



September 2nd, 2026

An Urgent Appeal to the Churches of the World **Save Christian Schools in Jerusalem and Safeguard Our** **Children's Right to Education**

**Your Beatitudes, Eminences, and Excellencies,
Brothers and Sisters in Churches Around the World,**

The Higher Presidential Committee for Church Affairs in Palestine, headed by Dr. Ramzi Khouri, Member of the PLO Executive Committee, addresses you with this urgent appeal in response to the grave crisis confronting Christian schools in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 2026–2027 academic year. The Israeli blockade on access permits for teachers and staff from the West Bank has prevented many of them from reaching their places of work, compelling Christian educational institutions to launch an open-ended strike in protest and leaving thousands of students unable to begin the school year normally.

This crisis cannot be viewed as a mere administrative matter or a question of movement and access. Preventing teachers, administrators, and support staff from reaching their workplaces directly deprives educational institutions of their ability to open their doors and fulfill their responsibilities. The immediate consequence is that thousands of children are being denied their fundamental right to education and the opportunity to begin their academic year in safety and stability.

This is taking place against the backdrop of an increasingly severe crackdown on Palestinian education in Jerusalem. Israeli authorities are imposing the Israeli curriculum on Palestinian schools in the city, in what represents a dangerous and unprecedented escalation since Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967. Such measures strike at the cultural identity of Jerusalem and must be understood within the broader effort to erode its Palestinian identity and historical connection and to further its Judaization. These actions run contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, which affirm the occupied status of East Jerusalem. These restrictions are also reflected in legislation passed by the Israeli Knesset in January 2026 restricting the employment, in the education sector in Israel and East Jerusalem, of individuals holding degrees from Palestinian higher education institutions, potentially depriving Palestinians of the ability to benefit from their academic qualifications and practice their professions within their own communities.

At the heart of this crisis is a simple and fundamental principle: education is a right, not a privilege, and teachers and students must never be treated as a threat. Educational institutions that have served generations of Palestinians—Christians and Muslims alike—must be allowed to fulfill their mission without obstruction.



STATE OF PALESTINE

Higher Presidential Committee
of Churches affairs in Palestine



دولة فلسطين
اللجنة الرئاسية العليا لمتابعة
شؤون الكنائس في فلسطين

The situation is particularly grave because of the historic role of Christian educational institutions in Jerusalem. For generations, they have been an integral part of the city's history and of the Church's mission and presence. They have educated and served generations of our Palestinian people, regardless of faith, and have contributed profoundly to building our society and nurturing values of dignity, responsibility, and belonging. Any attempt to undermine their ability to continue this mission therefore affects far more than teachers and students; it strikes at the historic role of the Church in education and service to Palestinian society and threatens an essential pillar of the historic Christian presence in Jerusalem.

We therefore call upon the Churches of the World to stand with Jerusalem, its educational institutions, its teachers, and its students. In light of your moral and humanitarian mission and your ecclesial standing, we urge you to raise your voices and use your ecclesial and international relationships to demand the immediate reinstatement and renewal of the necessary permits for the affected educational, administrative, and support staff. Their return to their workplaces is essential to enable Christian schools to reopen, restore the continuity of education, and allow students to return safely to their classrooms.

We further appeal to you to continue supporting the educational and church institutions of Jerusalem and to affirm, wherever possible, the need to protect their historic role and ensure their ability to continue their educational, humanitarian, and spiritual mission. At this critical moment, the solidarity of the Churches of the World with Jerusalem would be far more than an act of support for individual institutions. It would be a clear defense of the right of thousands of children to education, of the historic mission of the Church, and of the enduring presence and role of its institutions in the Holy City.

We urge the Churches of the World to act now: to raise their voices, to call for an end to the permit regime, and to help ensure that teachers can return to their schools, students can return to their classrooms, and Christian educational institutions in Jerusalem can continue the mission they have carried across generations. It is time to put an end to Israel's impunity.

With our sincere thanks and respect.

Dr. Ramzi Khouri
Member of the PLO Executive Committee
Head of the Higher Presidential Committee for Church Affairs in Palestine

