



# Sabeel's Theology of Contempt

## *Injecting Anti-Israel and Antisemitic Activism into Churches*

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*NGO Monitor's mission is to provide information and analysis, promote accountability, and support discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to advance human rights and humanitarian agendas.*

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## Executive Summary

This NGO Monitor report focuses on the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, a Jerusalem-based non-governmental organization (NGO). As a Palestinian Christian group, Sabeel plays a central theological and ideological role for pro-Palestinian campaigners active primarily in non-evangelical Protestant churches in North America, Europe, Australia, and elsewhere. The organization also is a major actor in the effort to convince Christian churches to support BDS ([boycotts, divestment and sanctions](#)) against Israel.

Sabeel's influence is widespread having successfully deployed Palestinian liberation theology in churches worldwide. This theology fuses historic Christian "teachings of contempt"<sup>1</sup> with Palestinian nationalist ideology. This theological paradigm interprets Christian texts to depict Palestinians as the wholly innocent victims of Israeli aggression and attempts to establish a religious obligation to promote a pro-Palestinian nationalist agenda.

In parallel, Sabeel condemns Jewish nationalism (i.e. Zionism) as a "narrow" reading of Scripture and censures Jewish territorial claims and sovereignty as a "tribal" interpretation of the Biblical message. Paradoxically, Sabeel uses its own brand of theology to endorse Palestinian nationalist aspirations. (See Appendix B: Using Christian theology to undergird nationalism)

Sabeel's program is designed to maximize exposure of "Palestinian liberation theology" in churches worldwide. The strategy is to build a critical mass of influential church leaders who will amplify the message that Israel is solely culpable for the origin and perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and pressure must be applied only on Israel – including through the instrument of BDS – to end the conflict.

Promoters of Palestinian liberation theology, including Sabeel's founder and head Naim Ateek, frequently incorporate overtly antisemitic language such as deicide imagery, replacement or supercessionist theology, and repeated disparagement of Judaism as "tribal," "primitive," and "exclusionary."

Sabeel's funding is non-transparent. NGO Monitor has been able to ascertain that European taxpayer funds are channeled to Sabeel via a number of European-based Christian aid societies that receive subsidies from European governments. Sabeel's high level of hostility toward Israel and its promotion of religious teachings often based on theological antisemitism raise serious questions about the abuse of taxpayer funds to enflame conflict, encourage religious intolerance, dehumanize Israelis and Jews, and delegitimize Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Teaching of Contempt: The Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism," by Jules Isaac. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1964.

## Key Findings

- Sabeel [supports](#) a “one state” framework (meaning the elimination of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state) and promotes the “ideal and best solution” is “ultimately a bi-national state in Palestine-Israel... One state for two nations and three religions.” In pursuit of this goal, Sabeel supports BDS (boycotts, divestments and sanctions) against Israel.
- Sabeel expresses inflammatory and offensive rhetoric that rationalizes terrorism against Israeli civilians and promotes classical anti-Jewish theological teachings.
- Sabeel is a primary source of the theological and ideological undergirding of much, if not most, of the anti-Israel political efforts in churches globally, including church divestment campaigns. Sabeel works with pro-Palestinian activists within different denominations (mainly liberal Protestant) in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Europe, Australia, and South Africa.
- Sabeel is based in Jerusalem, Israel and is registered with the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits ([#580312197](#)). As such, they are mandated to report foreign government financing to Israel’s Registrar of Non-Profit Organizations. However, Sabeel does not appear in the [Registrar’s foreign funding database](#), reflecting a lack of financial transparency and accountability.
- Sabeel is the recipient of taxpayer money primarily from a number of European governments: Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway. These taxpayer funds are channeled through a number of Christian aid charities: Diakonia- Sweden; Kerk in Actie, ICCO – Netherlands; Act Alliance; Norwegian Church Aid (NCA).
- Research by NGO Monitor has shown that, despite receiving subsidies from various governments, many of these Christian aid societies do not report the amounts of grants to Sabeel or other NGOs active in the Israeli-Palestinian region. The amount of taxpayer money used to support Sabeel’s program is not available from these sources. Further, the governments making these grants to the Christian aid charities do not report the amounts granted to Sabeel for use in the Israeli-Palestinian region, and are thus non-transparent.
- Sabeel often partners with Jeff Halper, director of the fringe NGO [Israeli Committee against House Demolitions](#) (ICAHD).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Sabeel is a major contributor to the international delegitimization network of NGOs that implement the [Durban Strategy](#). Sabeel's target audiences are churches in dozens of countries. Disturbingly, Sabeel's anti-Israel message is often intertwined with theological antisemitism. In the current climate of increasing antisemitism in Europe and elsewhere, Sabeel's message can be potentially dangerous to the safety and well-being of Jews everywhere.

European governments are in effect funding Sabeel through the offices of various Christian aid charities. This makes these governments and the Christian aid agencies morally culpable for the spread of anti-Jewish theology.

Churches have a fundamental choice to make: to act as peacemakers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or to become participants in the dispute. Sabeel's welcome by many denominations has turned these churches into parties to the conflict, and participating in an agenda that contributes to demonizing, dehumanizing, and delegitimizing Israel. Sabeel's vision of a "bi-national state in Palestine-Israel... One state for two nations and three religions" denies the right of the Jewish people to sovereign equality among the nations.

Peacemakers must avoid adding fuel to conflict. In contrast, Sabeel's Palestinian nationalist agenda has been injected into the theological bloodstream of a number of churches as a "liberation theology" undermines these denominations' mission as peacemakers, failing both Palestinians and Israelis alike.

In the interest of furthering the prospects of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and of lessening interfaith enmity, NGO Monitor makes the following recommendations.

1. **Christian aid agencies:** Christian aid agencies (Kerk in Actie, ICCO, Diakonia, Catholic Organization for Development and Peace) should end all funding to and cooperation with Sabeel.
2. **Governments:** Those governments (Netherlands, Sweden, Canada) that provide funds to these Christian aid agencies have a responsibility to ensure that taxpayer money is not used to encourage religious and ethnic conflict. These governments must undertake detailed and independent evaluations of the Christian aid agencies' funding activities before grant allocation and during implementation.
- **Israel:** Sabeel is registered with the Israeli Registrar of Non-Profits, and as such is mandated by Israeli law to register its foreign government financing to the Registrar

of Non-Profit Organizations.<sup>2</sup> Sabeel does not appear in the [Registrar's foreign funding database](#). It is unknown whether Sabeel received foreign government funding during the examined reporting period, whether it received funds but failed to act in accordance with the law, and/or whether it did not report due technical issues in the reporting system. NGO Monitor urges the Ministry of Justice and the Registrar of Non-Profits to exercise stronger oversight and pursue enforcement of the law as it pertains to Sabeel and all non-complying NGOs.

3. **Jewish communities:** The leadership of Jewish communities in North America and Europe need a significantly expanded strategic approach to combating efforts to delegitimize Israel in the churches. Such strategies may include:
  - a. systematically create synagogue-church relationships (clergy to clergy; laity to laity;
  - b. create a variety of materials for wide distribution to Christians; easy-to-digest pieces on Israel written by Christians for Christian audiences;
  - c. developing fact-finding missions to Israel geared specifically for Christians, to counter Sabeel's Witness Visit Tours and International Conferences;
  - d. developing a free course on Israel for Christian clergy to fulfill their cross-cultural, interfaith, etc. continuing education requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> The Israeli "[Law on Disclosure Requirements For \[Groups\] Supported by a Foreign Governmental Body](#)" (NGO Transparency Law - February 2011) provides an appropriate and timely framework to inform the Israeli public about foreign government involvement in Israeli political issues. As implemented by the Israeli Ministry of Justice, the law is an international model for transparency.

## Background

- Website: [www.sabeel.org](http://www.sabeel.org)
- [Founded](#) in 1989 by Anglican Canon Rev. Naim Ateek, Sabeel describes itself as an “ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians” that “encourages Christians from around the world to work for justice and to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people.”
- To accomplish this, Sabeel and Ateek apply Palestinian nationalist ideology to their interpretation of Christian theology. Ateek calls this reading of Christian teaching “Palestinian liberation theology.” Central to this doctrine is Christian replacement theology,<sup>3</sup> which is wielded as a means to refute Jewish religious and historical claims to the land of Israel.
- Sabeel’s [extensive program includes the following elements](#):
  - The **Peace and Justice Ministry** is Sabeel’s “most important.” Sabeel’s “work in this area takes into consideration both the demands of international law and the U.N. resolutions on the one hand, and our strong faith in the God of justice and peace on the other.” Sabeel cooperates with many different groups “locally and international” on this ministry.
  - The **Ecumenical Ministry** focuses on “ecumenical relations with all the Christians of the land, whether living within the state of Israel or in the occupied Palestinian territories.”
  - The **Interfaith Ministry** “concerns Christian Muslim relations.”
- Sabeel [“carries out its three ministries through its community programs.”](#) These are:
  - **International Outreach.** This program includes welcoming international visitors to Sabeel’s offices to introduce them to Sabeel’s agenda, including Palestinian liberation theology. In 2014, “Sabeel hosted over 850 guests from 42 different groups; hailing from 10 different countries, these groups included seminarians, university students, clergy, and laypeople.”
  - Another aspect of the International Outreach program is [The Contemporary Way of the Cross](#). This is a “modern-day Via Dolorosa” that places the

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<sup>3</sup> See [http://www.interfaithfamily.com/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/popular\\_culture/Catholics\\_and\\_Jews\\_A\\_Review\\_of\\_Constantines\\_Sword.shtml](http://www.interfaithfamily.com/arts_and_entertainment/popular_culture/Catholics_and_Jews_A_Review_of_Constantines_Sword.shtml)



Palestinian nationalist ideology into a theological framework. It takes visitors “through Stations of the Cross adapted to mirror the struggle of Palestinians. Featuring stations like ‘The Nakba of 1948’ and ‘Checkpoints,’ this liturgy allows participants to reflect on the current struggle for justice in the Holy Land and develop a spiritual response to what they have witnessed and learned.”

- Sabeel’s other programs are: Women’s, Youth, Clergy, Community, and Sabeel Nazareth.
- **International Friends of Sabeel network:** Through its international Friends of Sabeel network, each year Sabeel hosts numerous church-based conferences in the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia, where it promotes its agenda to large audiences of Christians.
- **International Conference:** Sabeel sponsors a bi-annual International Conference that “attracts intellectual, spiritual and civic leaders from around the world.”<sup>4</sup>
- **Witness Visit Tours:** Sabeel brings delegations of Christians to “Palestine-Israel” on highly politicized “Witness Visit” tours “to experience the reality of life in today’s Holy Land.” Further, Sabeel’s annual “International Young Adult Conference” brings “young Christians aged (18-35) from around the world to create an alternative pilgrimage experience that emphasizes active engagement with both the people and the land.”

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<sup>4</sup> At Sabeel’s 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference in November 2013 Ateek announced his [upcoming retirement](#).

