

Act for Peace work in Gaza

Act for Peace is working with the *Middle East Council of Churches Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees* to support the needs of the Palestinian people as well as their right to a just and lasting peace, including:

- essential health services to over 80,000 refugees
- specialist psycho-social services to families traumatised by the 2009 war
- vocational training for youth to help them find decent work



Photo: United Nations

Become an Ecumenical Accompanier

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) seeks to support local and international efforts to end the Israeli occupation and bring a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a just peace, based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. EAPPI is a program of the World Council of Churches. This year we are sending our first Australian volunteers as part of the program.

Applications are now open for the 2011 intake of volunteers!

For more information: visit www.ncca.org.au/eappi or email eappi@ncca.org.au.



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Dear friends,

In light of the tragic events that have taken place this week in waters off Israel and Palestine, we invite you to join us and millions around the world to pray and act for peace.

This week was the **World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel**, an ecumenical action week coordinated by the World Council of Churches.

The action week encourages churches and individuals to send a clear signal to policy-makers, the public and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples.

The attacks on the aid flotilla this week have brought international attention to the plight of those living in Gaza under Israeli blockade, which has resulted in over 70% of its 1.5 million citizens living on less than \$1 a day.

Act for Peace has been able to support ecumenical partners in Palestine for over 20 years with humanitarian assistance and peace and justice initiatives. Today, we are not asking for your money.

We are asking for you to pray and reflect on the Kairos Palestine document written by Palestinian Christians in Jerusalem and supported by the World Council of Churches. To show your support, please add your name to the list provided by your church or go to our website:

www.actforpeace.org.au/palestine

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Gee, Executive Director

Act for Peace

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia and a member of the global ACT Alliance

A prayer from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem

Gracious God our Heavenly Father, Creator and sustainer of each human life, we give thanks to you for every church and parish around the world that is praying with us this day for peace. Our Holy City and our land are much in need of peace.

In your immeasurable mystery and love for all, let the power of your Redemption and your Peace transcend all barriers of cultures and religions and fill the hearts of all who serve you here, of both peoples – Israeli and Palestinian – and of all religions.

In the land you made holy, free us all from the sin of indifference, contempt and violence which only brings hatred and killing. Free the souls and hearts of Israelis and Palestinians. Give liberation, freedom and dignity, to the people of Gaza who live under trials, threats and blockades. Guide the leaders in this land, purify their minds and hearts, to become true servers of their peoples. Speak your word of love for all to hear, guide us to justice in all lands, grant us power to proclaim your reign, bridge the gaps that divide and unsettle us and let your Kingdom come.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, barrier breaker and sharer of our humanity, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, who prays in and with us all. Amen.



Photo: United Nations

Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth

The statement is authored by the heads of Churches in Jerusalem and other Palestinian Christians. It is 'a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering'. Below are some key passages from the document:

'As Palestinian Christians we hope that this document will provide the turning point to focus the efforts of all peace-loving peoples in the world, especially our Christian sisters and brothers. We hope also that it will be welcomed positively and will receive strong support, as was the South Africa Kairos document launched in 1985, which, at that time proved to be a tool in the struggle against oppression and occupation.'

'Our word is a cry of hope, with love, prayer and faith in God. We address it first of all to ourselves and then to all the churches and Christians in the world, asking them to stand against injustice and apartheid, urging them to work for a just peace in our region, calling on them to revisit theologies that justify crimes perpetrated against our people and the dispossession of the land.'

It calls on Palestinians and Israelis to 'see the face of God in each one of God's creatures and overcome the barriers of fear or race in order to establish a constructive dialogue'.

The document asks that all peoples, political leaders and decision-makers put pressure on Israel and take legal measures in order to oblige its government to put an end to its oppression and disregard for international law.

The call from the Palestinian Christian community is clear – 'What is the international community doing? What are the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel and in the Arab world doing? What is the Church doing? The problem is not just a political one. It is a policy in which human beings are destroyed, and this must be of concern to the Church.'

Some of the actions urged in the Kairos Palestine statement:

- To encourage dialogue among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam to breach the walls imposed by the occupation.
- To raise public awareness of the need to restore political rights to the Palestinians and to encourage Israeli voices, advocating peace and justice.
- To follow Palestinian civil society and religious institutions and call on individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything which supports the occupation.

For a full copy of the Kairos Palestine document and other details about the campaign, please go to www.actforpeace.org.au/palestine

By request of our member churches, the National Council of Churches in Australia has sent a copy of the Kairos Palestine document to the Australian Government.