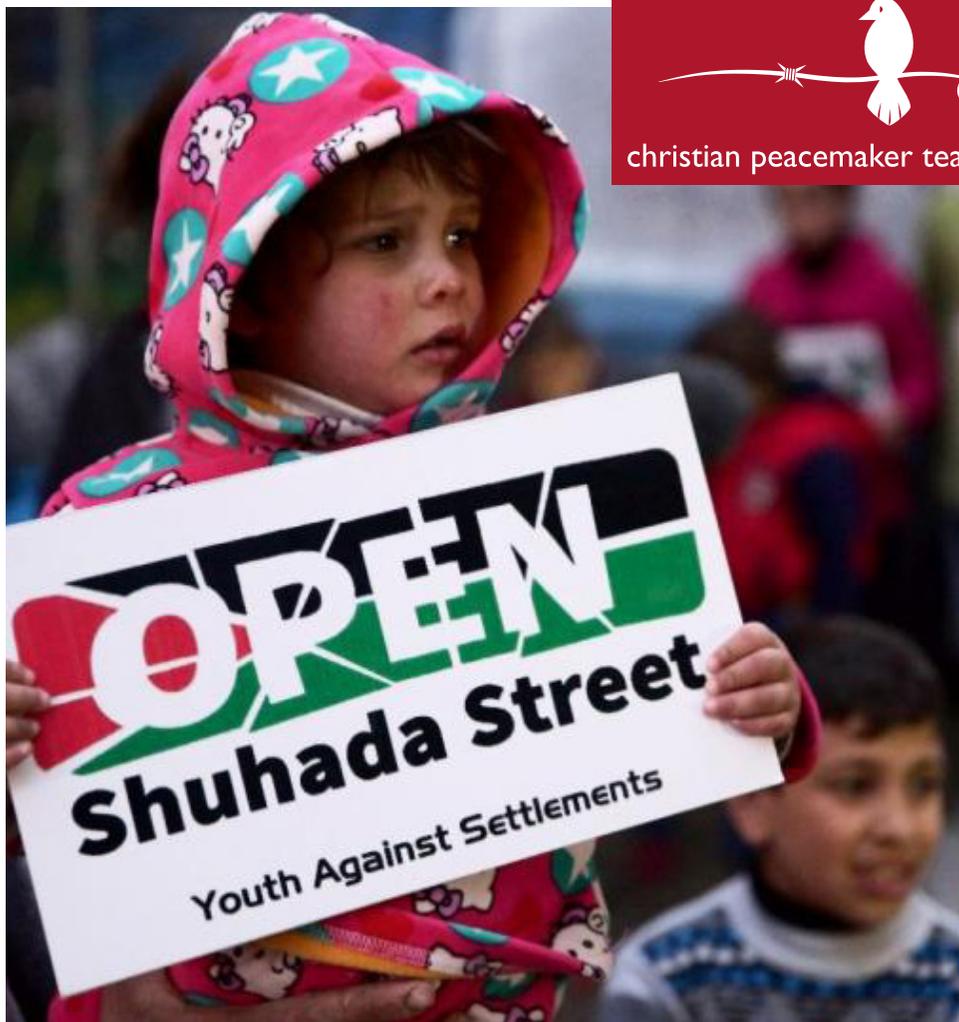


christian peacemaker teams



TEAM REPORTS



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Join a CPT Regional Group

SARAH THOMPSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since the 45th President was elected in the United States, CPT has received many more requests for training. From Seattle to Wichita, Florida to Michigan, individuals and groups reached out to CPT to request active bystander training, nonviolent direct action preparation, and info-sessions for deepening an undoing oppressions analysis for this spiritual-political moment. CPT also responded to the invitation to facilitate nationwide conversation toward the development of community-based rapid response networks that could support individuals and vulnerable populations facing increasing attacks from the alt-right. It's been a busy time—and an important way to re-connect with you as constituents, as well as make new friends.

