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Between the Frontlines

On the Role of Palestinian Christians

Marc Frings

The region between the Mediterranean and Jordan, as well as beyond, is considered to be holy by the three monotheistic world religions. Judaism represents a majority in Israel, while Islam represents a majority in the Palestinian Territories. However, Christians living on both sides of the Green Line – which is the demarcation line that separates Israelis and Palestinians – are a minority in both. Waves of emigration, which started about one hundred years ago, are one of the main reasons for the declining number of Christians in the region. At the birthplace of Christianity, of all places, one is confronted with the question about its continued presence there in the future. What are the current trends emerging within the Christian communities today?

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is perceived first and foremost as a geopolitical rivalry.¹ Israelis and Palestinians fight over the equitable split of a country that both sides claim for historical, religious, or political reasons. Singular events have in recent years once again raised the question of whether the religious dimension is increasingly impinging on the national nature of this conflict. This discussion flared up again in the summer of 2017, when Israel restricted access to the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif and deadly incidents occurred. Palestinians in East Jerusalem reacted with peaceful resistance in the sense of civil disobedience.² Of note is that not only Muslims demonstrated for their right to pray. Christians demonstrated side by side with Muslims, holding the Cross and Bible. That summer's events confirmed the primacy of politics: the collective experience of occupation (the West Bank), annexation (East Jerusalem) and blockade (Gaza) prompt Palestinian Christians and Muslims to adopt a national perspective, which also stimulates the search for identity.

For Christians, this is associated with unique challenges. Under closer scrutiny, their coping mechanism is built as a triangle with each base angle representing religion (Christians), freedom (Palestinian) and superimposed by national belonging (Arab), in which the Christian side

seeks to position itself. In daily life, this set up leads to incoherence characterised by contradictions and pragmatism.

Despite the fact that Christians in the Middle East have long been stigmatised,³ it is important to remember that Islam is the religion that was exported into the region in the 7th century by Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab. He conquered Palestine in 637 and thus successfully contested Christianity's dominance in the region. Christians have always lived at the holy sites. They had to negotiate their status as religious minority with all emerging regimes starting with the expanding Caliphate, and later with the powerful rulers in Constantinople and London.

Until the end of the Ottoman Empire, some 900 years passed in which Christians did not enjoy equal status with other religious communities. During the Ottoman period, the *Millet* system was in place. This system guaranteed minority rights and protection to Jews and Christians. At the same time, Christians had to endure restrictions, such as a ban on missionary work as well as the obligation to receive permits from the Caliphate to set up new churches.⁴ It was only with the establishment of the British Mandate over the former Ottoman province of Palestine that they obtained the same rights as other religious

communities. This came as a consequence of the League of Nations' ratification of the mandate's mission in July 1922.

There were shifts in the power structures with some clear implications for religious minorities in the 20th century. These include Muslim-influenced nationalism, the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, burgeoning Islamism throughout the Middle East, and, last but not least, the disintegration of state monopolies on the use of force, as can be observed today in Syria and Iraq.⁶

How many Christians still live in the region?

Some 14.5 million oriental Christians live today in the countries of the Near East, including Turkey, Israel, and Cyprus. Around 120,000 to 150,000 Christians live in Israel. In the Palestinian Territories (including East Jerusalem), there are around 47,000 residents who are followers of the Christian faith. Palestinian Christians are divided among all denominations, although followers of the Orthodox denomination are in the majority.

These figures should be considered with reservation, since different statistics are out there as well. The number of non-Palestinian Christians in Israel is notably unclear. The Latin Patriarchate estimates their number at around 165,000.⁷ On the Palestinian side, a census was conducted in 2017, the results of which were presented on March 28, 2018. Accordingly, the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics estimates the number of

Christians in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank to be around 46,850.⁸ The comparative value approach will lead to limited trend identification (see table 1), as the 2007 Palestinian Bureau of Statistics had limited access to Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and, therefore, had to estimate the number of inhabitants and their denominational affiliations.

