

Jerusalem, 15 September 2011

Dear friends and partners,

Greetings from the Holy City of the Resurrection, City of Hope where life conquered death.

This week will see an important event for us all in Palestine and Israel. The Palestinian Authority will request the United Nations to vote on the recognition of Palestine as a full member state.

At Caritas Jerusalem, we have seen the ravages of the occupation on the people for the past 44 years. There is the destruction of houses and crops, the discrimination for access to resources and services, the fear of random arrest and the creeping despair that eventually we might lose all our land to Israeli settlers. The feeling of injustice and humiliation is in every heart.

If Palestine becomes a UN member, Palestinians will regain their dignity. They will be considered as equals in peace negotiations and when defending their cause in the UN forum. They will have access to the International Court of Justice to protect the rights of their land. They will finally believe in a peaceful future in Palestine for their children.

A positive vote will not result in an instant peace agreement between Israel and Palestine. However, this is a real opportunity to restart the negotiations. The vote is a chance for us Palestinians to demonstrate our determination to achieve a true stable and democratic state living peacefully alongside Israel. It is also a chance for the international community to show that they truly support the two-state solution and the principle of self-determination of people enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Please show your support to Palestine's bid to the UN, write to your government, sign petitions and take part in peaceful demonstrations.

We do pray with all our heart for the voices of peace and justice to prevail on both Palestinian and Israeli sides. We pray for Jerusalem to witness a true miracle - from a City of Hope to become a City of Peace.

Claudette Habesch
General Secretary
Caritas Jerusalem