



Urgent need for support as Beit Jala families seek justice

Pax Christi International call for international pressure at the start of the Supreme Court of Israel Hearing on the Cremisan Valley

Pax Christi International is calling for justice to be upheld in the Cremisan Valley, near Bethlehem. Israel's plans to build a wall on the land of 58 Christian families should be abandoned. We have heard the pain and anguish of the families in Beit Jala faced with the threatened loss of their land and livelihood. The planned wall will destroy vineyards, groves and orchards and separate people from their land. It will create daily difficulties for children trying to access their school in one of the convents in the valley.

The planned route of the wall deviates sharply from the Green Line, the internationally-recognised demarcation line separating Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories captured in the six-day war of June 1967. More than three quarters of the wall's planned route is illegal, according to a landmark advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2004. It is also a flagrant breach of the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We urge governments to encourage Israel to follow international law. In particular, Israel should respect the livelihoods of these families. The people of the parish of Beit Jala must be protected from further expropriation of their land and homes. This is a matter of urgency as the Israeli Supreme Court Hearing on the construction of a separation wall in the Cremisan Valley starts on 29 January 2014.

Our deep concern, as we have repeatedly stated, is that this planned wall will consolidate the Israeli settlement areas and permanently cut off Bethlehem from Jerusalem. This particular plan is a microcosm of the tragic situation in the Holy Land – a situation which incites resentment and mistrust, making the possibility of a much-needed solution less likely.

Our prayers are with the people of Beit Jala as they seek justice. We also pray for all who seek a just peace in the Holy Land.

Brussels, 28 January 2014