

Stop the illegal Separation Barrier!



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Your Excellencies,

Representatives of foreign governments to Israel and Palestine,

We, Palestinian Christians, along with people of goodwill in the global community, ask for your prompt intervention on a matter of utmost urgency.

Recently the shocking situation in the Cremisan valley and Bir Ouna has come to the attention of the world. Israeli forces have been uprooting hundreds of olive trees in order to clear space for a new section of the Separation Barrier. This new effort to annex occupied Palestinian territory directly affects Palestinian wellbeing. These developments have been distressing for the entire Palestinian community. It has a direct impact especially on Palestinian Christians, who are made more vulnerable by these actions from the Government of Israel. This is a clear violation of international law.

In its [Advisory Opinion](#), released in 2004, the International Court of Justice concluded “that Israel cannot rely on a right of self-defence ... or on a state of necessity in order to preclude the wrongfulness of the construction of the wall.... The Court accordingly finds that the construction of the wall, and its associated régime, are contrary to international law” (Para. 142).

Fr. Aktham Hijazin, parish priest for Bir Ouna, has warned the world: “When you destroy the olive trees, you also kill the people here.” And we remember the words of the Bible, “You must

not destroy trees by wielding an axe against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down” (Deuteronomy 20.19).

Just four months ago the High Court of Israel rejected the Israel-planned route for the wall along the heart of the Cremisan Valley. It was acknowledged that this route would bring great harm to the convent, monastery, and school located there. The route would also directly impact privately-owned parcels of land, destroying olive groves and with them the wellbeing of local communities.

Despite this previous judgment, under official Israeli pressure, the High Court inexplicably allowed a new interpretation of its ruling to take force. As a result, work began immediately on construction of the wall through the Cremisan Valley.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Cremisan, remaining firmly committed to non-violent struggle and prayer for the area. The Israeli legal system appears to have been manipulated for the benefit of the occupation régime; all options within the Israeli legal system have been exhausted. We therefore call on international intervention to pressure Israel to return to the original ruling of its High Court. Without such pressure, the State of Israel will continue to act with impunity, humiliating the dignity of our people, threatening the livelihood of Palestinian communities, and insulting any effort toward building a just peace.

The construction of the wall on occupied land is a breach of international law – the Cremisan Valley is only the latest victim. Local Palestinian Christian communities urge you to put pressure on Israel to:

- immediately stop the illegal construction of the Separation Barrier on occupied land,
- dismantle the sections already constructed on all occupied territory, and
- replant the uprooted olive trees and compensate farmers who have lost their trees.

In hope,

National Coalition of Christian Organisations in Palestine

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum of the World Council of Churches

[Sign the petition](#) to:

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Will you read the petition and take 30 seconds to [sign it right now?](#)