year in military courts lacking fundamental fair trial rights. January to April 2016 saw an average of 420 children in military detention, the highest number since records began in 2008.

**SHOW** YouTube clip prepared by Defense for Children International Palestine called “Alone” telling the experiences of children detained by the Israeli military (8 minutes).

**REFLECTION AND PRAYER (10 minutes)**

**LIGHT** a candle. **SHARE**

The Kairos Palestine document reiterates that “in the midst of our catastrophe, our Christian word is faith, hope and love”. The Kairos cry for hope admits the absence of all hope for Palestinians under the present situation.

Yet Rifat Odeh Kassis describes hope as active, strenuous and alive with signs of hope amongst Palestinian people at grassroots level and in solidarity from the international community.

He writes “Hope begets hope” (Kairos for Palestine (2011) page 106).

**TAKE** 2/3 minutes for silent reflection.

**ASK** if anyone would like to share a comment/reaction to the session.

**ENCOURAGE** participants to think about what they have just heard and seen particularly in the context of hope/hopelessness/anger/hate/love.

Closing prayer:

God-with-us, you sit down in our midst. Nothing can separate us from your love – not towering concrete walls or the deep darkness between searchlights; not distance from friends or despair in our hearts that the world’s wrongs cannot be changed. You are with our brothers crowded at the checkpoint, with our sisters witnessing for peace: you sit down in our midst. Born into poverty to

displaced people living under occupation, you shared our human lives, and we know that your love can never be contained by the walls of separation. You sit down in our midst, God-with-us. Amen

Jan Sutch Pickard [https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace/resources/copy\\_of\\_WWPPIresource2015.pdf](https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace/resources/copy_of_WWPPIresource2015.pdf)

**SHARE** aims of next session

- To examine attitudes towards involvement with peace and justice for the Palestinian people
- To analyse claims of anti-semitism

### **LEAVE-TAKING**

Sources used for Session 3:

Palestine Solidarity Campaign

<http://www.palestinecampaign.org/>

Friends of Al Aqsa Peace in Palestine

<http://www.foa.org.uk/>

Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

<http://www.btselem.org/>

Defense for Children International Palestine

[www.dci-palestine.org](http://www.dci-palestine.org)

Time for Action

<http://kairosbritain.org.uk>

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine/Israel (EAPPI)

[www.eyewitnessblogs.com](http://www.eyewitnessblogs.com)



**BEFORE THE SESSION: Resources needed:** Pens, flipchart/A2 size paper, candle, matches, IT equipment and internet access to show Youtube clip <http://www.unjppi.org/video-see-justice-pursue-peace-in-israel-palestine.html>

Resources for the session:

- Handout 1 - Personal testimony of a house demolition
- Handout 2 - Views on oppression
- Handout 3 - Pictures of confrontations
- Handout 4 - Combatting accusations of anti-semitism
- Handout 5 - Kairos Palestine statement

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)**

**EXPLAIN** to participants the aims and outcomes of the session:

- To examine attitudes towards involvement with peace and justice for the Palestinian people
- To analyse claims of anti-semitism

Outcomes of the session:

- Clearer personal rationale for involvement with peace and justice for the Palestinian people
- More ideas of how to combat accusations of anti-semitism

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**INVITE** participants to use the text given out in Session 1 and join in the final section

God,  
You ask for our courage to protect the powerless  
but we prefer to remain safe, preserving ourselves for future challenges.  
You ask us to speak out for justice  
but we whisper, in case we are heard.  
You ask us to stand up for what is right,  
but we would rather blend in to the crowd  
You ask us to have faith,  
when doubting seems so much easier.  
Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,  
only when it is convenient to do so,  
only in those places where it is safe to do so,  
only with those who make it easy to do so.

Together we pray

**God forgive us and renew us;**

**Inspire us and challenge us**

**So that we might risk the journey, to your kingdom with you,**

**Amen**

**PALESTINE - A DISAPPEARING LAND (10 minutes)**

REMINDE participants of the previous session which highlighted the disappearance of Palestinian lands through illegal Israeli settlement.

SHARE United Nations report on house demolitions which support the settlement programme:

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Israel demolished, dismantled, or confiscated 1090 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem in 2016, displacing 1620 Palestinians, including 772 children.

By August 2016, Israeli demolitions of Palestinian structures had already exceeded any annual totals recorded by OCHA, since the UN agency began comprehensively tracking in 2009. Demolitions deny Palestinians the right to live securely and deny children an adequate standard of living, education, health, and psychological well-being.