CPT used to do most of our mobilizing through Regional Groups in the United States, Canada, and beyond. Regional Groups consist of at least one trained CPTer. They exist to support that CPTer through their CPT journey on a field team, to recruit for delegations, to organize speaking engagements, and to plan public education actions when a CPTer returns. Regional groups are also empowered to

start local CPT-like projects in their area, effectively bringing the learning from our international work into a CPTer's home context.

Regional groups have existed in northern Indiana, DC, Arizona, and Colorado. There are currently active ones in Ontario, eastern Australia (Oceania), as well as across Europe (UK, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden). The European groups all get together once a year for the European Convergence, and they currently run a regional project in Lesbos, Greece.

Rachelle Friesen, the new CPT Canada Coordinator, is watching the impact of the rise of white nationalism there, as the backlash to Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and the sting of racism creep north. Building on the successful work on CPT Ontario, she invites Canadian CPT supporters to consider starting a regional group in each province. She has upcoming visits scheduled to Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Reach out to her at rachellef@cpt.org.

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Sarah Thompson with Carol and Charles Spring.





Would you like to get a group together in the US? E-mail peacemakers@cpt.org and say “I’m thinking of starting a regional group, and Mark Frey can connect you with others in your area. I recently visited Carol and Charles Spring, CPTers in Colombia who returned to their home in DC and started a regional group that ran for many years. They had gotten a group together, to figure out what unique thing a regional group in DC could offer the broader CPT community. People had a lot of enthusiasm about various topics that ranged from supporting NVDA to assisting in arranging visits for CPTers to Capitol Hill.

How might you, as a CPT donor, reservist, or supporter, step up your public witness? Would you feel stronger if you were connected to other CPTers in your area? The new training coordinator, Sarah Sommers, and others can come to your region to give mini-CPT training to support your work on local issues. CPT has taught you skills and given you access to really important stories that need to be heard by many, so that we can build the partnerships we need to transform violence and oppression. Now more than ever! Please be in touch with how we can resource a small affinity group in your region.

We Don’t Have to Soldier On

SARAH THOMPSON, JOANNA SHENK, TIM NAFZIGER

Michael J. Sharp was a close friend. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) he was a Mennonite witness, scholar and peacemaker. Over five years, first with Mennonite Central Committee and then with the United Nations (UN) group of experts, he cultivated relationships of trust and respect with people who were experiencing dreadful violence, exploitation because of government corruption, and the oppressive impact of generations of corporate-colonial resource extraction. His teamwork there included demobilizing armed groups, investigating human rights abuses, and reporting to the UN Security Council towards their goal of creating the conditions for peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

On March 12th, Michael, and UN colleague Zaida Catalan were seeking to uncover the truth of the eruption of violence in Congo’s central Kasai region, when they were stopped, and killed. The violence in Kasai began in August of 2016 after government forces killed Kamwina

Nsapu, a tribal chief and militia leader, who had resisted DRC President Joseph

Kabila. In January of 2017 Michael and Zaida made an initial trip, documenting 5 mass graves in the region. Since then the number had risen to 23 mass graves.

How do those close to these situations process the loss of such key peacemakers? Eastern Mennonite University, where Michael attended undergraduate has an international program for peacemakers, some of whom have also returned home to face political violence, torture, and death.

Though we are in circles where we train and study as hard for peace as soldier train and study for war, we do not have to “soldier on” when one of us falls. There is no national myth in front of which we have to choke back our tears to appear strong “for the cause.” Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) immediately gave me time off of work to grieve and gather with loved ones. We sat with our devastation, did not pretend that the world made sense or that “God has everything under control,” nor try to keep everything in perspective.



Remembering Michael J. Sharp.