## Rationalization of Terrorism and Advancement of Antisemitism

- In pursuit of its Palestinian nationalist agenda, Sabeel often uses immoderate language that rationalizes terrorism against Israeli civilians and promotes anti-Jewish theological teachings.
- On July 20, 2014 Sabeel published a [speech](#) by Naim Ateek that denies Israel's right to self-defense against Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians, while also justifying terrorism with a "unique" interpretation of international humanitarian law and the laws of war:
  - "One of the most common refrains repeated by President Obama and other western leaders since the beginning of Israel's massive military offensive against Gaza is, 'Israel has the right to defend itself'... First, we should **consider that there is no clear 'self' for Israel to defend...** In light of the fact that Israel has no defined borders and is occupying another state, it is not even possible to define the 'self' that Israel has a right to defend." (emphasis added)
  - "International law unequivocally gives occupied people the right to shake off the yoke of the occupier through various **means including the armed struggle.**" (emphasis added)
  - "The Palestinian rockets from Gaza have an important message that Israel refuses to understand and the western powers, especially the United States, are unwilling to comprehend. The message of the rockets addresses the core issues and the root causes of the problem – **STOP THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND FREE PALESTINE**" (emphasis in the original).
- Upon Yasser Arafat's death in 2004, Sabeel posted a glowing tribute to him titled, "[A Word of Respect and Esteem for a Great Leader, President Yasser Arafat.](#)" The homage praised Arafat as the Palestinians' "father figure" who, "for forty years... struggled for the liberation of his beloved country, Palestine... Arafat traveled the world tirelessly presenting the just case of his people.... He came to embody and personify the struggle of his people."
  - Sabeel's paean to Arafat failed to mention his career as the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which in the name of this "struggle" was responsible for carrying out hundreds of terror attacks against unarmed civilians (Israelis, Jews and non-Jews) beginning in the 1960s.

- The Sabeel document also omitted [Arafat's approval of the arming of Hamas during the "Second Intifada."](#) Hamas carried out dozens of suicide terror attacks against Israeli civilians at the time, leaving hundreds dead.
- Sabeel frequently uses antisemitic language in its attacks on Israel. Sabeel spokespeople, particularly founder Ateek, disparage Judaism as "tribal," "primitive," and "exclusionary," while contrasting this to Christianity's "universalism" and "inclusiveness." Ateek has also used deicide imagery against Israel, referred to Jesus as a "Palestinian" thus dejudaizing him. Some examples include (emphases added):

**Naim Ateek:**

- "[The establishment of Israel](#) was a relapse to the most **primitive concepts of an exclusive, tribal God**. At its core is the way some secular Zionists interpreted the Holocaust. For some, the only authentic response to the Holocaust, religious or secular, Jewish or not, must be total commitment to the security and wellbeing of Israel... **Israel has adopted a new god**, one named Betahone, meaning security." (emphasis added)
- "The tragedy of many Zionists today is that they have locked themselves into the **nationalist concept of God**. They are trapped in it and they will be freed only if they discard their **primitive image of God for a more universal one...**" (*Naim Ateek, Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation, Orbis Books, 1989*)
- "[In this season of Lent](#), it seems to many of us that **Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians** around him. It only takes people of insight to see the hundreds of thousands of crosses throughout the land, Palestinian men, women, and children being crucified. Palestine has become one huge [G]olgotha. The **Israeli government crucifixion system** is operating daily. Palestine has become the place of the skull..." (emphasis added)
- In a workshop<sup>5</sup> he gave at FOSNA's 2010 conference in San Anselmo, CA, Ateek attacked Judaism's central holy book, the Torah: "When you have all the **exclusive theologies that have risen from texts coming out from the Torah**, when you go into the land, which I (God) will give you, 'Don't make peace with the people of the land, they will be like thorns in your throats, **get rid of them – either out or kill them.**' **That's in the heart of the Torah, in the**

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix E – "Anatomy of a Sabeel Conference: First Presbyterian Church, San Anselmo, California, March 5-6, 2010

**heart of the Torah**, which is the most authoritative part of the Hebrew Scriptures for Jews. For religious Jews.” (emphasis added)

- In the same workshop, Ateek asserted that it is Christianity that transformed the Torah’s “tribal” theology into a “universal” one. He said, “Old Testament and New Testament, we share the Old Testament with Jewish people. And the heart of it, how do we re-interpret the text, is it an exclusive theology of land or an inclusive theology of land... It’s a theology that opens up the whole world. For us Christians ‘God so loved the world’ it doesn’t say ‘God so loved the Jewish people’ (snickers in audience)... and it’s no more one land, one small piece of land, the Land of Israel.”

He also accused Orthodox Jews of forsaking the Prophets: “The Prophetic tradition after the (Babylonian) Exile started opening up, although for Orthodox Judaism it is the Torah that is authoritative... But you are right – for an Orthodox (Jewish) person would say, ‘I don’t care about the Prophets.’”

- In his book “A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation,” Ateek strips Jesus of his Jewish identity, “Palestinian liberation theology focuses on the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, who was also a Palestinian living under an occupation.”<sup>6</sup>

#### **Mark Braverman (Friends of Sabeel North America):**

- “Christianity came to take Judaism... pull it out of its tribal framework and make it universal... (Jesus) was saying this: we need to transform our religion. He was speaking truth to power. It’s for everyone and it’s not about a place, it’s not about a land anymore. This is where Judaism was supposed to go. But, instead, what has happened is this sense of isolationism, this sense of election and exclusivism has incubated for 2,000 years and we see the result today in the State of Israel.”<sup>7</sup>

#### **Sabeel on a Final Peace Settlement**

- Sabeel supports “one-state,” meaning no independent Jewish state. Its “[Vision for Peace](#)” proclaims: “*The ideal and best solution has always been to envisage ultimately a bi-national state in Palestine-Israel... One state for two nations and three religions.*” (emphasis added)

<sup>6</sup> Naim Stifan Ateek, “A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation,” (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Braverman is a [member of Friends of Sabeel North America’s Advisory Board](#). He made these remarks at the Sabeel Conference in San Anselmo, California, March 5-6, 2010, verbatim transcript.

- The Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA) website featured a January 15, 2014 [press release](#) on "[Zionism Unsettled](#)," an "educational resource" of the Presbyterian Church that [claims](#) that Zionism is a "false theology" and was aimed at promoting the anti-Israel divestment resolution presented at the Presbyterian Church National Biennial General Assembly in Detroit on June 14-24, 2014.
- Ateek [wrote of](#) "an Israeli form of apartheid that is much worse than what was practiced in South Africa." He blamed Israel for the [suicide bombing attacks](#) saying, "It was in the crucible of the occupation that they were shaped and formed. And if Israel labels them as terrorists, they are, after all the product of its own making."

## Budget, Transparency and Collaboration

Sabeel's financial transparency has become non-existent since 2012. In that year, Sabeel's annual Narrative Report included both a list of donors and funding amounts. Sabeel's 2013 Narrative Report only provided a list of donors and a pie chart including percentages of the group's budget, without amounts. In 2014's Narrative Report, both funding amounts and percentages were completely absent.

As mandated by Israeli law<sup>8</sup>, Sabeel must register its foreign government financing to Israel's Registrar of Non-Profit Organizations. However, it does not appear to fulfill this obligation, reflecting its lack of transparency and accountability. Its 2012 financial report, the only one listed on Guidestar Israel, is [inaccessible](#).

Despite this lack of transparency, Sabeel's partner relationships provide some insight into potential funding sources. Partnerships listed on Sabeel's website as well as materials published by its partners suggest that they are potential donors and are in ideological agreement with Sabeel's mission and values. This includes "co-sponsor" events with Sabeel or its overseas "Friends of Sabeel" support network.

## Funding

- [2012 total income](#) of NIS 1,870,203.<sup>9</sup>
- Sabeel's [2014 Narrative Report](#) catalogs donors, but no amounts. Listed donors are:
  - *Churches*: All Saints Episcopal Church; Church of Scotland; General Board of Global Ministries – NY (United Methodist Church); Mennonite Central Committee (MCC); Presbyterian Church USA; Trinity Episcopal Church; The United Church of Canada; United Church of Christ.
  - *International Christian aid organizations*: Diakonia- Sweden; Kerk in Actie – ICCO Act Alliance; Norwegian Church Aid (NCA); Solidarite Sacerdotale Eveche.
  - *Friends of Sabeel*: Canadian Friends of Sabeel; Eilert Rostrup - Friends of Sabeel Norway; Friends of Sabeel Australia Inc.; Friends of Sabeel France; Friends of Sabeel Ireland; Friends of Sabeel Japan; Friends of Sabeel Netherlands; Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA); Friends of Sabeel Sweden.

<sup>8</sup> [Quarterly funding reports](#) are submitted in accordance to the "Law on Disclosure Requirements For [Groups] Supported by a Foreign Governmental Body"

<sup>9</sup> Latest available, accessed February 2015

- *Individuals:* Nina Chiba; Community Contribution; Randa and Bill Veach; Rev. Naim Ateek; Rev. Robert and Maurine Tobin; Rizek and Alice Abusharr; Saleem Ateek; Samia Khoury; Sister Catherine Appleby.
- Donors in 2011-2013 include: Kerk in Actie ([Netherlands](#)); [Diakonia](#) ([Sweden](#)); [World Vision](#); [Mennonite Central Committee](#); Church of Scotland; Presbyterian Church USA; Presbyterian Church of Canada; United Church of Christ; Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace; and Friends of Sabeel chapters in North America, UK, Norway, among others.

Donors (Partial List)	Year	Amount (in NIS)
<b>Kerk in Actie (Netherlands)</b>	2012	240,000
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Diakonia (Sweden)</b>	2012	217,716
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>World Vision</b>	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Mennonite Central Committee (U.S. and Canada)</b>	2012	58,215
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Church of Scotland</b>	2012	23,493
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>United Church of Christ</b>	2012	17,863
<b>The Presbyterian Church of Canada</b>	2012	18,590
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>United Church of Canada</b>	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Friends of Sabeel North America</b>	2012	265,720
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Friends of Sabeel UK</b>	2012	11,583
	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Friends of Sabeel Norway</b>	2012	15,790
<b>Friends of Sabeel Australia</b>	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Friends of Sabeel Germany</b>	2013	Undisclosed
<b>Friends of Sabeel Netherlands</b>	2013	Undisclosed

- In place of providing donor amounts, Sabeel's 2013 Narrative Report<sup>10</sup> states 58% of its 2013 income derived from "Donations and Grants" and 42% from "activity income." No funding or income numbers are listed.
- The report states, "We will send an audited financial report covering 2013 to our funders or by request when it becomes available." NGO Monitor requested a copy of the audited report [see Appendix A], however, Sabeel failed to respond.

<sup>10</sup> The 2013 narrative report is no longer available online. Its removal is indicative of a lack of commitment to transparency by Sabeel.

## The Friends of Sabeel network

- The “[International Friends of Sabeel](#)” (IFOS) was organized in the international community to support the work of Sabeel through education, advocacy, conferences, solidarity visits, partner-to-partner projects and financial support. Regional chapters create a network of friends around the world who work in partnership with Sabeel to help bring about a just and durable peace for Palestine and Israel.”
- Friends of Sabeel chapters typically do not publish funding information and are not transparent. The exception is Friends of Sabeel Netherlands, which published its [2013 financial report](#). It does not indicate if it received government funding.

## Governments Funding Sabeel

- **NETHERLANDS:** The Dutch government grants hundreds of millions of euros annually to Dutch church-based aid organizations such as [Kerk in Actie](#) (KiA) and the [Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation](#) (ICCO). In turn, these groups disburse these funds to NGOs around the world, including Sabeel.
- Kerk in Actie (KiA)
  - In 2013, KiA received [€315,000](#) in Dutch government subsidies. KiA does not indicate how much funding is allocated to the Middle East or specifically to Israel and the Palestinian Authority.
  - KiA [claims](#) to support Sabeel in order to promote the voice of Palestinian Christians within the church, and seeks to raise €50,000 in 2015. It previously raised [€70,000](#) to support the work of Meta Floor, a Dutch Christian activist who worked on [behalf of KiA](#) in “peace, human rights, and lobbying” at Sabeel’s Jerusalem office.
- Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
  - From 2011-2015 ICCO received approximately €76.5 million per year in [Dutch government funds](#). ICCO “closely cooperates” with EuropeAID and European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). In 2013, ICCO received [€2.6](#) million from ECHO and [€4.3](#) million in EU subsidies. It also cooperates with [third parties](#) such as the Dutch postcode lottery (€1.3 million, 2013) and the [Church of Sweden](#) (€86,050, 2013). It does not indicate how much funding is allocated to the Middle East or Israel and the Palestinian Authority.