While Christians are leaving their native homeland, other religious groups are growing. Statistically speaking, a Palestinian Christian in Israel has 2.18 children, an ultra-Orthodox Jewish mother 6.5, a secular Jew 2.88, and a Muslim mother 3.84 children. Only non-religious families grow to a lesser extent than Christians.⁹ In the Palestinian Territories, the birth rate lies at 4.4. As a result, their respective proportion in society sinks rapidly because of the current birth distribution. In Israel, Christian growth is at two per cent. In Palestine, it is at only one per cent.

Indigenous and Immigrant Christians in Israel: Limited Contact amongst Them

Christians live on both sides of the Green Line, with their respective realities being now and then different in Jewish-molded Israel and in Muslim-dominated Palestine. In Israel, Christians live in the midst of a Jewish nationalism which marginalizes them, an increasingly Muslim-molded Arab nationalism, and a growing evangelical movement.¹⁰ Recent waves of immigration pose an additional threat to the indigenous Christians:

Table 1: Palestinian Christians in the Palestinian Territories 2007 and 2017

Year	Bethlehem	Ramallah/ al-Bireh	East Jerusalem	Jenin	Nablus	Gaza Strip	Other Governorates
2007	21,560	10,817	5,271*	2,423	665	1,377	452
2017	23,165	10,255	8,558	2,699	601	1,138	434

* 2007: Estimates (Census could only be carried out to a limited extent in East Jerusalem.)

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2018, n. 8, p. 35.

with the end of the Cold War, an influx of non-Arab Christians to Israel has started and it continues up to this day. The new Christians originate from the former Soviet Union (Christians who immigrated with their Jewish spouses), Africa (asylum seekers), and Asia (migrant workers). These immigrants differ in many ways from Palestinian Christians in the State of Israel. Palestinian Christians form a homogenous group with a high level of political organisation and a geographical focus on the north of the country. This puts them in a position not only to assert their minority status in Israel, but also to articulate their national aspirations. As indigenous Christians, they are closely connected to their homeland. Juxtaposed to them are the Christians who lack identity-defining characteristics (see table 2). Some sources assume that these immigrants already form the majority among the totality of Israeli Christians.

These Christians are collectively referred to as “Hebrew-speaking Christians” as distinct from their Palestinian (Arabic speaking) brethren. They are not politically organised, since they are mainly concerned with assimilation. They live in Jewish neighborhoods and go through an educational system that does not address their Christian identity. The indigenous group, like the immigrant Christians, takes on a *minority* role, but neither side sees any reason for mutual networking.

Table 2: Origins of Emigrant Christians without Palestinian Roots in Israel

Emigrants from the former Soviet Union	30,000 – 40,000
Work migrants from Asia	50,000
Asylum seekers from Africa	35,000
Others (Christian tourists that have stayed on)	50,000

Source: Neuhaus 2017, n. 10, p. 15.

Christians in Palestine: a Minority with a Unique Profile

According to the Israeli and Palestinian Constitutions (Basic Laws), all believers have the right to practice their religion, no matter where they are. As for the Palestinian Territories, this also applies to the Gaza Strip, which has been under the control of Hamas for almost eleven years. The Islamist organisation has used its rule in order to legally transform this area according to their ideology through laws and regulations. There are about 1,100 Christians living among Gaza’s two million inhabitants. About two thirds of them state they do not feel secure or only partially so.¹¹ No attack specifically targeting Christians has so far been documented. Human rights organisations also emphasise that they do not see any restrictions on religious freedom in the Gaza Strip.¹² One can therefore assume that Hamas uses the Christian presence to present itself as a guardian of religious freedom, while at the same time pushing for an Islamisation of public space on all other levels. Unlike in Israel, where the Jewish character has constitutional significance, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestinian Autonomy (PA) strive for a discourse that is inclusive of multiple religions: “We do not know a Palestine without Christians,” stated one Palestinian official.¹³ Christians were always present in their midst.

