“Let my people go”

World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel,
September 21-27, 2014

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum, World Council of Churches
The "Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum" (PIEF), established in 2007, is an instrument to “catalyze and coordinate new and existing church advocacy for peace, aimed at ending the illegal occupation in accordance with UN resolutions, and demonstrate its commitment to inter-religious action for peace and justice that serves all the peoples of the region.”

The PIEF works towards increasing solidarity between and among churches committed to peace and justice for communities living under occupation. Its inter-faith dimension invites people of other religions in the Middle East and elsewhere to join the search and struggle for a just and comprehensive peace.

The core actions of PIEF will address:

- Actions challenging government support for the occupation
- Actions challenging public support for the occupation
- Actions challenging theological and biblical justifications for the occupation and
- Actions maintaining viable the Palestinian Christian presence in the Holy Land.

For more about the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum see: https://pief.oikoumene.org/en
Resources and information about the WWPPI: https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace
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- Friday 26 September: Conscientious objectors
- Saturday 27 September: A day of action and advocacy
- The Jerusalem Prayer for World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel
- Other Resources

A document by PIEF with the much appreciated and acknowledged contribution of our friends at:

Addameer- Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association http://www.addameer.org/
Defence for Children International Palestine http://www.dci-palestine.org/
Hurrryat – Center for Defense of Liberties & Civil Rights http://www.hurryyat.net/en/
New Profile- Movement for Demilitarization of Israeli Society http://www.newprofile.org/english/
Kairos Palestine http://www.kairos Palestine.ps/
Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)http://blog.eappi.org/
World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel working group https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace
Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre (JIC) http://pief.oikoumene.org/en/jic/jerusalem-inter-church-centre-jic
Introduction

Dear friends and co-workers for justice in Palestine and Israel,
Thank you for participating in World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel (WWPPI) 2014, a yearly event that encourages congregations, community groups, and people of faith to worship, educate, and advocate for an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine. This year, the theme of WWPPI is “Let my people go” (Exodus 9:1). In response to the request of church leaders and laity in Palestine, the WWPPI international working group has chosen to focus attention in 2014 on the critical issue of political prisoners incarcerated in Israeli jails: Palestinians imprisoned in Israel, the occupied Palestinian territories, and annexed East Jerusalem; administrative detainees; child prisoners; prisoners suffering harsh conditions; and Israeli conscientious objectors. In preparing this resource, intended to serve as a guide to observing the week, the international working group seeks to reiterate the 2013 Christmas address by His Beatitude Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who called upon the world to remember those in prison. Through this year's theme, we state our conviction that God stands with those in Palestine and around the world who are oppressed, and seeks liberation for those unjustly detained.

The plight of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails is one of the major human rights violations against Palestinians under the occupation. As of May 1, 2014, there were 5,271 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention centers. Of these, 196 are minors, 17 are women and 192 are administrative detainees. According to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, since 1967 about 750,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israeli forces. Many are arrested and held without charge under a draconian measure referred to as “administrative detention” rather than by judicial decree. Their detentions are not for civil crimes but because they chose political resistance to the illegal occupation. Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories, has characterized Israeli’s detention regime as one “designed to disrupt Palestinian society, producing an atmosphere of arbitrariness, instability, and powerlessness.”

To assist our partners worldwide to observe the week, the following resource has been created by the WWPPI international working group in cooperation with partner human rights and Christian organizations in Palestine. Theological reflections, background materials, links to additional resources, and suggested acts of advocacy have been compiled for each day. Additionally, each day focuses attention on one particular aspect of the crisis of imprisonment in Palestine.

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Sunday 21 September: We worship in spirit with our Palestinian sisters and brothers
Tuesday 23 September: Administrative detention
Wednesday 24 September: Child prisoners
Thursday 25 September: Harsh prison conditions
Friday 26 September: Conscientious objectors
Saturday 27 September: A day of action and advocacy

There are a number of ways in which this resource might be used during the observance of World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel 2014: Read and meditate on each day’s reflection, as part of one’s individual spiritual study or a small group gathering.
Copy and forward each day’s resource to fellow church members or other community groups.
Include part of this resource in the congregation’s Sunday or mid-week worship service, prayer vigil, or advocacy event.
Post a link to this resource on a church homepage, and forward the link to other communities of faith.
The theme of WWPPI 2014, “Let my people go,” is more than just a slogan. It is also a prayer. We pray for the release of those unjustly imprisoned. We pray for the freedom of all who are oppressed by forces of occupation. And we pray for our own liberation from the evils of prejudice, hatred, and violence. During WWPPI 2014, from 21 to 27 September, let us continue the struggle against oppression and occupation through inspired worship, insightful education, and engaged advocacy.

Report back!
Are you using this material? Are you arranging a vigil, giving a lecture, using the liturgy or sending postcards? Is your church praying for the political prisoners or has your group come up with an idea of your own? Please let us know! Reporting back to the Christian Community in Palestine and Israel is an important part of WWPPI so please send us your material and your story!

Keep an eye on the website to get updates on ways of reporting back: https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace

P.S. Remember to use photo, video & social media to get the message out! Use the tag:

#WWPPI2014
Monday 22 September:
Political Prisoners: 1948, 1967 and Jerusalem

Under this theme the issues of Palestinian prisoners from different areas are addressed. It is important to remember that not only Palestinians from within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Palestinian areas occupied by Israel since 1967), but also Palestinians from within Israel (the areas within the internationally recognized borders from 1948, known as the “Green Line”) and Palestinians living in the annexed East Jerusalem (the so-called “Jerusalemites”) can become political prisoners.

