

## JUST REPORT AND ACTIONS 6<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2025

*Note. I have finally worked out how to do hyperlinks in the text to avoid long internet addresses. For the uninitiated, the text that is highlighted links directly to a web address, all you have to do is click. IKR...magic of tech*

### WITNESS

- [Deaths in Gaza](#): From Gaza Unlocked, reported by an AFSC worker on the ground, c. 217 people in the week from 27/12/24 to 3/1/25: These are the most reliable figures. Al Jazeera reports suggest around a further 100 killed between 3-6<sup>th</sup> January.
- We held in our thoughts, [Lina](#), a young girl displaced in Gaza who has just had her first period – no sanitary protection, no privacy, no celebration of adulthood and much pain.

### ACT

Two actions this week.

1. We need to persist with our call for the release of Dr. Abu Safiya, still detained and according to eyewitness [Islam Bader](#) stripped and whipped with cables and being interrogated. Details of the attacks and detention are on [Al Jazeera](#), [Middle East Eye](#) and [Medglobal](#).

**This is extremely urgent as there are already reports of his injuries and Sde Teiman detention centre is notorious for torture and rape.**

**Email your MP again. We suggest also emailing the British Medical Association(BMA).**

See [Annex 1](#) for sample letter and contact details. If you are a healthcare worker, you could consider joining [MedAct](#), who are brilliant campaigners on Palestine and other issues, and also email your union on this topic. Also talk to your colleagues, your doctors and ask them to act.

2. Letter to bishops in the Church of England. This follows on [a previous initiative by CAMPAIN](#), but focuses on what message and moral leadership they are providing in their dioceses (that is, the area administered and served by the bishop). Whether or not you are a practising Anglican does not matter – as our friend Sharen Green reminded us, the Church of England is the established, state church (whether we like it or not!) and has a responsibility to all of us. Find the details in [Annex 2](#).

### LEARN

Nicola shared her research into the websites of all the 41 dioceses. In brief, 10 had no statement at all about Palestine or Gaza, 12 had made statements in October 2023 but had nothing since. (ie over 50% offering no current prayers or information). However, there were some shining exceptions, including [Gloucester](#), [Chelmsford](#) and [Norwich](#). Positive suggestions based on the research can be included. As far as I could see, only 5 Christmas sermons directly referenced the conflict in the Holy Land.

### NEXT WEEK

Focus on BBC coverage of Palestine genocide, in particular the bias of ME Editor Raffi Berg; background, staff complaints, petition signing. If you can, read [Jonathan Coulter's recent blog](#) which contains among other things a summary of Owen Jones's report, or watch Jones's interview with Novara Media [here](#). Please also prepare by watching and listening to news broadcasts (if you can bear it) from the main channels (BBC, ITV, C4) and Radio 4 and World Service, so that we develop our own views on the topic.

**ANNEX 1 Email to British Medical Association/ copy to your MP/ email your MP again for Dr Abu Safia**

[BMAScotland@bma.org.uk](mailto:BMAScotland@bma.org.uk)

[BMAWales@bma.org.uk](mailto:BMAWales@bma.org.uk)

[BMANorthernIreland@bma.org.uk](mailto:BMANorthernIreland@bma.org.uk)

[info.public@bma.org.uk](mailto:info.public@bma.org.uk).

feel free to customise, and add your experience if you are a health worker or associated.

FAO

Professor Philip Banfield, Chair of BMA Council; President Dr. Mary McCarthy; Alex Mills, Director of Finance; Emily Baker, Director of HR; Gareth Williams, Director of Legal Services; Carolyn Brown, Chief Information Officer; John Robertson, National Director BMA Scotland; Peter Gordon, Director National Negotiations; Greg Beales, Director Communications and Policy; Nicky Jayesinghe, Chief People Officer; Matt Waddup, Director of Member Relations; Claire Armstrong, National Director Northern Ireland; Chief Executive Officer - Neeta Major; Chief Executive Officer Rachel Podolak; Emma Runswick, Deputy Chair of Council; Trevor Pickersgill, Treasure; Latifa Patel, Chair of Representative Body

Dear Professor Banfield, Dr Mary McCarthy and colleagues

I note that the BMA has to date failed to join calls by the international medical community for the immediate and unconditional release by the Israeli government of Dr. Abu Safiya from Kamal Adwan Hospital, [who was arrested along with colleagues, and detained on December 27<sup>th</sup> 2024](#). Dr. Abu Safiya is reportedly being held at the infamous [Sde Teiman](#) detention camp, where torture and rape have been evidenced. Witness [Islam Bader](#) has testified to seeing him stripped and whipped with cables. There may be just time to save him from the fate of his colleague, [Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh](#), whose death seems to have been the result of violent rape.

