



MARYKNOLL
Office for Global Concerns



FRANCISCAN FRIARS
Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Way Forward for Middle East Peace

Starting at 4:00p.m. ET

TRIP REPORT

Susan Gunn—Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Russ Testa—Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Franciscan Friars

Trip Overview

Jan. 11-14 Jerusalem,
Bethlehem, and Ramallah

Jan. 14-15 Amman, Jordan

Jan. 15-17 Beirut, Lebanon

Jan. 18-22 Jerusalem and
West Bank (Erbil, Iraq
canceled due to security)



CMEP Executive Leaders Delegation with
Jessica Montell of Hamoked



Who we met with

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem:

- Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Cardinal Pizzaballa and Bishop Shomali, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
- Bishop Azar of the Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land
- Father Francesco Patton, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land
- Rev. Canon Dr. Donald Binder, on behalf of Archbishop Naoum, Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem



Who we met with

Israel & occupied Palestinian territories:

- Beit Jala Women's Child Care Society
- Rabbis and Jewish leaders in Israel
- Ramallah Friends School (Quaker)
- Star Mountain Rehabilitation Center (Moravian)
- Protestant ministers and Franciscans in Bethlehem and Jerusalem
- Human Rights activists & Civil Society leaders



Who we met with

Palestinian Political Leaders:

- President Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority
- Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, Palestinian Authority
- Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, General Secretary, Palestinian National Initiative (PNI)



with my best wishes

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

ISRAEL AT WAR - DAY 125

01/22/2024

US official visits family of Palestinian-American teen killed in West Bank clash

George Noll, who heads the US office of Palestinian Affairs in Jerusalem recently visited the family of Tawfic Abdel Jabbar to offer his condolences after the 17-year-old Palestinian-American was killed in the West Bank,

Jabbar was shot in an incident in which an off-duty policeman, a soldier and a civilian opened fire in circumstances under investigation.

The US has expressed its “devastation” over Jabbar’s death and has demanded an investigation into the matter.

Who we met with

U.S. Government Leaders:

- George Noll, Chief of U.S. Office of Palestinian Affairs, Jerusalem
- Staff of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem
- U.S. Ambassador to Jordan – Ambassador Yael Lempert in Amman

Who we met with

Meetings in Jordan:

- Bishop Christophorous of the Jordanian Council of Churches
- HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal at the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies
- Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi
- HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad
- American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).



Who we met with

Meetings in Lebanon:

- Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai and Maronite Bishop Gregory Mansour
- Rev. Dr. Elie Haddad at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary
- Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian at Haigazian University
- Dr. Michael Abs of the Middle East Council of Churches
- Rev. Joseph Kassab, Pres., Supreme Council of Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon
- Rev. Najla Kassab, Pres., World Communion of Reformed Churches



Jerusalem Ceasefire Prayer Service

- **Hosted by** Fr. Sebastian, ofm, at Dominus Flevit Holy Site on the Mount of Olives
- **Sermon by** Rev. Dr. Jack Sara, Bethlehem Bible College
- **Prayers by** Churches for Middle East Peace Board Members and Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon



Gaza

- The suffering
- The Christian community
- Israeli government
- Strong solidarity
- Relief efforts
- Miracles



Occupied Palestinian Territories

- Locked down
- Raids and Arrests
- Strong connection to Gaza
- Tense Moment



Jordan and Lebanon



- Economies and societies are in a crisis mode
- The Churches are united together
- Young peoples' future
- Refuge crisis is massive
- Jordan as a key component to the future



Impressions & Takeaways

- **Trauma** is society-wide
- **Humiliation, retaliation** by Israel
- **Values** of hospitality, courage, humanity
- **Bombardment and invasion of Gaza** not in anyone best's interest
- **Anger** at U.S., Pres. Biden, Christians
- **Hopes** pinned on ICJ case
- **Regional conflict**

Impressions & Takeaways

- **Need U.S. Christian voices for ceasefire**
- **Short-term Goals:** ceasefire, release of all hostages, humanitarian aid
- **Long-term Goal:** two-state solution
- **Challenges:** Settlements, No clear Palestinian leader, Lack of trust of Israel, U.S.



Call to Action

- **Be visibly active as people of faith**
 - Prayers of the faithful and daily prayer
 - Gaza Ceasefire Pilgrimage – walk 25 miles during Lent
 - Pilgrimage for Peace – march from Philadelphia to DC, Feb. 14-21
 - Ash Wednesday Service outside of the White House, Feb. 14 @ 11am
- **Constant advocacy for ceasefire, release of hostages, humanitarian aid**
 - Churches for Middle East Peace (www.cmep.org)
 - Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (www.maryknollogc.org)
- **CMEP Advocacy Summit, April 9-11 in DC** (www.cmep.org)