Mennonites and Anabaptists center Christ's call to be peacemakers, knowing that there is physical, emotional, and spiritual risk involved. Jesus models that the way of peace is filled with turmoil, one illustration is Jesus's long night weeping in Gethsemane. Giving space to grief can provide clarity to recover. Christ rose from that devastated moment to stay true to his mission and extend healing touch to his captor's ear (Luke 22:51).

Staggering numbers of human, animal, and environmental tragedies cross our Facebook feeds every day. We often desensitize and decontextualize. But when you know someone personally who suffered and died, all the pain of all of those numbers and situations rushes in, and pounds the body: searing, graphic, unrelenting. Part of peacemaking is to let that in, and be raw and sensitized by it. By having compassion for ourselves in these moments, asking for help or to be held, even deeper commitment to ending cycles of violence can grow. Our circle of care widens, we open our heart-mind to the reality of the many people and places whose names we don't know, but whose lives mattered just as much as our friend's.

Our discipleship inspired peacemaking always happens in a particular political context. In Michael's case, it's too trite

to simply see him as a martyr for peace: he and his colleagues were searching for mass graves in the Kasai region and someone did not want them to complete that work. It is up to us to make sure his work continues. Rings of support in a community in grief mean that there are some that coordinate meals, some that do logistics for the family, and some that prepare for advocacy to honor and continue the work. To do international peacemaking well we need to be prepared to collectively exert political will on behalf of those most impacted by the violence of war and injustice in the particular political landscape at home and abroad.

The wider church can honor a peacemaker that has been killed not by putting them on a pedestal, and distancing ourselves from the pain of loss, but rather letting it enter us. Aware of our own complexity, we can embrace the complexity of the slain peacemaker's story and learn about the political context. Taking time to stop means disrupting our business as usual and getting a chance to examine the way we have been conformed to the patterns of the world, especially the reliance on violence to maintain our lives. Connecting with grief rather than pushing-through will re-order priorities once we are moving again.



End of Term

Hello beloved CPT community. As directors, we sign on for terms of three years - and my three years have simply flown by. It's with a mixture of sadness and optimism that I announce that this will be my last newsletter with the organization. It has been a pleasure serving CPT and our supporters around the world in Communications & Engagement.

As I prepare for my new work as Development Director with Family Resources, a child abuse prevention non-profit, I'm reflecting on my time at CPT. We have seen oppressive governments, militaries and companies engage in rising violence against peacemakers and community members in Palestine, Colombia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Greece and North America.

We have seen you, our committed supporters, show up to put your faith in action for peace, contributing financially, in prayer and love, in volunteer hours, so that CPTers can stand alongside peacemakers around the world as they stand up to those militaries and companies.



A few recent and upcoming Communications & Engagement milestones:

- At our last CPT Steering Committee meeting, CPT reaffirmed our commitment to our Christian identity. Read the whole statement at http://cpt.org/about/identity_statement.
- Our new website is under construction, to be seen very soon at cpt.org. We'll provide lots of resources for you to turn your faith into action for peace in your local context, as well as supporting our ongoing work in Palestine, Colombia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Greece, and North America.
- We're seeing and responding to more training requests than ever in the U.S. Request one in your area now by e-mailing peacemakers@cpt.org.

It has been an honor to be in this work with you, and my support for CPT will continue. Christian Peacemaker Teams is experiencing a beautiful time of renewal and recommitment. Our resolve to build partnerships to transform violence and oppression is stronger than ever. And more and more people are joining us every day.

As Mordecai says to Esther in the Bible: perhaps CPT has grown into our position in the peacemaking world for such a time as this. Join us today at cpt.org, and keep an eye out for that new website!

With love and solidarity,
Jennifer A. Yoder



Leveling the Playing Field. Women Walking Together in Faith

SHIRLEY REDEKOP, REPRINTED FROM THE CANADIAN MENNONITE



Pictured from left to right: Maria Angela Peinado; Hannah, Fred and Shirley Redekop; Maricela Jimenez; and Pierre Shantz. (Photo courtesy of Shirley Redekop)

The saying goes, “There are two gifts we should give our children: one is roots, the other is wings.” My husband and I encouraged our children to fly and prayed we gave them roots.

