

Middle East Notes
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
July 5, 2018



Please note: Opinions expressed in the following articles do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

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The six featured articles and the related links in this issue of the Middle East Notes focus on the Christian Kairos Statement on Gaza and Jerusalem; the need of income sources for the Gaza people; concerns about President Trump's yet to be published Middle East Peace Plan; growing differences between American and Israeli Jews; Palestine legal complaints to the UN and the International Criminal Court (ICC) of Israel war crimes and crimes against humanity; analysis of 100 years of Nakba; links to CMEP Bulletins, other articles of interest, and a book review.

Commentary: Code words are replacing and obfuscating the reality of people in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. "Gaza," "IDF," " Hamas," "Fatah," "Ramallah," "Jerusalem," "Occupation," "Israelis," "Palestinians," "Diaspora Jews," "Arab Israelis," "Ultra-Orthodox," etc. Using code words makes it easier to talk about this conflict, but much easier to ignore and forget living people, the shared humanity of men, women and children whose lives, hopes, fears, livelihood are encompassed by these code words, whose present and future lives are marked with scars, hatred, despair and fear. Code words make it easier to see only a crowd of "others" rather than living people so much more similar to one another than different. Code words make it easier to depersonalize the "other", to forget that every human being is an image of God. Human named faces facing each other with hope, forgiveness and creativity help us see the face of God.

- "Kairos Palestine", a Christian Palestinian movement, calls on Christians around the world "to be the conscience of humanity and hear the cry of the oppressed in the Holy Land," to call for the end of oppression, occupation, and violence, especially in Gaza and Jerusalem.
- Amira Hass writes in Haaretz that Gaza's condition could improve if Israel lets Gazans work, thereby increasing their income sources. But the Israeli government's policy is to divide the Strip from the West Bank— which only serves Hamas.
- Ori Nir notes in Americans for Peace Now (APN) that President Trump's Middle East team is preparing to release its Israeli-Palestinian peace plan. Reports regarding the content of the plan are unsettling.
- Judy Maltz states in Haaretz that a American Jewish Committee (AJC) survey reveals deep differences between the two communities; the main factor predicting how people respond is how they identify religiously.
- Zaha Hassan writes in Al-Shabaka reports that Palestine has submitted a legal complaint with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) involving serious violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. Like the ICC referral, it specifically alleges war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Al-Shabaka presents a 91-page analysis of the Nakba that reviews the past 100 years, dissects the present, and looks ahead to a better future.

1) [Kairos Statement on Gaza and Jerusalem](#)

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they" (Ecclesiastes 5:8).

"On Monday, May 14th 2018, in Gaza, 60 people were killed and 2771 wounded among crowds walking unarmed towards their villages, from which they had been compelled to leave. They were killed in cold blood and posed no threat to anybody. At the same time, the American embassy was relocated to Jerusalem in violation of international law. The transgressor is the great power that should call on others to respect international law." ...

2) [Only Freedom of Movement Can Save the Gaza Strip From Imminent Collapse](#), Amira Hass, Haaretz, June 28, 2018

“Given the Gaza Strip’s well known, dangerous economic and environmental situation, any technical solution proposed, assuming it’s implemented, could slow the deterioration a bit. So would minor relaxations of the blockade, such as have been reported in recent leaks to the Israeli media. But their importance has been exaggerated.

“The only thing that could really save Gaza is rapid and immediate growth in jobs and revenue sources.” ...

3) [Ultimate Deal? APN Position Paper in Advance of the Trump Administration's Israeli-Palestinian Peace Plan](#), Ori Nir, APN, June 26, 2018

“President Trump’s Middle East team is preparing to release its Israeli-Palestinian peace plan. Reports regarding the content of the plan are unsettling. While we believe the United States has a vital role to play in bringing together Israelis and Palestinians to make peace, we view the Trump administration’s effort with grave concern.”

See also:

['The Ultimate Deal': Crushing the Palestinian People Grain by Grain](#), Odeh Bisharat, Haaretz, June 25, 2018

[What's the real motivation behind Trump's Mideast peace plan?](#) Uri Savir, Al-Monitor, June 24, 2018

[The two-state solution is dead. Palestine needs a new UN mandate](#), Mark Seddon, The Guardian, June 15, 2018

[The 'ultimate deal' that Jared Kushner is proposing for Palestine would strip the people of all their dignity](#), Robert Fisk, The Independent, June 16

4) [American, Israeli Jews Sharply Divided Over Trump, Western Wall and Settlements, Survey Shows](#), Judy Maltz, Haaretz, June 10, 2018

“A survey published on Sunday by the American Jewish Committee illustrates the great divide between American and Israeli Jews on issues ranging from the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem to egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall.”

See also:

['You never told me': Confronting American Jewish myths about Israel](#), Emma Goldberg, 972 Mag. June 19, 2018

[U.S. Jewry and Israel: A growing identity crisis](#), Yossi Shain, Ynetnews, June 23, 2018

5) [Palestine Sets Precedent with Legal Complaint](#), Zaha Hassan, Al-Shabaka, June 17, 2018

“Attention has been focused on the state of Palestine’s [recent submission](#) of a “referral” to the International Criminal Court (ICC), alleging that Israeli officials committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people.”

6) [MARKING THE NAKBA From Betrayals and Warnings to Future Visions](#)

“A 91 page selection of Al-Shabaka analysis of the Nakba that reviews the past 100 years, dissects the present, and looks ahead to a better future.”

Churches for Middle East peace (CMEP) Bulletins

6/15/18 [CMEP Bulletin - UN Denounces Israel’s Handling of Gaza Protests](#)

6/22/18 CMEP Bulletin [The Trump Administration Going to Bat for Israel](#)

6/29/18 - CMEP Bulletin [Child Detention in the U.S. has Parallels to Palestine](#)

Book review: [Cracks in the Wall](#) by Ben White, The National, June 16, 2018

“An impassioned book explains why western support for the Jewish state is waning as US-backed Zionist nationalism further subjugates Palestinians.”