

September 21, 2014

World Council of Churches' "World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel" - September 21-27, 2014

Background

- The [World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel](#) (WWPPI) is an annual program organized by the World Council of Churches' Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF). World Council of Churches (WCC) is a [collective](#) of "347 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories."
- WWPPI [seeks](#) to target policy-makers, community groups, and local parishes about "the urgent need" to end the "illegal occupation and secure the legitimate rights and future of both peoples." This year's WWPPI theme is "*Let My People Go*," in reference to "Palestinian political prisoners" – a term that, in PIEF's usage, includes terrorists convicted for attacks against civilians.
- Materials produced for the week reveal the sharply one-sided and inaccurate premise upon which the event is built. One such document, a [dossier](#) titled *Palestinian Prisoners: A Question of Conscience*, uses an all-encompassing definition of the term "political prisoner" as including "any Palestinian—resident of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, or Israel—arrested in relation to the occupation."
- PIEF erases the severity of crimes committed by many of these "political prisoners" – including the premeditated murders of Israeli civilians. The dossier demands the release of these prisoners, calling such releases "achievements," and ignoring the serious threat to human rights and the rule of law posed by their release.
- The release of convicted terrorists has had grave consequences, although this is not indicated throughout any of the WWPPI material. Some notable examples include:
 - Ayman Sharawnah, named in PIEF's dossier, was released by Israel after a prolonged hunger strike. Sharawnah had been convicted for his

involvement in a terror attack in Beersheba in May 2002 that wounded 19 Israeli civilians. Upon release, [Sharawnah returned to terrorist activities](#).

- The June 2014 kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli teens, Gilad Sha'er, Eyal Yifrah, and Naftali Frenkel, was conducted by the terrorists [Abed a-Rahman Ghaminat](#) and [Mahmoud Kawasme](#) released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange.
- [Ziad Awadh](#), released by Israel in the Shalit exchange, [murdered Baruch Mizrahi](#) in an ambush.
- Other prisoners released in the Shalit exchange are [now directing Hamas](#) operations in the West Bank from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.
- Released convicts, such as Gaza Imam Sheikh Iyad Abu Funun, can also [inspire extremism](#).



Screenshot from [MEMRI video](#) of Gaza Imam Sheikh Iyad Abu Funun brandishing rifle during a sermon on August 29, 2014.

- The dossier invents international law in order to demonize Israel, falsely claiming that “Administrative detention violates the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also constitutes a form of torture within a systematic policy which is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and amounts to a war crime and crime against humanity” (pg. 20). According to the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), this is an incorrect interpretation:

Even though internment in international armed conflicts is regulated by the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I,7 these treaties do not sufficiently elaborate on the procedural rights of internees, nor do they specify the details of the legal framework that a detaining authority must implement. In non-international armed conflicts there is even less clarity as to how administrative detention is to be organized.

Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions, which is applicable as a minimum standard to all non-international armed conflicts, contains no provisions regulating internment, i.e. administrative detention for security reasons, apart from the requirement of humane treatment.

- Another document, PIEF's [program booklet](#), makes the extraordinary claim, without citation to any objective or verifiable source, that "since 1967 about 750,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israeli forces." This would be equal to about 16,000 new prisoners incarcerated annually, contradicted by the booklet's own assertion that on average approximately 3,500 Palestinians were arrested each year since 2000.
- WCC cooperates with a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement WWPPPI. These include, [Addameer](#), [Defence for Children International-Palestine \(DCI-PS\)](#), Hurryyat, [Kairos Palestine](#), and Jerusalem Inter Church Centre (a subsidiary of the [WCC](#)).
- Governments that directly or indirectly fund WCC and its partner NGOs enable these groups' false and immoral portrayal of Israel.

