

Der Landesbischof · Postfach 2269 · 76010 Karlsruhe

Herrn
Rifat Kassis
General Coordinator
Global Kairos for Justice



Der Landesbischof
Prof. Dr. Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh

Besucheranschrift:
Evangelischer Oberkirchenrat,
Blumenstraße 1-7, 76133 Karlsruhe

Karlsruhe, 10. Juli 2020

Dear Mr. Kassis, dear sisters and brothers,

Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

On June 16, 2020, your "Cry for Hope: Call to Decision and Action" was handed over to me personally. With this you have shared with us the deplorable political circumstances which the Christian communities in Palestine have been facing for years and which have worsened rather than improved. You rightly remind us of the responsibility we have as brothers and sisters in faith towards our Christian brothers and sisters in the Palestinian region.

As Protestant Christians in Germany, for biblical-theological reasons and against the background of our catastrophic history of anti-Judaism, our turn toward reconciling with the Jewish people has been of essential importance to us. As a result we have often not perceived the situation of our Palestinian brothers and sisters with the appropriate clarity, fervor and commitment. But the efforts for justice, for dialogue and reconciliation are indivisible.

That is why it is important for us to assure you in reply to your letter that we hear your "cry" and sincerely share your great concern for this intolerable situation.

We support and strengthen the Palestinians' quest for state sovereignty: spiritually, morally, materially, and politically. Even though the possibility for coexistence through the two-state solution seems to be a distant prospect, we currently see no other way to justice and peace in the Holy Land. We clearly hear the biblical admonition that the gift of the land for all who live there is linked to the demand for justice and mutual respect.

With you we are convinced that the Bible cannot be used to legitimize disenfranchisement and discrimination or justify geopolitical claims to power at the expense of law and justice. We oppose any instrumentalization of religion by political interests.

We reject the view of current conditions in the Holy Land according to so-called "Christian Zionism" as presaging the End Times. We regard this understanding of biblical texts as inimical to dialogue and as worsening the potential for conflicts.

Rather, we gather around the vision of a free and sovereign Palestine side by side with an state of Israel in a peaceful Middle East. We give our undivided support to those who strive for this goal without violence; we vigorously oppose all those who rely on violence. Against this background, we also consider boycott measures to be legitimate in principle as a non-violent form of resistance, even if we do not want to join calls for a boycott ourselves.

We want to contribute to the growth of justice and peace in Israel and Palestine. We reaffirm our commitment to use all our means to promote and strengthen actors and initiatives in the region who are willing to engage in dialogue and have an affinity for reconciliation. We believe that God's command is fundamentally aimed at justice and peace for all people. We call for an end to continued settlement construction and Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. We reaffirm the declaration of the Evangelical Middle East Commission of 28.5.2020, because any unilateral annexation cements injustice and fuels violence. We call for clear steps towards political independence for Palestine as well as for a renunciation of terror and acts of violence against Israel. We urge all parties in the region to respect human rights and the international community's international legal provisions.

The Kairos Document was published 10 years ago. The Regional Synod will therefore deal with the "Cry for Hope" of Palestinian Christians at its next or the next but one meeting and thus address the issues behind it in greater depth. Your letter of 25 June with its seven proposals for action will be included in these discussions. We will inform you about the results of the discussion and decision processes.

We conclude our response with the assurance of the 1st letter of Peter: But the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will raise you up, strengthen you, who suffer for a little while, and give you strength and foundation. To him be power for all eternity! Amen.

I wish you much strength and God's blessing, warm greetings to you,

Prof. Dr. Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh

Bishop