



Holy Land 2019 Coordination Communiqué: Christians in Israel – Challenges and Opportunities

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January 18, 2019 WASHINGTON—Representatives of bishops' conferences from several countries, including Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, Chairman of the International Justice and Peace Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, met in the Holy Land January 12-17, 2019.

Together, they have issued their annual communiqué in which they acknowledge the challenges and opportunities that Christians face in Israel. In the communiqué, the bishops call for prayer, pilgrimage and practical solidarity on behalf of Christians in Israel to help keep hope for the future alive.

Noting that Israel was founded on the principle of equality for all citizens, representatives of bishops' conferences from several countries, including the United States, acknowledged that Christians in Israel face challenges and opportunities. In the final communiqué of the Holy Land Coordination, the bishops called for prayer, pilgrimage and practical solidarity to help Christians in Israel keep their hope for the future alive.

Nineteen bishops from Europe, the United States, Canada and South Africa made the annual solidarity visit which included time spent in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Haifa, and villages meeting with Christian mayors, villagers, and migrants to hear of their stories of living and working in Israel.

In their communiqué, the bishops note that many Christians, along with Palestinian Arabs and migrants, face systematic discrimination and are marginalized. In particular they noted that Israel's Nation State Law passed in 2018 creates "a constitutional and legal basis for discrimination" against minorities and supported "all those challenging discrimination."

After visiting a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) camp and school in Jenin, the bishops also called for their governments to help fund health care, education and other basic services for Palestinian refugees. This was in response to the U.S. government's decision to withdraw funding for the Palestinians and call for the closing of UNRWA.

The bishops expressed admiration for their sisters and brothers in the Holy Land for not losing hope and committed themselves to help keep that hope alive.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops along with bishops from other nations on this solidarity visit continue to decry violence as a way to resolve conflict but instead strongly support a two-state solution in which the two democratic sovereign states of Israel and Palestine exist in peace.

The Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church in the Holy Land has met every January since 1998 to pray and act in solidarity with the Christian community in the Holy Land.

The bishops' 2019 communiqué is available [here](#):

[Statement](#)

Source: [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#).