As early as the first days of Palestinian resistance, there were examples of national belonging when the “Muslim-Christian Association” was founded to fight against the British Mandate. In 1968, the “Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine” (PFLP) was founded by George Habash, a Greek Orthodox Palestinian who propagated leftist terrorist strategies in the 1960s and 1970s. He was the first to call for the hijacking of civilian aircrafts as a means of terror.

The Christians’ prominence in public space comes first and foremost thanks to institutional arrangements. Although Article 4 of the Palestinian Basic Law states that Islam is the official religion, other religions are also protected by the Palestinian Authority. The “Higher Presidential Committee

of Church Affairs” reports directly to President Mahmoud Abbas on the situation of Christians in the Palestinian Territories. This is a strong indication that the political leadership is very much concerned with the fate of the local Christians.¹⁴ Only a few Arab governments have a comparable representative body for religious minorities. An additional profile is given to Christians through a quota system that grants them a majority in ten municipal councils in the West Bank. A quota system has also been established at the executive and legislative levels to represent the entire Palestinian society: in the Palestinian Legislative Council, six out of 132 seats are reserved for Christians.

More than One Hundred Years of Emigration: Why Do Christians Leave Their Homeland?

Today, the reasons for Christian emigration are part and parcel of the global trends of migration movements: the search for a better life including upward mobility motivates many persons who are willing to emigrate. In addition, there are specific local factors: Christians attended missionary schools, bringing about their early emergence as a middle class in urban areas. Hence, they were historically destined to live abroad early on.¹⁵ From the very beginning, respectable Christian schools focused on teaching foreign languages and conveying a positive view of the West.

Migrant movements among Palestinian Christians (and other groups) began in the mid-19th century and began to intensify in 1908 when the Ottomans introduced obligatory conscription for Christians.¹⁶ Subsequently, mainly young men left their homes fleeing the Ottoman army service in the hope of prosperity. The main destinations were North and South America, with Latin America in particular still a popular destination for Palestinian emigrants – such as Chile, where 500,000 Palestinians live today.

A second wave of migration had political and military causes. The first Israeli-Arab war in 1948/1949 resulted in about 700,000 Palestinians either fleeing or being displaced from Israel. 50,000 Christians fled in the turmoil of the war; West

Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Lidda lost the majority of their Christian inhabitants.¹⁷ Between 1948 and 1967, the migratory movement continued in the form of a third wave of emigration. Well-educated Christians responded to calls from Jordan and the Gulf States for qualified professionals. Political pressure increased during Jordan’s sovereignty over the West Bank and East Jerusalem, resulting in internal Palestinian emigration and settling down east of the Jordan River, in present-day Jordan. After the Six-Day War (1967) and the precarious situation thereafter, there was a renewed rise (fourth wave) of Christian migration. This war brought about the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and later on the annexation of East Jerusalem. Other Palestinians eventually reacted resignedly to the failure of the Oslo Peace Process and the outbreak of the Second Intifada in the fall of 2000. This prompted a fifth Palestinian migration wave into the diaspora.

While the quota system described above reflects the goal of the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah to provide opportunities for more participation by religious minorities, the social climate is currently changing. Christians are becoming, more than ever before, aware of their minority role and find themselves in a relationship of dependence with the majority religious communities. Fear of political change that would be of disadvantage to them often promotes the feeling of being safer abroad than in their Palestinian homeland. And finally, culture, public discourse, and educational concepts contribute to the feeling that Christians are not part of the Palestinian collective. Those who stay have the choice between different coping mechanisms – assimilation into the respective environment, suppression of their own identity, dialogue with other social groups, or retreat into an inner exile.

