

Prayer Petitions: 24 May 2017
ACT PALESTINE FORUM
PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
24TH of every month

Every day in the month ahead, we continue to pray with and for our sisters and brothers in Palestine and Israel who have called for an ecumenical prayer vigil across the globe on the 24th of every month.

APF encourages its friends and partners to visit the [APF website](#) and [APF Facebook](#) page often to find, and also contribute, updates, photos, stories, advocacy ideas, and special prayers.

A special thanks to DSPR-NECC for contributing to this month's prayers.

ACT Palestine Forum Prayers

24 May 2017

Prayer Focus: Gaza Blockade

Since October 2000, the Gaza Strip has been subjected to a continuous but fluctuating blockade. The blockade was reinforced and enhanced to unprecedented levels in the 2-3 years that followed the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2006/2007. The blockade entailed both the movement of goods and individuals.

In 2016, the volume of goods entering Gaza was at the same level as 2007, falling short of meeting the demands of the increasing population. The volume of goods exported was just 20% the amount exported in 2007. The restrictions on exports increase the vulnerability of Gaza's economy by weakening its production base. After the war of 2014, restrictions were imposed on the entry of construction materials needed for the reconstruction of the intensive damages encountered by private and public assets in Gaza. Such restrictions slow the recovery process and extend the suffering of thousands of families who lost their houses during the war.

The number of Palestinians leaving Gaza via Israel on daily basis (460 people) is only 2% the figure in September 2000 (OCHA, 2016). The blockade targets the population of the Gaza Strip without exceptions. A significant percentage, more than 35%, of patients applying for permits for medical reasons were denied access. Humanitarian actors, especially the Palestinian staff, are increasingly being denied access out of Gaza through Israel (OCHA 2016).

Israel is still prohibiting Palestinian farmers from reaching their lands that are within 300 meters from the Israel/Gaza borders, making farmers poorer and depriving Gaza from cultivating significant parts of its arable lands, essential for its food security. Similarly, fishermen are only allowed to fish within 6 nautical miles from Gaza's shore, which is less than one third of the fishing area established in the Oslo Accords.

These numerous restrictions have resulted in making the unemployment rates rise to above 40% and the poverty reached around 40% (PCBS 2016). About 47% of the population in Gaza Strip suffers severe food insecurity. And, more than 70% of the population depends differentially on aid (OCHA 2016).

OCHA. November 2016. The Gaza Strip: The Humanitarian Impacts of the Blockade. United Nations Office for the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs. <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-blockade-november-2016>.

PCBS. Palestine in Figures 2015. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2188.pdf>

Prayers

Prayer for Peace

Almighty God and Creator, You are the Father of all people on the earth. Guide, I pray, all the nations and their leaders in the ways of justice and peace. Protect us from the evils of injustice, prejudice, exploitation, conflict, and war. Help us to put away mistrust, bitterness, and hatred. Teach us to cease the storing and using of implements of war. Lead us to find peace, respect, and freedom. Unite us in the making and sharing of tools of peace against ignorance, poverty, disease, and oppression. Grant that we may grow in harmony and friendship as brothers and sisters created in Your image, to Your honor and praise.

Amen.

Special Ecumenical Prayer on 5 June 2017

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is calling on Christians worldwide to join in prayer for just peace in the Holy Land by taking part in a Pentecost prayer service. The WCC has developed a service for the “The Global Day of Prayer for Just Peace in the Holy Land” to be used by churches and communities of faith all over the globe on 5 June 2017.

The Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, stated “To pray for unity is our calling as an ecumenical family. To pray for peace in the Holy Land, and particularly in Jerusalem at this time, is an affirmation of our commitment to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace and our long history of engagement for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel. We support the member churches in the region in their witness and ministry, and we encourage member churches around the world to act in prayer and solidarity for peace with justice in Palestine and Israel.”

More information and resources for this service can be found here:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-calls-for-prayer-for-just-peace-in-the-holy-land>