- It appears that ICCO funded<sup>11</sup> Sabeel for a [project](#) in 2011, but Sabeel does not list ICCO as a funder in its 2011 annual report. The project is only mentioned on ICCO's English website, aimed at "building communities" and "to reflect in a theological manner on the Palestinian situation in terms of Israeli occupation." No financial amounts are provided.

**SWEDEN:** The Swedish government's [International Development Cooperation Agency](#) (SIDA) has been providing substantial aid to Palestinians in the [West Bank and Gaza](#) since 2000. In [2013](#), these areas received SEK 372 million (~\$44 million). Much of this aid is funneled through Diakonia, [Sweden's largest humanitarian NGO](#).

- Diakonia
  - In [2013](#), Diakonia's revenue was SEK 473 million (~\$56.3 million), of which over SEK 200 million came from the SIDA, SEK 10 million from the Swedish embassy in the Middle East and SEK 3 million from the EU Middle East. SEK 44 million (~\$5.3 million) was spent on Middle East projects.
  - SIDA (via Diakonia) funded Sabeel's [Nakba Memory program](#) in 2008 "to commemorate the Nakba [Catastrophe] of 1948, examine the current struggles for freedom, equality, and identity, and confront the continuing problems of the 1948 refugees." In 2011 Sabeel received [SEK 225,000](#) (~\$32,390) from SIDA (via Diakonia) for its "Community Program," a four-month project "that works for justice and peace for all the people of the land through a spirituality of non-violence." Sabeel is also mentioned in the 2012 SIDA [CivSam](#) (Middle East region progress summary) report as a 2012 "CivSam" partner.

**NORWAY:** In [2013](#), Norwegian Aid (NORAD) donated NOK 32.8 billion in development aid, of which NOK 631.9 million (~\$83 million) was granted to "Palestine." This includes Norwegian Church Aid, which is the [largest recipient](#) of public funding among NGOs in Norway.

- Norwegian Church Aid
  - In 2013, NORAD donated NOK [13.8 million](#) (~\$1.7 million) to NCA's projects in "Palestine." NCA spent NOK [10.5 million](#) (~\$1.3 million).

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<sup>11</sup> Though the language that ICCO uses to describe its specific involvement in projects is vague, it appears from its funding mechanism that ICCO provides funding for the projects listed on its website. ICCO allows donors to choose to [donate money](#) toward a specific ICCO project, suggesting that ICCO involvement in projects includes a financial component.

- Though Sabeel lists NCA as a donor, the NCA does not list its grantees, making it difficult to verify funding to Sabeel. However, the NCA has funded and partnered with organizations that partner with Sabeel.
- NCA donated over [1.9 million CHF](#) to the World Council of Churches from 2011 to 2013. [Friends of Sabeel-Norway](#) is one of the sponsors of NCA's World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (a WCC project) yearly, including in [2013](#) and [2014](#).
- The WCC and Sabeel also published a 2008 resource booklet titled "[Imagine Peace](#)," which maintains that Jesus' promise of peace is unfulfilled because "this part of the world is under the domination of American/Israeli military power." The booklet also echoes supercessionist theology: "The twelve names of the twelve sons of Jacob, who gave rise to the twelve tribes of Israel, represent God's people according to the self-understanding of the Jews, who at a particular moment in their history started to see themselves as God's only people. The twelve names of the twelve apostles here represent God's people restored after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is God's people in an inclusive sense."
- [Partners](#) with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). ELCJHL head Bishop Munib Younan has spoken at Sabeel conferences and ELCJHL has [supported](#) Sabeel events. Dr. Mitri Raheb, President of the Synod of ELCJHL is scheduled to [lead](#) a Sabeel sponsored tour of the region in March 2015.
- [Lists](#) the Lutheran World Federation as a partner. LWF programing was supported by Sabeel in [2012](#) and [2013](#) and received donations from Sabeel in [2010](#) and [2013](#).

## Implementing Its Strategy: Sabeel's Programming

Through its various activities including international conferences in Jerusalem, "witness trips to the Holy Land," and its quarterly newsletter "Cornerstone," Sabeel works to influence churches primarily in the United States and Europe. Sabeel's programming is extensive, requiring significant resources both in Jerusalem and abroad. This need for structural and financial support has led to the growth of the "Friends of Sabeel" network. Through these activities, Naim Ateek and his fellow Sabeel activists aim to recruit religious leaders to the cause of anti-Zionism, enabling a powerful international demonization infrastructure.

### Programs

- Sabeel offers five program types including [Community Building](#), [Youth](#), [Women](#), [Clergy](#), and [Study Circle](#).
- Throughout these five tracks of programing, the theme of political activism and advocacy remains constant. It is through the guise of "peace" and empowerment, as demonstrated in the programming language, that Sabeel continues to promote an anti-Israel agenda.

### Trips and Conference

- Sabeel organizes three different types of trips and conferences to encourage international participants to take part in its vision including "[Witness Visit](#)," [international conferences](#), and [youth conferences](#). Friends of Sabeel North America alone [lists](#) over 45 trips and conferences since 2003.
- Sabeel brings delegations of Christians to "Palestine-Israel" on highly politicized "[Witness Visit](#)" tours "to experience the reality of life in today's Holy Land." Witness visits include meeting with those "who partner with Sabeel in non-violent resistance to the illegal occupation and violations of international and humanitarian law." Partners include [EAPPI](#), [Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem](#), [Diyar Consortium](#), [Zochrot](#), [Kairos Palestine](#), [Tent of Nations](#), [Breaking the Silence](#), [Friends of the Earth Middle East](#), [East Jerusalem YMCA](#), [B'tselem](#), [Parent's Circle Family Fourm](#), [Addameer](#) and [Defense of Children International](#)
- The most recent trip in December 2014 was titled "[Popular Resistance and Liberation Theology in Palestine](#)," with the purpose of "meeting people at the grass roots as well as those in leadership of the 'popular resistance' movement." The emphasis of the trip was to encounter "the instruments of military occupation up close, including the settlement infrastructure, the apartheid wall, and prisons, and you will hear about the military abuse of nonviolent protestors."

- Their November 2014 witness trip was branded with the message “[come and see.](#)” Sabeel encouraged visitors to “experience the realities of the Palestinian community living under Israeli Occupation: the Separation Wall, illegal settlements, checkpoints, confiscated and demolished homes, refugee camps, and environmental degradation. Learn about the loss of civil and property rights of Arab Israeli citizens.”
- Witness trip agendas include [meetings](#) with fringe activists such as Jeff Halper, director of the [Israel Committee Against House Demolitions](#); with [Machsom Watch](#), and former soldiers from [Breaking the Silence](#). The mainstream Israeli voice is virtually absent.
- Sabeel uses replacement theology as a theme in its witness trips. Sabeel organizes [visits](#) to Jerusalem’s “Way of the Cross,” in [order](#) to be “mindful of Christ’s suffering, but also intentionally lamenting various ‘stations’ of Palestinian suffering like the Nakba, refugee camps, political prisoners, and checkpoints.”<sup>12</sup>
- Sabeel sponsors [international](#) and [youth](#) conferences, “which attract (sic) intellectual, spiritual and civic leaders from around the world,” gathering to influence the international community. These conferences function as a politicized lobbying technique to reach liberal English speaking Christians, advertising Sabeel as the “voice of Palestinian Christians.”
- Conferences often [include](#) speeches by activists “concerned with justice and peace in Palestine/Israel,” “interactive workshops,” and opportunities to learn advocacy tactics for “campus organizing, community education and humanitarian response, and strategies for BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions).”
- In 2008, Ateek claimed Hamas as an Islamic “liberation theology movement” at the “[Peace, Palestine & US Policy 1948-2008](#)” conference in Detroit.
- At the 2011 8<sup>th</sup> international conference “[Challenging Empire](#),” Naim Ateek stated, “The establishment of Israel was a relapse to the most primitive concepts of an exclusive, tribal God.”

<sup>12</sup> In 2005, Sabeel produced a forty-page booklet titled “[The Contemporary Way of the Cross: A Liturgical Journey along the Palestinian Via Dolorosa](#)” which equates the suffering in the Gaza Strip with Christ being nailed to the cross, and the construction of the West Bank security barrier with Christ’s death on the cross.

- At the 2013 9<sup>th</sup> international conference “[The Bible and the Palestine-Israel Conflict](#),” several NGO leaders spoke, including Dr. Hala Khoury-Bisharat, chairperson of [Adalah](#); [Dr. Mads Gilbert](#), a member of the Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) and signatory to the Lancet’s “[Open Letter for the People in Gaza](#)”; Gerard Horton, attorney at [DCI Palestine](#); Dr. Munther Isaac, director of [Christ at the Checkpoint](#); Dr. Victor Kattan, program director of [Al-Shabaka](#); Jonathan Kuttub, founder of [Al Haq](#); Joakim Wohlfeil, policy officer of [Diakonia](#); Jean Zaru, presiding clerk of Ramallah Friends Meeting of Palestine; and several [Kairos Palestine](#)<sup>13</sup> authors.
- Mazin Qumseyeh is a Palestinian Christian living in the West Bank who speaks frequently on behalf of Sabeel at both conferences and witness trips. He was the opening speaker at Sabeel’s [8<sup>th</sup> International Conference in 2011](#), a speaker at the [2014 FOSNA Portland, OR Conference](#), featured at the 2014 Witness trip “[Popular Resistance and Liberation Theology in Palestine FOSUK/FOSNA/CFOS Witness Trip & 5th Anniversary Conference for Kairos – Palestine](#),” and is a recommended speaker on the website of [Friends of Sabeel North America](#). In his writings he often uses antisemitic tropes. (See Appendix D for examples.)
- Friends of Sabeel North America maintains a [YouTube channel](#) for showcasing the conferences, which they encourage to be used for “ideas for conference themes, speakers, workshops, and education materials.”

### Weekly Wave of Prayer

- [Weekly Waves of Prayer](#) are “sent to Sabeel’s network of supporters” in order to enable “local and international friends of Sabeel to pray over regional concerns on a weekly basis.” The prayer waves insert decontextualized political messages and advocacy recommendations within religious rhetoric.

### Action and Advocacy

On Sabeel’s action and advocacy page, two documents are listed, the *Kairos Palestine* Document and Sabeel’s Call for Morally Responsible Investment.

- The [Kairos Palestine](#) document, drafted by a small group of Palestinian Christian clergy, calls for BDS (boycotts, divestment, and sanctions) against Israel and denies the Jewish historical connection to Israel. The BDS activists reject Jewish sovereignty and right to self-determination. According to this ideology, the existence of Israel is inherently racist and illegitimate. This viewpoint is in opposition to the “two-state”

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix G: The Kairos Palestine Document

solutions to the conflict, supporting a single Palestinian state throughout Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.