World Council of Churches' "Israel-Palestine" Bodies/Agencies

- The WCC has established various bodies that participate in the international campaign to delegitimize Israel. These include the [Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum](#) (PIEF) and the [Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel](#) (EAPPI). Both were founded following the WCC's [Ecumenical Campaign to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine](#). WCC has no similar bodies to address any other world conflict.
- WCC is a major sponsor of the [Kairos Palestine Document](#), which [echoes supersessionist language of the Christian past](#) and refers to anti-Israeli terrorism as "legal resistance." WCC is a [supporter](#) and [leader](#) of anti-Israel boycott and divestment campaigns, and active in efforts to demonize Israel [at the UN](#).
- PIEF, founded "to catalyze and coordinate new and existing church advocacy for peace, aimed at ending the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories in accordance with UN resolutions," is the main organizer of the WWPPPI.
- Using a theologically-based argument, PIEF "[condemns](#) Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories" as illegal; accuses Israel of imposing [collective punishment](#); and authored a number of extreme statements about the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the [Kairos Palestine Document](#) and the ["Water Apartheid" in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.](#)"

- To support its claims PIEF relies on claims of politicized NGOs such as [Addameer](#), [B'Tselem](#), [Breaking the Silence](#), [Defence for Children International-Palestine](#) (DCI-PS), [Physicians for Human Rights-Israel](#) (PHR-I) and [New Profile](#).

World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel (WWPPI)

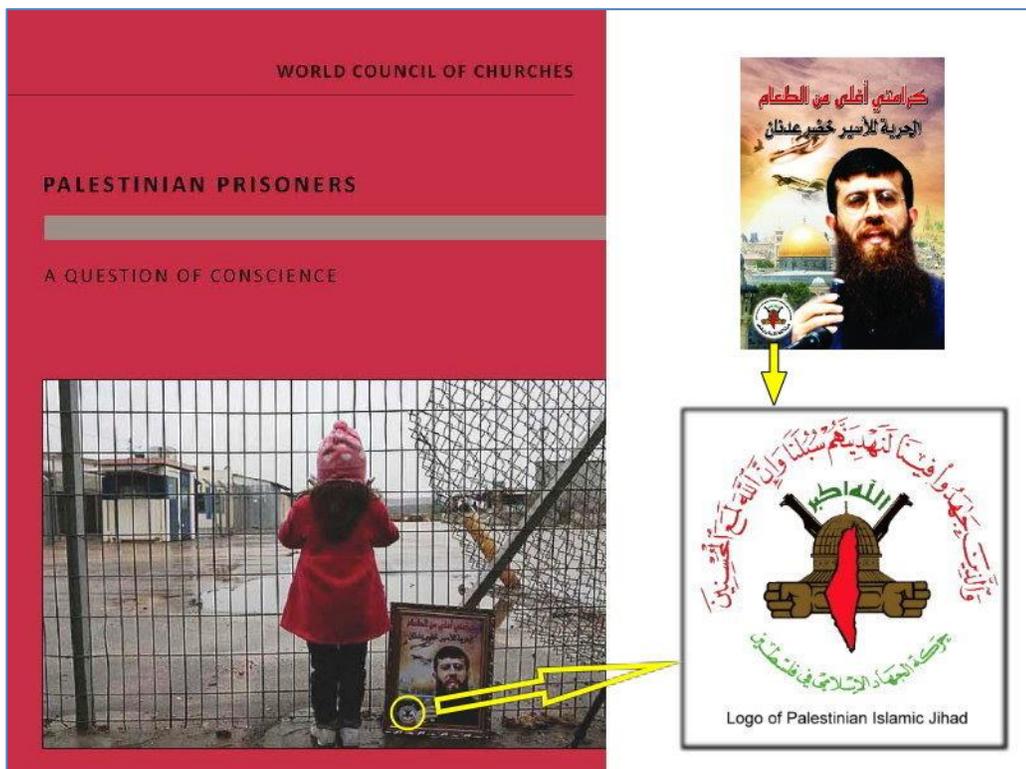
WWPPI Background

- Started in 2010, [WWPPI](#) is an “annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy” that asks participants to “work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace.”
- Each WWPPI has a specific theme and is composed of events occurring throughout the globe. PIEF invites congregants around the world “who share the hope of [justice](#)... to create a common international public witness.”
- The [2013](#) and [2011](#) WWPPIs were based on the theme “*Pray, educate, and advocate for justice in Palestine.*” In accordance with 2013’s theme, PIEF published a [resource](#) to attack Christian Zionism for “validat[ing] colonization, apartheid and empire-building.”
- Previous years (including [2010](#) and [2011](#)) focused heavily on the [Kairos Palestine Document](#), and included [literature](#) that used demonizing terms such as “dark prison of occupation” and “greed of land confiscation.”
- NGOs and their leaders, such as [Richard Falk](#), [Jeff Halper](#) (ICAHD); [Naim Ateek](#) (Sabeel), [EAPPI](#), [Pax Christi](#), [Kerk in Actie](#), [Secours Catholique](#), [Rabbis for Human Rights \(RHR\)](#), [Wi’am](#), [Caritas](#), and Act for Peace (AFP), are [significantly involved](#) and act as highly politicized advocates for WWPPI.