What is a political prisoner? In this context a political prisoner is someone arrested on the basis of his or her opposition to the occupation of Palestine (Addameer 2014). Most prisoners are tried under Israeli military law in trials that often do not conform to international standards of due process, or not tried at all but held in administrative detention for long periods. UN-OCHA, a UN body focusing on humanitarian affairs, calls these prisoners “occupation related” and defines them as “Palestinians from the oPt held by the Israeli authorities […] in connection to an offense related to the Israeli occupation and classified by the Israeli authorities as a 'security detainee/prisoner’” (UN-OCHA OPT 2014).

Prisoners from the 1948 areas – from inside Israel
As of 1 May 2014 there were 90 political prisoners that are Palestinian citizens of Israel. While they have mainly been tried in Israeli civil courts they are still classified as “security” prisoners by the Israeli authorities. Some of these include “pre-Oslo prisoners” (prisoners that have been imprisoned since before the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993) that were scheduled to be released in early 2014 as part of the return to “negotiations” brokered by
United States Secretary of State John Kerry. In the end Israel reneged on its agreement to release these prisoners and no prisoners from 1948 areas were released. Recently this group of prisoners has been faced with yet another frightening threat – the risk of losing their citizenship. Only this spring two Israeli organizations, Adalah and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), found it necessary to issue a joint open letter to the Israeli Supreme Court urging the court never to withdraw citizenships from Palestinian political prisoners holding Israeli citizenship – a notion that had been raised both among politicians and in media. To withdraw a citizenship as a part of a punishment for prisoners is, according to the statement, a mark of a totalitarian regime (ACRI and Adalah 2014).

Prisoners from the 1967 areas – from inside the West Bank and Gaza
Since 1967 circa 750,000 Palestinians have been imprisoned by Israel (Physicians for Human Rights Israel). In all, about 20% of all Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory have been held in Israeli detention or prison during at least one point in their life. In the last 14 years more than 8,000 children have been detained (Addameer 2014). Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territories are governed by approximately 1,650 Israeli military orders which govern every aspect of Palestinian civic life. The practical implication of these broadly defined offenses is the criminalization of many aspects of Palestinian civic life. For example, the political parties that comprise the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) are still considered “illegal organizations” even though Israel has been engaged in peace negotiations with the PLO since 1993. Carrying a Palestinian flag is also a crime under Israeli military regulations, while participation in a demonstration is deemed a disruption of public order (Addameer 2014).

At the moment (as of May 1, 2014) more than 5,200 Palestinian political prisoners are held by Israel. Of this amount, 196 are minors, and 192 are “administrative detainees” – prisoners held without legal charges or trials (Addameer 2014). As of April 2014, close to 200 prisoners have chronic and severe medical conditions.

The so called “detention regime” (Falk 2013) is an ongoing problem in Palestine, a problem that has increased over the last years. UN-OCHA, keeping track of how many Palestinians are detained every month for so called “occupation related” activities, found that the monthly average of arrests has increased yearly: 262 in 2011, 283 in 2012, 380 in 2013, and 428 as of April 2014 (OCHA 2014).

The “Jerusalemites”
Jerusalem is in many ways a divided city. The Israeli, western part of the city is a relatively booming area with ongoing construction and expanding business areas. The Palestinian, eastern part of the city was occupied by Israel in 1967 and has since been illegally annexed; it is considered by Israel to be a part of the Jerusalem municipality. However, Palestinian residents living in East Jerusalem are considered “permanent residents” of Israel, not citizens. The practical effect of this is that within the same area different quality of services are provided and different regulations apply, depending on the ethnicity and status of the
inhabitants. The discrimination and unequal treatment can take the form of deficient infrastructure in Palestinian areas (such as water shortage and/or water quality problems) and house demolitions due to the unequal and discriminatory nature by which the Israeli authorities issue building permits. The Palestinian “Jerusalemites” also face other problems - random withdrawal of residency rights still occurs and problems related to permits for family re-unification (when one person is Jerusalemite and the other from the West Bank or Gaza, for example) limit the life of the Palestinian Jerusalemites. Furthermore, for Christians as well as for Muslims, access to the city's holy sites is sometimes limited, especially during religious feasts. Palestinians from Jerusalem are tried in Israeli civil courts, not like those from the West Bank who are tried in Israeli military courts.

According to Addameer, as of May 1, 2014, 298 Jerusalemites were imprisoned in Israel.

**Reflection on 1948, 1967, Jerusalem prisoners**

"As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, 'Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead.' When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard” (1 Kings 21:15-16). For how long, dear God, must we wait for your prophets to come to announce justice? For how long will we languish in prisons, as "security detainees," while our land is occupied? For how long will we suffer because of the greed of Ahab, the king of Samaria? For how long will Israel steal the inheritance of my ancestors, that you forbid me to sell?

We are in prison, dear God of justice! We are illegally sitting for many years in prison, waiting for your prophets to announce your justice and your freedom. We, as an obscene amount of other Palestinians, are experiencing for so long the illegal prison, without the right of legal charges or just trials! We are children, we are women, we are sick and hungry. But we love our vineyards! And we are not giving them up, as you told us not to do. We keep the candle of our hope burning, until your prophets come to announce freedom of iniquity, to announce justice and peace with our neighbors. Come, dear Lord, we are calling! Hear our prayers!