- *Kairos Palestine* also rationalizes, justifies and trivializes this terrorism. Specifically [stating](#) (in section 1.4), “Some (Palestinian) political parties followed the way of armed resistance. Israel used this as a pretext to accuse the Palestinians of being terrorists and was able to distort the real nature of the conflict, presenting it as an Israeli war against terror, rather than an Israeli occupation faced by Palestinian **legal resistance** aiming at ending it.” [emphasis added]
- As [stated](#) by Sabeel, “In this spirit [*Kairos Palestine*] requests the international community to stand by the Palestinian people who have faced oppression, displacement, suffering and clear apartheid for more than six decades... we Palestinian Christians declare that the military occupation of our land is a sin against God and humanity, and that any theology that legitimizes the occupation is far from Christian teachings because true Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples.”
- The second document provided is “[Sabeel’s Call for Morally Responsible Investment](#).” This paper provides justification and implementation suggestions for divestment from Israel, based on claims of legality, morality and responsibility. There is serve distorting of facts supported with religious rhetoric. Demonization within the document includes, “For many years the Palestinians rejected the establishment of the state of Israel because it was founded on the denial and violation of Palestinian rights,” followed by claims that Israel violates international law and comparisons of Israel with South Africa under apartheid. The document entirely omits the peace process, Israel’s full withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, or bilateral cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.
- As part of Sabeel’s advocacy mission, the organization also seeks to build a critical mass of influential church leaders who will amplify its messages that Israel is solely culpable for the origin and continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict.
- Sabeel works with pro-Palestinian activists within different denominations, such as the Presbyterian Church (USA)’s [Israel-Palestine Mission Network](#), the [Episcopal Church’s Palestine Israel Network](#), the United Methodist Church’s [General Board of Global Ministries](#) and [United Methodist Kairos Response](#), the [American Friends Service Committee](#), and many others.

- Through Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), Sabeel often participates in denominational policymaking conferences. For example, at the 2012 Presbyterian General Assembly, [FOSNA Executive Director Rev. Dr. Donald Wagner](#) is listed as leading a workshop for the Israel Palestine Mission Network side-events.
- According to analyst Dexter Van Zile, Sabeel's rhetoric and advocacy played a key role in two major [anti-Israel resolutions](#) within American churches. For instance, in the Presbyterian Church (USA) 2004 General Assembly, which "passed a divestment overture that stated the occupation had 'proven to be at the root of evil acts committed against both sides of the conflict.'"
- In another example, Sabeel played a direct role in the United Church of Christ's (UCC) 2005 General Synod passage of a pro-divestment resolution. According to Van Zile, "This resolution, which closely followed the schema of shareholder activism and divestment outlined in a statement issued by Sabeel in early 2005, passed in part because of the skilled politicking of Sabeel activist attorney Jonathan Kuttub, who was granted 'voice without vote' at the assembly."
- Another instance of Sabeel's direct involvement in churches is seen in the conferences organized by its US representative Friends of Sabeel North America. One such conference, held March 2010 at the First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo, California, was extensively documented. It was called "A Time for Truth, A Time for Action." According to participants at the conference<sup>14</sup>:
  - The 500 participants were guided through lectures and workshops designed to motivate them into active participation in BDS.
  - The "Time for Action" segment was led by Omar Barghouti, a co-founder of the BDS movement. He painted Israel as a "racist" and "apartheid" state founded on a "colonialist" ideology committing "slow genocide" against the Palestinians and thus requiring full BDS. He was warmly received by the audience.<sup>15</sup>
  - Over twenty other speakers and workshop leaders repeated these themes, blaming Israel alone for the conflict.

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<sup>14</sup> For primary sources regarding the conference, contact NGO Monitor

<sup>15</sup> Barghouti is signatory to the One-State Declaration. In 2004 he [wrote](#), "The two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is really dead. Good riddance! But someone has to issue an official death certificate before the rotting corpse is given a proper burial and we can all move on and explore the more just, moral and therefore enduring alternative for peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Mandate Palestine: the one-state solution.."

- Jeff Halper, director of the fringe NGO [Israeli Committee against House Demolitions](#) (ICAHD), was also a keynote speaker, urging that the “discussion” of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be reframed into a human rights conversation. He further said that the framing should be within the categories of traditional references to “colonial imperialism and apartheid politics.”
- Conference speakers attacked the Jewish religion, with Naim Ateek and Mark Braverman repeatedly referring to Judaism as “tribal,” “isolationist,” “exceptionalist.” Braverman called contemporary Jews “paranoid” and suffering from “psychological issues.”
- Not a single participant, including the Christian clergy present, raised any objections to these theological attacks on Judaism.
- Another example is by bringing churches together in joint lobbying efforts including:
  - Distributing the [“Ash Wednesday Letter to Pope Francis: Speak out against Targeting of Palestinian Children.”](#) The letter states, “In anticipation of the Pope’s May visit to the Holy Land, an Open Letter signed by over 200 bishops, clerics, members of religious orders and theologians from several faith traditions, was delivered today to Pope Francis. The letter asks the Pope to speak out against the Israeli army’s program of kidnapping, detention, and systematic abuse of Palestinian children and to call for an end to the occupation and colonization of Palestine.”
  - In December 2013, Sabeel issued a [“Christmas Message”](#) focusing on the issue of the Israeli Bedouin in the Negev. Ateek made a triumphalist declaration that “God’s love for all people was expressed in and through the coming of Jesus Christ... In Christ, the evil of discrimination and bigotry is obliterated.” He then contrasts this with Judaism: “The appalling irony is that what the Jewish people longed for over the centuries when they were weak, they are unwilling to give to others now that they have become strong.”<sup>16</sup>
  - On November 2, 2013, FOSNA created a [campaign](#), including sending letters to the CEOs of 14 major companies, to urge the boycott of SodaStream products.

## Cornerstone

- Sabeel’s quarterly newsletter is “Cornerstone,” published since 1994. The content regularly attacks Israel’s legitimacy:

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16 A number of highly politicized NGOs have sought to [exploit the issue of the Bedouin in the Negev](#) in an effort to demonize and delegitimize Israel in the international arena.



- In the [Winter 2003](#) issue of “Cornerstone,” Fr. Rick Van De Water promoted supersessionism.<sup>17</sup> He wrote, “the New Testament cannot be interpreted without the background of the Old; nor can the teachings of the Old Testament be held in isolation from their fulfillment in the New... To be chosen is to be in Christ, the Chosen One. Thus Paul could include gentile Christians in the true ‘Israel of God’ (Eph 2:19; Gal 6:16), and conversely assert that ‘not all who are descended from Israel are Israel; nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children.’”
- In the [Spring 2009](#) issue, Naim Ateek compared Gaza after the 2008-9 Gaza War to the Holocaust, stating, “Many of us find it [the burning of Jewish children during the Holocaust] comparable to what the government of Israel has done to the people of Gaza today.”

### Friends of Sabeel

- “[Friends of Sabeel](#)” (FOS) is an international support network for the Ecumenical Center for Liberation Theology in Jerusalem, aiming to attract attention from the mainstream for the anti-Israel movement.
- FOS hosts numerous church-based conferences in the US, Canada, Europe and Australia each year where it promotes its agenda to large audiences of Christians, and are often the hosts of the “trips and conferences” and “action and advocacy” in their respective countries, as outlined in the sections above. They also provide an outlet to spread Sabeel’s Weekly Wave of Prayer. Chapters are found in:
  - [United Kingdom](#)
  - [Canada](#)
  - Ireland
  - [Netherlands](#)
  - [Sweden](#)
  - Denmark
  - Norway
  - [France](#)
  - Germany
  - [North America](#)
  - [Australia](#)
  - Japan

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<sup>17</sup> “Supersessionism is based on two core beliefs: (1) national Israel has somehow completed or forfeited its status as the people of God and will never again possess a unique role or function apart from the church; and (2) the church is now the true Israel that has permanently replaced or superseded national Israel as the people of God. Supersessionism, then, in the context of Israel and the church, is the view that *the New Testament church is the new Israel that has forever superseded national Israel as the people of God*. The result is that the church has become the sole inheritor of God’s covenant blessings originally promised to national Israel in the Old Testament. This rules out any future restoration of national Israel.” See “Defining Supersessionism,” at Theological Studies, <http://www.theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/supersessionism/324-defining-supersessionism>

- FOSNA often collaborates with other organizations for its conferences or events. In 2015 FOSNA partnered with organizations such as [CODEPINK](#), [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) (JVP), Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), and more, to [“shutdown” this year’s AIPAC conference](#).
- In November 2014, FOSNA partnered with SJP to conduct its conference [“Voices for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land”](#) in Madison, WI.
- In October 2014, FOSNA partnered with over 75 organizations including [Addameer](#), SJP, and various “Resistance,” “Justice,” and BDS coalitions to [“Block the Boat for Gaza”](#) attempting to blockade a ship belonging to Israel’s largest shipping companies from entering the Port of Oakland.

## Resources

- Sabeel provides [“articles,”](#) [“statements,”](#) and [“links”](#) including speeches by Sabeel representatives and general declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Articles listed on these pages include [Sabeel's Open Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, A Human Tragedy Called Gaza](#), and [Sabeel's Statement on 40 Years of Israeli Occupation](#).
- Sabeel also offers external resources to consult, including “Christian Organizations Working for Peace in the Middle East” and Palestinian and Israeli “Organizations Providing Information and Insight.” Many of the NGOs provided are key players in campaigns to demonize and delegitimize Israel, including [American Friends Service Committee](#), [World Council of Churches](#), [Pax Christi](#), [Christian Aid](#), [MIFTAH](#), [Palestinian Solidarity Campaign](#), [Coalition of Women for Peace](#), [ICAHN](#), [Alternative Information Center](#) and [Mossawa](#).

## APPENDIX A: NGO Monitor Correspondence to Sabeel

*The following emails were sent to Sabeel on June 12, 2014 and February 15, 2015 respectively requesting Sabeel's audited financial reports for 2013 and 2014. Sabeel did not reply to either request.*

**From:** Yitzhak Santis [mailto:yitz.santis@ngo-monitor.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 12, 2014 2:17 PM  
**To:** 'sabeel@sabeel.org'  
**Cc:** Gerald Steinberg (steinberg@ngo-monitor.org)  
**Subject:** Audited financial report for 2013



Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center  
 Sabeel Finance Committee (Estephan Salameh, Sami Khoury, Omar Harami, Peter Khoury, Francis Tams)

Dear Members, Sabeel Finance Committee,

NGO Monitor is currently preparing a comprehensive update on its research of Sabeel's activities and funding. We took note of the statement in Sabeel's 2013 Narrative Report that said, "We will send an audited financial report covering 2013 to our funders or by request when it becomes available."

As part of the transparency process, we would like to ask you to provide us with this important information. We would appreciate it if you would please send us your audited financial report for 2013 by June 22, 2014.




We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Yitzhak Santis** | [NGO Monitor](#) - The Amuta for NGO Responsibility, R.A.  
 Chief Programs Officer and [BDS in the Pews](#) Project Director

1 Ben Maimon | Jerusalem, Israel

☎ 972 (0)2 566 1020 | Mobile: 972 (0)52 253 4908

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cc: Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg, President, NGO Monitor

**From:** Yitzhak Santis [mailto:yitz.santis@ngo-monitor.org]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 15, 2015 11:02 AM  
**To:** 'sabeel@sabeel.org'  
**Cc:** Gerald Steinberg (steinberg@ngo-monitor.org)  
**Subject:** Request for audited financial reports for 2013 and 2014



Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center  
Sabeel Finance Committee (Estephan Salameh, Sami Khoury, Omar Harami, Peter Khoury, Francis Tams)

Dear Members of Sabeel Finance Committee,

NGO Monitor is currently preparing a comprehensive update on its research of Sabeel's activities and funding. We took note of the statement in Sabeel's 2013 Narrative Report that said, "We will send an audited financial report covering 2013 to our funders or by request when it becomes available." We sent you a request for this financial report on June 11, 2014 and have yet to receive a response.

We take note that in your Narrative Report 2014, no such offer to send an audited financial report is mentioned. Nonetheless, we are also requesting a copy of your financial report for 2014.

