

Christians4Palestine— Ireland Bulletin

Volume 1, Number 4, October 2025



'Peace, justice and equality for all our brothers and sisters in Palestine — Christian, Muslim and Jew'

Introduction

Christians4Palestine Ireland is a multi-faith, cross-community activist organisation that works to raise awareness of the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people and the injustices perpetrated against them. This bulletin aims to provide articles and information to broaden knowledge and understanding of the region.

This bulletin focuses on two accounts of eye witness testimony. The first is the perspective of Roy Uprichard on a talk by Rev. Ashraf Tannous, a Lutheran Minister from Bethlehem who gave a number of talks in Belfast to highlight the ethnic cleansing that continues at an alarming rate in the West Bank.

The second is from Dr Dianne Kirby, from Belfast, who visited the West Bank in October and has seen first hand the impact of the Genocide and the continued settler colonialist project.

Twinning with Palestine

If you'd like to learn more about Christians4Palestine's proposal to offer support and assistance by 'twinning' local churches and communities with West Bank Towns and villages, starting with the town of **Taybeh**, please visit our website at

 christians4palestine.org

 christians4palestine@outlook.com

Podcasts, bulletins, fundraising projects are available free on the website.



SCAN ME

'I Am Human' - A talk by Rev. Ashraf Tannous

A standing man at the front of an East Belfast Church. Here to share a story. Passing on preamble he unbuttons his jacket, and, with his arms wide spread, asks us to observe, to confirm that he is human. Powered by heart, blood, breath, hopes and dreams. One who feels. Deeply. **'Am I not also Human?'** As if brother to a Venetian Merchant objecting to *his* dehumanisation.

But Rev Ashraf Tannous possesses a multiplicity of identities: **Arab, Palestinian, Semitic. And Christian.** His people a part of *that* story. Not only because he pastors the Lutheran Bethlehem Christmas Church. But that his ancestors were there at the very beginning, in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost. Becoming part of the very first church.

That he feels compelled to make the case for both his people's humanity and pedigree shows the extent of our disregard for human dignity – our *Imago Dei*. One that echoes others subjected to myriad cruelties, who cried out, **'I can't breathe.'** And that *their* lives matter too. Or, with a Martin Luther King, Jr., moment, in Chicago 1968, stood alongside black sanitation workers holding placards also saying that, **'I Am Human.'**

Ashraf spells out the plethora of Apartheid indignities faced by a caged population in the West Bank: walls, checkpoints, soldiers shouting, cursing, spitting from behind guns pointed - at long lines stood in the sun, or tortured before the 1200 new gates installed on roads since October 2023. **'If you raise your voice, you might be seen as a threat. And shot.'** There's a roulette wheel-spin app that occasionally alerts travellers to chase capricious openings of these newly gated communities.

He names the economic strangulation of the West Bank as a **'silent starvation'** of a caged population unable to travel into Israel to work. It seems, he says, that the aim is to make life so unbearable that you might voluntarily leave. A choice taken by 150 Christian families in Bethlehem over the last two years

He outlines this silent Genocide and Ecocide unfolding throughout the Occupied Territories as ancient olive trees are uprooted or burnt; as looting and frenzied settler attacks continue. Land is stolen, villagers and animals murdered; water sources commandeered, then sold back at inflated prices. To those trapped like insects in a jar, tortured by a cruel child. All at the behest of a God who supposedly administers DNA tenancy tests. In a place where 11-year-old girls write their wills.

A slew of maps above Ashraf project ever-shrinking territory - from the 1948 Nakba, to another, 1967 Palestinian catastrophe, which, through the looking glass, doubles as a case of 'catastrophic success' for Israel – now become occupier of a subject population placed under military law, requiring repression. Trending to ethnic cleansing. Dehumanising both occupied and occupier. Over time, a well-funded settler movement built critical mass to flood onto hilltops as the Occupied Territories became a Swiss cheese of separated Palestinian enclaves.

After two years, most of the world now sees the suffering in Gaza for what it is. The G word debate over – proven by facts and messaged by persistently marching feet. But at a cost. Of moral injury. In the process, as Pankaj Mishra says, in 'The Shoah after Gaza', protestors 'risk permanently embittering their lives - in attempts to bear witness and alleviate, even a little, the Palestinian's feelings of absolute loneliness.' A cost which most prefer to denial and a dehumanisation of the self.

In Gaza, two million lives cast into the air are now left hanging by a thread from the hem of a mad king in search of the prize of peace. Whilst in the West Bank, 2.7 million people squeezed into a tightening net expect to become the next scapegoat sent out into the wilderness bearing the sins of others, namely European Antisemitism. Left to the mercy of hands made mad by ancestral wounds - then absolute power.

But our governing echelons, the clients of Empire, remain reluctant to even name the crime and present it to the criminal. Never mind take appropriate action. Empires, like angry beasts easily enraged, lash out with their long sweeping arms of impunity. The force of their blows felt most fiercely by those farthest from the Metropolitan centre. Those without citizenship rights. At the very least, we must lament and bear witness. **However, as Rev. Ashraf also said,**

'it is better to speak out and support communities while we still can'.