**Suggested ideas for advocacy**

- Lobby for the right to presumption of innocence of all detainees, a fair trial without undue delay, the right to prepare an effective defense and to interpretation and translation for prisoners under trial. Further, advocate for the right to gender-sensitivity in all matters pertaining to prisoners.
- Learn more from the links below and spread what you learned! Write a “letter to the editor” for your local newspaper about the “detention regime” that disrupts life in Palestine.
References and *Online resources


Adalah et.al (2013) Joint input to the ENP Country Report on Israel 2013: Human rights of prisoners and detainees held in Israel, with focus on Torture / CIDT

Adalah (2013) Lasting Injustice: Discrimination against Palestinian political prisoners in the commutation of sentences and early release
http://adalah.org/Public/files/English/Publications/Articles/lasting-injustice-elajou-2013.pdf

Addameer (2013) Report: Courageous voices, fragile freedoms Israel's arrests and detentions of Palestinian Human Rights Defenders against the annexation wall
Addameer (2014) General Briefing: Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons
http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=359

Arab Association for Human Rights (Janan Abdu, Prisoners Project Coordination)
www.arabhra.org


www.ochaopt.org
The term “administrative detention” may mean nothing to most people who live under authentic democracies. But for the people of Palestine it is an ever-present threat and a cruel part of life under occupation. In the Israeli context the term “administrative detention” is used for an administrative, rather than juridical, procedure that makes it possible for the Israeli authorities to hold prisoners without trial or even on unstated allegations (Addameer 2014). Israel claims, rather dubiously, that it is used for preventing persons from committing acts that will threaten public safety. However the sweeping use of administrative detention is, according to Addameer, perceived as a colonial tool to suppress resistance to occupation and has hence drawn much criticism.

Israel has used administrative detention as a policy since its establishment in 1948 and then transferred this policy to the occupied Palestinian territories in 1967. Over the years the number of persons held under administrative detention fluctuated. For example, on the eve of the second intifada in 2000, 12 people were held in administrative detention. Three years later the numbers peaked when in April 2003 no less than 1,140 Palestinians were held in administrative detention. In the difficult period between 2005 and 2007 the average monthly number was approximately 765. Over the years also a few Israelis have been held in administrative detention; however they have been few in number and were generally held for short periods of time (B'tselem: Administrative detention 2013).

Palestinians held under administrative detention are not told what the allegations against them are. They are also rarely presented with any evidence against them, since their detention itself is based on “secret” or “classified” information. This in turn means that a person in administrative detention is given little or no possibility to address or deny the accusations, as charges are not presented. The period of detention can last from one to six months, but may then be renewed indefinitely. Some Palestinians have spent up to eight years in administrative detention.

As of May 1 2014, 192 Palestinians are held as Administrative Detainees. 8 of these are members of the Palestinian Legislative Council.
detention, not knowing the reason for their detention. In April 2014, 28% of the administrative detainees had been held for between 6 months and a year, and 20% had been held for 1-2 years. Four persons had been held in administrative detention for more than two years (B’selem: Administrative detention).

This form of detention can, under very special crisis circumstances, be legal under international law – but since it impedes due process and risks encouraging arbitrary detention, even international law permits its use only as a last resort and only to prevent immediate and severe danger to the public, never as a punishment for committed offences (4th Geneva Convention 1949).

As of May 1, 2014, there are 192 Palestinians held in administrative detention by Israel. Eight of them are members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (www.addameer.org). The Israeli sweeping practice of putting persons in administrative detention is in breach of international laws and for decades the state of Israel has been criticized for its failure to apply the rule of law in relation to the Palestinian population. “Administrative detention is the most extreme measure that international humanitarian law allows an occupying power to use against residents of occupied territory. As such, states are not allowed to use it in a sweeping manner. To the contrary, administrative detention may be used against protected persons in occupied territory only for ‘imperative reasons of security’ (Fourth Geneva Convention, Art.78).”

Addameer: Key Issues/Administrative detention

According to both international and national Israeli law, individuals cannot be put in prison on the basis of their political opinion; nonetheless, at the moment (May 1, 2014) Israel holds 8 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council in administrative detention, with four of them having been imprisoned for more than a year.

Furthermore, in a report from 2013, Addameer found that also human rights and social activists can be subject to administrative detention by Israel, for example for organizing so-called illegal demonstrations in Palestine, as under Israeli military orders all demonstrations are considered illegal.

This can be seen as ways by which Israel uses arrests as a political weapon. It raises the question: Can resistance be criminalized?

An end to an illegal and unjust practice

The practice of administrative detention, imprisoning a person even for a month without a proper trial, is a severe human rights violation as it denies the person the right to liberty and dignity. When argued that evidence against - or even the precise charges of - the defendant is secret, the legal system cannot work and the right to a fair trial cannot be guaranteed.
To be put in prison under administrative detention means not knowing how long you will be there. It means that even though you may not be told what you are accused of you still stand to be denied your liberty. This unjust system of criminalization of persons arrested for crimes that UN-OCHA describes as “occupation related,” that is for political reasons, must end.

**Reflection on administrative detention**

In the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, the prophet Jeremiah made it his vocation to remind and invite the people of Israel that the gospels of the exodus and the reign of God will be written not only in tablets but also “in their minds and in their hearts” (Jer. 31:33). This means a return to what is at the heart of the law: justice and liberation to the oppressed. As exemplified in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the faith communities are challenged today “to preach the good news to the poor, set free those in detention, give sight to the blind, and to announce the jubilee,” when the dispossessed are given back the keys to their homes and vineyards (Luke 4:18-19).