As part of the transparency process, we would like to ask you to provide us with this important information. We would appreciate it if you would please send us your audited financial report for 2013 and 2014 by the end of this week, February 20, 2015.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

**Yitzhak Santis** | [NGO Monitor](#) - The Amuta for NGO Responsibility, R.A.  
Chief Programs Officer and [BDS in the Pews](#) Project Director

1 Ben Maimon | Jerusalem, Israel

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cc: Prof. Gerald M. Steinberg, President, NGO Monitor

## APPENDIX B: Using Christian theology to undergird nationalism

Sabeel promotes a contextualized theology,<sup>18</sup> which fuses liberation theology with Palestinian nationalist ideology. Sabeel condemns Jewish nationalism (i.e. Zionism) as a “narrow” reading of Scripture and censures Jewish land claims as a “tribal” interpretation of the Biblical message. Paradoxically, Sabeel uses its own brand of theology to endorse Palestinian nationalist aspirations.

In this endeavor to promote Palestinian nationalism, Palestinian liberation theology manipulates Christian liturgy. Sabeel organizes an alternative “[Contemporary Way of the Cross](#),” which is based on the Via Dolorosa that commemorates the last hours of Jesus’ life, from his condemnation to his death, through 14 stations representing specific episodes with theological meaning. In Sabeel’s “Contemporary Way of the Cross” Jesus is substituted with the Palestinian people, his condemnation with the birth of the State of Israel (which the Palestinians call Nakba, catastrophe), and his nailing to the Cross by Israel’s construction of the security barrier (known in anti-Israeli discourse as the “apartheid wall”).

The portrayal of Jesus as a Palestinian resonates in Sabeel’s activism. The Christmas postcards portraying the “Holy Family” searched by Israeli soldiers while trying to reach Jerusalem represent another attempt to deny Jesus’ Jewish identity, in line with replacement theology.

The use of Christian theology for the advancement of Palestinian nationalism characterizes Sabeel’s activism and Ateek’s theological arguments. Central to Ateek’s liberation theology is the denial of Jewish claims to statehood, considered as a particularistic interpretation of the Bible, or in Ateek’s words, “tribal,” “primitive,” and “exclusionary.”

Informing Ateek’s liberation theology is his belief that “the Jews have a vocation for suffering.” This argument has a twofold connotation: it is anti-Zionist, since it denies the Jewish people’s national dimension, and antisemitic as it builds upon the teaching that Jews were supposedly condemned by God to wander the earth in perpetual Exile (the “[Wandering Jew](#)” legend<sup>19</sup>) for the sin of rejecting Jesus. In a single paragraph Ateek denies the Jewish covenantal relationship with God, while extolling Jewish suffering in Exile:

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<sup>18</sup> Contextualized theology is an “attempt to make the Scripture applicable and understandable to modern society.” See <http://www.quodlibet.net/articles/lamerson-parables.shtml>

<sup>19</sup> See Encyclopaedia Britannica, “[The origins of Christian anti-Semitism](#)”: “As Christianity spread in the first centuries CE, most Jews continued to reject that religion. As a consequence, by the 4th century, Christians tended to regard Jews as an alien people who, because of their repudiation of Christ and his church, were condemned to perpetual migration (a belief best illustrated in the legend of the Wandering Jew)”.

*[E]spousing the nationalistic tradition of Zionism, [Jews] have relinquished the role of the servant that they have claimed for centuries, becoming oppressors and warmakers themselves. This has been a revolutionary change from the long-held belief that the Jews have a vocation for suffering.<sup>20</sup>*

Theologian Adam Gregerman's critical study of liberation theology within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict describes the theological foundations upon which Ateek built his Palestinian liberation theology:

*Liberation theologians are possibly alone among all modern Christian theologians in glorifying the centuries of Jewish exile and wandering. Their praise for exile is directed against the very idea of a modern State of Israel... Only powerless and weak Diaspora Jews are faithful to their religious and moral traditions... It is striking that liberation theologians' idealization of Jewish exile is largely theoretical. The historical experiences of Jews in exile are mostly absent from these accounts. When writers note that exile could be dangerous, they consistently downplay the disadvantages and limitations of exilic life.<sup>21</sup>*

Mennonite theologian Alain Epp Weaver, [who is also active in Sabeel](#), is one such theologian who extols Jewish powerlessness in exile. He approvingly quotes Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder on Jewish suffering in Diaspora as "that is what the Jews learned to do, and do well."<sup>22</sup> As such, Jewish exilic torment is an ideal to be commended. Weaver, quoting Yoder, writes:

*More often emigrating, frequently suffering martyrdom nonviolently, [Jews] were able to maintain identity without turf or sword, community without sovereignty. They thereby demonstrated pragmatically the viability of the ethic of Jeremiah and Jesus. In sum: the Jews of the Diaspora were for over a millennium the closest thing to the ethic of Jesus existing on any significant scale anywhere in Christendom. To be born in the state of Israel makes one less of a Jew, in the deep historical sense of the term, than to be born in a ghetto.<sup>23</sup>*

<sup>20</sup> "Justice. and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation," by Naim Stifan Ateek. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1989, page 160.

<sup>21</sup> "Old wine in new bottles: liberation theology and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," by Adam Gregerman, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, June 22, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> "On Exile: Yoder, Said, and a Politics of Land and Return," by A. E. Weaver in "The New Yoder," edited by Peter Dula and Chris K. Huebner, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010, pages 149-150. Also available online: [http://books.google.co.il/books?id=GIZMAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA149&lpg=PA149&dq=%22that+is+what+the+Jews+learned+to+do,+and+do+well.%22&source=bl&ots=u17OeETEpV&sig=ZybnbltZTpqiJAgElZJ\\_mWcMPGw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LvCWU\\_HAE\\_SP7AaJtoHoDA&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=true](http://books.google.co.il/books?id=GIZMAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA149&lpg=PA149&dq=%22that+is+what+the+Jews+learned+to+do,+and+do+well.%22&source=bl&ots=u17OeETEpV&sig=ZybnbltZTpqiJAgElZJ_mWcMPGw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LvCWU_HAE_SP7AaJtoHoDA&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=true)

<sup>23</sup> Weaver, Ibid.

For Gregerman:

*This valorization of holiness in subjugation reveals an antipathy to the basic rights of the Jews, like all people, to security, freedom, and self-determination. One need not lionize Bar Kokhba or the Maccabees to imagine that a life free of foreign domination is more desirable. To suggest otherwise elevates Jewish weakness and vulnerability to a pure or ideal state, ignores the Jewish experience of powerlessness, and perpetuates some of the most offensive anti-Jewish themes in the Christian tradition.*<sup>24</sup>

In his seminal book *The Teaching of Contempt*,<sup>25</sup> French-Jewish historian and Holocaust survivor Jules Isaac identified this doctrine as one of the three main teachings of contempt that dominated Christian theology regarding Jewry for millennia. Isaac writes,

*Christian theology commonly teaches that the Dispersion of Israel, dated at A.D. 70, is the divine punishment for the Crucifixion... Almost all the Church Fathers of the fourth century speak with the same voice... In the great Augustinian treatise The City of God we read: 'But the Jews who rejected him, and slew him... after that were miserably spoiled by the Romans... and dispersed over the face of the whole earth.'... From then on, century after century, the theme is taken up in varying tones – above all, alas, the tone of contempt."*

The lionization of Jewish weakness within classic Christian theology is a kind of sanctification of Jewish statelessness and powerlessness. This doctrine complements the Palestinian nationalist cause, which generally rejects any Jewish claims – religious or historical – with the land of Israel. Sabeel has succeeded in imparting this theological template into a number of liberal Protestant denominations where liberation theology is taught in many seminaries.

One of the difficulties facing this group of Palestinian Christian theologians to shape a theologically backed nationalism was the development of the post-World War Two Jewish-Christian dialogue, which – among many issues in the Jewish-Christian relationship – addressed the anti-Judaism that pervaded traditional Christian teachings, particularly supersessionism. For this reason, Sabeel also calls for an end to Christian-Jewish dialogue because, in their view, the promotion of the Palestinian nationalist narrative in mainline denominations is hindered by Jewish “pressure” that “silences” Christians’ “prophetic voice.”<sup>26</sup> (See Appendix E for an elaboration of this aspect of Sabeel’s agenda.)

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<sup>24</sup> Gregerman, Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Isaac, op. cit..

<sup>26</sup> March 2010 conference held at the First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo, CA, “A Time for Truth, A Time for Action.”

## APPENDIX C: Sabeel's Partnerships

### Catholic:

Broederlijk Delen:

- Broederlijk Delen's [Fair Tourism Brochure](#) suggests Sabeel Nazareth as an alternative tourism destination, gives a description of the organization and provides contact information.

Secours Catholique:

- Friends of Sabeel-France in conjunction with Secours Catholique signed a [letter to the French Prime Minister](#) demanding the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement in response to an amendment to the "Prevention of Infiltration" law.

CCFD-Terre Solidaire:

- CCFD [published](#) Sabeel's invitation for a "wave of prayer" on April 10, 2014.
- Violette Khoury, Director of Sabeel-Nazareth, was a speaker at a CCFD event in Lourdes and [traveled throughout](#) France giving the same speech at various CCFD meetings. A synopsis of her speech can be found [here](#).
- [Publicized](#) the June 2014 general assembly of Friends of Sabeel-France in Nantes.
- Met with Sabeel-Nazareth and Violette Khoury during an [August 2013](#) trip to "Israel Palestine" with Secours Catholique.

### Protestant:

United Church of Canada:

- The United Church of Canada (UCC) lists Sabeel as an [official partner](#).
- The UCC encourages readers to [tweet](#) as part of their BDS campaign "[Unsettling Goods](#)" and requests readers follow @SabeelJerusalem as a "source of information."
- In 2015 the UCC and Canadian Friends of Sabeel sponsored a speaking tour by Jeff Halper, founder and director of the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions (ICAHN).



- The UCC representatives attended a 2013 meeting of Christian and Muslim leaders hosted by Canadian Friends of Sabeel. During the meeting UCC's decision to boycott products from Israeli settlements was praised as "a ray of hope."
- The UCC posted the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum's (PIEF) 2013 resource guide in their [World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel booklet](#), which includes Sabeel's contribution, "Way of the Cross on Settlements."
- The UCC advertises alternative tourism with Sabeel in their 2009 brochure "[What Can We Do: Toward a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel](#)."
- Nora Carmi, Sabeel's coordinator for community-building and women's programs in 2009, [advocated for a boycott](#) as an [official guest](#) of the UCC's 40th General Council.
- The UCC's 2007 United for Peace "[worship resources](#)" uses Sabeel's materials from its "Alternative Ecumenical Service."
- The UCC cites Sabeel's materials and "call for morally responsible investment" in its briefing on "[Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel](#)."
- During a debate over divestment at UCC's 39th General Council, documents provided to attendees in support of divestment included Sabeel's "[A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Nonviolent Response to the Occupation](#)."
- The UCC advertises Sabeel's [Waves of Prayer](#).
- From the UCC's "[Submission to the Canadian Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism](#)" in 2009:

*Partnership has also involved the church directly with organizations such as the Middle East Council of Churches, and various branches working with and representing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; Sabeel, an Ecumenical Centre for Palestinian Liberation Theology; and several Jewish organizations, Bat Shalom and B'Tselem. These relationships have assisted the church in understanding the situation of Palestinians and in the belief that peace in the region will require a just resolution to the conflict.*

- From the [41<sup>st</sup> General Council in 2012](#), UCC writes:

*In the Middle East the United Church has been working with Palestinian – both Muslim and Christian – and Jewish groups to promote peace through justice. Partners, including the Jerusalem Center for Women and the Sabeel Ecumenical*

*Liberation Theology Center, offer leadership in understanding the history and impact of the Occupation on all faith communities in the region, and guidance for United Church members seeking to act in solidarity with people in the Middle East.*

Kerk in Actie (KiA):

- Advertises Sabeel as one of their partners to meet in its [2015 Israel/Palestine Tour](#).
- Sabeel, along with KiA and ICCO, [organized](#) the [Uur van de Waarheid](#) conference in Amsterdam on September 15-16, 2011. The event's aim was to promote the [Kairos Palestine](#) document.
- Sabeel is featured on Kerk in Actie's [projects page](#). The page also shows that the organization sent one of their members, Margriet Westers, to work with Sabeel in Jerusalem in January 2014.
- Westers writes about her experience working at Sabeel including an [April 2014 Easter dinner at Sabeel](#) and [Valentines Day](#).<sup>27</sup>
- Westers organized a trip to Israel and the Palestinian Territories as part of the ["Come and See" project](#).<sup>28</sup>
- Westers wrote about the [Tent of Nations' tree issue](#). Donations to the Tent of Nations are processed through Sabeel Netherlands. [Tent of Nations](#) is a farm owned by the Palestinian Christian Nassar family, used as a site for groups focused on addressing "cultural conflicts around the world, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by facilitating positive encounters between young people from different cultures." The organization uses politicized terms such as "[Apartheid wall](#)."
- Sabeel's Dutch Christian activist Meta Floor maintained a blog (no longer active) on the KiA web site. [She writes](#):

*The delegitimization and criminalization of the Israeli government and its local and international support is gaining unstoppable momentum. The existence of international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns and other forms of nonviolent resistance is an established fact. The Government and the State of Israel are now regarded as an apartheid regime. ([Google translate](#))*

<sup>27</sup> Wester's blog entries can be found at <http://www.kerkinactie.nl/projecten/uitgezonden-medewerkers/margriet-westers>.

