

Press release:

Kairos Southern Africa's response to Palestine Kairos

The Palestine Kairos Document was launched in South Africa on Monday evening 4 April 2011, at a meeting of Kairos Southern Africa in Bredell near Johannesburg. The document is called: *A moment of truth – A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of the Palestinian suffering.*

The notion of a Palestine Kairos Document was inspired by the South African Kairos Document as a Christian testimony of faith during the dark and last days of apartheid. Palestinian lay people, theologians and church leaders came together to express a testimony of faith in relation to their experience under the occupation of Palestine by Israel.

In response to the message of the Palestine Kairos Document, Christians from South Africa and countries in Southern Africa gathering at the conference decided to state the following:

We fully honour this faith commitment and courageous witness as expressed by Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine. This testimony of faith, hope and love is a profound expression of Christian faith under circumstances of gross injustice.

We feel seriously challenged by the Palestinian witness of faith in general as well as by their Kairos document and consequently we:

- Affirm with the Palestinians that the core of the “conflict” between Israel and Palestine is the occupation of Palestine by Israel. We affirm with them that the occupation of Palestine is a fundamental evil to be resisted as an obligation of faith. Moreover, we also consider the Christian theological justification of this occupation based on Zionism as a heresy. We have to deal with our own complicity towards putting the credibility and integrity of the Christian gospel at stake in the Holy Lands. We will have to challenge our own reading of the Bible in lending support to the death and destruction in Palestine today.
- Consider the Zionist ideology as racist. Furthermore we consider the State of Israel to be an apartheid state. For South Africans, the similarities between the situation faced by Palestinians and the situation faced by us under apartheid are clear, striking and extremely painful.
- Accept our complicity to the injustices suffered by Palestinians albeit through widespread ignorance, silence and apathy in our society.
- Will challenge our society, government, political parties, businesses community, civil society, and indeed the churches and the Christian community in general about their complicity regarding this.
- Stand in solidarity with Palestinians in their commitment towards non-violent resistance against the occupation. We support the call towards boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) against the Israeli government.
- promote an ethical code of conduct about pilgrimages and other tours to the Holy lands. We are concerned that, as things stand now, such tours obscure the present-day realities in Palestine under the Israeli occupation.

Just as the white community in general and supporters of South African apartheid locally and abroad were challenged to change, we also challenge the conscience of all who support the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This change is possible.

Whilst we reject the racially exclusive solution of Zionism to the holy land, we pray for an inclusive and just peace where the dignity and equality of all the inhabitants are upheld.

On behalf of Kairos Southern Africa
Rev. Moss Nthla
Chairperson

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