

# Statement of the Sabeel 8th International Conference

To Our Friends and All People of Conscience:

As the margins of Empire began to crumble in the Arab world, Sabeel's Eighth International Conference convened in Bethlehem inside the prison walls of imperial rule. We, the participants, 300 people from 15 countries, met from 23rd to 28th February, 2011, to discuss "Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness and Resistance," surrounded by the unavoidable and cruel effects of empire's rule on the Palestinian people and their land.

We heard how Jesus resisted the arrogance, violence and repression of Empire and became a model for us when he drove out the money changers and confirmed the people's independence from Caesar. Jesus helps us overcome fear and stand in solidarity against Empire. We must follow his example and pray for his courage to resist imperial power, aligning ourselves with the poorest and most oppressed.

We met the victims of Empire in refugee camps, at checkpoints and in their homes, where they courageously persist in the face of unrelenting oppression. We saw them resist the theft of their homes, fields and water, challenging us to confront Empire in our own countries and in the Holy Land.

We support the [Kairos Palestine Document](#) [1] [1] and encourage all Christians to read it and act on it. Confronting the root causes of the conflict, this document urges all Christians and people of conscience to help end the military occupation that deprives Palestinians of their rights and condemns both peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, to a distortion of their humanity. We see boycott and divestment as nonviolent tools for justice, peace and security for all. We say to the churches: "come and see". You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Our word to the international community is to stop the double standards and insist on the enforcement of international law and U.N. resolutions regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict.

As we depart this conference we hold the United States responsible for the obstacles it has placed in the path of peace, including its veto of a U.N. resolution that condemned Israeli settlement building in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, contrary to U.S. policy stating that settlements are illegal.

We will carry all that we have seen and learned here to our homes and families, our churches and governments, along with the challenges we have accepted for ourselves and our communities.

Bethlehem, Palestine

28 February, 2011