

*Our land is called to be a land of peace. Jerusalem, the city of God, is a city of peace for us and for the world.*  
From a statement of the heads of the Churches of Jerusalem, 12/6/17

Standing with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS) affirms that **East Jerusalem**, including the Old City with its holiest of places, **is not the capital of Israel**. CFOS notes that the status of illegally occupied Jerusalem is determined not by the will of the state of Israel, nor of the whims of any American administration or of Congress, but by international law.

We are especially grateful for our 10<sup>th</sup> annual James Graff Memorial Lecturer two weeks ago in Toronto, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Rights, International Law Professor Michael Lynk, who helped us to understand the history of this status. He presented an insightful exposition of international law as it pertains to the 50 year old Israeli occupation of the Old City and the rest of the West Bank and Gaza. **Prof. Lynk reminded us of the UN Security Council assertion, “that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem... are null and void.”** Critically, he has determined that in international law, Israel is now to be considered an “illegal occupant,” which has far-reaching ramifications.

Yet the prophetic voice of truth often has its opposition. After the lecture, B’nai Brith Canada concocted a series of disingenuous slanders against Prof. Lynk and yet again against CFOS. CFOS invited Prof. Lynk as he adheres to our guiding “values of non-violence, justice, peace and reconciliation,” as [our mission states](#). Thus, CFOS simply replies to B’nai Brith with the words of the Palestinian Christians that we support:

*We are confident that, with strong support from our friends, Israelis and Palestinians can work towards negotiating a sustainable and just peace, benefiting all who long for the Holy City of Jerusalem to fulfil its destiny. The Holy City can be shared and fully enjoyed once a political process helps liberate the hearts of all people, that live within it, from the conditions of conflict and destructiveness that they are experiencing.*

Based on international law, we additionally and unreservedly condemn Canada’s “no” vote on the UN General Assembly resolution reaffirming Israel’s actions in East Jerusalem as “null and void.” By this vote in the company of only Israel, the US and three of its Pacific Island client states, Canada seems to have either isolated itself among UN states or reduced its vote to US client state status. Canada’s vote at this critical time only served to encourage the recent U.S. declaration on Jerusalem and all the ensuing violence, injustice and instability it wreaks in the Middle East and beyond.

Canadian Friends of Sabeel again echoes this call from the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem. We encourage the Canadian government to likewise receive [their message](#). The Church leaders of the Holy City urged such politicians to rather “listen to the song of the angels” since the first Christmas, who declare, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to the people of good will.” All, they say, are morally obliged to allow “the Holy City of Jerusalem to fulfil its destiny” which is that **“the city of God is a city of peace for us and for the world...being for all.”**