

**Pax Christi International opposes Israel's plans for annexation
and calls on the international community to hold Israel accountable for
violations of international law.**

Pax Christi International vehemently opposes Israel's plan to annex any area of the West Bank including the Jordan Valley. We recognise East Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights as illegally annexed under international law. We continue to condemn Israel's 53-year occupation of the West Bank and its 13-year blockade of Gaza. We stand in steadfast solidarity with our Palestinian sisters and brothers whose freedom, dignity and human rights are threatened by this current proposal and Israel's previous actions.

We endorse the statement by the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of the Holy Land Churches¹ which expresses grave concern over any such unilateral action to annex land. We add our voice to the growing denunciation of Israel's flagrant disregard of international law², the Geneva Convention³ and resolutions agreed upon by the United Nations General Assembly⁴ and Security Council⁵. We stand with those countries, civil society and human rights organizations, denominations and religious communities and people of conscience who call for Israel to immediately end their plans for annexation⁶.

As the global Catholic movement for peace and nonviolence, Pax Christi International is deeply concerned that actions to annex *any* portion of the West Bank will extinguish the last glimmers of hope for a just and lasting peace in the land we call holy and has the potential to spark righteous anger and unrest throughout the region.

¹https://www.globalministries.org/a_statement_by_the_patriarchs_and_heads_of_the_holy_land_churches_on_israeli_unilateral_annexation_plans

²<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/01/chapter-3-israeli-settlements-and-international-law/>

³<https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/cjpmc/pages/2110/attachments/original/1470164694/01-En-Conventions-Factsheet.pdf?1470164694>

⁴<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>

⁵<https://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7D35E1F729DF491C85256EE700686136>
<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/sres2334.php>

⁶<https://www.mecc.org/mecc/2020/5/11/xob0k5pwd6udzfniax5dsy75v36532>

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AIDA_calls_on_international_community_to_prevent_annexation_May2020.pdf

<https://cmep.salsalabs.org/ps-church-leaders-annexation>

<https://www.theelders.org/news/elders-call-new-middle-east-peace-plan-counter-israeli-annexation-threat>

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NUysXg67fjw3yadRNPoNuVCTBC3Ajatti7yrxpB4pW8/edit>

<https://www.annexation.site/>

<http://www.elcuhl.org/liberation-not-annexation/>

For 75 years, Pax Christi International has promoted nonviolence as a tool for responding to injustice and has encouraged dialogue to foster reconciliation and negotiated peace agreements. We believe that all parties in a dispute warrant respect and acknowledgement. Annexation undermines these principles placing the rights and very humanity of one group as inconsequential to the expectations of another.

We believe there is another way to secure the rights and safety of Israelis and Palestinians. This unilateral action is counterproductive to creating real security, justice and peace.

The end of World War II saw the birth of a new international world order that enshrined human rights and set standards for the behaviour of nations. Pax Christi International, founded during this momentous time, is deeply concerned that Israel's decision to pursue annexation of land taken by military force not only violates but jeopardizes the norms and dictates of that world order, which is already seriously threatened.

Annexation, and/or the implementation of the Trump administration's "Deal of the Century", will formalise Israel's strategic and persistent efforts to create "facts on the ground" and will be the death knell for a viable Palestinian state. For decades, a two-state solution which acknowledges the rights and security of both Palestinians and Israelis as equal neighbours has been upheld by the Vatican⁷, United Nations and the international community. If Israel continues with its plans, as articulated, realisation of a two-state solution will be rendered impossible. This will cause irreversible damage to the fulfillment of the inalienable right of Palestinians to self-determination, as guaranteed in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations⁸, and will hinder efforts for them to create a flourishing Palestinian state.

As Palestinians have incrementally lost ownership and access to their land and natural resources through land confiscation, home demolitions, discriminatory planning laws and unbridled settlement expansion, all tools of creeping de facto annexation, the international community has watched yet remained unwilling to stop these illegal actions.

July 1st 2020 is the date Prime Minister Netanyahu may test the international community's resolve to protect and defend principles they have enshrined as the bedrock of a civilized world. It is on that date that the coalition government is expected to put forth its plans for unilateral annexation of occupied Palestinian territories, a proposal that will have a devastating impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children, women and men. This is the world's Kairos moment to take immediate and forceful action or be complicit in this plan.

⁷ <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-05/holy-see-israel-palestine-vatican-gallagher.html>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/purposes-and-principles-un-chapter-i-un-charter#rel1>

Pax Christi International calls on the international community and United Nations member states not only to speak out against these illegal actions but also to foster the courage to hold Israel accountable by imposing specific and meaningful consequences.

We ask all Pax Christi Sections and Member Groups

to join with **Church leaders and members of faith communities to**

- express their solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis who oppose annexation, occupation and the blockade of Gaza;
- urge dioceses to exercise their right to make financial investments and consumer choices based on standards of ethical and social responsibility;
- speak out in opposition to Israel's illegal and unilateral plans for annexation at this crucial moment;

and to **call on their elected representatives to urge their government to:**

- oppose Israel's plan for annexation;
- outline what specific actions they will take in response to any annexation including but not exclusive of:
 1. ending all arms trade and military security cooperation with Israel
 2. suspending military and other financial aid to Israel while they are in violation of international and humanitarian law,
 3. implementing sanctions on trade with illegal settlements including boycott of settlement products and companies benefitting from settlement activity;
- declare that they will not recognise any unilateral change to the established 1967 borders;
- hold Israel accountable for violations of international and humanitarian law;
- recognize the State of Palestine.⁹

Brussels, 19 June 2020

⁹ <http://bibliotecanonica.net/docsag/btcaqf.pdf>
<https://palestineun.org/about-palestine/diplomatic-relations/>