



Thames North Synod Israel/Palestine Resolution

**Paper G
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Trinity St Albans sends the following Resolution, urging Thames North Synod to send it, with our grave concerns, to the General Assembly 2021, whether it meets virtually or in the traditional way:

Informed by the direct experience of participants in the denomination's educational visit to Israel and Palestine in 2019, widely shared since within the church, General Assembly embraces the Cry for Hope issued in July 2020 by Kairos Palestine, <https://cryforhope.org/>

- *General Assembly recognises the grave injustices and suffering which so many Palestinians, including our Christian brothers and sisters, endure every day resulting from the increasing and on-going occupation of Palestinian land*
- *General Assembly calls on churches:*
 - *to take steps to ensure that they are well informed about the enormity of the situation for Palestinian Christians;*
 - *to reflect on how a Biblical understanding of 'justice and peace' challenges us to listen to the voice of the oppressed*
- *The URC resolves to live in Christian solidarity with Palestinian Christians. We will continue to pray for peace and respect for the human rights of all of the people of the Holy Land as we seek ways to engage with and respond to the Cry for Hope*

1. In 2016 this Synod passed a Resolution that would, along with others, result in the 2019 URC Educational Visit to Israel-Palestine. On return Rachael Williams (Thames North rep) reported to Synod. She and Agnes Nteziryayo (Islington URC) remain deeply affected by their visit. Visit participants have reported back to churches, though inevitably Covid has affected this work.

2. URC Mission Committee took a firm stance on the situation in their [June 2020 Resolution](#), issued when it was anticipated that Israel would annex the West Bank: "The narrative was one of inadequate water supply, intermittent provision of electricity, economic deprivation, unequal access to health care and severe restrictions on freedom of movement. In the context of these daily challenges, there was a plea to share the prayers and the story of all that the participants had seen. Crucially, the group realised that this was not a conflict between faiths, but an outcry against the disproportionate actions of the Israeli Government. ..."

3. The proposed de jure Annexation did not go ahead, but de facto Annexation continues every single day. We hear of the trauma of [house demolition](#), the grief at [olive tree destruction](#), the fear of [settler attacks](#) and [violence at the olive harvest](#). There is, too, the stress of [fighting eviction](#) and the [night raids](#) with [arrests of children](#). Even after demolitions, the authorities can return to [destroy tents and shelters](#). Palestinian land is continually [being expropriated](#) for new roads and settlements. On top of all this come the difficulties associated with Covid and (now) the unequal [provision of vaccination](#). Churches can follow events thanks to the Sabeel [Wave of Prayer](#), [Commitment for Life](#), the [Kumi Now](#) weekly initiative, and the [Amos Trust](#), amongst other sources.

4. In July 2020, Palestinian Christian leaders issued the document [Cry for Hope](#) with urgent news about what was happening to them and a declaration: "we cannot serve God while remaining silent about the oppression of the Palestinians". Arising from the Cry for Hope, a number of URC clergy have participated in international seminars online with Palestinian Christian leaders; this included several from within Thames North Synod. Susan Armitage writes 'The webinar was a very powerful and a very moving experience, to which I felt impelled to respond'.

5. We are moved to respond to this call from Palestinian Christians, and to let them know we have heard and have recognised their plight, along with that of all Palestinians. They need, and deserve, to hear back from us. Thanks to the 2019 visit, our Church is now informed enough to make a response, and it is our Christian duty to do so.