The prophets of ancient Israel from Moses to Jesus Christ thus speak to us in our time; they speak powerfully to the people of Palestine and Israel who, to this day, continue to live in the shadows of the valley of death that is “administrative detention,” an icon of all that is subversive of the spirit of the Mosaic Law. An instrument of repression and oppression, administrative detention is a practice which places the Israeli occupiers in the same spot as the objects of wrath of the Hebrew prophets. Not only desecrating of the *imago dei* in human beings, administrative detention exposes the gravity of the apostasy and idolatry of Zionism.

As people worldwide commemorate World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, we also pray that the message of the Pentecost reverberates in our time; it calls on all people to speak in “strange tongues” (Acts 2:4) toward the establishment of international unity and global solidarity in the creation of a new reality. These “strange tongues” are the tongues of prophecy that pass judgment on the empire and its imperialist geopolitics. They are the tongues that reveal the weakness of the powerful and the power of the weak; they are the tongues that expose the guises and pretentions of the powers that be but are empowering and enflaming the struggling temper of the oppressed of the world. Let the “strange tongues” say: LET MY PEOPLE GO.

**Suggested Ideas for advocacy**

- Lobby: Urge your government to call on Israel to immediately stop the practice of administrative detention.
- Learn more and educate your society with the help of Addameer and its campaign “Stop Administrative Detention” www.stopacampaign.com
References and *Online resources:
Addameer (2014) Fact sheet on Detained Palestinian Legislative Council Members

Addameer (2014) Key Issues Administrative Detention
http://www.addameer.org/etemplate.php?id=293

B'tselem (2013, 2014) Administrative detention
http://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative_detention

Addameer (2013) Report Courageous voices, fragile freedoms Israel's arrests and detentions of Palestinian Human Rights Defenders against the annexation wall

*Spoken word artist and poet Suheir Hammad: Poems of war, peace, women, power
https://www.ted.com/talks/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power#

*Video accounts from ex-detainees and their families www.stopadcampaign.org
Wednesday 24 September:
Child prisoners and the arrest of minors

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli soldiers and Palestinian children meet and interact daily. The direct proximity between army and children too often results in conflicts, especially at friction points such as check points, Israeli bypass roads, and close to settlements and refugee camps. For the children the confrontations do not only pose a direct hazard, but taking part in, or even being close to, clashes may also result in detention and arrest. According to the international NGO Defence for Children International (DCI), around 200 Palestinian minors are arrested by the Israeli army every month; since the start of the second intifada (in 2000) 8,000 children have been arrested in the West Bank and Gaza, some of them as young as 12 years old. Today (as of May 2014), 196 Palestinian minors are held by Israel; 27 of them are younger than 16 years and all of them are boys (DCI 2014). The most common violation that children are accused of is suspicion of throwing stones, a felony that under Israeli military law can attract up to 10 (in extreme cases 20) years in prison. Other accusations are suspicion of possession of weapons or suspicion of being a member of a forbidden organization. However, more than half of the arrests of children in the West Bank are carried out between midnight and five in the morning in the homes of the children, often far from the time and place of the alleged offence (DCI 2013).

For the child an arrest is often a very frightening experience involving blindfolding and hands tied behind the back; ill treatment is frequent and both verbal and physical abuse have been reported (UNICEF 2013). As the children are detained and forcibly removed from their homes, a majority are not allowed to be accompanied by a parent, and parents are generally not even allowed to be present during interrogations. UNICEF in 2013 further reported that at the time of arrest often neither the children nor their parents are informed about where the children are

“Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age.”

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37(c)
being taken. “Ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appears to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized” UNICEF (2013) p.13In grave breach of international human rights law, an overwhelming majority of the children are not allowed to see a lawyer prior to interrogation and are rarely or insufficiently informed of their legal rights. An effect of this was that in 2013 DCI found that 1 in 5 children had signed statements or confessions written in Hebrew – a language most of them do not understand. Recent reports from DCI further show that every fifth child had experiences of solitary confinement during their imprisonment, the average length in solitude being 10 days, with the maximum reported as 28 days (DCI 2014). When sentenced many children, like many adults, are transferred to prisons and detention facilities outside the West Bank. This is deemed illegal according to the Geneva Convention, as it separates children from their familiar environment and severely limits visits by family members.

Military law and special protection of minors
Even though both international and Israeli law grants special protection and legislation to minors accused of criminal offences, other rules apply in the West Bank. In the West Bank minors as well as adults fall under Israeli military legislation and very little or no attention is given to the age of the accused (B’tselem 2012); thus, children are denied many of the special rights that, according to the UN Convention on the Right of the Child, shall apply to minors.
According to Israeli Military Order 1651, criminal responsibility applies to children from 12 years of age, and from then on they can be put in prison. However shocking these regulations, there are persistent reports of even younger children having been detained by the military forces. In July 2013 Wadi’ Maswadeh, at the time 5 years old, was arrested by military forces in Hebron. The frightening incident was filmed by a human rights organization field researcher and can be watched at: http://www.btselem.org/video/20130711_soldiers_detain_5_year_old_in_hebron

Criticism towards treatment of minors
Despite both domestic and international criticism, the Israeli army continues to detain and prosecute children. Over the years numerous national lawyers, UN experts, and local and international organizations have reported about the violations of children's rights by Israeli officials in Palestine. The explanation usually given by Israel is that since Palestine is occupied, and hence not a part of Israel, Israel does not have to abide to the UN Convention
on the Rights of the Child in those areas. These explanations have not been accepted by the international community; on the contrary, the discriminatory outline of this explanation – the blunt difference between the ways in which Israeli and Palestinian children are treated within the legal system – has been well documented (Hart & Lo Forte 2013).