Israeli authorities refuse the majority of applications for building permits by Palestinians in Israeli-controlled Area C, which comprises 60 percent of the West Bank, forcing them to build homes without the necessary permits. Punitive demolitions are used as collective punishment against Palestinians in contravention of international law.

<http://www.dci-palestine.org/>

**ACTIVITY:** Ask a participant to read out the personal testimony of a house demolition (handout 1)

*"I am MAK, 43-year old Palestinian who lives in Al-Walaja village west of Bethlehem city. I started to build a house in the village in 2009, and finally completed the building of 120 square meter house in 2016. I could only enjoy living in this new house for two months. In April 2016 the Israeli army handed me a demolition order for the house that I had been working on for the past 7 years. I contacted and hired a lawyer to stop the demolishing, but my efforts were in vain. A week after the order was issued the Israeli bulldozers arrived in Al Walaja at 2.00 a.m, accompanied by some 40 Israeli soldiers to carry out the demolition. The reason for this order was that I did not have a license for the construction of this house. I actually did apply for a license, however, but since Al Walaja is located in what is considered 'Area C' (under Israeli civil and military administration) Israel does not approve any building licenses applied by the Palestinians living there. Not only I did lose this house and all I invested in it, but also I also had to pay for the costs related to the removal of the remains of my house after the demolition. This is real oppression."*

**WHY IS THE SITUATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE RELEVANT TO ME? (25 minutes including video )**

**SHOW** Youtube clip “Seek Peace, Pursue Justice in Israel-Palestine: Time for Action” produced by the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel - personal testimonies of internationals who have witnessed the life of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation (13 mins)

**ASK** participants to share any particular views or information contained in the video that struck a chord with them.

**ACTIVITY:** Refer participants to handout 2 - views on oppression

In small groups/pairs and bearing in mind the points made in the video and the quotations in handout 2, **ASK** participants to think about their personal reactions/views to the situation in Palestine. How are these reactions/views affected by their belief in Christ?

*“Now that I have seen, I am responsible” written on the Separation Wall outside Bethlehem.*

*“Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented”. Holocaust victim, Elie Wiesel's Acceptance Speech, on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 1986*

*“It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result”. Mahatma Gandhi 1869- 1948 Indian Political and Spiritual Leader*

*“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality”. Bishop Desmond Tutu as quoted in Brown, R.M. (1984) Unexpected News: Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes p. 19*

*“We can be angry but we must not hate”. Sami Awad director Holy Land Trust based in Beit Sahour speaking in Oxford summer 2015*

*“We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. American Declaration of Independence 1776*

As a whole group **SHARE** reactions including the ideas below if these do not come up.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Christ preaches love and compassion for all people. If one part of the body of Christ suffers, the whole body suffers 1 Corinthians 12. v. 24 - 26</li><li>• The Christian message preaches dignity, justice and freedom for all people.</li><li>• We are challenged as Christians to seek justice for all people.</li><li>• Special responsibility - Britain's involvement in the creation of the state of Israel and partition of Palestine.</li><li>• The need to uphold and enforce international law as a framework for human rights and justice</li></ul> |
|---|---|

**CHALLENGING CLAIMS OF ANTI-SEMITISM** (25 minutes)

**ACTIVITY:** In pairs/small groups **REFER** participants to Handout 4 –pictures of confrontations in Myanmar, apartheid South Africa, Northern Ireland and Palestine. ASK participants for their reactions to the pictures. **SHARE**, as a whole group, reactions to the pictures e.g. balance of power between protagonists

**WRITE** the following questions on the flipchart/A2 sheet and **DISCUSS** as a group:

- do we feel more comfortable challenging excessive behaviour if perpetrators are not Jewish?
- do we fear accusations of anti-semitism?
- do we need to challenge our personal feelings about challenging Israeli actions against Palestinians?

In small groups, **REFER** participants to handout 4 - combatting accusations of anti-semitism. ASK participants to discuss the arguments and practical suggestions in the handout in the light of their own experiences. **SHARE**, as a whole group, main points from group discussions.

