

Sabeel's Litany for Gaza

In the early morning, on May 31, 2010, Israeli forces intercepted a flotilla of 6 ships bound for the Gaza Strip, carrying nearly 700 people and a cargo of medical supplies, pre-fabricated homes, building supplies, and educational materials. The ships were attempting to break the internationally condemned Israeli blockade that, since June 2007, has prevented virtually all people and goods from entering or exiting the Gaza Strip (with the exception of insufficient humanitarian supplies and some aid workers). As the Israeli forces boarded the ships, at least 9 flotilla participants were killed while nearly 60 participants and 10 soldiers were injured. Eventually, all the ships were rerouted and the flotilla participants were arrested or deported. The siege on Gaza continues.

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem will hold a day of fasting and prayer on Monday, June 7, for the members of the flotilla, the people of Gaza, and for peace in Palestine and Israel. This litany is offered as a resource for individuals and congregations to adapt and use, in part or in whole. We encourage pastors to use the litany in their Sunday services.

Eternal God, arbiter of justice and champion of peace, reach into the deep pit of violence, despair, and ruthlessness that shapes the lives of so many in Palestine and Israel. The nations are in an uproar, kingdoms totter, people cry out.

You, O God, are our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Grant, O God, healing to the men and women injured during the Israeli military assault. Bring grace and consolation to those who mourn the dead.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled.

God who has proclaimed release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed, may all who have been taken prisoner for their involvement in the flotilla return safely home. We remember these and others who are unjustly detained.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, who has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...and to let the oppressed go free.

Lord of all, make known to all in Palestine and Israel that your love extends to all people, that might is not right, that fear begets fear, that love conquers all. Give hope to the many who, in love, speak and act boldly for justice.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

God of Justice, we pray that the nations of the world will no longer stand idly by, but uphold the rights of the oppressed in Gaza, the West Bank, and around the globe. We, the peoples of many lands, "reaffirm [our] faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." [UN Charter: Preamble]

Your judgements are just, O Lord, you will hold all nations accountable for what they have done, and also for what they have left undone.

God who offers life in abundance, break the chains of injustice that shackle the people of Gaza. May the blockade that limits food and medicine, toys and cement, culture and trade, friendships and families be swiftly ended. May the people of Gaza and of the West Bank be brought together in unity.

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. [Isaiah 65]

God of equity, who knows no distinction between race or creed or colour, help us to be ever impatient in our encounter with injustice and abuse. As ambassadors for Christ, do not allow our hearts to be hardened, but let us live your message of justice, peace and reconciliation. We remember the words of your prophet: “The effect of justice will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” [Isaiah 32:16-18]

God, in your grace, transform the world.