**Reflection on child prisoners**

“So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. Then they grabbed him and threw him into the cistern” (Genesis 37: 23-24).

Joseph was arrested by his brothers and thrown into a cistern, an event which led to him being sold, and later landed him in the prison he experienced in Egypt. Prison prevents a future, disturbs progress and development, and kills a dream. We ask God to be with Palestinian children today as God was with Joseph; through a deposited gift of God's wisdom in him, Joseph found release from prison: “*The Lord was with Joseph in the Prison and showed him his faithful love*” (Genesis 39:21).

The Lord is with the Palestinian child prisoners and those who witness harassment on a daily basis as they seek to exercise their freedom and right to education. They must find favor with us, and we must act on their behalf. The challenge posed by Goliath to young David is like the challenges Palestinian children face in prison. David challenged Goliath with the words of his faith: “You come to me with a sword and with a spear… but I come against you in the name of the Lord of hosts” (1 Samuel 17:45). Likewise, we read the testimony of the Psalmist: “You brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psalm 40:2).

What more can we wish for the children, who today suffer injustice? If David's stone could pass through Goliath's helmet, then the obstacle of Israeli prison walls can be broken, and the imprisoned can find liberation.

**Suggested ideas for advocacy**

- Lobby for: compliance with international norms and regulations, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the dignity and legal rights of children in custody; the provision of adequate medical care and disavowal of torture or threats; the presentation of allegations against a child in a language that both the child and legal guardian can understand; the use of incarceration only as a measure of last resort and release on bail as a standard practice.
- Set up a “post card workshop” and write to your own member of parliament, local politicians and the Israeli ambassador in your country on this issue.
References and *Online resources:
*The film “Stone cold justice” www.abc.net.au – (in English) (http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2014/02/10/3939266.htm)
Thursday 25 September:
Harsh prison conditions, and their consequences on prisoners' health

According to the Geneva Convention, Israel is responsible for the life and health of the persons held in their prisons. One part of that responsibility is to provide health and medical care to the inmates. As Israel is continuously and heavily criticized by groups such as Physicians for Human Rights for neglecting these duties, knowledge about and advocacy for the right to medical care and basic health care for Palestinian political prisoners is truly important. However, according to Addameer (2014) since 1967, 53 Palestinian prisoners have died in Israeli prisons as a result of medical neglect, with 17 deaths reported since 2000. Over the last 15 year period, 178 cases of medical neglect were documented. The frightening numbers raise concerns over the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons; according to Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHR-I), there is cause for concern. PHR-I reports systematic discrimination against Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons; they face medical negligence including delay in providing treatment, lack of specialized medical care, and being detained under unhealthy conditions which may cause severe health impacts on the prisoners or even death.

In a 2013 joint statement by 16 Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations, the criticism towards the Israeli treatment of its prisoners was severe. The organizations stated: “…Palestinian prisoners are held in overcrowded prisons where there is a lack of basic amenities, poor hygiene, a significant lack of fresh air and inadequate living space. Palestinians are currently allotted about 2.9 square meters of living space per person and any existing windows in prison cells are

“We lead a difficult life inside these prisons. Outside, when a person suffers from illness, you can see it on his face, and when he asks others to help him get medication, they do. But in prison, it's completely different. I suffered very much there. When a prisoner feels ill, he must be strong, even if it results in his death, rather than giving the jailers any opportunity to humiliate him or to gloat.”
Ibrahim Joundia, from “The Prisoners' Diaries” (2013)

The UN Basic Principles for Treatment of Prisoners (1990) states: “Prisoners should have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation” (WHO 2013).
often covered by iron sheets, thus reducing the availability of natural sunlight. All amenities in the prisons, such as television, clothing, blankets, and books are considered 'privileges' and can be revoked at any time" (Al Haq et. al. 2013). The severe situation in the prisons is also highlighted by the Palestinian organization MIFTAH, which points out that the food in prisons is often poor, clean clothes and blankets are lacking and access to toilets is restricted (MIFTAH 2012).

Even though the prisons and detention centers have medical clinics, they are usually only staffed periodically and the shortage of doctors and nurses is widespread. Addameer (2014) also points out that medical examinations are often conducted through a partition, raising doubts about the quality of care.

Another health issue that has been raised concerns female prisoners and gender specific health issues. Up until this day there is no access to gynecological service for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, even though this is an urgent issue. Furthermore, there is a lack of Arabic speaking female medical staff (Addameer 2014). Even in cases when medical treatment while in prison is possible, there exist other challenges for the imprisoned. In a study carried out on long-term Palestinian political prisoners released in an exchange of prisoners in 2011, the former prisoners reported that medical treatment was given by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) in exchange for political information – something that led many to avoid contact with the prison clinic as long as possible (Wahbe 2012).

Yet another structural difficulty regarding medical treatment in Israeli prisons is that the medical staff is not independent, and hence cannot act independently within the prison system. The staff is employed by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) rather than by the Ministry of Health, putting them in a very hard position as the demands and instructions from their employer often clash with their responsibilities and professional code of ethics. The lack of external and independent control of, and transparency regarding, the situation in the prisons further increases the risk of malfunction, systematic ill-treatment and violations of prisoners' rights (Physicians for Human Rights Israel).