<sup>28</sup> The itinerary in Dutch can be found at <http://www.kerkinactie.nl/download/CAwdEAwUUkZCVkk=&inline=0>.

## Norwegian Church Aid:

- [Naim Ateek](#) spoke to a group of delegates sent by NCA to the region in March 2010.
- Norwegian Church Aid dedicated a section of its [Eyewitness - Companions in Israel and Palestine](#) report to a discussion of Naim Ateek and Sabeel.
- [Lists Sabeel](#) as one of the peace movements in Israel.

## Diakonia:

- Refers to Sabeel as a “[partner organization](#).”
- Sabeel’s website [states](#), “Diakonia is closely associated with Sabeel” and credits this relationship for changing the direction of Swedish foreign policy toward Israel: *“Through its theological stance Sabeel has succeeded in establishing networks of Friends of Sabeel, for example, in the US, Britain, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Australia. Sweden, a country which was strongly pro-Zionist in the past, manifests strong support [for Sabeel’s agenda].”*
- Partnered with Sabeel to organize a July 2013 youth festival called “[Moving Mountains – Reshaping the World](#).”
- In the [2012 SIDA CivSam report](#), Diakonia writes that Sabeel is a “CivSam” partner and as such:

*Monitored human rights and raised cases of violations to the attention of national and international stakeholders.” Sabeel was also among the group of Palestinian partners that “built capacity among young men and women leaders in order to prepare them for leadership positions in their communities.” Sabeel also “conducted 4 major conferences for both Christian and Muslim Clerks on the topic of tolerance in the Palestinian educational system with the participation of 400 women and men.*

- The [2011 SIDA CivSam report](#) writes: “Sabeel received additional funding from SIDA CivSam during the last four months of 2011 and operated volunteer youth programs, workshops, and a conference on the topic of religion and the state.”
- Sabeel was mentioned as a partner in the [Diakonia 2012 Annual Report](#) (in Swedish) as well as in the [2011 Annual Report](#) and the [2007 Annual Report](#).

## Amos Trust:

- Amos Trust’s [May 2015 Alternative Pilgrimage to Palestine and Israel](#) includes meeting with Sabeel in its itinerary.

- Joined [Friends of Sabeel-UK](#) and others for a 2011 Lobby Day at the British Parliament.
- Published a 2009 commentary by Sabeel: "[Sabeel's Reflection on Gaza](#)" (no longer available on Amos Trust's website).
- Participated with [Friends of Sabeel-UK](#) in a 2008 "Disappearance of the Holy Land Conference."
- Member of a 2007 coalition called "Enough" with [Friends of Sabeel-UK](#), formed in order to "highlight the 40 years of occupation and work together on specific events to end that occupation and see justice for the Palestinians."

#### Christian Aid (UK):

- Friends of Sabeel-UK is an [official partner](#) of Christian Aid in the "[World Week for Peace in Palestine-Israel/UK](#)."
- Christian Aid quotes from Ateek's writings in its publications ("[One land and many voices](#)"; "[Lifelines](#)").

#### World Council of Churches (WCC):

- Articles in the WCC's magazine by Clare Amos reference Sabeel, both in [September 2013](#) and [December 2012](#).
- EAPPI programming was featured several times at Sabeel's [2011](#) conference, "Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness and Resistance."
- Sabeel's programming was featured in the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum's (PIEF) [2011](#) World Week for Peace in Palestine (PIEF was founded by WCC in 2007).
- Friends of Sabeel Sweden is represented on EAPPI's "[steering group](#)."
- The organization met with Naim Ateek during the [2009 "Living Letters" tour](#).
- Published Naim Ateek's 2009 article "[Labouring for God's Transformation](#)" as part of the WCC 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
- Participated with Sabeel in the [2006 International Church Action for Peace](#) initiative.

- Publicized a 2004 Book Review, written by an EAPPI participant: [What is wrong with suicide bombings? A Palestinian Christian perspective](#) by Naim Ateek. Through providing theological condemnation for suicide bombings, the book falsely claims that Israeli military action is indiscriminate and is morally equivalent to suicide bombings: “As Israeli soldiers shell and kill Palestinians indiscriminately, Palestinian suicide bombers strap themselves with explosives and kill Israelis indiscriminately.”
- Jean Zaru, Vice-Chair of the board of Sabeel in 2000, submitted a document to a WCC Committee titled “[Israeli-Palestinian Conflict – Sharing the land, the truth and the peace.](#)”

#### Presbyterian Church (USA):

- Sabeel is listed as one of multiple “[partner churches and church organizations.](#)”
- PCUSA’s [blog entry from August 2011](#) lists Sabeel as a resource regarding Palestinian initiatives at the UN.
- Presbyterian Mission Agency includes an option to [donate to Sabeel.](#)
- Sabeel gave a [Presbyterian Missionary](#) an honorary communion/prayer service as he ended his mission.

#### Church of Scotland

- Sabeel is an official partner of the Church of Scotland.
- In April 2013, the Church of Scotland issued a report titled, “The Inheritance of Abraham? A Report on the 'Promised Land.'”
- Using theological language, the report rejected the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel and was strongly influenced by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center.
- Sabeel’s belief that the Jewish people have forfeited its status as the people of God dominate the Church of Scotland's report.
- After protests from many quarters, including NGO Monitor, the Church of Scotland issued a revised report in May 2013.
- The “revision” was insufficient and continued to rely on Sabeel’s ideology and theology. Though some of the more hurtful language was removed from the main body of the report, much of its original offensive theology and ideology remained.

## American Friends Service Committee (AFSC):

- AFSC devotes a page of its website to [Naim Ateek](#) as well as [Jean Zaru](#) (founding member of Sabeel).
- Joining [Sabeel's Wave of Prayer](#) is included among "Ten things you can do to support AFSC's Israel-Palestine and divestment programming."
- Naim Ateek [spoke](#) at an AFSC/FOSNA co-sponsored conference "[Wide Tent for Justice: Next Steps for Peace in Palestine/Israel](#)" in Chicago in October 2013.
- [Bay Area Friends of Sabeel](#) co-sponsored an AFSC event that included a "Panel of Listeners and Testimonies," which includes anti-Israel panelists such as Medea Benjamin of CodePink and testimonies from individuals such as 19 year old Maya Yechieli Wind who "refused to serve in the Israeli army [and] spent forty days in military prison."
- FOSNA co-sponsored an AFSC [May 2014 film screening](#) of "Stone Cold Justice" which investigates "Israeli government's systematic strategy of threats, arrests, and detention of Palestinian youth and "Flying Paper" which focuses on "true story of resilient Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip on a quest to shatter the Guinness World Record for the most kites ever flown."
- FOSNA co-hosted the May 2014 American Muslims for Palestine [annual Nakba commemoration](#), publicized by AFSC.
- Bay Area Friends of Sabeel was a partner with Interfaith Witness for Middle East Peace's "[Citizen Hearings on Impact of US Weapons on Civilians in Gaza](#)" which was publicized on AFSC's website.
- NorCal Friends of Sabeel co-sponsored a [January 2012 talk](#) promoting BDS by Dalit Baum entitled "Who Profits," which was publicized on AFSC's website.
- FOSNA was a co-sponsor of a 2011 AFSC conference "[US Policy in Palestine and Israel](#)."
- In 2010, AFSC and FOSNA co-sponsored (with others) the [9<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine](#).
- FOSNA endorsed "[Never Again for Anyone](#)," an event coinciding with Holocaust Remembrance Day and publicized by AFSC.

## Jewish Voice for Peace:

- Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) is a radical left-wing organization based in Oakland, California. It views itself as the [“Jewish wing” of the Palestinian solidarity movement](#).
- [JVP fully endorses](#) boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) and has [supported](#) and promoted the BDS agenda in mainline churches since at least 2004 when the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted for “selective divestment.” Since then, JVP has been present at numerous national church gatherings, [collaborating](#) with pro-Palestinian denominational activists.
- One of JVP’s principal partners in this effort is [Friends of Sabeel -- North America](#), the U.S. arm of [Sabeel](#).
- Despite Sabeel’s use of antisemitic language, JVP’s Rabbinical Council issued a [“Statement of Support for the Sabeel Institute”](#) that declared, “As rabbis and people of faith, we stand in solidarity with the work of Sabeel.”
- JVP’s collaboration with Sabeel is extensive:
  - In [2007](#), JVP held a rally “in solidarity with the Sabeel Conference taking place in Boston.” in conjunction with the FOSNA and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee.
  - In 2008, [JVP co-sponsored](#) a FOSNA conference “In Search of a Homeland: The Quest for Place and Peace in Israel and Palestine.”
  - In 2010, JVP and FOSNA [co-sponsored](#) a national advertising campaign entitled [“Be on our side”](#) to be featured in San Francisco. The campaign sought to lobby the US government to cut funding to Israel. Endorsers of the conference included CodePink and American Muslims for Palestine, which has been [categorized](#) as a radical anti-Israel organization and having ties to terror organizations.
  - JVP co-sponsored with FOSNA and other groups a “major regional conference” in San Anselmo, California called “A Time for Truth, A Time for Action.” (See Appendix E for details)
  - In 2010, JVP and FOSNA jointly [lobbied the US government](#) to grant a visa to Palestinian activist Mohammad Khatib coordinator of the “Popular Committee Against the Wall and Settlements” and “Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (PSCC)”
  - In 2011, cooperated on the [“WeDivest.org” campaign](#) which aimed to target TIAA CREF, one of the world’s largest retirement funds.

