



CANADIAN
FRIENDS
OF SABELL



A Message from Two Chairs

CFOS gives thanks to Fr. Robert Assaly for over two decades of faithful service and leadership. At the CFOS AGM in August, the Board and Members facilitated a transition for the role of Chair. We share with you these year-end reflections from our outgoing and incoming Chairs.

Greetings from Fr. Robert Assaly, CFOS Co-Founder and Past Chair

Ever since I first lived in the West Bank and visited Gaza at the beginning of the first *intifada*, I was drawn into the story of injustice told by the people on the land and I knew my faith required of me to do justice (Micah 6:8). Serving there with my family at the request of the Church, meeting with Madrid negotiators and later witnessing how the Oslo Accords cemented the evil of the occupation, as the Kairos Palestine call described it, further motivated me.

One of the most meaningful parts of my role has been the partnerships on the ground and the inspiring Palestinians who inform all our work. The inception of CFOS was initially at the request of Sabeel Jerusalem and in the last two decades we have been responsive to many Church-related (CRO) partners in Palestine.

We frequently hear from our partners how our work in solidarity here encourages them in their challenging struggle for justice as they bear witness to the integral contribution of Christianity in its place of origin. Palestinian Christian voices call to us to work for peace and justice from Canada. At CFOS we strive to do that by bringing together the Canadian churches, CROs, progressive Jewish, Muslim and secular organizations to work on common themes and projects.

Looking at what's coming in 2021/22, **most exciting for me is the anticipated reveal of a North American, and eventually global, initiative for justice that we have been working on for three years.** I am also eagerly waiting to see the post-pandemic potential to bring Samah Sabawi's compelling *Tales* play on Gaza to more cities across the country. Both of these powerfully amplify Palestinian voices in unique ways.

As I shift my Chair roles at CFOS, I am confident that we will continue to see great things from our dynamic Executive Director, Yara Shoufani, and our capable and committed Board. It has been a privilege and an honour to be part of the founding and growth of CFOS.



In solidarity,

Robert Assaly

Rev. Robert Assaly
Co-Founder and Past Chair

Hello from Rula Odeh, CFOS Incoming Chair

As the new chair of the board for Canadian Friends of Sabeel, I look forward to build on the many successes of my predecessor Fr. Robert Assaly, who continues to serve as our Co-Founder and Past Chair as well as staying very active on several programs and committees.

This past Spring, despite being in the midst of the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CFOS Board chose to have a series of virtual sessions to create an ambitious and creative Strategic Plan. We updated our mission, vision and values (see below) and we developed an action plan with a clear timeline.

Our Mission:

In response to calls for solidarity from the Palestinian Christian community, we faithfully engage, educate and equip the Canadian Christian community and our partners as we pursue our shared calling and vision.

Our Vision:

The Canadian Christian community and our partners are energized as we pursue a durable peace – rooted in justice, freedom, equal rights, and the principles of nonviolence – for all Palestinians and Israelis.

Our Values:

Truth. Justice. Solidarity.
Our efforts are guided by the Christian values and principles of non-violence, justice, peace, solidarity and reconciliation. We work with communities of all faiths and like-minded organizations with similar values to tell the truth.

As you'll see from our on-line Christmas appeal campaign, we remain committed to our mission and vision despite the current challenges of the pandemic to our work of solidarity. **We are delivering new creative programs** including:

- a re-imagined James Graff Memorial Lecture (a virtual experience coming in early 2021)
- new partnerships including events with Daoud Nassar about the nonviolent resistance of Tent of Nations, and,
- Encounter the Holy Land – a virtual liturgy program offering sermons by Palestinian Christian leaders to churches

We wish to go beyond just maintaining our work during these challenging times of COVID-19 restrictions. We are striving to grow our advocacy projects and respond to calls from Palestinian partners to find new ways to be in solidarity. **Will you remain committed to us so that we can continue our important work?**

To implement our exciting programs and initiatives we are counting on you, our faithful long-time and new supporters, with your charitable gifts, prayers and networks, to help us during these critical times. **If you can support us with a monthly gift of \$15, \$25, \$40, \$80, \$120 or more, this will ensure a consistent mode of support that we can plan our programs around.**

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe, healthy and blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year!



In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rula Odeh".

Rula Odeh
Chair