The Israeli Prison services use a systematic policy that violates the provisions of international humanitarian law. Poor living conditions can aggravate the physical and mental health of prisoners and increase the probability of catching various diseases. Several prisoners have died after their release as a result of the diseases that they suffered from in prison: one prisoner spent eighteen years in prison and died six months after his release; another spent 23 years in prison and died after less than three years of his release (Hurrryat 2014).

Reports of torture
Over the years there have been numerous reports of torture in the Israeli prisons (see for example the report “On torture” 2012). Addameer, in a report from January this year, writes: “The forms of torture and ill treatment employed against Palestinian prisoners include the following: beatings, tying prisoners in stressful positions, interrogation sessions that last up to 12 consecutive hours, depriving prisoners of sleep and other sensory deprivation, isolation and solitary confinement, and threats against the lives of their relatives.” Fifteen years ago the
Israeli High Court of Justice banned torture during interrogations; however, this has not changed the practice for so-called “security detainees” where grave ill-treatment and so-called physical pressure is still widespread. It is actually so widespread that the organization Addameer characterized it as systematic (Addameer 2014).

**Reflection on harsh prison conditions, and their consequences on prisoners’ health**

Everyone has been ill at some point in his or her life, and can relate to the vulnerability that sickness imposes to a greater or lesser degree. Sick people are often dependent on others for care and support. Imagine being sick, vulnerable, and alone. Now imagine not only being denied adequate medical attention but also the right to seek medical attention. Imagine someone using your vulnerability to force you to do something against your will.

Considering the prison conditions and the treatment of Palestinian prisoners as described, we might reflect during this week on the intent behind incarceration of prisoners in our own societies, and our society’s understanding of justice. How do they differ? In societies seeking to be just and fair, prison conditions and prisoner treatment are independently monitored to ensure that they are at least humane. There are even international laws governing the treatment of prisoners of war! Poor prison conditions inflict even harsher punishment on prisoners, over and above the prison sentence already imposed. As stated, this is a violation of international laws governing the treatment of prisoners. For example, if a sick prisoner is in pain, denying pain killers would be considered torture. How are sick prisoners treated in your country?

Incarceration is considered punishment in and of itself because it denies the individual who is imprisoned his or her right to freedom for a defined period of time. Furthermore, the prisoner is required to follow rules not imposed on a free person: denied the freedom and the right to make ordinary daily decisions, such as what and when to eat, when to sleep and wake up, etc. Prison authorities control every aspect of a prisoner's physical life. Such power and authority should also come with responsibility. What kind of responsibility do prison authorities in your country have, especially toward sick prisoners?

**Suggested ideas for advocacy**

- Lobby for: applying of, and respect for, the principles of international humanitarian law, in order to reduce the negative effect of imprisonment on Palestinian detainees and their families.

Use social media to create public consciousness about the plight of Palestinian political prisoners and the illegalities practiced by the Israeli military and prison authorities. Write blog posts or a Facebook updates, record a short video statement for YouTube or discuss it on Twitter.
References and Online resources


Hurrryyat (2014) The veracity of ailing prisoners lives in Israeli Occupation Jails

Maannews (2014) Prisoner officials accuse Israel of ‘medical crimes’
http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=674222

MIFTAH - The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (2012) MIFTAH's Fact Sheet Palestinian Prisoners
http://www.miftah.org/Doc/Factsheets/Miftah/English/Prisoners.pdf

Physicians for Human Rights Israel/ Prisoners and detainees department


World Health Organization (2013) WHO oPt advocates for right to health for Palestinian prisoners
http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/4EB808E0BC9AB3D685257AF7005259BA#sthash.v7nm4yVm.dpuf
Friday 26 September:
Conscientious objectors

“A distinct category of political prisoners in the Holy Land is conscientious objectors. The focus of this day will be on persons within the Israeli society that refuse to take part in the occupation (for example, by refusing to serve in the army), and for that reason end up in jail – prisoners of conscience. As stated by Amnesty International (2013), “the right to object to military service on grounds of conscience is protected under international human rights law.” This day therefore takes up issues especially linked to freedom of speech and consciousness.

In early 2014, more than 100 Israeli teenagers (aged 16-20), eligible to be drafted into the army, sent a letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu stating their intention to refuse to enroll in the army on the basis of conscience. Their reasons to object were many: the damage the army and the occupation do to the Palestinian society and people, violation of human rights, the illegal settlements, the “ideal” of violence that is spread through the army, the militarization of Israeli society, perpetuation of inequalities between men and women in the army and hence in the society, and more. One of the signatories of the letter, 16-year-old Mandy Carder from Tel Aviv said: “My refusal is a way of expressing my opposition to the wrongs done daily in our name and through us” (JFJFP 2014).

But in Israel, where serving in the army is compulsory, refusing is not easy. Israel has no law that recognizes the right not to be a soldier. There are laws that in theory allow refusal for pacifist reasons, but this status is incredibly difficult to receive. This in practice means that refusing military service is likely to result in imprisonment.