- In 2011, JVP, FOSNA, Code Pink and LA Jews for Peace [protested](#) Israeli anti-Nakba legislation.
- In 2012, JVP sat on an “[interfaith boycott committee](#)” that included FOSNA, American Muslims for Palestine, US Campaign to End the Occupation. The focus was on “the Israeli settlement project, SodaStream.”
- In 2012, JVP issued a [statement](#) in “Support for Sabeel” claiming, “As rabbis and people of faith, we stand in solidarity with the work of Sabeel... what kind of nonviolent leverage does a disadvantaged people use when so much power is aligned against them? This is the heart of the question that Sabeel have been exploring for decades: how to struggle nonviolently against Occupation.”
- In 2012, JVP Sacramento advertised and [endorsed](#) the FOSNA conference “A Time for Justice: Supporting Human Rights in Palestine Israel.”
- In 2014, JVP Deputy Director Cecilie Surasky, spoke at FOSNA’s [Voice for Peace and Justice in the Holy Land](#) conference.
- JVP Deputy director Cecilie Surasky spoke at a [March 2014 FOSNA conference](#) in Philadelphia
- In 2014, JVP and FOSNA led a [BDS rally](#) targeting Hewlett-Packard in San Francisco, along with the American Friends Service Committee and the Coalition to Stop HP.
- JVP promoted FOSNA’s 2014 “[Breaking a Generation](#)” conference.
- Bay Area resident David Glick is a member of Jewish Voice Peace and the NorCal Friends of Sabeel steering committee. He often makes statements on behalf of both organizations. This includes a response to the [2014 JCPA Letter to Presbyterians](#) and the article “[The Real Danger to Israel](#)” where Glick argued for the Palestinian “right to resist” remaining neutral on Hamas’s indiscriminate rocket fire into Israeli towns and cities: “People under occupation have a right to resist and fight back. Whether or not one condemns or approves of Hamas’s rocket fire, one thing is clear: Israel is not really defending itself from rockets, it is instead defending its self-declared right to swallow up more and more Palestinian land and empty it of more and more Palestinians.”
- In 2014, JVP and FOSNA served together on the “[National Rasmia Defense Committee](#)” which lobbied for the U.S. government to discontinue its proceedings against Rasmia Odeh, who was found [guilty](#) for immigration fraud after concealing her role in two terrorist bombing deaths in Israel.
- In 2014, JVP and FOSNA were among the sponsors of a [protest dinner and film screening](#) in opposition to Operation Protective Edge.



- In 2014, JVP, Sabeel, American Muslims for Palestine and Codepink activists were arrested for [staging a sit-in](#) at the offices of California Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein to “demand senators support investigation of war crimes in Gaza” See [letter](#) to Feinstein.
- JVP and FOSNA are both members of the PDX SodaStream Boycott coalition and staged a [December 2014 Chanukkah](#) protest outside of TARGET, along with other coalition members.
- JVP co-signed a [2015 letter](#) which states, “We, the undersigned organizations, commend Oregon’s U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer for asking House Speaker John Boehner to cancel an invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address a joint session of the U.S. Congress.
- JVP Board member Penny Rosenwasser is featured as part of a [2015 FOSNA lecture series](#) on the topic “Is Opposing Israel’s Policies Anti-Semitic?”
- JVP’s Rabbi Alissa Wise is scheduled to speak at the March 2015 “[Seeking the Peace of Jerusalem: Overcoming Christian Zionism in the Quest for Justice](#)” conference co-sponsored by FOSNA between Thursday, April 23, 2015 to Saturday, April 25, 2015 in Vancouver, B.C.

## APPENDIX D: The Use of Antisemitic Themes by Mazin Qumseyeh

Mazin Qumseyeh is a Palestinian Christian living in the West Bank who speaks frequently on behalf of Sabeel. He was the opening speaker at Sabeel's [8<sup>th</sup> International Conference in 2011](#), a speaker at the [2014 FOSNA Portland, Oregon Conference](#), was featured at the 2014 Sabeel Witness trip "[Popular Resistance and Liberation Theology in Palestine FOSUK/FOSNA/CFOS Witness Trip & 5th Anniversary Conference for Kairos – Palestine](#)," and is a recommended speaker on the website of [Friends of Sabeel North America](#).

In his writings Qumseyeh often uses antisemitic themes:

- [Writes](#) about the **"Zionist controlled mainstream media"** and [how](#) **"the Zionist controlled media** does not dare publish reality: what is happening on the ground to people. The popular resistance is all but ignored by the self delusional right wing **Zionists and their managed media outlets"** (emphasis added)
- [Claims](#) Israeli Jews **"have developed fear of gentiles to paranoia levels"** and asks **"Why will there not be a US foreign policy that benefits US population? Is it because certain Jews make money out of the tribalism that is Zionism?"** (emphasis added)
- [Engages in Holocaust-denial](#) when he writes **"in 'democratic' Europe there are countries where you can examine and challenge any historical event except the Zionist version of WWII history."** (emphasis added)
- [Asserts that](#) NATO is under Zionist control when it **"follow(s) the script prepared for them in Tel Aviv"** and that NATO's definition of "terrorism" is the one promoted by **"the Zionist media** around the West (that Islam is the cause)." (emphasis added)
- [Blames](#) most oppression in the world on wealthy "Zionists" in an Al-Jazeera article: **"Multi-Billionaire Zionists Behind Wars and Destruction of the Environment,"** he wrote, "I believe it is necessary for all of us to work on all fronts against oppression, whether of fellow human beings or of the environment. I think the issues are related: the same multi-millionaires and **billionaires (most of them happen to be Zionist)** work to keep people fighting each other, push them towards servitude, poverty, and ignorance while getting rich themselves. Religion is used to keep people from real progress." (emphasis in the original)
- Dismisses [Jewish, and Christian, concerns](#) regarding the incitement to antisemitism contained in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of Christ" by [declaring](#), **"criticism of Gibson's movie by Zionists is simply not credible."** (emphasis added)

- Uses racial criteria to deny Jewish historical connections with the Land of Israel based on the [debunked theory](#) that Ashkenazi Jews are not “Semitic people” but in fact are Turkic Khazars. “The research of Arthur Koestler<sup>29</sup> who happens to be an Ashkenazi Jew himself,” [Qumsiyeh writes](#) **“clearly demonstrates that most Ashkenazis are convert Khazar's with closer ties to Turkish people than to Semitic people.”** (emphasis added)
- [Posted](#) questions and answers – some antisemitic – from his blog’s readership.  
Example:
  - Question: “In presidential election in 2004, over 70 million dollars in donations went to candidates from Jewish supporters of apartheid Israel. More than 2/3rd went to the Democratic party (hence Kerry/Edwards just like Bush/Cheney catered to their demands). In this election campaign, Zionist controlled media and large sums of cash mad sure that any candidates who do not pander to Israel are excluded (e.g. Paul and Kucinich). Most candidates made more trips to Israel than they did to Chicago or Detroit. What is left of the US democracy?”
  - Answer: “The Jews would LOVE to have peace in Israel as long as it meant that the Arabic speaking majority wouldn't be running the country. It does NOT suit global corporatism to have peace in the Middle East any time in this generation. It suits them down to the ground to have oil speculation driving oil prices, fueling unbridled commodity speculation of all sorts and artificially inflating corporate profits while U S interest rates on debt are being kept artificially low by the FED. Not to mention the outrageous profits being derived by direct sales of goods and services to the military to keep this most-outsourced-in-history war going! Why let the relief of human suffering and the institution of human rights in Israel interfere with a cushy corporate income stream?? Follow the money and you will see what really drives the NeoCons who really run George Bush!”

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<sup>29</sup> Koestler was a [“Hungarian-born British novelist, journalist, and critic.”](#) He was not a historian, geneticist, or an expert on Judaism or Jewish history.

## APPENDIX E – Anatomy of a Sabeel Conference: First Presbyterian Church, San Anselmo, California, March 5-6, 2010

*The following is from personal testimony by several attendees of this conference. Quotes are taken from audio recordings made at the conference.*

- The primary focus of the conference was the promotion of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) as a strategy to be employed against Israel. The line-up of pro-BDS speakers included:
  - Naim Ateek
  - Omar Barghouti, a co-founder of the global BDS campaign
  - [Paul Larudee](#), co-founder of the Free Gaza Movement, and Free Palestine Movement
  - [Dr. Mads Gilbert](#)
  - Hatem Bazian, founder of American Muslims for Palestine and senior lecturer in the Departments of Near Eastern and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley
  - Donald Wagner, FOSNA executive director
  - Mark Braverman
  - Barbara Lubin and Ziad Abbas of Middle East Children's Alliance
  - Anna Baltzer, National Organizer, US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation
- The overarching message at the conference was a biased presentation against Israel, Zionism and Judaism.
- A central motif was the undermining of two key points of contact between Jews and Christians: dialogue between mainline Christians and Jews, and Evangelical Christian Zionism.
  - Naim Ateek called for an end to Christian-Jewish dialogue because in his view the promotion of the Palestinian nationalist narrative in mainline denominations is hindered by Jewish "pressure" that "silences" Christians' "prophetic voice."
  - Ateek said at this conference: "I don't like interfaith these days, especially Christian-Jewish, because it has silenced the Christian prophetic voice, you know, and it has become a condition for many Jewish partners, that you can speak of everything else in the world, you cannot touch the Palestinian issue, and that's important for all of us in here. Mark Braverman is a Jew, and he's a religious Jew, in his own way, but he is very solid against interfaith work because he has observed it, that it has silenced, you know, I don't hear the prophetic voice from interfaith group. So that's why I would see it in a different way..."

- The conference was structured to walk the participants carefully down an indoctrination path (“A Time for Truth”) where the only obvious choice in dealing with Israel is to advocate (“A Time for Action”) within the mainline denominations for full, blanket BDS.
- Sabeel founder Rev. Naim Ateek, in his opening remarks, set the conference’s initial tone by attacking Israel, Zionism and disparaging Judaism.
  - His recounting of the history of the conflict was an amalgam of misinformation, distortion, omissions, and half-truths. This included the use of theologically loaded language, such as the term “original sin,” when describing Israel’s establishment in 1948.
  - A serious omission in his presentation was failure to mention any Arab culpability in the conflict, past or present: no mention of the Arab states’ invasion of Israel in May, 1948, nor even a single instance of Palestinian Arab violence, nor any mention of the policies of Palestinian Arab political leadership that contributed to the outbreak of conflict.
  - For Ateek the 1948 “Nakba” was solely and specifically the result of a pre-meditated program of Zionist “ethnic cleansing.”
  - He referred to Jewish theology as “tribal,” “exclusive,” and other pejoratives.
  - The only way to deal with Israel, therefore, was with boycotts, divestment, and sanctions (BDS).
- Overt attacks on Judaism and Jews were sounded in the conference.
  - Ateek, and others, often asserted supercessionist theology, portraying Judaism as being “tribal” and “exclusionary” in contrast to Christianity’s “universalism” and “inclusiveness.”
  - Mark Braverman, a member of the Friends of Sabeel North America Advisory Board, described Jews as being “isolationists” who hold a “sense of being special and apart.” Further, he described Jews as “paranoid” and suffering from “psychological issues.”
- The 500 or so attendees apparently ranged from those actively engaged in anti-Israel activity, to sympathy for the Palestinian cause.
- Ateek and a number of other speakers repeatedly endorsed the [Kairos Palestinian Document](#).
- Omar Barghouti closed the conference with a “call to action” for BDS. His main points were:
  - Israel is a “racist” state, and Zionism is a form of “colonialism.”

- “Only a Jew can be a national in Israel. Non-Jews cannot be nationals” and therefore “Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state.”
- Israel is committing a “slow genocide” against the Palestinians.
- Thus, a full BDS effort covering economic, military, diplomatic, academic, cultural and consumer affairs is the only way to deal with Israel.
- Another two dozen speakers and workshop leaders promoted the same themes of delegitimization and BDS, giving the conference an overall arc as a complete top-to-bottom denunciation Israel. The main trope sounded throughout was that the conflict was entirely Israel’s fault. There was no self-criticism, self-reflection, or acceptance of any Palestinian responsibility for any part of the conflict.