One day in a sermon my husband said, “I believe in what Christian Peacemaker Teams [CPT] does, but I also fear one of our sons will join them,” referring to its placing of teams in communities confronted with situations of life-threatening conflict.

Well, it turns out it is our daughter Hannah who is now a long-term CPT volunteer in Colombia. She’s been there for four years now, walking with farmers who are at risk of being forcibly displaced from their land, and learning about the challenges women face in that setting.

My roots are in Pennsylvania, growing up on a farm with two older brothers. I was expected to help with outside work as well as in the house. My dad also taught me to shoot a hunting rifle and ride a motorcycle. But I realized my brothers were not expected to help with housework and were given cars for their 16th birthday. I felt they had an unfair advantage.

Now as I’ve mothered the next generation, I pondered what message I passed on to our only daughter. After reading an article Hannah sent me about an experience she had at a women’s regional peacebuilding meeting, I found my answer. Here’s what she wrote:

“The most impacting moment for me [at the first meeting of

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women from northeastern Antioquia] was a fireside conversation around apple sugar-cane tea. The women gathered around holding hands and introduced themselves, then moved into small groups to share their experiences: ‘When did you realize you were a woman?’ ‘What have your struggles been?’ ‘What is the role of women in your society today?’

“Stories came pouring forth: becoming a woman at 16 because she was [pregnant] and about to be married; realizing her womanhood as they raped her; struggling to put food on the table and care for the children while also working on the farm; missing out on her childhood because she had to work; and the expectations of submission, permission and women as property. Tears rolled and laughter ensued as the stories wove together, intertwined and floated up on the steam from our tea cups.

“I, too, am a woman. But my story comes from a very different place than those campesina [rural peasant] women. I realized I was a woman when I was about four or five years old. Growing up amongst three brothers, I understood rather quickly that I was different. Not just physically, but also by the way I was treated. I remember being so very frustrated with what I experienced as favoritism from my mother. I hated that she singled me out, made sure I was getting what I needed before the boys, and generally just took to spoiling me. Or so I thought.

“But while I shared my life’s experiences with those beautiful women, I suddenly realized that what I had received from my mother wasn’t excessive doting or coddling; she was actually creating a level playing field for me. She was giving me the step up that society never would, so that I’d have the same experiences and opportunities as my brothers. She was my ally, proving to me that I could do anything.

“The most important asset to this difficult work of undoing oppression is being an ally. We need women and men, young and old, of every nationality, ethnicity, religion and orientation, to stand together as allies, recognizing privileges and creating consciousness to tear down society’s oppressive structures. And these Colombian women are doing just that.”
So why not join the team?



Pictured Hannah and Shirley Redekop.



May the Creator Open Our Hearts to Listen

A reflection on the Pilgrimage to Indigenous Rights April 23-May 14, 2017

ESTHER TOWNSEND, CPT DELEGATE



Marchers with signs “Churches for Indigenous Rights. Let Justice Flow...” (Photo courtesy of Mathew Behrens.)

In May, I joined a group walking 600 kilometers from Kitchener to Ottawa, Ontario, called the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights. Organized by Mennonite Church Canada – Indigenous-Settler Relations and Christian Peacemaker Teams – Indigenous Peoples Solidarity, the pilgrimage had two primary goals: to visit churches to foster conversations about the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and its role as a framework for reconciliation; and to call on the Canadian government to fulfill its promise to implement UNDRIP. In particular, we walked in support of Bill C-262, a private member’s bill by MP Romeo Saganash. That provides a legislative framework for UNDRIP’s implementation.