One especially vulnerable group when it comes to conscientious objectors is the Druze community. The Druze, an Arab group in Israel, have been drafted into the Israeli army since 1956. Yet many refuse to be enlisted, often on grounds that they refuse to fight against their own people, the Arab Palestinians. New Profile, an Israeli network that works to support the rights of conscientious objectors and to de-militarize Israeli society, reports that Druze objectors are often treated more harshly than other objectors in Israel and are serving longer prison sentences. Omar Sa’ad, an 18-year-old Druze from Mghar, a village in the Galilee, has now served more than 150 days in prison and seven prison sentences for refusing to join the military. In 2012, when he was only 17, he sent a letter to both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense saying: "I refuse because I am a man of peace and I hate all forms of violence, and the military institution represents for me the peak of physical and psychological..."
violence” (Amnesty International 2013). He is still in a legal battle with the State of Israel due to his refusal to serve in the military.

The State of Israel is now trying to enroll new groups into the army, such as ultra-orthodox Jews and Arab Palestinian Christians living inside Israel. For the ultra-orthodox Jews, devoted to a religious life of prayer and studying, enrollment would be a true breach of conscience for many, if not all. For the Christians of Palestinian descent, enrollment in the Israeli military is still voluntary, but fears are increasing that this “voluntary drafting” will become compulsory over time. These fears have especially been increased due to new attempts by the State of Israel to define the Christians of Israel as “non-Arabs,” putting them into a different legislative category than their Muslim counterparts in Israel, as well as their Palestinian brothers and sisters in the West Bank and in Gaza. These legislative attempts are widely considered to be a strategy of “divide and rule,” as it would create legislative distinctions between Arab Christians and Muslims in Israel, and introduce new military service policies. Christian leaders in the Holy Land, such as Orthodox Archbishop Atallah Hanna, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land's Bishop Munib A. Younan, and former Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, have spoken out against these new legislative attempts, and the World Council of Churches has issued a statement strongly questioning the new laws (WCC Statement, March 2014).

A need to de-militarize and to act

Conscientious objectors in Israel raise important questions about the legitimacy of violence and militarization in the Holy Land. These efforts are backed up by churches around the world, and a number of Israeli human rights organizations working to de-militarize Israeli society. New Profile, for example, argues that “militarism is a prevalent ideology which upholds the military as sacred, an ideology which glorifies military values and the war ethos, irrespective of the actual state of security. In a militaristic society the military is revered, its leaders held in the highest regard, and in turn the military's norms and values pervade and dominate the civil society, in areas such as education, entertainment, urban space, social services, family life, etc.” New Profile is convinced, however, that this is not the only way of living – they are convinced that “today, Israel is capable of a determined peace politics” (New Profile Movement).

Another Israeli organization that fights the occupation and the effects it has on both Israelis and Palestinians is Breaking the Silence. The organization was founded in 2004, and is made up by former IDF soldiers that have served in the occupied territories of Palestine. They have seen the devastating effects that occupation has on both the occupier and the occupied. They are influential, not least in the Israeli society, as they speak of their own experiences. The group now seeks to educate and raise awareness about the everyday reality of the occupation. One way of doing that is through collection and publication of testimonies of former soldiers, available at: http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/testimonies/videos.
**Reflection on conscientious objectors**

In 2009, the World Council of Churches (WCC) prepared a study on the “The Right of Conscientious Objection to Military Service” as part of its Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) program. The main conclusion of this study highlighted the theological and ethical urgency for churches around the world to protect the rights of conscientious objectors, individuals who are serving as witnesses for justice and against violence. The WCC therefore called upon Christians “to uphold the right of refusal to bear and use arms and to encourage church members to uphold that right as well” (WCC Minute on the Rights of Conscientious Objectors 2009). In the Israeli society today, conscientious objectors remain a vulnerable, yet brave, group of individuals. They are often very young, and dare to stand firm on the values that a just peace can only be established for both peoples if the ideals of militarism in their own society and in their own surroundings are challenged. It is therefore urgent for churches around the world to uphold and support the rights of those refusing the join the Israeli military out of conscience, and to pray, educate, and act along with them.

**Suggested ideas for Advocacy:**

- Lobby for the right of individuals to refuse conscription into the army on legality.
- Support a conscientious objector! Write letters of support to conscientious objects serving time in Israeli prisons, and send them to messages2prison@newprofile.org.
References and *Online resources

Breaking the Silence http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/
New Profile Movement for Demilitarization of Israeli Society
http://newprofile.org/english/militarismen
Jews for Justice for Palestinians JFJFP http://jfjfp.com/?p=57077
Joint Letter of Israeli teenagers, ages 16-20, who declare their refusal to serve in the IDF
(2014) www.facebook.com/refusingIDF
Amnesty International (2013) News Conscript facing jail again for refusing to go against his conscience
World Council of Churches (2014) Concern over Israeli law on the status of Arab Christian citizens
World Council of Churches (2009) Minute on the rights of conscientious objectors to military service
http://www.newprofile.org/english/
*Natan Blanc talks about his experience as a conscientious objector in Israel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-e3HTHZGsk
*Omar Sa’ed (18) talks about his rational for refusing military service in Israel
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UJDV-Clsyk
*WCC (2009) Study on the Rights of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service
*Persecution of Christians in the Middle East: Communiqué of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land
**Saturday 27 September:**
*A day of action and advocacy*

The WWPPI international working group is presently organizing an action and advocacy campaign that will aim to mobilize communities around the world on this day, to speak with one voice against the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine and the ongoing crisis facing political prisoners being detained by Israel.

More details about this campaign will be released in the weeks leading up to the start of WWPPI, via email, the PIEF website, and the WWPPI Facebook group page.