**A Bay Area Presbyterian Elder who attended the conference described how its structure was designed to guide the audience toward one clear conclusion: “Israel is the problem.”**

*[Ateek] would try to win us all over to his view of the causes and solutions. He would attempt to make his points as a theologian speaking in a church to a mostly educated Christian audience. And sure enough, he had a clear message that Zionist Israel is the problem (“I am calling for the de-Zionification of Israel”), that the Palestinians just want peace, and that Israel must be reined in.*

*But once Ateek was done, the speakers who followed began to change the tone. Their content was not about theological constructs or calls for Christian solidarity. Instead of building a philosophical case, the conference moved into dark (and ultimately vicious) territory very quickly. A steady, relentless, downward progression into expressions of genuine hatred for Israel, its leaders and its people took over.*

*The next day... we now moved to the theme, “Israel is genuinely evil.” Saturday morning began with an absolute gore-fest, courtesy of Mads Gilbert... followed by Norton Mezvinsky who delivered a lengthy rant about the extremist views of Jews. By now nearly every presentation was becoming a rant, with the tone of each speaker picking up and carrying on the deep agitation of his predecessor. The number of explicitly anti-Semitic statements grew as the day progressed (worldwide Zionist control, Zionist control of the media, Zionist control of Obama, Zionists made us kill a million Iraqis, etc). The expressions on the faces in the audience grew grey and hard, and the longer they sat there, the more enormous the towering, unassailable polemic became. They were now just riding in the stream.*

*This was all very slick. It was offered as a theological conference but was actually an extremist political rally.*

## APPENDIX F – Sabeel’s Influence within the Churches: The United Church of Christ as a Case Study

- In 2012, UCC [granted](#) 17,863 NIS to Sabeel and is listed as a [2014](#) donor.
- UCC’s [Global Ministries](#) lists Sabeel under both its [partners](#) and [projects](#) page, advocating for its members to donate to Sabeel.
- UCC’s Global Ministries distributes many of Sabeel’s materials, including its [weekly wave of prayer](#), [newsletter](#), [cornerstone magazine](#) and [events](#).
- Recommends *Justice and Only Justice* and *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* written by Naim Ateek under the Global Ministries “[recommended reading](#).”
- UCC [partners](#) with the [Kairos Palestine](#) “movement” which supported the 2014 UCC “[Resolution of Witness Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#), calling on solidarity with the Palestinian people and a withdrawal from investing in companies that profit from the occupation of Palestinian territories.”
- Several UCC representatives [co-signed](#) a 2014 Sabeel letter to the Pope asking him “to publicly call upon the government of Israel to end its mistreatment of Palestinian children.”
- [Sponsored](#) the 2014 FOSNA Madison Conference.
- In 2014, UCC minister Rev Graylan Hagler was the [keynote speaker](#) at “Voices for Justice & Peace in the Holy Land,” a two-day conference co-hosted by NorCal Friends of Sabeel and Christ the King Church.
- In 2014, a Coral Gables, Florida UCC congregation worked [partnered](#) with FOSNA in “action against SodaStream’s product.”
- Co-sponsored and spoke at events such as “[Tree of Life Conference on Palestine-Israel Kairos](#)” (2013) and “[A National Service of Mourning in remembrance of those who have died in Palestine and Israel](#)” (2014).
- Naim Ateek [preached](#) at a 2014 UCC service in Madison Wisconsin. His sermon was titled “Prerequisites for Peace in Palestine”
- [Featured](#) on UCC’s “links” page under “justice”
- Global Ministries James Vijayakumar was [featured](#) as a main theologian to “help us translate and contextualize the relevance of this topic [Challenging Empire] to our daily life” at Sabeel’s 2011 8<sup>th</sup> international conference.

- UCC's Global Ministries [produced](#) "A pastoral response to the Palestine Kairos document: 'A Moment of Truth' April 2010" in support of Kairos Palestine, asking UCC members to "Commit to read, study and reflect", "visit the region to learn", "advocate with the US government", "support denominational partners in Palestine", and "avoid products that are produced in illegal Israeli settlements."
- Cites [Sabeel](#) as a group that is carrying out "advocacy actions involving Christians concerned about the Gaza crisis, especially the collective punishment of the people of Gaza, and the need for a just and lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples." (2009)
- Sabeel sponsored a 2007 UCC [two-day conference](#) in Boston titled "The Apartheid Paradigm in Palestine-Israel."
- [Sent](#) a full time missionary to intern with Sabeel to "heighten interfaith dialogue" in 2006.
- FOSNA Honolulu representative [spoke](#) in support of divestment at a 2005 UCC BDS debate for "two resolutions calling for the use of church funds in ways that will discourage violence and injustice in Israel and Palestine."
- [Met](#) with Sabeel during a 2005 United Church of Christ Delegation [trip] to Israel and Palestine. Author J Bennet Guess writes, "For Naim, the Via Dolorosa is not simply the route of Jesus through Jerusalem's Old City, a route we watched being retraced by tourists and pilgrims on our visit. The Way of Sorrow is also a contemporary reality experienced by oppressed people in many contexts, including Palestine."
- [Featured](#) Jonathan Kuttub, a Sabeel board member, at a 2005 "Wider Church Ministries."
- Quote given by Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in a [response](#) organized by UCC to the 2001 terror attacks in the United States. Sabeel states, "As Palestinians, who have been victims of terror, we are appalled at the reports of Palestinians celebrating your tragedy. Amidst all the pain and injustice that we have been living through the past year, we condemn all terrorist crimes that dehumanize and perpetrate evil."
- [Advertises](#) Sabeel's prayers on the UCC website.
- Sabeel [features](#) UCC's document "The Palestinians, Israel, and the Churches' Economic Leverage" in its "Call for Morally Responsible Investment."

#### **UCC was alerted that Sabeel is a "Radicalized Palestinian Christian Group"**

- The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released a [statement](#) in 2006 titled "ADL Troubled by United Church of Christ's Embrace of Radicalized Palestinian Christian



Group." In its statement, ADL responded to UCC's claim "With our partner the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center...we assert the moral reprehensibility of suicide bombing." In response, ADL wrote a letter to UCC's Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), stating "If Sabeel is your partner, how can you countenance these words, and not see a relationship between the words and those who attack Israel physically and verbally?"

- Dexter van Zile wrote a [report](#) in 2007 in response to a Sabeel conference occurring at the Old South Church, "the flagship church of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in Boston." Van Zile states, "Despite complaints from mainstream Jewish groups in the United States about Sabeel's hostile rhetoric and agenda, the United Church of Christ continues to portray the organization as an ecumenical 'partner' for peace in the Middle East."
- In response to the controversy, Rev. Nancy Taylor, pastor at Old South Church discussed the issue in a [sermon](#) on September 9, 2007.
- Taylor stated, "A columnist in [The Jewish Advocate](#), a local Jewish paper, has publicly accused me and Old South of hosting, 'an anti-Jewish hate fest' and has demanded that we 'do the right thing' and bar Sabeel and the Archbishop from speaking here....These leaders are not happy with our decision to host Sabeel and the Archbishop. They express concern, disappointment and fear. Why? Because the Archbishop and Sabeel use the language of apartheid to describe the situation of Palestinians and because they promote a program of selective investment in Israel as a means of applying pressure. Our Jewish friends experience these as a threat to the security, and as an affront to the dignity, of the state of Israel. I regret causing a rift between Old South and our friends and allies in the Jewish community. Nevertheless, the position of our Church Council – and my position – is that, as one of a handful of great world leaders of our time, Archbishop Tutu has earned the right to express his views on this most painfully contested part of the world."

## Appendix G: The Kairos Palestine Document

### Assessing “A Moment of Truth”

Rev. Peter A. Pettit<sup>30</sup> and Prof. Bruce Chilton<sup>31</sup>

Excerpts:<sup>32</sup>

*On December 15, 2009, a dozen Christian patriarchs and heads of churches in Jerusalem welcomed the Kairos Palestine 2009 document promulgated four days earlier...*

*Kairos Palestine 2009 sets out a program for the churches in North America and elsewhere in the world: (1) to repent of “fundamentalist theological positions” that support Israeli oppression of the Palestinians; (2) to help recover the Palestinians’ freedom; (3) to “come and see”; and, (4) to use boycott and “disinvestment” as tools by which to “take a position of truth with regard to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land.*

*Each of these familiar themes makes a seductive appeal to the mainline Western churches to support a non-violent version of the Palestinian cause, yet each also embodies the kind of faulty analysis that only prolongs conflict...*

*In the first case, we agree that Christian support of Israel can turn uncritical and harmful when wedded to an ideological or theological agenda that overrules evidence with programmatic postures. But the document ignores serious, faithful Christian assessments of the Jewish relationship to land that do not distort scripture and do not support an unjust occupation...*

*A request to “get our freedom back,” however, implies that there was once a Palestinian freedom that Israel alone has abrogated. That misrepresents history. The document’s ill-defined assertion of “our land,” on behalf of Christian and Muslim Palestinians, panders to a misconception that has repeatedly stalled progress: the myth that Israel is an illegitimate imperialist interloper that alone stands in the way of Palestinian autonomy and freedom.*

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<sup>30</sup> Rev. Peter Pettit, Ph.D. wrote this article while director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Associate Professor of Religion Studies at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania

<sup>31</sup> Prof. Bruce Chilton is Bernard Iddings Bell Professor of Religion at Bard College; Chaplain of the College and Executive Director, Institute of Advanced Theology

<sup>32</sup> For the full text see

<http://www.muhlenberg.edu/cultural/iicu/Responseto2009KairosPalestineDocument.pdf>

*Thirdly, the invitation to “come and see” allegedly includes “Palestinians and Israelis alike,” but the authors’ portrait of Israel offers no reassurance that Palestinian Christian guides will help the pilgrim to understand Israeli realities.*

*Finally, the call for boycott and divestment by the churches, coupled with “a system of economic sanctions...against Israel” by the international community, evokes the effective anti-apartheid action of the world community in South Africa. This attempted parallel brings us up squarely against shortcomings in the Kairos Palestine 2009 document...*

### **Resolution on Kairos Palestine: Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform)**

April 15, 2010

Excerpts:<sup>33</sup>

*Careful consideration of what [Kairos Palestine] says and what it does not say, of the history it paints and the history it obfuscates, and of the moral yardstick it applies to Israel yet compromises in the face of Palestinian violence, reveals a morally inconsistent and theologically suspect document that speaks only part of the truth, and not always that...*

*Sadly, this document also rejects or ignores more than a half a century of Jewish-Christian rapprochement and takes its place among other Christian documents which, throughout history, have intended to delegitimize the Jewish people’s continuing Covenant with God, particularly by arguing that our Covenant has been superseded by Jesus and Christianity.*

*Like the Kairos authors, the Central Conference of American Rabbis is deeply concerned about the welfare of the Palestinian people, as our record indicates. Our strenuous objections to Kairos do not diminish our commitment to a two-state solution as the only avenue to achieve a just and lasting peace, preserving a secure Jewish State of Israel and facilitating for the first time the realization of the Palestinian people’s nationhood.*

*Among its many failings, Kairos:*

- *Echoes supersessionist language of the Christian past, since rejected by most mainstream Christian denominations, referring to the Torah absent Christian revelation as, in the words of the Christian Scriptures, “a dead letter.”*
- *While opposing and negating the applicability of scriptural texts, historical presence, and theological discourse to justify the existence of a Jewish state, does exactly that in making its case for a Palestinian State...*

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<sup>33</sup> For full text of this resolution see: <http://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/resolutions/all/ccar-resolution-2009-kairos-document/>

- *Purports to promote non-violent resistance as the only legitimate Christian response to the Israeli occupation, yet expresses “respect” and “high esteem for those who have given their life for our nation,” thereby implicitly condoning, even praising, suicide bombers.*
- *Attempts to neutralize the concept of terrorism through the euphemistic reference to “terrorism,” implying that the deliberate Palestinian targeting of Israeli civilians with the aim of killing as many as possible in order to strike fear and terror is not terrorism at all, but a form of “legal resistance.”*