

November-December 2008 Newsletter
Number 26

**Eid Mubarak, Happy Hanukah, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from the 29th Group of EAs and Staff!**



Group 29 at the handover ceremony at the Church of the Redeemer, 17 November 2008.

A new group of 24 Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) began their three-month term in mid-November. The new arrivals bring the total number of EAs to have participated in the programme to 498 since it began in 2002. The 29th group of EAs comprises 19 women and 5 men from 10 different countries (Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK). Among other professions, the EAPPI welcomes seven teachers, three priests and two journalists. Five EAs are returning for a second term. Profiles of the current EAs are posted on the website, www.eappi.org.

EAs support East Jerusalem family evicted from their home

After having been presented with an eviction order in July 2008, the Al Kurd family was brutally evicted from their house in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in the early hours of 9 November 2008. Israeli settlers quickly moved into the house in which the Al Kurds had lived since the 1950s. The Al Kurds subsequently moved into a tent not far from their house. The Jerusalem Municipality has since demolished this tent on numerous occasions. So far, three groups of EAs have provided a regular and supportive presence with the Al Kurd family. At the press conference held on the same day as their eviction, Fawzieh Al Kurd (Umm Kamel) called for the EAs to stand beside her. On 22 November 2008, Abu Kamel sadly passed away from a heart attack. The EAs will continue to accompany the Al Kurd family, whose plight has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle for human rights. Eyewitness reports can be found on the website.



Umm Kamel speaking at the press conference on the day of her family's eviction, 9 November 2008. Photos: Mats Svensson

EAs witness the eviction of the Occupied House in Hebron

On 4 December 2008, a four-storey building occupied by Israeli settlers in Hebron was evacuated by the IDF. Within less than an hour, the IDF physically and forcefully removed between 200-250 Israeli settlers and supporters from the disputed al-Rajabi house on the hill of Al-Ras. In retaliation, Israeli settlers in Hebron and all over the West Bank attacked, rampaged and set Palestinian houses on fire. EAs were present and documented the damage in Hebron, Susiya in South Hebron Hills, Asira al Qibliya and Burin near Yanoun and Azzoun near Jayyous.



Wadi al-Hussein on fire. Photo: EA Silja Nordahl.

Demonstrations against the Wall in Jayyous

On 11 November 2008, Israeli authorities began re-routing the separation wall in Jayyous despite the postponement of a court decision on the case until December 2008. The work to re-route the wall, which will see the confiscation of a further 585 dunums and four wells belonging to the village, has spurred weekly demonstrations after the midday prayers. EAs accompany and document the non-violent demonstrations against the wall. More information can be found in the latest placement update, downloadable from the news section of the website.

House demolitions continue in Jerusalem and the West Bank

According to UNOCHA, there were 13 demolitions in Jerusalem (Silwan, Beit Hanina, Shu'fat, 'Eisawiya, Sheikh Jarrah, Anata, As Sawahira al Gharbiya and Jabel al Mukabbir) and three demolitions in Area C (Shuqba and Eizariya) in November 2008. Jerusalem EAs responded quickly and provided presence with most of the affected families, totalling 45 adults and 45 children. EAs also sent photos and incident reports to UNOCHA and human rights organisations. A photo story of a demolition in Silwan on 5 November can be viewed on the website under 'Photos'.

Visiting Delegations

After having received a record-breaking 58 delegations, totalling 814 individuals, during the term of Group 28, we have received smaller, yet no less significant numbers during the first month of Group 29. Each placement has had its visitors, including a large group of Austrian students and a Macedonian group in Bethlehem, Swedish Members of Parliament in Hebron and Bethlehem, an Italian group in Yanoun, the Jimmy Carter Center in Susiya and Umm al-Kheir, a US Lutheran group in Jerusalem, a delegation from the US Church World Service in Hebron and Bethlehem, an Icelandic doctor in Tulkarem and a delegation from the South African Council of Churches in Jerusalem, Jayyous and Bethlehem. These delegations constitute an important part of EAPPI's advocacy work.



Contact in Shufa enjoying the Arabic newsletter and the photos of former EAs. Photo: EA Milena Aviram.

Arabic newsletter on EAs' advocacy at home

In November, EAs eagerly distributed the newly published Arabic newsletter on recent EAs' advocacy once they left their placements and returned home. This newsletter will be produced and distributed to local contacts twice a year to keep them informed about the EAs' advocacy work. The newsletter can be downloaded from the website.

For more information, please contact:

Matilda Svensson, Communications & Advocacy Officer +972 (0)2 628-9402 (eappi-co@jrol.com)

International Office, Geneva +41 22 791-6108 (eappi@wcc-coe.org) or check out the website: www.eappi.org

*The **Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** supports Palestinians and Israelis working for peace by monitoring and reporting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, offering protection by accompanying local communities in daily activities, and by advocating with churches for a peaceful end to the Occupation. The programme, which began in 2002, is coordinated by the **World Council of Churches (WCC)**. The **WCC** is a fellowship of 347 churches, in more than 100 countries in all continents from virtually all Christian traditions. Its office is in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information on the WCC: www.oikoumene.org*

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