



**International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people
29 November 2016**

Jerusalem, November 2016

Dear friends and partners,

The day to day violence is still ongoing in the Holy Land. With each passing day the people of the region are losing any sense of mutual understanding of our common humanity and common future.

This is only natural because Palestinians continue to be displaced through house demolitions in Area C of the West Bank.

Settlements are in violation of international law, but they are still there and actually expanding; hundreds of new settlements are being built and thousands are planned for the coming years.

Children should not be imprisoned, but around 500-700 Palestinian children are arrested, detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system each year.

The situation in Gaza remains the same. Constant electricity cuts, little access to safe water, malnutrition in children and pregnant women, unemployment, poverty and human rights violations have become the norm.

The peace talks have collapsed and were replaced by a cycle of violence, animosity and destruction.

We, at Caritas Jerusalem are witnesses to these humanitarian violations and we do our best to alleviate the pain and suffering of the Palestinians in the Holy Land.

We believe that there are no military solutions to this conflict and injustice. The Palestinian and Israeli people face a shared fate on shared land. Therefore, the only solution is through direct negotiations, the end of occupation, the cessation of hostility and provocations. But, it is impossible to continue negotiating forever; therefore, a time table and an action plan should be imposed so that a solution will be reached as soon as possible, once and for all.

Next year we will commemorate 100 years of Balfour promise, 50 years of occupation and at the same time 50 years of Caritas Jerusalem serving with love...the Occupation and Caritas Jerusalem are at the same age. We hope and pray that this will be the occasion for celebration to the end of suffering for both our people.

Let us, on this International Day, pray that the parties create a conducive environment for meaningful negotiations and reaffirm our commitment to translating solidarity into positive action.

Fr. Raed Abusahlia
General Director
Caritas Jerusalem