WWPPI – 2014

- [WWPPI 2014](#) focuses on four main topics derived from the theme “*Let My People Go*”: Political prisoners; Administrative detention, Child prisoners, and Harsh prison conditions.
- The four topics are outlined in WCC/PIEF’s resources, including the [Program Booklet: “Let My People Go”](#) and the [Dossier: “Palestinian Prisoners A Question of Conscience.”](#) The program booklet and the dossier generally reference politicized sources that promote a one-sided narrative against Israel. The dossier does not provide specific and clear referencing for its findings. It simply lists the NGO contributors at the beginning and end of the document without attributing specific statements to specific sources.

- The documents minimize the threat of terrorism, while simultaneously alleging Israeli “war crimes,” “torture,” “crime against humanity,” mass detention and imprisonment,” and “illegal and arbitrary detention.”
- The dossier uses a definition of “Palestinian political prisoner” taken from the NGO [Addameer](#): “Addameer defines political prisoners as any Palestinian—resident of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, or Israel—arrested in relation to the occupation” (p. 2). This broad definition includes those convicted of terrorist crimes or have committed other acts of violence.¹
- In October 2012, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) became the first major intergovernmental organization to approve [specific criteria](#) for what defines a political prisoner. The criteria states that “those deprived of their personal liberty for terrorist crimes shall not be considered political prisoners if they have been prosecuted and sentenced for such crimes according to national legislation and the European Convention on Human Rights.”



Cover of dossier highlighting Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist prisoner released after a hunger strike.

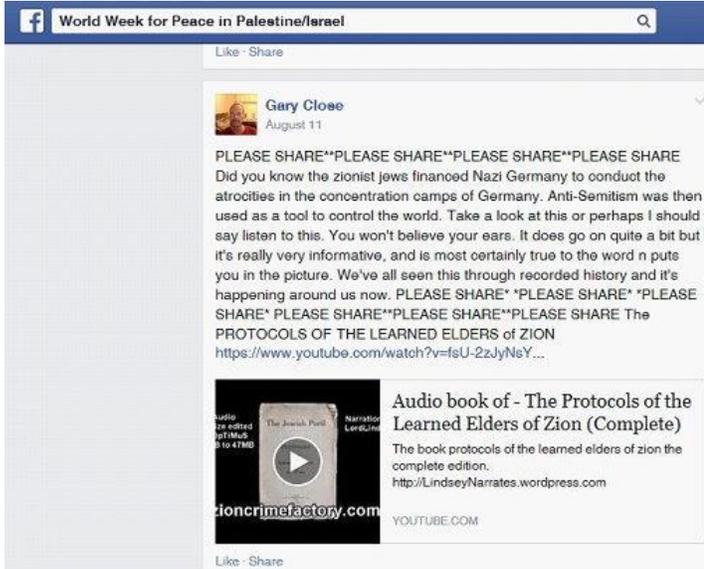
- The dossier’s cover features a photograph of a young girl standing outside a prison fence and next to a poster of prison hunger striker [Mohamad Musa Khader](#)

¹ Addameer Chairperson Abdullatif Ghaith was [banned](#) by Israel from travelling internationally because of his alleged membership in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror organization.

[Adnan](#). The logo of [Palestinian Islamic Jihad \(PIJ\)](#) can be seen clearly on Adnan's poster. Adnan is [reportedly](#) a leader within PIJ and is associated with radical Islamist terrorist activities. This key detail - Adnan's association with a terror group - is not mentioned anywhere in the dossier, despite its presence on the dossier's own cover.

