

## Moving Stories

Responding to the crisis in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories

### Right to Movement



Picture by Ray Stanyon

The United Reformed Church's 2016 General Assembly agreed to expand the church's understanding of the situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

In September, 22 members of the URC travelled to IOPT on an educational trip. These included representatives from each Synod, youth, the Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority group, Church House staff, including Communications, Interfaith and *Commitment for Life*.

The group's task is to share what we saw, and to share the stories of the people we met. We were struck by many injustices, One was the fact that we as UK (and one American!) citizens had more right to movement than Palestinians.

Revd Dr Munther Isaac is an indigenous Palestinian Christian. He spoke about the unfair restrictions to movement placed upon him. "There is," he said, "one set of laws governing Palestinians living in the West Bank, another for Palestinians living in Israel and a third set of laws governing Israeli citizens." Munther had been invited to speak in the US. He was forced to travel via Jordan. He was not allowed in Israel to get to Ben Gurion airport.

This road sign show-cases these differences. Israelis are forbidden from entering Zone A under PA control. This ensures that Israelis and West Bank Palestinians cannot meet, drink coffee, fall in love or go to school together.



Picture by Kevin Snyman

This new Apartheid is particularly noticeable in the fact that some roads are built by Israel for the exclusive use of settlers. The picture below shows a road cutting through Palestinian territory. It connects an Israeli settlement, on the far left, to Jerusalem. Both the road and settlement are illegal under International Law.

"Imagine you in the UK were living under this kind of occupation," asked Munther. "What would you do?"

The trip was incredibly moving, and we hope to share more of these stories. If you would like one of the participants to speak at your church about her of his experiences, please contact Suzanne, who will try to organise that for you.



Picture by Hannah Jones