



Action Alert

Break the silence against the expropriation of the Holy City

Geneva. March 24, 2010 - Jerusalem, the Holy City that houses the faith for the three monotheistic religions remains at the heart of conflict in the Middle East today. In the light of the discriminatory settlement expansions in Jerusalem by Israeli authorities that adversely affect women and children, the YWCA of Palestine and the World YWCA call for immediate action to end all Israeli illegal actions and daily violations of human rights.

Heavy clashes have erupted in Jerusalem this week as despair and exasperation result from discriminatory measures, many of which have been practised since 1967. The discrimination Palestinians face; especially that of women and young women, undermines dignity and security, violates human rights and jeopardizes a sustainable future for children in the Middle East.

The Israeli policy of expulsion in East Jerusalem has resulted in the revocation of over 13,100 ID cards from Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Today, restrictive provisions apply only to Palestinian Jerusalemites and those wishing to travel abroad endure intensive and humiliating security inspections at the airport and face daily discriminatory citizenship treatment.

The forced evictions of Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem are in contradiction to international law and the Geneva Conventions. More than 120 persons have been forced to vacate their homes as of December 2009. Restrictive residency and housing policies in Jerusalem also violate human rights with more than 2,000 houses destroyed in East Jerusalem since 1967, with 75 of these structures destroyed in 2009. In May 2009, a UN OCHA report stated that at least 28% of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem (affecting an estimated 60,000 residents) are at risk of being demolished.

Moreover, Israel's pattern of disregard for non-Jewish religious sites in Jerusalem adds to tension in the area, especially at a time when violations of International Law are a daily occurrence. We denounce the inappropriate and disrespectful treatment of holy sites in East Jerusalem and appeal that tolerance and cooperation prevail.

We call on the YWCA movement and partners to take immediate action to end the Israeli human rights violations.

Take action today and:

1. Call on the Government of Israel to stop evictions from and demolitions of Palestinian residences in East Jerusalem and the continuing Israeli military occupation.
2. Renew calls for solidarity of the international community and governments, particularly those signatories to the Geneva Conventions, to encourage and assist the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to put an effort to reach a just and sustainable peace in the Holy Land.

3. Continue to educate your membership on the root causes of the conflict in the Middle East and violations of Human Rights in the region.
4. Support the empowerment of women in the Middle East region by contributing the development of programmes that enhance the dignity and security of women, promote women's human rights as well as promise a sustainable future for children (Middle East Resolution issued in the World YWCA Council Meeting of Kenya, 2007)
5. Call for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that promotes the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace processes and all Resolutions pertaining to Palestine, including SR 242 and 338 that call for the end of Israeli Occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian State.
6. Join the movement against goods and services from the occupied territories, as part of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign as means of exerting pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Palestine and abide by International Law and UN Resolutions.

There can be no Peace without Justice. There can be no Justice with Occupation

Sources: PASSIA, UN OCHA, UNHCR, Peace Now, MamillaCampaign.org.