

'It feels like there is no life left for us here, no future for our children. No happiness and no hope left in our hearts. My family have always lived here. Every generation going back as far as we can know of have lived here in Bethlehem. But this occupation, this violence, this suffocation and this indignity...I don't know if we can take anymore. Soon all our churches will be empty and there will be no more Christians left in the Holy Land.'

These are the words of Abu Nidal, a wood carver in Bethlehem. The lack of tourists coming to Bethlehem due to the ongoing conflict, the Israeli closure stopping him getting to Jerusalem and other tourist centres, and the Israeli imposed export regulations for Palestinians make it difficult and expensive for him to sell his goods, meaning that he is now struggling to provide for his family. He has a wife and three children to think about as well as his parents who live with him.

Abu Nidal's story is not unique. Instead it is the norm for Palestinians who live each day under the Israeli occupation, experiencing significant loss of normal freedoms that you and I take for granted; visiting their families, travelling abroad, getting to work and school, and accessing healthcare. Instead they face checkpoints, delays, roads they can't drive on, bombs falling on their homes, soldiers intimidating their children and being refused access to their farmlands. This system of apartheid has resulted in;

- 745 Palestinian children arrested by Israel's occupation force in 2019.
- 218 days of Israeli bombs dropping on Palestinians in 2019 and 2020, killing and injuring hundreds (including children), destroying many families.
- 15,400 olive trees were uprooted or destroyed on Palestinian farms by illegal Israeli settlers and the Israeli occupation forces in 2019-20, shattering the livelihood of hundreds of Palestinians.

The Christian community in Palestine with Global Kairos for Justice have come together to issue '**Cry for Hope**' (www.cryforhope.org), in which they state that the integrity of the church and the Christian faith is at stake: "We cannot serve God and the oppression of the Palestinian people". The Cry asks Christians to engage in a process of study, reflection and confession concerning the systematic deprivation of the Palestinian people and the use of the Bible by many to justify it, and act to formally reject such oppression.

**"When the Church hears the cry of the oppressed
it cannot but denounce the social structures
that give rise to and perpetuate the misery
from which the cry arises"**

-Archbishop Oscar Romero

We would like to invite you, as a leader of your Church/denomination, to join a small and intimate online discussion with Palestinian Christian theologians about Cry for Hope - to hear directly from them what our Palestinian Christian family are facing in their daily lives, to discuss, challenge and be challenged on theological perspectives, and to find out and what you and your church can do to stand in solidarity with them here in the UK.

This is a unique opportunity for you to engage with and learn from Palestinian theologians, whether you know nothing of the situation or are already an expert. This event will be hosted by Sabeel-Kairos, a Christian human rights organisation working to promote a just peace for Israel and Palestine, who will ensure the meetings are a 'safe space' to ask questions and raise our voices free of judgement.

Seminar Dates:

Thursday 26th November 2020 at 12:30-2:00pm

Thursday 10th December 2020 at 12:30-2:00pm

Thursday 21st January 2021 at 12:30-2:00pm

If you would like to attend one of these events, please email info@sabeel-kairos.org.uk or return the below form to:

Sabeel Kairos
Office above AGE UK
60 The Parade
Oadby
Leicester
LE2 5BF

Name and title:

Denomination:

Church and Town:

Have you ever visited the Holy Land?

Yes **No**

How much do you know about the injustice faced by Palestinians?

Nothing **A little bit** **A lot** **I am already an activist**

Which seminar would you be interested in attending?

26th November 2020

10th December 2020

21st January 2021