- Both the dossier and the program booklet erase any connection between Palestinian prisoners and the terror groups they represent; likewise, they do not contain the words " Hamas," " Islamic Jihad," or the names of any other terror groups.
- The dossier demands the release of prisoners, without excluding those who committed violent crimes against civilians: " Addameer accordingly demands that all administrative detainees held on account of their political views or their activities carried out in resistance to the occupation be released promptly and unconditionally" (p. 27).
- PIEF erases the severity of crimes committed by many of these " political prisoners" – including the premeditated murders of civilians – as well as the serious threat to human rights and the rule of law posed by their release.
- The words " terrorism" and " terrorist" appear only four times in the dossier (pp. 11, 16 & 26), and always in the context of belittling Israel's self-defense against terror. These words do not appear at all in the program booklet. " Violence" and " violent" are used in both the dossier (24 times) and the program booklet (11 times), but only in reference to Israel's alleged treatment of these prisoners, never to violence committed by prisoners convicted for their involvement in terrorism.
- The dossier portrays emotive case studies, among them Ahmad Sa'adat (p. 65) who is serving a 30-year sentence for heading the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) listed by the U.S. as a foreign terror organization. Sa'adat was recently [praised and honored by the P.A.](#) for his terrorist activities and planning. The case study neglects to mention Sa'adat's terrorist leadership, planning, and activities against Israel for which he was incarcerated, and instead alleges Sa'adat's " poor prison visitation rights."
- The dossier advocates for the early release of specific ailing prisoners (p. 48-55), many of which have been convicted of murder on several counts. However, there is no such standard within international law.
- [WWPPI's Facebook page](#) includes posts promoting overtly antisemitic material, such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, material written by neo-Nazi David Duke, and a documentary called. "[Israeli Genocide in Gaza](#)" The Facebook page

also contains an [antisemitic cartoon](#) depicting Israel – with a prominent Star of David – as a [snake](#). As of the date of this factsheet, WCC has not removed any of these materials from its Facebook page, implying that it condones antisemitic messages.



NGO Partners and their Government Funders

- As part of their larger campaign to demonize and delegitimize Israel, NGOs that are [funded by European governments](#) call for “an end to the illegal Israeli

occupation of Palestine,” and make legal and factual claims without the necessary expertise or access to objective and independent facts.

- WWPPi’s materials – such as [Program Booklet: “Let My People Go”](#), [Worship Liturgy: World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel 2014: “I Was in Prison”](#), and [Dossier: “Palestinian Prisoners A Question of Conscience,”](#) – include significant contributions from biased, one-sided, and highly political NGOs, without citations, verification, or other sources of evidence.²
- For example, the dossier dedicates an entire chapter to child prisoners “based on an analysis of the 206 affidavits collected by DCI-Palestine in 2012 and 2013.” [NGO Monitor](#) has shown that many of the allegations published by [DCI-Palestine](#) lack credibility and are based on false or unverifiable information. At the end of the chapter, the dossier states “The affidavits collected by DCI-Palestine during 2012 and 2013 indicate that the ill-treatment of Palestinian children held in Israeli military detention is widespread and systematic.” No additional citations or verification are provided.

Table: European governments are enabling several of these NGOs to conduct their work. Key NGOs (listed as “[cooperators](#)” in WWPPi documents and “[organizations](#) working with Prisoners and Human Rights”) and their government funders.

NGOs	Government Funders
Addameer	UK , Netherlands , Ireland , Sweden , Switzerland , Denmark
DCI-Palestine	Sweden , Denmark , Netherlands , Germany , Italy , Spain , Belgium
New Profile	Germany , Switzerland , Netherlands
B’Tselem	European Union , France , Norway , Germany , Sweden , Switzerland , Denmark , Netherlands , UK
Breaking the Silence	Spain , European Union , Netherlands , Belgium , Norway

² These NGOs include: [Amnesty International](#), [Breaking the Silence](#), [B’Tselem](#), [Bread for the World](#), [Defence for Children International \(DCI\)-Palestine](#), [Gisha](#), [Hamoked](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [ICAHD](#), [New Profile](#), [PCATI](#), [PHR-I](#), [Sadaka Reut](#), [The Alternative Information Center](#), [UNICEF](#) and [UN-OCHA OPT](#), [Yesh Din](#), [+972 Online Magazine](#). Other organizations cited by WWPPi oppose peace and negotiations, promote narratives that reject the legitimacy of a Jewish state, or are involved in blatant antisemitism. These NGOs include: [Adalah](#), [Al-Haq](#), [Addameer](#), [Badil](#), [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), [MIFTAH](#), [Machsom Watch](#), [Kairos Palestine](#), [PCHR](#), [WCC](#) and its subdivisions [EAPPI](#) and Jerusalem Inter Church Centre (JIC).