In the meantime, here are other suggestions for acting and advocating in support of Palestinians political prisoners:

- Arrange a “WWPPI breakfast” focusing on child prisoners and the detention of minors.
- Pray with the people of Palestine. Use the liturgy or parts of it in your spiritual context.
- Write to the Israeli ambassador in your country urging Israel to immediately stop the practice of administrative detention and to release, or fairly and with no delay try their case in court, all persons currently held in administrative detention.
- Get inspired by New Profile's Power Point “Making Militarism Visible” and discuss militarism and non-violence in your own society. Have a look at a map or take a walking tour of your town. Do you also have streets named after battles or generals? Are there any “war memorabilia” on display in public places?
- Keep the political prisoners of Palestine and Israel in your prayers, and ask your congregation to include them in the intercession.
- Set up a “tell one friend” challenge in your group. We all know it is easy to “preach to the choir” but we need to tell others too. Challenge your group to talk to one friend a week that needs to know more about the situation of Palestinian political prisoners.
- Join, or encourage friends to join, Breaking the Silence guided tours to Hebron and the South Hebron Hills, allowing an unmediated encounter with the reality of military occupation from the eyes of an Israeli.
• Arrange a screening of the film “Stone Cold Justice” (available at www.abc.net.au/4corners) and open up for a discussion afterwards.

• Spread the word! Write a column for your local newspaper or your organizations newsletter – let more people know about the issue of Palestinian political prisoners!

• Learn more about the situation for prisoners in your own community – invite a guest speaker or go on a study trip.

• Set up a study circle in your community using the material in the resources for this week.

• Get inspired by “infographics” like this one (http://www.dci-palestine.org/sites/default/files/infographic_image_end_of_year_2013_sm_26dec2013.pdf) and create your own to tell about Palestinian political prisoners! Do it by “old school” cut and paste, or go digital using http://piktochart.com/ or http://infogr.am/

• Keep updated! Look at the webpages of Hurryyat, DCI, Addameer, Kairos, New Profile and EAPPI (you will find the addresses on the last page of this booklet) and keep updated with the situation in Palestine.

• Start planning a “Come and see” pilgrimage to Palestine! Ahlan wa Sahlan! You are welcome! Find inspiration in the document: http://www.kairos-palestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/Guidelines%20for%20Christians%20Contemplating%20a%20Pilgrimage%20to%20the%20Holy%20Land.pdf

• And, whatever you do – tell us! Report back to Palestine. Information on ways to report back can be found at https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace
Jerusalem Prayer
For World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, 21-27 September 2014

Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. Hebrews 13:3

With these words we pray together for those who are in prison all over the world, those easily forgotten. We pray especially for the political prisoners of Palestine and Israel. We pray for the sick among them and those who cannot handle the hardship of a prison cell, for the children and women who are mistreated behind bars. We also remember those left behind, the families who are bereaved as their beloved ones are sent to prison. We pray for inner transformation for those who committed crimes, and in need of conversion. We pray for hearts and minds that are haunted by hatred and fear, that we will soon find peace and reconciliation in souls and in the societies.

This region aches with so much troubles of the body and soul, both presently and in history. In Palestine and Israel today many lack freedom and too many are behind bars. For too long injustice, violence and fear have shaped this region. We pray and ask for human treatment and justice for all, as we are all children of God. At last we pray for a just peace settlement and reconciliation, a peace where there will be no more political prisoners behind bars and where harmony will prevail in the hearts of all the peoples of this region. We pray for God's mercy, for freedom for those in shackles and for peace in our time.

As we observe this week with our brothers and sisters from churches all over the world we pray:

Psalm 79

Palestinian Christian Church leaders in Jerusalem share this prayer with their Brothers and Sisters for World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel 2014.
Other Resources

Documents
- Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons
- Children in Israeli Military detention - Observations and Recommendations
- Joint report on child recruit practices in Israel and the Occupied territories
  http://www.newprofile.org/english/node/203
- Violations against Palestinian Prisoners & Detainees In Israeli Prisons & Detention Centers
- Human Rights Watch report- Israel and Palestine
  http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/israel-palestine

Organizations
- World Council of Churches
  http://www.oikoumene.org/en
- Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum
  https://pief.oikoumene.org/en
- Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
  http://www.eappi.org/
- Jerusalem Inter-Church Center JIC
- WWPI Facebook group page
  https://www.facebook.com/groups/335983429786866/
- Addameer
  http://www.addameer.org/
- Badil
  http://www.badil.org/
- DCI-Palestine
  http://www.dci-palestine.org/
- Physicians for Human Rights
  http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/
- Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)
  http://www.pchrgaza.org/portal/en/
- Hurryyat
  http://www.hurryyat.net/en/
- Al Haq
  http://www.alhaq.org/
- B'Tselem
  http://www.btselem.org/
- New Profile
  http://www.newprofile.org/english/
- Breaking the Silence
  http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/
- 'Ahrar Centre for Prisoners Studies and Human Rights
  http://ahrar.ps/en/?p=3607
- UN-OCHA (Palestine)
  http://www.ochaopt.org/
- UNICEF – State of Palestine
  http://www.unicef.org/oPt/protection_6745.html
- Amnesty International – Israel and Occupied Palestinian territories

Audio visuals
- http://www.addameer.org/evideo.php9 (Vide gallery of prisoners- Addameer)
- http://www.dci-palestine.org/dcivideos (DCI Palestine)
- http://www.dci-palestine.org/othervideos (Other videos on child abuse)
- http://www.hurryyat.net/en/AllVideo.aspx (Hurryyat- Centre for Defense for liberties and civil rights)