**Complaint:** *“Criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic/the whole world is anti-semitic”*

**Response:** *It would be no surprize to find anti-Semites critical of Israel but to criticise specific Israeli policies that violate international law is the opposite of bigotry. Instead it is a just act – one might even say a very Jewish one- that works to strengthen human rights, rights that protect Jews and everyone else.*

*If one is criticising house demolitions, checkpoints, extra-judicial executions and the like and one is called anti-Semitic, then the accuser is bizarre indeed. In order for these criticisms to be anti-Semitic the accuser has to accept those violations of international law as inherent characteristics of Jewry. So who’s being anti-Semitic here?*

*While it’s true that there is anti-Semitism in the world, what does this have to do with the military occupation of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem?*

*Schaeffer, E., Halper, J. and Johnson, J. (2006) “Counter-Rhetoric Challenging “conventional wisdom” & reframing the conflict p.29, 30 ICAHD*

[https://www.umhltf.org/uploads/CounterRhetoric\\_ReframingTheConflict.pdf](https://www.umhltf.org/uploads/CounterRhetoric_ReframingTheConflict.pdf)

**Some ideas for combatting accusations of anti-semitism when criticising Israeli Government led human rights abuses:**

- Make it clear you are criticising/taking action against Israeli Government policy and actions, not Jews generally.  
The re-working of the non-legally binding working definition of anti-semitism by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in May 2016 (and adopted by the UK government in December 2016) states that “criticism of Israel similar to that levelled at any other country cannot be regarded as anti-semitic”.  
[https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press\\_release\\_document\\_anti\\_semitism.pdf](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_anti_semitism.pdf)

So ask yourself, could I be making a similar criticism of another country under the same circumstances?

- Base your criticisms on international law incorporated in UN declarations e.g. December 2016 UN resolution 2334 condemning the building of Israeli settlements in West Bank as a flagrant violation of international law.
- Familiarize yourself with one or two particular aspects of Israeli Government policy which you find particularly unacceptable and is against international law e.g. treatment of child detainees. Press this point home when e.g. justifying BDS as a method of persuading the Israeli Government to change its policies towards Palestinians.
- And remember Sami Awad’s words “We can be angry but we must not hate”.

**POINT OUT** that The Kairos Britain movement is clear that criticism of the state of Israel and the behaviour of some West Bank settlers is not automatically anti-semitic. For more information <http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/the-question-of-antisemitism/>

Although for some people the State of Israel is how they see Jewish identity, so criticism of the state can be read as anti-Semitic, the Kairos Britain movement does not hold this view.

“We do not accept that criticising the actions and policies of the Israeli government or behaviour of some West Bank settlers is automatically anti-Semitic. Our motivation is only to speak the truth. We want to signal not just our commitment to the rights of Palestinians, but our dedication to the humanity and security of Jews in Israel and worldwide”.

Kairos Britain: “Time for Action” page 5

### **THE KAIROS JOURNEY (10 minutes)**

**REMIND** participants:

The Kairos Britain document “Time for Action” (page 12) tells us that the Kairos message is based on a journey of:

- confession
- repentance
- speaking the truth to power

**ACTIVITY: REFER** participants to handout 5 – A Moment of Truth paragraph 2.3.2. **In** pairs/small groups, **ASK** participants to read handout 5 together and discuss individual responses to the views expressed in the handout in the light of the Kairos journey – confession, repentance, speaking truth to power.

**ENCOURAGE** participants to think back to the terms of the Balfour Declaration and their responses to the views on oppression (previous activity this session)

As a whole group, **SHARE** one/two main ideas/responses from each pair/group

*“Our presence in this land, as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, is not accidental but deeply rooted in history and geography of this land, resonant with the connectedness of any other people to the land it lives in. It was an injustice when we were driven out. The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice”. Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth paragraph 2.3.2.*

**REFLECTION AND PRAYER (10 minutes)**

**LIGHT** a candle. **SHARE**

The Kairos Palestine document reiterates that “in the midst of our catastrophe, our Christian word is faith, hope and love”.

Rifat Odeh Kassis is clear in his book Kairos for Palestine (2011) that love is challenging and the intention in the Kairos document was to challenge the Palestinian people to follow the commandment to love your enemy. Liberation only comes for both oppressed and oppressor when aggression and cruel conduct end. God’s commandment to love includes resistance but a resistance based on love not hate and which respects the enemy’s fundamental humanity.

**TAKE** 2/3 minutes for silent reflection.

**ASK** if anyone would like to share a comment/reaction to the session.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

God of justice, bless those who work for peace through justice. Strengthen their resolve in the face of seemingly endless violence. Guide the leaders of the peoples of the Middle East to know your will and to support a just peace for all of your children. God of love, lifting up the holy land for all humankind, breathe love and compassion into our prayers with a desire for nothing other than peace: peace in our hearts, peace for all creation, and especially peace in the land that is called holy.

