



CLERGY COUNCIL

For several years, Friends of Sabeel North America and its supporters have experienced targeted harassment from Zionist organizations, including Christian Zionists. Clearly we are not alone in this, but it's time we stand up to it thoughtfully. For many of us in FOSNA, our commitment to advance justice and peace in Palestine and Israel (where the forces of ethnic domination and colonialism are causing tragic suffering) is based in our Christian faith and the model set forth by Jesus and the Hebrew prophets. We believe that we have an ethical responsibility to stand with the poor and oppressed in the Holy Land as we pursue justice for all through nonviolent resistance. This is not only our right under the law but our Christian, ethical responsibility.

FOSNA's newly organized Clergy Council stands in this tradition and is now available to offer wise counsel, spiritual support, and a variety of practical resources for those experiencing intimidation. As we pray and work for justice in Palestine and Israel, we are also part of a growing global movement adopting positions and nonviolent strategies, such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which trigger opposition. We in FOSNA believe we have an important responsibility to stand with those who are paying a personal or collective price for this vital solidarity work.

If you, your church, or organization are facing targeted intimidation or bullying behavior, we offer support and various resources through our FOSNA Clergy Council. After reading our mission statement and list of resources below, please contact us immediately by filling out and returning the contact sheet. If you prefer a secular approach, we can meet your needs as well. Remember: the opposition is trying to isolate and silence you through intimidation. We are all stronger together, and there is support available now from colleagues who know firsthand what you are going through.

Mission Statement

The FOSNA Clergy Council provides personal and organizational counsel, prayer, legal resources, theological instruments, and other means of support for clergy, congregations, university groups, seminarians, students, social justice advocates, and seminary faculty who are facing undue intimidation and outside pressure from individuals and organizations. The Clergy Council exists to serve all denominations as well as non-denominational churches, institutions, and individuals.

Resources

Compassionate Listening and Spiritual Support: Members of the FOSNA Clergy Council have walked in your shoes and are available to provide a listening heart, wise counsel, prayer, and spiritual support to meet your personal and/or collective needs. The council represents most Christian denominations and nondenominational churches and provides women and men who will work with you and the particular types of intimidation you are experiencing.

Theological Resources: FOSNA and other faith-based organizations have compiled helpful Biblical and theological resources that can address the majority of the arguments offered by the opposition. The council will work with you to offer sound theological advice in response to specific challenges you might encounter. We can also suggest resources for personal study and small group or congregational study to broaden your awareness of the situation in Palestine and Israel and assist you in building a support network.

Legal Resources: As the Zionist organizations pursue their well-financed campaigns through legislation at the state, local, and national levels, you are protected in the majority of cases by the First Amendment. However, each case may pose different legal challenges. FOSNA has used the services of our friends at Palestine Legal for most cases and can offer additional legal counsel if necessary.

The Rabbinic Council of Jewish Voice for Peace: At times the opposition will claim to speak for all Jews, which is not only incorrect but seriously dated. The fastest growing Jewish organization in the United States is Jewish Voice for Peace, a strong voice for justice and an organization with which we work on a day-to-day basis. JVP's Rabbinical Council provides invaluable support for FOSNA events and personnel when needed.

Media Support: It is often wise to design a strategic media strategy to "shine a light" on the tactics employed by the opposition. The Clergy Council can assist in designing a strategy. The council can refer you to professional journalists who will assist in drafting articles and statements for broader publication.

Organizational Support: It is vitally important to know you are not alone. There is a growing network of support across the country, not only in the churches, but in the Jewish, Muslim, academic, and secular peace and justice communities. It may be helpful for you and your organization to become involved with one or more of the organizations such as a Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) group at a nearby university, a JVP group, or a Muslim organization. The Clergy Council can assist you and your congregation or organization if and when you decide to become more involved in this global movement.

Support Statement: If appropriate, the FOSNA Clergy Council will issue a statement of support for your particular needs. Statements such as this have been helpful methods of demonstrating not only to the opposition but to neighboring churches, fellow clergy, the media, and your church members that you are not alone and that a community of friends stand with you.