

# Dear Chilean miners, please do not accept Israel's invitation

By [Robin](#)

Theme: [Religion](#)

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Dear Survivors of the Chilean Mine Trap,

You do not know me. I am just an American blogger/peace activist who has followed your heroic efforts to survive your 69 day ordeal and the heroic efforts to save you. With wonder I watched as you were brought up one by one to freedom from your underground hell, where for so long you did not know if you would live or die. Indeed the whole world watched as you were rescued in thunderous joy that you would be reunited with your loved ones who had sat vigil for you for so long, insisting you were alive, insisting the rescue effort keep on, praying together for your safety. The entire world rejoices in your safe return above ground to your loved ones.

Now it is your time to recover from your ordeal, to readjust to above ground living with all the physical aspects that entails as well as the emotional ones. Yet people who wish to somehow attach themselves to your rescue and what they see as your celebrity status are now issuing public invitations for you to visit them.

Beware the Trojan horse bearing gifts. For their all-expense paid trip invitations are being issued with their own interest and image at heart.

Today I read that you have received an [invitation from the Israeli Tourist Ministry](#) to visit the Holy Land where Christianity began, where the holiest of Christian sites are located. They have offered to pay for your entire trip there, for you to visit "Israel". They are offering you this trip at Christmas time as a "gift to you"

I am asking you please to not accept this invitation. You are not just being invited to visit "Israel", you are being asked to visit holy sites which have been under the Israeli occupation of Palestine for 42 years, sites that Palestinian Christians are routinely denied access to by their occupier.

In June the Vatican issued a paper deploring the denial of access to Christians to the holy sites under occupation, [calling the occupation "unjust"](#).

You would be taken to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in occupied East Jerusalem which Israel routinely denies access to for Christian Palestinians. You would also be taken to Bethlehem, the birth place of Christ, which has been under Israeli occupation for 42 years. Nearby is the home of Daoud Nassar's [Tent of Nations](#) which is continually [under threat of demolition by Israel](#).

Christian Palestinians suffer just as horrifically under the occupation as do their fellow Muslim Palestinians.

For this reason the Kairos Declaration was issued which calls for an end to the 42 year long occupation of Palestine which is in direct violation of international law.

## Introduction

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant, in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land. Inspired by the mystery of God's love for all, the mystery of God's divine presence in the history of all peoples and, in a particular way, in the history of our country, we proclaim our word based on our Christian faith and our sense of Palestinian belonging – a word of faith, hope and love.

Why now? Because today we have reached a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian people. The decision-makers content themselves with managing the crisis rather than committing themselves to the serious task of finding a way to resolve it. The hearts of the faithful are filled with pain and with questioning: What is the international community doing? What are the political leaders in Palestine, in Israel and in the Arab world doing? What is the Church doing? The problem is not just a political one. It is a policy in which human beings are destroyed, and this must be of concern to the Church.

We address ourselves to our brothers and sisters, members of our Churches in this land. We call out as Christians and as Palestinians to our religious and political leaders, to our Palestinian society and to the Israeli society, to the international community, and to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Churches around the world.

Read the entire Kairos Declaration [HERE](#)

Every day [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) in the Occupied Territory work to protect Palestinians from their military occupation and settlers who routinely assault them.

In Latin America liberation theology has played a large role in providing solace and support to the oppressed. Palestine also has an organization, [Sabeel-Palestine Liberation Theology](#), which calls for the freedom of the oppressed under Israeli occupation and government policy. These are your brothers and sisters in Christ, in humanity.

As peace talks in lifting the occupation of Palestine have not gotten anywhere in 42 years, Israel has continued to violate international law by continuing to build settlements in the occupied territories. Israel has refused to extend their ten month freeze on building which is in direct contravention of international law.

Now the Ministry of Tourism of Israel has issued you an invitation for an all-expense paid trip to visit the "holy sites" in "ISRAEL". The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holiest of Christian shrines, is located in occupied East Jerusalem. Bethlehem, the birth place of Christ, is located in the occupied West Bank. These are only two Christian holy sites that Israel wishes to take you to and to somehow capitalize on your celebrity by their offer.

As a Christian myself, I beg you not to accept this invitation, not while Israel refuses to withdraw from their 42 year long illegal occupation of Palestine. Christmas is our time to celebrate the birth of Christ, not to do so to the detriment of those living under occupation in his birthplace by accepting a gift from their occupier.

Dear miners, you may never read this letter to you, but should it somehow reach you, it was written to you from my heart, to the hearts of you brave men who survived, by the grace of God, you are still with us.

Blessings to you in peace,

Robin

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