



On his recent speaking tour across the U.S. with FOSNA, Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac declared the following: "We Palestinians are much less concerned with the impact of what happens at the polls in November than we are with the impact of what happens when the students return to campus in September!"

As universities and colleges start back up for the Fall semester, a full 11 months after the start of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, we unapologetically champion our student activists in the face of growing repression.

Ahead of the semester, New York University made the determination that 'Zionist' (an ideological designation) is a protected trait in their anti-discrimination policy. Columbia University arrested student picketers on the first day of classes. More and more schools are adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and a growing number of schools are restricting or banning protest entirely. It is imperative that we do everything we can to support our students, protect their rights, and help them keep up the momentum as they face new challenges.

We once again encourage everyone to reach out to and be there for their local Palestine advocacy student group, Students for Justice in Palestine chapter, or campus encampment. In addition, please add your name to the statement below. Many thanks to FOSNA-NJ for initiating this declaration.

As Christians we have a deep appreciation and affection for Judaism. The Christian embodiment of compassion and justice is rooted in Jewish teachings. The books of the Jewish prophets are essential to our understanding of peacemaking, nonviolence, and liberation. The words of Isaiah that call us to free the oppressed, feed the hungry, provide shelter for the afflicted (Isa. 58:6-7 NABRE) are echoed in the gospels in the words and deeds of our savior Jesus.

Jesus was a Palestinian Jewish person and his followers, mostly Jewish themselves, became the Palestinian Christians, over 200,000 of whom still live in the Holy Land. We can and we do hold both our Jewish siblings and our Palestinian siblings close to our hearts.

We are also acutely and painfully aware of the role that mainly European Christians played throughout the centuries in promoting and harboring antisemitism. We are also acutely and painfully aware of the past and ongoing role of Christians in the mass murder, displacement, and erasure of indigenous people across the globe. However, we reject the idea that creating a nation state that disadvantages, discriminates against and displaces, indigenous people draws us any closer to reconciliation with our Jewish siblings who are not, and have never been, of one mind about the state of Israel. Further, the repentance and the penance for the sins of European and American Christians who either participated or looked away during the Holocaust cannot be paid for with the freedom, safety and the lives of Palestinians who are the indigenous people.

Zionism is a political ideology which betrays the foundations of our faith. At its core is the belief that a single group of people enjoy God's favor more than the rest of the world. We reject this because we know that God loves us all equally. Sinners and saints, Jews and Gentiles, believers and non-believers- all enjoy the boundless, unconditional, inexhaustible love of our creator. The love God calls us to "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Cor. 13:7 NABRE)

We admire the sacrifice of the students at Columbia, Fordham, Rutgers, Notre Dame, Princeton, UCLA, University of Pittsburgh and over 100 other colleges across the country whose peaceful resistance to the military industrial complex, imperialism and the slaughter of innocents is being met with all forms of retaliation, violence and brutal repression. The students are pointing directly to our complicity in the bombing and the siege of Gaza and the maintenance of what is an apartheid state. It is weapons manufactured by American companies, paid for with American tax dollars and in many cases developed with the assistance of the same universities these students are attending that have killed thousands of children, and permanently disfigured or made orphans of many more. These weapons and the siege and occupation that they maintain are killing Palestinian civilians and Israeli hostages alike. If there are lessons to be learned from October 7th among them must be that weapons are not making Jewish people anywhere more safe.

We weep for all those who have lost their homes, their limbs, their beloved ones and their own lives. We declare that our hearts are big enough to feel sorrow and have empathy for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

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We also know that more violence will not solve anything. The students are asking our government to stop the killing and to feed the hungry. This is exactly what our scriptures say.

We urge you to listen to the students. Theirs is a just and moral cause.

Signed,

Friends of Sabeel North America

The Daniel Berrigan Collective

Pax Christi Canada

Americans Committed to Justice and Truth

Baltimore Nonviolence Center

The Emergent Grace Movement

Friends Meeting for Worship in Indiana PA

Friends of Sabeel NA- New Jersey Chapter

Intelligent Future

Justice Ministries Committee, Presbytery of NYC (PCUSA)

Lauren Faith Smith Ministry for Nonviolence

Middle East Task Force — DC, Maryland and Virginia

Network of Evangelicals for the Middle East

Pax Christi New Jersey

Pax Christi New York State

Pax Christi Rhode Island

Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus

Peacebuilders Academy

St. Paul & St. Andrew United Methodist Church, NYC

Teachers For Palestine

Sign Here

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