Trends and Challenges

The characteristic incoherence of the Christians – in the sense of a (survival) strategy – is constantly being challenged by political, economic, and social trends. Palestinian Christians face two fronts: in Palestine, they are threatened by Islamisation, while in Israel they encounter Jewish fundamentalism encouraged by national-

religious Jewish splinter groups and Jewish right-wing extremists.¹⁸ So-called “price tag attacks” against Palestinians and Christians are said to be a reminder to the Israeli Government that concessions to non-Jewish groups are undesirable.¹⁹ The 2009 Kairos-Palestine document represents a tangible result of the recent politicisation of Christians.²⁰ The authors of this document perceive it as a Christian response to the Israeli military occupation. The most famous co-author is the former Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, who became one of the most important voices of Oriental Christians during his tenure (1987 to 2008). As the first Palestinian Latin Patriarch, he used his prominent stature to point out the political grievances of his people.

The Kairos-Palestine document, entitled “Cry of Hope”, aims to promote a positive and constructive outlook on the future of Palestinians and Israelis. It was written by local Christians in Arabic to primarily reach out to Palestinians. Local oriental Christians have so far never taken a standpoint on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in such a clear and organised manner. The text goes beyond a description of the state of affairs and comprises concrete recommendations for action, such as support for non-violent resistance. The reference to the *Great Song of Love* (1 Cor. 13: 1–13) is the theological background of this document whose core ideas – faith, love, hope – are transmitted to the present and applied as a roadmap. In this context, the initiators of Kairos understand love as an obligation to resuscitate the moral force of Judaism. Thus, the group has made itself quite vulnerable to attacks, because it currently embeds the latter within the context of the resistance to the Israeli military occupation. In view of the global attention that the document received, not least because of its positioning towards boycott campaigns against Israel, the initiative is regarded by the initiators as a great success.²¹ Michel Sabbah describes the church in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an actor who should embody the message of Jesus and contribute to reconciliation between the two sides. The Latin Patriarchate’s Commission for Peace and Justice makes a clear statement when it says: “In both societies [in Israel and in Palestine], Palestinian life is far from normal.

To act as if everything is normal would be to ignore the violations of the basic rights of people.”²² With this, the Catholic Church stands with those who criticise the view of having “normal relations” with Israel as long as the occupation persists.

While church representatives seek out the public, church members often choose the opposite path – there is already talk of self-imposed ghettoisation.²³ New neighbourhoods emerge, sometimes with institutional support, to provide Christians with easy access to church and school. Closed residential complexes that are distant from the traditional Christian residential quarters deepen the gap with the Muslims. This phenomenon is often described in East Jerusalem, where work opportunities are lacking and housing is expensive. This is particularly painful since key sites of Christianity such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Via Dolorosa, and the Mount of Olives are all located in East Jerusalem.

Whoever Can Leave, Leaves: Empirical Findings on Emigration Trends

In a joint project, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ramallah and DIYAR (Bethlehem) presented empirical findings on the causes of migration among Christians and Muslims in the Palestinian Territories.²⁴ According to those, Christians and Muslims generally tend towards a similar viewpoint of political and social developments.²⁵ For example, both sides feel that freedom of religion is a given,²⁶ whereas their sense of security depends above all on their place of residence and on religion (see fig. 1).

The conflict with Israel (45 per cent of Christians/60 per cent of Muslims) and the economic situation (16 per cent of Christians/twelve per cent of Muslims) are most often cited as unsettling factors.²⁷ Only Christians in Gaza cite religious extremism as an insecurity factor (25 per cent).

62 per cent of Christians and 92 per cent of Muslims are convinced that Zionism pursues the goal of driving Christians and Muslims out of Historic Palestine.²⁸ To be precise, a majority (65 per cent of Christians/52 per cent of Muslims) states that their

freedom of movement is being restricted.²⁹ For Christians there is a particular heaviness in regards to the route of the Israeli Barrier today, which runs between the Nativity Church in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.³⁰

Upon a closer look at migration trends, it is striking that 23 per cent of Christians surveyed have family members who have emigrated during the previous year, while the same is only true for twelve per cent of Muslims. Migration has thus become a mass phenomenon, with 49.5 per cent of the 12.7 million Palestinians in the world neither living in the Palestinian Territories nor in Israel.³¹ Hence, one can assume that probably every Palestinian knows someone with personal migration experience. The fact that twice as many Christians as Muslims have experienced migration in their immediate family environment suggests that their ratio in Palestinian society will continue to decline.