The most common question we were asked, by our church hosts, by reporters, and others, was, “Why are you walking?” Walking 600 km is not something normal

in our society. My initial answer was that Indigenous communities have devoted their time and energy to rights advocacy, land defense, and water protection for decades, and that settlers also have a responsibility to participate in this work. I wanted to take some time out of my routine intentionally to reflect on my responsibilities as a settler on Turtle Island. It seemed right to do this in community, at a walking pace.

If I’m truly honest, part of my answer is also that the pilgrimage promised to be exciting. And it was. We had the opportunity to walk alongside and learn from Indigenous leaders including Romeo Saganash, Leah Gazan, Pat Makokis, Myeengun Henry, James Bartleman, and Sylvia McAdam. We were welcomed by Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation, whose Chief Doreen Davis sat with us for hours sharing heart-stopping stories of her community’s successful resistance to uranium mining and

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military tests on their land. We arrived in Ottawa to the sound of church bells and applause, and marched through the streets near Parliament. We were photographed, filmed, and interviewed.

Yet I also vividly remember the physicality of the pilgrimage: aching feet, legs, and back, taped-up toes. Murmured prayers and meditations repeated over and over in pace with my steps. The almost imperceptible daily shifts from enthusiasm to exhaustion to a second rush of adrenaline. The delicious relief of stretches and of back rubs from friends, and the joy of singing together in harmony.

All this was also an essential part of our journey. The walking was humbling, painful, joyful. I was reminded that we were walking in the footsteps of hundreds of Indigenous youth and water walkers, who for decades have been walking for justice. I learned that I could not rely only on my own strength to keep going, but that I needed 87-year-old Henry Neufeldt's steady pace, 11-month-old Junia Boos' radiant smiles, and 11-year-old Abby Heinrichs' courageous words. I learned that justice is slow and hard.

I also began to write the words of UNDRIP on my mind and heart: a covenant that Canadians have made with the Indigenous peoples on whose lands we live. Each of the long-term walkers on the pilgrimage memorized one or two articles of the Declaration. I learned Article 28, like so much else in the Declaration, simple yet deeply challenging:

- Indigenous peoples have the right to redress, by means that can include restitution or, when this is not possible, just, fair and equitable compensation, for the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed

consent.

Walking along the shoulder of Highway 7 for ten days, past forests, fields, rivers, houses, strip malls, and far too much windblown garbage, I could see that what settler society has done to this land cannot be undone. We can pick up the trash, plant trees, free rivers from concrete embankments, but there are scars that will not disappear. We cannot undo colonization. We can, and should, return some of what has been taken, yet we are still here, settlers who call this place home. We don't fully know what is needed to make things right. Seeking to walk with Indigenous peoples, we are working for a justice that is beyond our vision, that we will only discover in conversation, over generations.

May the Creator open our hearts to listen, and to act when we are called upon.

Originally posted on KAIROS: Ecumenical Justice Initiatives blog on May 25, 2017.



Mim Harder provided a smudge in the morning before we set out from Rouge Valley, Ontario.



Decolonizing Psalms

KATHY MOORHEAD THIESSEN, CPT DELEGATE

I co-led the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights on April 23-May 14, 2017. As I walked-kilometer after kilometer- I listened to music. One song, based on Psalm 23 struck my soul. I know that this psalm is often read at times when people need comfort. I thought about the role of Christianity in colonization of the indigenous peoples of Canada. I imagined that the young children forced into residential schools run by the churches had been forced to listen to the King James version of this psalm- in situations where they were not able to derive comfort. Everything presented was foreign and they were not given space to draw on what they knew to be good and right.

So, I sat down to rewrite this psalm, with symbolization that is sacred and good to my indigenous relatives. This is one reason that I walked- to break down the oppression that has existed for over 150 years in my land and to work on the colonization of my own mind.

Psalm 23 revised - May 6, 2017

Creator is my protector like a grandfather, grandmother, mother, father, auntie, uncle. I lack for nothing. I have places to lie down and rest under the cedar trees and on grassy plains. You lead me beside quiet waters that are pure enough to fish in, to swim in and to drink. My whole being is nourished and restored.