God of mercy, even as we long to understand that which is often beyond our comprehension, we lay before you the hearts, minds and bodies of all those suffering from conflict in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, and from the ongoing occupation. Shower upon all the people of this holy land the spirit of justice and reconciliation.

God of the nations, give to all our people the blessings of well-being, freedom, and harmony, and, above all things, give us faith in you that we may be strengthened to care for all those in need until the coming of your son, our Saviour and Lord. Amen

<http://actpalestineforum.org/>

**SHARE** aims of next session:

- To develop an understanding of non-violent ways to resist Israeli occupation
- To develop ideas for personal involvement in supporting the Palestinian people



**LEAVE-TAKING**

**NB:** For more information on a theological response to occupation see Chapter 4 Delegitimising Occupation: a theological response in Kairos Britain: Time for Action  
<http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Time-for-Action.pdf>



**BEFORE THE SESSION: Resources needed:** Flipchart/A2 size paper, flip chart marker pens, candle, matches, list from session 1 of what participants hope to get from the sessions

Resources for the session:

- Handout 1 - Alternative versions of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”
- Handout 2 - Quotations from the Bible
- Handout 3 – Anglican Marks of Mission
- Handout 4 - Some ideas of what we can do in the UK
- Handout 5 - Action plan
- Handout 6 – Evaluation form
- Handout 7 - final verse alternative “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (20 minutes)**

**EXPLAIN** to participants the aims and outcomes of the session:

Aims:

- to develop an understanding of non-violent ways to resist Israeli occupation
- to develop ideas for personal involvement in supporting the Palestinian people

Outcomes:

- a clearer idea of ways to support non-violent resistance to Israeli occupation
- an action plan

### **OPENING PRAYER**

**INVITE** participants to use the text given out in Session 1 and join in the final section

God,

You ask for our courage to protect the powerless

but we prefer to remain safe, preserving ourselves for future challenges.

You ask us to speak out for justice

but we whisper, in case we are heard.

You ask us to stand up for what is right,

but we would rather blend in to the crowd

You ask us to have faith,

when doubting seems so much easier.

Lord forgive our calculated efforts to follow you,

only when it is convenient to do so,

only in those places where it is safe to do so,

only with those who make it easy to do so.

Together we pray

**God forgive us and renew us;**

**Inspire us and challenge us**

**So that we might risk the journey, to your kingdom with you,**

**Amen**

**REMIND** participants of the elements of the Kairos journey

The Kairos journey involves:

- confession
- repentance
- speaking truth to power.

An element of our repentance is to acknowledge the reality on the ground in Palestine and over the last few weeks we have spent time hearing about the reality of life for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, we still often feel more comfortable accepting a sanitized version of what life is like in Palestine e.g. as expressed in Christmas carols.

**ACTIVITY: REFER** participants to handout 1 traditional and modern words of ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’. **ASK** participants to sing/say the two versions of the carol.

**SHARE** reactions to singing/saying the different versions.

#### **A Christian response to resisting to occupation (30 minutes)**

**EXPLAIN** that the Kairos Palestine movement is clear that Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is good for neither Palestinian nor Israeli and it calls for resistance grounded in love.

Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth states that:

*“It (the occupation) is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights, bestowed by God. It distorts the image of God in the Israeli who has become the occupier just as it distorts this image in the Palestinian living under occupation”* (paragraph 2.5).

Christian teaching commands us to love. The document calls for resistance but *“resistance with love as its logic”* (paragraph 4.2.3). It calls for new ways to find a resolution to the conflict through which the ways of force give way to the ways of justice. Such an intention must apply above all to *“the peoples that are militarily strong, mighty enough to impose their injustice on the weaker”* (paragraph 4.2.2).

It is clear that the future of Israelis and Palestinians is one – a future where *“either the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both”* (paragraph 4.3).

**ACTIVITY:** Refer participants to handout 2 – quotations from the bible. In pairs/small groups, **ASK** participants to discuss the teachings on peace and justice in the quotations, to share their interpretations and how these affect their attitudes to Palestinian/Israeli issues.