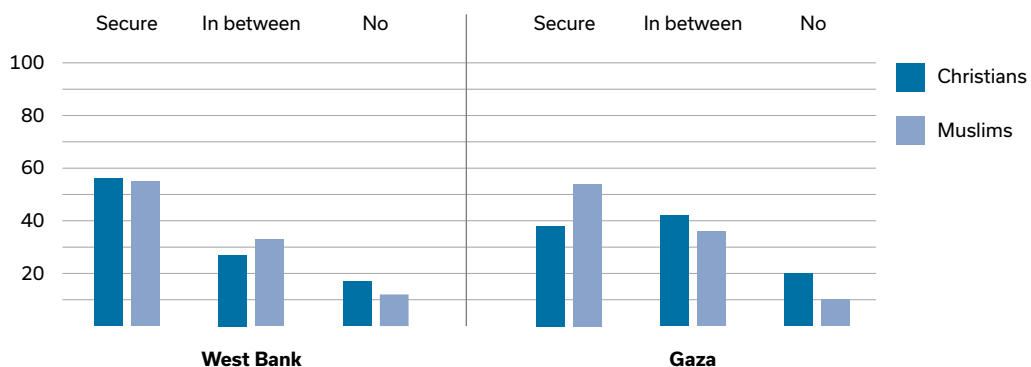
Family members who stayed behind state that economic causes have been the main driver for the emigration of 72 per cent of Christians and 59 per cent of Muslims. By contrast, political (twelve per cent of Christians/18 per cent of Muslims) and social or religious factors (nine per cent of Christians/17 per cent of Muslims) played a subordinate role. The primarily national perspective is confirmed by another ratio: 63 per cent of Christians and as many as 89 per cent of Muslims believe that Israeli actions influence their presence in the Holy Land and contribute to emigration.

28 per cent of Christians surveyed and 24 per cent of Muslims say they are considering emigration. The proportion of those willing to emigrate could increase as tensions in the Middle East increase. 27 per cent of Christians and 20 per cent of Muslims say that the regional situation increases their desire to emigrate.

The secondary relevance of religion and religious affiliation is reflected not only among those willing to emigrate, but also within the group of those who want to stay in their Palestinian homeland – only two per cent of Christians say they do not want to emigrate for religious reasons.³² The fear that at some point there would be no more “living Christian stones” left to safeguard the religious heritage is therefore not constitutive for any considerations regarding emigration. On the contrary, the perceived link with the country (41 per cent Christians/49 per cent of Muslims) or the family (34 per cent of Christians/36 per cent of Muslims) is too deep-rooted within them to seek out emigration.

Despite tensions between Washington and Ramallah since the inauguration of President Donald Trump, a majority of those willing to emigrate would like to have a new life in the United States (43 per cent of Christians/25 per cent of Muslims), while no European country is named as a preferred destination. Only when all European countries are added up, it becomes clear that the continent, with 26 per cent (Christians) and 49 per cent (Muslims), ranks close to the results of the United States. The

Fig. 1: Do You Feel Safe, and Do You Think Your Family and Property Are Safe as well? (in Per Cent)



Source: Raheb (ed.) 2017, n. 11, p. 104.

fact that Europe is locally perceived as rather pro-Palestinian and the US as pro-Israel does not have any direct impact.