You guide me along the right paths: learning the right way to live with all creation. Even though I walk through the valley of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Creator, your loving kindness comforts me.

You prepare a table before me in the midst of those I love and those I disagree with. We have time to talk and discuss and settle our differences while eating wonderful food. You provide medicines and smudge for my healing and my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and mercy and humility and honesty and respect and bravery and wisdom and truth and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will live in the house of Creator for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow.



Shabat Obaadjiwan First National Cultural Centre provided food for our bodies and souls.





As Adults, We Are Just Afraid for Our Children

JULIE BROWN

The explosion was massive, even through the small video on Kak Najib's iPhone you could see the devastation and huge plume of smoke that engulfed the whole side of a nearby mountain. This was just one of many bombs that fell on the area surrounding the village of Merkajia last fall.

Merkajia is an Assyrian village that lies within the northern mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan. These mountains are a dividing point between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan as well as a battleground between the Turkish government and The Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK. While media sometimes gives nod to this decades long conflict, The realities of life for those like the villagers of Merkajia, people whose communities are on the frontlines, are rarely told.

In November the Turkish Government dropped a barrage of bombs on the area surrounding this small village Kak Nagib, the Mukhtar (village leader) of Merkajia, told CPT. When the first bombs fell it was in the evening Kak Najib was in his house with his family. He explained that at first

they stayed inside their home and took shelter but as the bombs continued to fall they went outside afraid that one would hit the house and it would collapse on his family. The women and children were sent from the village and only the men stayed behind to protect their homes and property. "As Assyrians we believe that we will die one day and that we should not be afraid of death. I have seen many wars, Saddam forced me to go to Kuwait. As adults, we are just afraid for our children," he explained.

The bombs also shattered all the windows in every home in Merkajia and cracked several walls. Kak Najib pointed to a large crack in his home just over a large portrait of Jesus hanging in his family room. When CPT asked how people could be in solidarity with the villagers of Merkajia he simply said, "Let people know that we are being bombed."

When the area quieted, Kak Najib went out from his house into the village's surrounding lands. There he was shocked at what he saw. When he

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Walls inside Kak Najib's house in Merkajia. (Photo by: Julie Brown)



Kak Najib showing the historical map of his village's land to the CPTer. (Photo by: Julie Brown.)

attempted to survey the damages to the area he found parts of bodies strewn over the landscape. He said that he did his best to collect them and keep them from the wild animals so that these people could have a proper burial. Although Merkajia's residents are not involved in fighting, and even have an agreement with the fighters to stay away from the village, no one is immune from the effects of the bombings in this area. Over fifty bombs hit the area in a period that lasted almost a week. In the end 16 people were killed and 63 wounded. All were Kurdish fighters.

Though no one from the village lost their life, civilians in the area also continually feel the effects of these attacks. Many families have left, homes are damaged, and they no longer raise herds in this area because with every bombing the animals are released and lost. The fields are also constantly burned and destroyed around the village. The villagers from Merkajia have land deeds to this area that date back to the Ottoman Empire. Kak Najib held up a large map depicting the Assyrian village's historic land that his family has lived on for generations. He remarked, "This is our land, even if it is all burned we will never leave."

This bombing took place in November, however, CPT records show that over forty Turkish Cross-border bombings on Kurdish areas similar to Merkajia have taken place just in the first half 2017 alone.

Interested in traveling to see the work CPT does on our teams? E-mail delegations@cpt.org and say "I'd like a delegations starter pack!"



CPT delegate team in Iraqi-Kurdistan.



Run

CPT PALESTINE TEAM MEMBER



A Palestinian boy tries to evade an onslaught of Israeli tear gas on his way to school.

There is a group of boys from the Old City of Al Khalil/Hebron who congregate in the evenings at Bab al-Baladiyeh, the old municipality square, to kick around a soccer ball. There aren't very many places to play in the Old City but this is one of them; a space only large enough to play a 3-touch game up against a wall, right opposite of the Israeli occupying forces military base.