**SHARE** main points as whole group.

**Quotation 1** *Jesus said “You have learned what they were told, “Love your neighbour, hate your enemy”. But what I tell you is this: Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors; only so that you can be children of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise on good and bad alike, and sends the rain on the honest and the dishonest”. (Mathew 5: 43-45)*

**Quotation 2** *St. Peter said: “Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse but on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you are called”. (1 Peter 3:9)*

**Quotation 3** *St. Paul said: “The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, rather justice, peace and joy, inspired by the Holy Spirit”. (Romans 14:17)*

**Quotation 4** *The prophet Isaiah said: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. Former things shall no more be remembered nor shall they be called to mind. Rejoice and be filled with delight, you boundless realms which I create; for I create Jerusalem to be a delight and her people a joy”. (Isaiah 65: 17, 18)*

*And he said again: “He will not break a bruised reed, or snuff out a smouldering wick; he will make justice shine on every race, never faltering, never breaking down, he will plant justice on earth.”  
Isaiah 42:3*

**Quotation 5** *The prophet Micah said: “God has told you what is good; and what is it that the Lord asks of you? Only to act justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with your God”. (Micah 6:8)*

**SHARE** A Moment of Truth makes a clear call to the churches of the world to get involved in the Palestinian struggle for peace, freedom and justice.

*“Can you help us get our freedom back? For this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security and love”. (paragraph 6.1)*

**REFER** participants to handout 3 and ask a participant to read out the text.

*The Anglican Communion has 5 marks of mission which underpin its commitment to and understanding of God’s integral mission.*

*The Five Marks of Mission are:*

- *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom*
- *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers*
- *To respond to human need by loving service*
- ***To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation***
- *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth*

*(Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101)*

**ASK** participants for their reactions to the marks of mission and particularly mark 4. **ASK** participants from other Christian denominations if they know of similar statements by their own churches.

**So what can resistance to occupation look like – speaking truth to power? (20 minutes)**

**SHARE** A Moment of Truth gives examples of ways to challenge injustices

- civil disobedience
- advocacy campaigns
- an end to the selective implementation of international law and resolutions regarding the Palestinian situation and divestment
- economic sanctions and boycott against Israel
- come and see

**ACTIVITY: REFER** participants to handout 4 “Some ideas of what we can do in the UK”.

In pairs/small groups **DISCUSS** the ideas in handout 4. **SHARE** reactions as a whole group

**COMPLETE** action plan (handout 5) for individual and/or group actions.

**REFLECTION, EVALUATION AND PRAYER (20 minutes)**

**LIGHT** a candle.

**SHARE** the meaning of the word “Kairos” as expressed by Rifat Odeh Kassis in the foreword to his book “Kairos for Palestine”.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the right or “supreme” moment when something special occurs.

Kairos in the New Testament means “the appointed time in the purpose of God”, the moment when God acts.

Kairos in “A Moment of Truth”, the Kairos Palestine document, means the moment when we see God’s gifts in the midst of our suffering.

Kairos to me means the moment when Christians decide to be Christians.

Rifat Odeh Kassis “Kairos for Palestine” (2011) p.4

**TAKE** 2/3 minutes for silent reflection.

**REFER** back to the list made in Session 1 highlighting what participants hoped to get from the sessions

In small groups/pairs, **INVITE** participants to:

- review their original hopes and whether or not they have been achieved
- share a comment/reaction to the sessions

- give positive/negative reactions to any of the resources and/or activities

**SHARE** main points as a whole group. **ASK** participants to complete evaluation form (handout 6) and return them to you.

**CLOSING PRAYERS:**

Loving God,

Of the people of Islam;

Of the people of Christ;

And of the Jewish people;

Help us to hold the people of Israel and Palestine in our hearts.

Help us to understand their hurt and pain.

Gracious God help us to be skilful in our interventions.

Help us to have wisdom not to amplify the wrong.

We see the injustice.

Help our actions to be understood as those of a critical friend to Israel

And not as an enemy of their people.

Help Palestinians to hold your love and guidance in their hearts as they continue to fight the injustice.

Let them be shown the way from darkness by the light of the Holy Spirit

Help all the people to truly know each other,

To understand each other,

To talk to each other,

To listen to each other.

Grant wisdom to all the leaders.

Grant peace to this land where there is no peace.

Let justice flow through the whole land like a river.

We ask this in your Son's name.

Amen

(Debbie Chaloner member of Market Harborough Congregational Church and the Iona Community)

**REFER** participants to the final verse of an alternative "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (handout 7) and **INVITE** them to say or sing together.

O daring child of Bethlehem,

empower us all we pray,

To work for peace that wars may cease

and love be born today.

With all the nations' angels

proclaiming we shall tell:

"Heal Bethlehem, join 'us' with 'them' –

Amen, Immanuel!

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**LEAVE -TAKING**