On the Future of Christians in the Palestinian Territories

When US President Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017, the Arab and Muslim worlds were enraged. Those who protested referred not only to the difficult circumstances for future peace talks if the USA should take on a one-sided position regarding this final-status issue. They also referred to the religious significance of the city of Jerusalem for Islam. At the same time, Christian Jerusalem has increasingly been included in the discourse. All church leaders turned to the US President in advance to promote conciliatory action.³³

Palestinian Christians lead a niche existence in their homeland. Their everyday lives are split between the claustrophobia of self-imposed ghettos and the extensiveness of the diaspora, where more Palestinians live now than in the Palestinian Territories. In order to reverse this trend, some efforts are necessary. This includes giving more prominence to the Palestinian history's Christian heritage. For example, textbooks should reflect a pluralistic society. Even today, there is concern among Christians as to whether a future Palestinian state will be in a position to protect its own religious minorities. This fear appears justified when looking at the restriction of liberties in the Arab World. According to the US think tank *Freedom House* which measures the global state of freedom and democracy on an annual basis, only Tunisia is considered free, three states are considered partially free, and all other states are not free according to the Freedom Index.³⁴ Taking measures to build confidence can combat this fear. Christians should not lack self-confidence: 70 schools for 27,000 pupils and 260 social and charitable organisations are sponsored by the church.³⁵

Economic incentives are necessary in order to fundamentally curb migration aspirations. 20 per cent of all employees work in hotels, restaurants,

or commerce. An estimated 630,000 tourists, one third of them pilgrims, visited the Palestinian Territories in 2017 (Israel: 3.7 million), which barely made itself felt economically, since at best 1.1 per cent of the GDP are generated by the tourism sector.³⁶ Some educational work is needed in the West in order to advocate for equitable and sustainable tourism, particularly among pilgrims. This task could be taken over by the diaspora, who can put their networks and experience to use.³⁷ There is a great potential in tourism considering an unemployment rate of 27 per cent and restrictive trade opportunities in the Palestinian Territories. At the same time, East and West are called upon to critically reflect on their ability to have a dialogue: the religiously oriented Middle East encounters a secularised West, that likes to boast about its values, which in turn, though, are much less integrated into daily life than those in the Orient are. Palestinian pastor Mitri Raheb points out another contradiction: while Arab Christians often act as a progressive force, Christians in the West are viewed as custodians of conservative values who oppose change.³⁸ Despite all the problems mentioned here: according to the KAS-DIYAR study, an overwhelming majority is convinced that Christians will continue to live in Palestine in the future. However, the same survey also reveals that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is increasingly perceived as a religious conflict. Religions and their representative bodies are requested, on the one hand, to emphasise their peaceful nature and, on the other hand, to make it clear that they are not following political agendas. In order to keep the perspective of the "living stones" at the sacred and historic sites unscathed, there is a need for signals of hope that the political and economic framework for all believers in the region, no matter their religion, will improve.