I had seen the boys playing several times as I walked through the Old City, but the day I finally found the courage to join in the game would forever change me and my understanding of the reality of living under occupation in Palestine.

It happened quite suddenly as the news spread around town; soon every kid I passed on the street knew my name, a small crowd would gather in the square,

and my non-existent Arabic vocabulary now included three words: she plays soccer. This new-found fame opened doors into homes where I was welcomed like family and my dust-covered pant legs and scuffed shoes – although initially to my embarrassment – became a testimony to the joyful new friendships.

Soon, though, our regular Friday afternoon pick-up game in Bab al-Baladiyeh became impossible as military jeeps barged through the square on their way to Shuhada St./Checkpoint 56. Fatah, the governing party, called for weekly demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian Political Prisoners' Hunger Strike and Israeli military forces responded with excessive tear gas, sound grenades, skunk water, live ammunition, and rubber bullets against protesters.

In the days

Cont. on Page 14





following the clashes, the phone calls increased. Only this time it wasn't soccer scheduling. The boys were calling us frequently to let us know the soldiers were in the streets. The soldiers began a manhunt conducting ID checks and intrusive body searches of almost every young man walking or driving. They carried photos of boys throwing stones during the clashes, asking local community members and threatening families for information on the boys' whereabouts.

On Monday May 1, Amir* appeared at the bottom of our staircase, breathless. The soldiers had taken his brother Yousef. We ran to Bab al-Baladiyah, but it was too late. He had already been put in a police jeep and taken to the police station, later held in a detention centre in a nearby settlement, and then transferred to an Israeli military prison outside of Ramallah. While Yousef was being taken away, the soldiers continued their patrol through the neighbourhood and found Motasem sitting on the staircase by the sweet shop. They surrounded him, grabbing him firmly by the arm and leading him down the street and inside the military base where they questioned him for 20 minutes before releasing him.

We still tried to meet up for soccer when we could, but Yousef's absence was felt. Samir and I were too tired to play so we resorted to cheerleading from the peanut gallery. That was the last day I saw him. Two days later the soldiers raided his house at 4:00am. When they couldn't find him they threatened to arrest his two brothers and would not return their IDs. Samir turned himself in the next morning, Monday, May 15. His family knows nothing about his court case.

On Wednesday, May 17 on my way home from Bethlehem, I ran into some of the boys hanging out in the square. With soccer out of the question, we decided to grab some snacks and hang out at Abed's house. Just as we were leaving Bab al-Baladiyah, Abed turned around to

go back for a bottle of coke. Suddenly, three soldiers came running out of the tunnels, one of them grabbing Abed by the neck. Abed was able to pry his way out of the stronghold and escape running as the soldier ran after him. Not having caught Abed, the soldier returned to the square and grabbed his friend Aziz who had been trying to negotiate with the other two soldiers. The three soldiers held Aziz in a chokehold for 3 minutes while he struggled to breathe, smashing his head against a steel door causing him to bleed, and then dragged him inside the base where they blindfolded him. When he called his mother a few hours later he was still blindfolded, handcuffed, and did not know where they had taken him. The soldiers told Aziz that they were looking for his younger brother Amir and they threatened to shoot Aziz if Amir didn't turn himself in.

I haven't seen the boys much after Aziz's arrest. Some of them left the city for a few days and others are avoiding the streets. When I do get a chance to say hello, they are often on edge, constantly looking over their shoulders, aware of any small movement or noise. Nowhere is safe here, not even their homes. Abed is trying to finish his final exams. The soldiers showed up at his house one morning last week and he had to flee over rooftops. He's tired of being on the run. He's considering turning himself in after school's out.

