



May 13, 2021

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Bishop Desmond Tutu

As we are writing this, bombs are falling over Gaza, where 24 people have just been killed in the past hour only, increasing the numbers of those murdered to 103 (including 27 children) and injuring over 580 and flattening many multi-story buildings to the ground, and wiping out whole families.. One soul lost is too many.”

Excerpt of the Statement from the Palestine Youth Ecumenical Movement (PYEM)

The World Student Christian Federation is highly concerned by the new escalation of violence against the Palestinian people, which includes women and children. The images we have seen and the testimonies of our Palestinian student brothers and sisters fill our hearts with pain and call us to continue acting for justice and peace for the right and self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Context:

This latest Israeli military operation against Gaza comes as a continuation of Israel's strategies to silence Palestinians who are fighting for their freedom, dignity, right to exist, self-determination, and worship in their sacred places.

In Sheikh Jarrah, at the gates of the old city of Jerusalem and at Al-Aqsa mosque, protestors were brutally repressed by the Israeli military with, stun grenades, tear gas, rubber-coated metal bullets, batons, assault, skunk water. The use of excessive force, arbitrary arrests and aggressive attacks for the past days, have been the strategy of the occupation forces, wounding hundreds, some very severely, where three young men lost both of their eyes.

Some other 600 Palestinians, at least, got arrested by the Israeli occupation forces including 6 journalists. We have also witnessed, during the past days and nights, the brutal attacks of settlers on unarmed Palestinians in Jerusalem, Lydd, Haifa and all-over historical Palestine.

Twenty-eight families of some 500 people are under the threat of eviction from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood for the sake of colonial settlers: in a brazen violation of the International Humanitarian Law. This also is not a separate event; it is a continuation of Israel's ethnic cleansing strategies. It is a continuation of the Nakba, which started in 1948 and still ongoing every day.

At the Gaza Strip, the military operation already took 103 lives -including 27 children- and injured over 580, and flattening many multi-story buildings to the ground. Those are not mere numbers. Those are people, children, men and women each with their own hopes, fears and dreams.

This ethnic cleansing, and apartheid system is being funded and supported by the USA, Canada and European countries who are almost all complicit in the oppression of our people. They do almost nothing to hold Israel accountable to its obligations under the International Humanitarian Law as an occupying power and have not made real attempts to push for just peace.

This apartheid system is the by-product of the national supremacy doctrine that Europe, the United States and most of the central nations allow Israel to get away with.

For decades WSCF has been struggling for justice and peace in the Holy Land and joined the cry of hope of the Palestinian people. The General Assembly in 2015 held in Bogotá Colombia, has passed a policy paper to support and advocate for the Palestinian communities based on international law, Human Rights perspective and the theology of liberation perspective on the preferential option for the poor and those who are oppressed

The World Student Christian Federation joins the Palestine Youth Ecumenical Movement and demand and urgently call:

To churches, the ecumenical movement and civil society:

1. To use the right terminology. Start calling things with their actual names. It is not a conflict. It is ethnic cleansing. Israel is a settler colonial regime that enforces a structure of apartheid from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.
2. To drop both sides narrative. This narrative disregards the power dynamics by portraying the image of equal parts. Those are not equal parts, unarmed occupied protestors vs. heavily weaponized settlers colonialists and soldiers, oppressors and oppressed, occupiers and occupied.
4. To stop funding companies and corporations that are complicit and profiting from the apartheid and human rights violations. Actively support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign. If you stand against colonization, apartheid, occupation and ethnic cleansing, then stop funding it.
5. To self-reflect on positions and affiliations. Revisit, challenge and defy theologies that justify injustice, colonialism, apartheid, and oppression.
6. To actively advocate for Decolonizing Palestine. Our fight for justice is international. No one is free until we are all free.
7. Active participation and actions of our churches and our Christian brothers and sisters around the world is a prophetic must. Being silent renders you complicit in the oppression, colonialism, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

To the United Nations and UN Parties,

8. To fully implement and comply with international law. The WSCF and the Student Christian Movement actions are based on the Human Rights and the international law approach and is saying nothing but to respect the UN Conventions and enforce the UN Resolutions on Palestine;

9. To affirm that the annexation of East Jerusalem or any other part of Occupied territory is illegal under International Law. The eviction of the Palestinian families from Sheikh Jarrah is a war crime.

10. To recall the importance of the rights of the peoples to self-determination under international law *UNGA A/RES/37/43* the right to resist colonialism and the respect and granting of Human Rights of the Palestinian people.

We pray for all the families that have been suffering through the ongoing, oppression, military operation, ethnic cleansing, apartheid and occupation of Palestine.

We pray and act for Peace and Justice,



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The World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) is a worldwide youth and student organization that brings together more than 107 affiliated and associated student movements in more than 90 countries.

As a Federation of student movements, the WSCF empowers and connects activist youth and students around the world on their journey towards the transformation of the future. The WSCF fosters a democratic culture for the mobilization of proactive youth in society, promoting positive change through dialogue and action among different traditions and cultures.

The WSCF is a Non-Governmental Organization with Special Consultative Status with the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).