-translated from German-

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- 1 This report is an updated and extended version of the following publication: Frings, Marc 2018: Zwischen den Stühlen. Zur Rolle der palästinensischen Christen, in: Deutsche Statthalterei des Ritterordens vom Heiligen Grab zu Jerusalem (Jahrbuch 2017/2018, Neue Folge 82), pp.14–21.
- 2 Cf. Frings, Marc / Schroeder, Bastian 2017: Eskalation am Tempelberg, KAS Country Report, 27 Jul 2017, in: <https://goo.gl/5r5dWV> [4 May 2018].
- 3 Steinbach, Udo 2008: Christen im Nahen Osten, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 26, 12 Jun 2008, pp.3–7, here: p.3, in: <http://bpb.de/apuz/31139> [4 May 2018].
- 4 Cf. Dane, Felix / Knocha, Jörg 2010: The Role and Influence of Christians in the Palestinian Territories, *International Reports* 12/2010, pp.53–71, here: p.55, in: <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.21240> [4 May 2018].
- 5 Access to the original document: The Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, The Avalon Project, in: <https://bit.ly/1tRrXWk> [4 May 2018].
- 6 Cf. Steinbach 2008, n.3, pp.6–7.
- 7 Interview of the author with David Neuhaus (former Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew-speaking Catholics in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem), West-Jerusalem, 12 Aug 2017.
- 8 Cf. State of Palestine, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2018: Preliminary Results of the Population, Housing and Establishments, Census 2017, Feb 2018, p.14.
- 9 Cf. *ibid.*; Jandrey, Anna / Caro, Eva Keeren 2016: Be Fruitful and Multiply! Israel and Its Growing Minorities, *International Reports* 4/2016, pp.28–40, here: pp.31 f., in: <http://kas.de/wf/en/33.47595> [4 May 2018].
- 10 Neuhaus, David 2017: Writing From the Holy Land, Jerusalem, p.14.
- 11 In the West Bank, 44 per cent state to not feel secure or only partially so. Cf. survey results, in: Raheb, Mitri (ed.) 2017: Palestinian Christians. Emigration, Displacement and Diaspora, Bethlehem, pp.98-150, here: p.104.
- 12 Interview of the author with human rights activists, Gaza, 28 Aug 2017.
- 13 Interview of the author with a PLO-official, Ramallah, 8 Aug 2017.
- 14 Interview of the author with Issa Kassissieh (Ambassador of Palestine to the Vatican), East-Jerusalem, 11 Aug 2017.
- 15 Raheb, Mitri 2017: Palestinian Christians in Modern History: Between Migration and Displacement, in: *idem* (ed.) 2017, n.11, pp.9–28.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 West-Jerusalem lost 88 per cent, Haifa 52 per cent, Jaffa 73 per cent, and Lod 70 per cent of the Christian population in that period. Cf. *ibid.*, p.13.
- 18 Cf. Pater Schnabel, Nikodemus 2017: Angefeindet. Ein Erfahrungsbericht über Christen im Heiligen Land, *Die Politische Meinung* 545, Jul–Aug 2017, pp.85–87. Surveys document that at least 20 per cent of Palestinians favor political Islam (measured through support for Hamas), cf. surveys by KAS and PCPSR, in: <https://goo.gl/skQVff> [4 May 2018].
- 19 Young men of the “Hilltop youth” conducted an arson attack on a German monastery in 2015. For details, cf. *ibid.*; Domradio 2017: Vier Jahre Haft, 12 Dec 2017, in: <https://domradio.de/node/263017> [4 May 2018].
- 20 Cf. Kairos Palestine: Kairos Document, A moment of truth. A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering, in: <https://goo.gl/55YGKP> [4 May 2018].
- 21 Interview of the author with Nora Carmi (co-initiator of Kairos Palestine), East-Jerusalem, 11 Aug 2017.
- 22 Commission for Justice and Peace: The Question of Normalization, Jerusalem, 14 May 2017, in: <https://goo.gl/fBmiHS> [4 May 2018].
- 23 Cf. Schnabel 2017, n.18, p.86.
- 24 Cf. Raheb 2017, n.15.
- 25 For details on the methodology, cf. Aghabekian / Rabah, n.11, p.30.
- 26 On a scale from 1 (no freedom) to 10 (very high level of religious freedom), Christian interviewee’s response average was 7.5 compared to 7.9 as perceived by Muslims; *ibid.*, p.30.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p.31.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p.34.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p.42.
- 30 Cf. interview Kassissieh, n.14.
- 31 Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs 2018: PASSIA Diary 2018, Jerusalem, p.383.
- 32 Aghabekian, Varsen / Rabah, Jamil 2017: Migration of Palestinian Christians and Muslims, in: Raheb (ed.) 2017, n.11, pp.29–43, here: p.33.
- 33 The letter of the 13 Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches is available here: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 6 Dec 2017, in: <https://goo.gl/J1VfMA> [4 May 2018].
- 34 Freedom House 2018: Freedom in the World 2018. Democracy in Crisis, in: <https://goo.gl/frFK4Z> [4 May 2018].
- 35 Al Qass Collings, Rania / Kassis, Rifat Odeh / Raheb, Mitri (eds.) 2012: Palestinian Christians in the West Bank. Facts, Figures and Trends, Bethlehem, pp.15-16.
- 36 Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, n.31, pp.408 and 418.
- 37 Cf. interview Carmi, n.21.
- 38 Raheb, Mitri 1995: Ich bin Christ und Palästinenser, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh.