



Abu Sake, Jordan Valley. Image Hilary Minch, Eappi



Armed Israeli settlers polluting the Yanoun village well. Image Hilary Minch, EAPPI



Qalandiya Checkpoint. Image EAPPI

About our Speakers: Ian Bell & Hilary Minch

Ian and Hilary have both served recently as human rights observers with the World Council of Churches –Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. (www.eappi.org)

The EAPPI programme is an independent human rights and advocacy programme created by the World Council of Churches in 2002. It provides protection through presence by accompanying Palestinians in their daily lives and supporting Israeli peace activists. The Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) bear witness to violations of international law and human rights. On their return home, they advocate for a just peace based on international law and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

Ian and Hilary will talk about the experiences they shared with Israeli peace activists and Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank. Ian is a founding member of Orkney Friends of Palestine and Hilary is a member of the Board of Sadaka – the Ireland Palestine Alliance, an organisation founded in 2009, to maximise support in Ireland for the Palestinian people in their struggle for national, democratic and human rights.

The Human Rights context

In Area C of the West Bank, a diminishing number of indigenous Palestinians live cheek by jowl with an ever increasing number of Israeli settlers living in well over a hundred illegal settlements.

Palestinians are diminishing in number in large part because Israel denies Palestinians the right to build on their own land or to access their grazing land and routinely demolishes Palestinian homes. At the same time, Israel asserts its absolute right to build ever more colonies for Israeli settlers on Palestinian land, despite calls from the international community to cease this illegal activity.

To make matters worse, many Palestinians living in Area C are under constant threat of harassment and physical attacks by armed Israeli settlers, who routinely attack Palestinian men, women and children, burn crops and destroy olive trees. The Israeli army does little to stop this violence and often appears to protect the Israeli settlers.

The system of control encompassing planning policies, home demolitions and settler violence, results in the forced displacement of Palestinians out of lands in which they have lived for generations to make way for Israeli colony settlements, all of which are illegal under International Law.