What is BDS?

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) are a positive series of actions aimed at targeting the Israeli Regime and companies who support it. BDS was a key factor that ended the Apartheid Regime in south Africa that oppressed the majority black population. The strategy is to target a few significant companies, that are complicit in the genocide, and have a big impact by getting the public to buy goods or services from **alternative** business or companies.

BDS Targets

We encourage you to change your buying habits and support local produce and companies by buying from them.

1. **TEVA**, is a huge Israeli Pharmaceutical company that is complicit in the genocide. They manufacture, as do other companies, a wide range of drugs that have come out of patent. You can impact TEVA by talking to your Doctor or Pharmacist and telling them to provide **non TEVA** products.
2. **Allianz** Insurance Group —is a major investor in ELBIT Systems who supply the arms and drones used to kill civilians in Gaza. Check your insurance supplier and switch to a different provider.
3. **Booking.com and VRBO** —both companies advertise properties in the Occupied Palestinian Territories stolen by Settler Colonialists. If you select a property or hotel on their web site then book it directly with the hotel. You will discourage their support for genocide and find it 10%-20% cheaper as well.
4. **Starbucks** – buy your coffee in local coffee houses boycott Starbucks
5. **McDonalds** – buy your food in local cafes and restaurants
6. **Israeli products** in supermarkets.

Apartheid Free Zones

C4P is encouraging companies and organisations to register and become an Apartheid Free Zone. This means starting to make the transition from goods and services that support the genocide directly or indirectly.

We are working with restaurants, bars and Churches to start that process. More information in the next bulletin

'The Children Especially'

THE most dangerous place on earth to be a child is Gaza. In what are most likely gross undercounts that exclude the missing and the untold thousands still buried under rubble, since October 7th, 2023, almost 20,000 identified Palestinian children have been killed in Gaza. Estimates suggest that Gaza is home to nearly 40,000 orphans, 17,000 Wounded Child, No Surviving Family, and the world's largest child amputee population.

In addition are deaths by weaponised starvation and disease, known to impact society's most vulnerable, its children.

Indicting them as future terrorists, Israeli leaders, rabbis and political pundits openly declared children legitimate targets, including those in the West Bank where settlers and soldiers have wantonly murdered children with total impunity.

West Bank youngsters are routinely subject to arrest and detention, with all that entails, as well as continuous harassment and violence from settlers who, correctly, see children as the soft underbelly. Fears for their safety force families to flee. Palestinians feel Israeli hatred is directed 'especially toward the children'.

It was an observation that persisted in my mind during a performance by Palestinian schoolchildren, ages ranging from 6 to fifteen years, showcasing their orchestral and singing skills.

As invited guests, the delegation of which I was a part enjoyed an elevated view of earnest young faces focused on perfect pitch and melodious music.

Equipped with a wide array of instruments, including exquisitely crafted traditional Palestinian, the playing and singing were outstanding. The teachers beamed with pride and pleasure as their pupils, down to the very youngest, delivered professional, polished performances.

Watching the absorption etched on each child's face, transformed to elation and delight at the explosion of applause that followed every piece, I briefly made myself imagine looking down the telescope of a high-powered rifle at any one of these children. Trying to imagine what it would take to make me pull the trigger, brought home to me as could no statistic, the immensity of the indoctrination and dehumanisation to which Israelis are subjected.

The natural instinct of any human-being is to preserve and protect the life of a child. To not simply take that life, but to publicly brag, celebrate and even turn it into a sporting achievement, reflects the efficacy of Israel's indoctrination programme.

Brainwashing starts pre-school, instilling hatred for and fear of Palestinians depicted as cruel, evil, inhumane and bent on the destruction of Israel. The process robs Israelis of their humanity as it instils a false sense of 'chosenness', of ethnic supremacy while reducing them to cogs in the state's all-encompassing security apparatus. Servants of Zionism at home, imperialism abroad.

Trumpian triumphalism relating to the non-existent ceasefire, references to 'our hostages', the clarification that without American support Israel could not survive as a state never mind remain regional hegemon, demonstrate the responsibility of America and its allies for Israel's genocidal assault on defenceless civilians with the misfortune to dwell on prime real estate located in an area of geopolitical significance.

A colonial-settler project enabled by western powers determined to control a resource rich region, Zionist ambition turned Israel into an American attack-dog. The result was an unholy alliance that served the interests of the monied classes in both societies.

Europe showed minimal concern for Holocaust survivors at the end of the Second World War. Most found themselves in Displaced Person camps before being shipped off to various destinations, Israel included.

The newly formed Israeli society, made up of Jewish pioneers from Mizrahi and Sephardic ethnic groups, saw Holocaust survivors as impoverished, feeble and mentally unstable. They suffered prejudice and marginalisation. One third still live impoverished lives in Israel.

Edward Said famously observed that Palestinians were '**victims of the victims**'. Perhaps a more accurate depiction would be that working-class Israelis and Palestinians alike are '**victims of imperial greed and ambition**' that for centuries sacrificed its own peoples as well as others to preserve and promote the interests of a privileged class?