

VOX

A Christian Voice - a Human Concern

“Be not afraid, speak out and do not keep silence: I am with you.” (Acts 18:9)

International Church Action for Peace in Palestine & Israel



This year, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has established a new initiative; a global advocacy week concerning the situation in Palestine and Israel. This week will provide an opportunity for churches around the world who are concerned about the situation to act together.

The situation continues to deteriorate. So far it does not look like 2006 will herald a new start for the Palestinians or the Israelis. Although the withdrawal from Gaza last year was reported as a positive step, during the period of the withdrawal, the increase in the number of settlers in the West Bank was higher than the number that had been evacuated from Gaza. The West Bank barrier continued to be erected and along with it, Palestinian land and water resources were annexed to Israel and more Palestinian homes were demolished. The recent upsurge in violence in the Gaza Strip and political instability in the run-up to the Palestinian elections only suggests that more uncertainty lies ahead.

The global church cannot avert its gaze any longer. Now is the time to act. The aim of the advocacy week, which will take place from March 12th – 19th, is for churches around the world to send a clear message to policy makers, that the churches are watching, and taking new actions for peace. So far, nine countries will be taking part as well as the international Pax Christi network. Each church community is planning its own activity.

In Palestine, the event will be launched by a church service in Jerusalem on 12th March. The Joint Advocacy Initiative of the YMCA and YWCA (JAI) and Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center have planned a week-long program of events aimed at giving internationals the opportunity to come and experience what is happening on the ground, to meet Palestinians and be exposed to what daily life is like for them.

We call on all our partners to join in the International Advocacy Week in the Holy Land. If this is not possible, we encourage you to participate in and support the activities taking place in your own countries.

Please see the below flyer for details.



January, 2006

Issue No. 28

In this issue of Vox, you are invited to participate in the International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel: March 12-19 of 2006.



Joint Advocacy Initiative and Sabeel

invite you to participate in



'International Church Action for Peace in Palestine and Israel'

An advocacy initiative convened by the World Council of Churches

12 -19 March 2006

Program will include:

- Launching of event with Patriarchs and Bishops of Churches in Jerusalem.
- International Planting Day with the Olive Tree Campaign.
- Candle March at the Separation Wall.
- Solidarity Visits with Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron.
- Sabeel's Contemporary Way of the Cross.
- Visits to Holy Sites in the Galilee, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem.
- Witnessing the destruction in Jenin Refugee Camp and Nablus' Old City.
- Settlement Tour with Israeli Committee against House Demolition.
- Cultural Evening with Palestinian Youth (dinner and dancing).
- Meeting with Church Related Organizations in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. (Program subject to change).

Full local travel package: US\$ 800

(Price includes hotel, all meals, tips, registration & transport based on double occupancy.
Single supplement available for \$180. Does not include airport transfer)

To register, contact JAI or Sabeel: Telfax: (972)-2-6282082 / Email: pr.advocacy@ywca-palestine.org or mimitobin@veriozon.net

For prices on air travel, airport transfer, or additional nights please contact our local travel agent:
Guiding Star. Tel: (972)-2-6273150 Fax: (972)-2-6273147 Email: Johnny@guidingstar2.com

Program Supported by the Network of Christian Organizations in Jerusalem

What can you do...?

VOX appeals to the world's Church leaders to pray and act to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians as a consequence of the extremely harsh measures and policies imposed by the Israeli occupying forces. Vox urges all national leaders, international governmental and non-governmental institutions to take action and pressure Israel to abide by international humanitarian law.

VOX is an electronic newsletter representing a unified Christian voice of Church related organizations (CROs) who consent to this initiative. Vox's rationale is to monitor and report on the humanitarian situation on the ground in the Palestinian occupied territories. Vox was initiated in March 2003 at the start of the Iraqi war in order to continue providing news about the ongoing deterioration of Palestine's life conditions. VOX embraces The East Jerusalem YMCA, YWCA of Palestine, DSPR (Department of Services to the Palestinian Refugees, The Middle East Council of Churches), the Near East Council of Churches Gaza, Sabeel Liberation Theology Center, Justice and Peace Commission Jerusalem, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, Caritas Jerusalem and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

For information, please contact the sender of this message if your CRO is interested in joining VOX or for any comments.

VOX NEWSLETTER