These are only four stories of many more arrests and detainments that have happened in al-Khalil over the last month. The fact that four of the boys from our neighbourhood soccer team have been arrested speaks to the wider systematic violence rampant across occupied Palestine. Even something as simple as playing soccer is no longer a game but a struggle for survival where your every move is monitored, scrutinized, and criminalized.





Mailbag

We welcome your letters and feedback and recognize even those of us deeply committed to this peacemaking work can have different perspectives. We thank Eileen Corder for her gracious sharing of her perspective, printed here with permission.

Dear Peacemakers,

You do amazing and much needed work in our world. I admire you, read your reports, speak highly of you to others and send donations when I can. Your newsletter is most welcome.

In Vol 27:1, in your article “IPS,” Rachele Friesen begins with an olive harvest in Palestine, then abruptly shifts to a protest at Short Hills Provincial Park in Ontario. I flipped back to the previous page thinking I had read the “cont. Pg. 6” wrongly. I had not.

I read to the end of the article and pondered this the rest of the day. Many feelings and thoughts flew over me. I read the article twice more to understand what was upsetting me so.

I believe it was the labeling of people as either settler or indigenous, a dualistic simplification that leads to idealizing one group and vilifying another. I understand where Ms. Friesen is coming from, but fear and hatred are poisonous and communicable. The prevalence of them in Israel is the legacy of the Third Reich; I imagine the animal rights protesters are very misguided. Both situations, however, are cause for sadness and contemplation before action.

CPT has continually kept the high standards of love and compassion close to its heart and spaciousness in its head. It is absolutely vital to your mission that your endeavors embrace these standards in everything.

The seeds of prejudice should have no place in your plans.

RESPECTFULLY AND IN PEACE, EILEEN CORDER

Dear Eileen,

The issues in Palestine and Turtle Island are extremely complex and the media’s portrayals of these struggles are often laden with misinformation. Despite its complication, for those who are part of the struggle and experience the colonial oppression, the path towards action is not questionable, but rather a necessity for survival. I believe as peacemakers, we need to engage in dialogue and discussion around these issues but not become paralyzed by the complexity. It is important to recognize the structure of oppression/power, understand how power is distributed among identities, and then work to transform it.

In the story of the two harvests I see this form of peacemaking and transformations occur. The Palestinian and the Haudenosaunee harvesters are reclaiming power by accessing land, ensuring food security for their community, and upholding Indigenous cultural practices, despite pressure and threats of violence from settlers. The harvesters are transforming the system of power.

I believe we need to recognize our identities within structures of power. It is once we recognize the power that we have within those identities that we can begin a transformation process which is ultimately peacemaking. When this recognition and determination for change happens, we see a new binary that supersedes ‘settler’ and ‘indigenous’ which is those who are working for liberation and those who are working against liberation, recognizing that people who are settlers or indigenous can ebb and flow between these categories.

RACHELLE FRIESEN, CANADA DIRECTOR

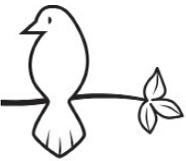




Photo from a Palestine e-mail update: Israeli military searches the car of two Palestinian men traveling in the Old City.

The Palestine team sends out regular photo updates capturing the Occupation in images, as well as the peacemaking work of the team. The Iraqi Kurdistan team sends a monthly newsletter of updates. We love to connect with you about all the peacemaking work of our teams and our partners.

Make sure you're signed up to receive our e-mail updates!
E-mail peacemakers@cpt.org and say "I'd like to receive your e-mail updates."



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Photo from a Palestine e-mail update: Israeli military searches the car of two Palestinian men traveling in the Old City.

The Palestine team sends out regular photo updates capturing the Occupation in images, as well as the peacemaking work of the team. The Iraqi Kurdistan team sends a monthly newsletter of updates. We love to connect with you about all the peacemaking work of our teams and our partners.

Make sure you're signed up to receive our e-mail updates!
E-mail peacemakers@cpt.org and say "I'd like to receive your e-mail updates."



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