Israel must stop targeting Gaza's healthcare system. Since 7 October 2023, over 1,050 healthcare workers have been killed in Gaza by the IDF. The latest casualty is a young neonatal doctor Thabat Saleem, who worked as a volunteer at the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, and was killed in a strike on a house in the Nuseirat refugee camp during overnight bombing on Monday. Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on human rights, issued this plea to healthcare workers across the world. "I urge medical professionals worldwide to sever all ties with Israel as a powerful statement against its complete destruction of Gaza's healthcare system—a key instrument of its ongoing genocide". According to WHO, and [ICRC](#) this latest crime there is now no functioning hospital in northern Gaza and only nine partially functioning in the south. Please, on behalf of humanity and the Hippocratic oath by which you are bound, use the power that you have to campaign for Dr Abu Safiya's release, the release of all medical staff now held in detention, and the cessation of the assassinations of healthcare workers.

**Sample 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to MP (see report December 30<sup>th</sup> for a fuller version with links)**

Dear... In your capacity as....I urgently request you in the name of common humanity, and international law, to demand of the Israeli Government the immediate and unconditional release of Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, his colleagues and patients from Kamal Adwan Hospital in Northern Gaza. Dr. Abu Safiya is reportedly being held at the infamous [Sde Teiman](#) detention camp, where torture and rape have been evidenced. There may be just time to save him from the fate of his colleague, [Dr. Adnan Al-Bursh](#), whose death seems to have been the result of violent rape. [Islam Bader](#) has testified to seeing Dr Safiya stripped and whipped with cables. Despite worldwide concern and requests for his release, Israel has given no information. All doctors have a responsibility to treat every patient they encounter, regardless of affiliation. This is the basis of the Hippocratic oath. Please let me know what you are doing to secure his release and safety.

**ANNEX 2 Writing to Bishops.**

This takes a bit of time, but we think well worth doing in order to persuade church leaders to make a stand. If they all did so, things could really change. Don't forget – you do NOT have to be a church goer to take an interest.

**Step 1.** What is your diocese? Look here <https://anglicanonline.org/uk-europe/england/dioceses/index.html> and use educated guess to narrow down. OR look at your local Anglican church website which should tell you (note that large dioceses are subdivided.. there will be "suffragan" bishops for the smaller areas, whom you may want to contact). Sharen Green says Deans have a lot of influence, so if you have time, copy to them.

We will be writing a joint letter to all bishops later, but starting local is the best idea!

**Step 2.** Have a look at the website – type into search engine eg. *Diocese Norwich* and it will take you straight there. Use the *search* facility for keywords – I used Palestine and then Gaza. If you have time, Ukraine is an interesting keyword, as many websites have more information on this than on Palestine. It's important to form your own view about what is there – or not there. Sometimes the Christmas sermon is posted, and can be read quickly, again this gives you an indication (one was all about the joy of baking which seemed extraordinarily insensitive when famine is stalking the Holy Land).

**Step 3.** Write your letter. Customise the template as you wish. If they are doing a good job, tell them so! And ask how they are using their influence locally and nationally to lead to change. Select the points you want to make, and add your own. For example, your own experience at Christmas services; an offer to help – lead a prayer, run an activity, be there to speak to people and pray with them, cook a meal...; why you want them to show moral fibre

The email address of the Bishop is usually on the website, but they are provided below.

Dear Bishop (Christian name)

I live in your diocese and am looking for ...(leadership and moral clarity) from the Cof E – the established church of the UK – on the issue of genocide and apartheid in Palestine and Gaza....

- The evidence of War crimes & Genocide is very clear, it is a year since the International Court of Justice issued its [Summary of the Order of 26 January 2024](#)
- Over 45,805 have been killed to date, including 14,500 innocent children. Another 22,000 people have life changing injuries.
- Deaths over the Christmas period (24-26 December), more than [100 Palestinians were massacred](#) – including children like [Buthania Aziz](#), shot in the head and the heart on Christmas Eve by a sniper, and the [8 babies who have frozen to death](#) over the Christmas period.
- Perversion of Christian and Christmas message. Christians have a special duty to speak out, because our faith came from Palestine, and the actions of a Palestinian – Jesus of Nazareth.
- Archbishop Cottrell's [Christmas sermon](#) tells us what we should be doing.

*At the centre of the Christmas story is a tiny vulnerable child; a child that Herod's furious wrath will seek to destroy, for like every tyrant, Herod cannot abide a rival.*

*Don't just talk about justice, don't just talk about joy, don't just talk about service, don't just talk about love. Show me.*

- The massacre of innocents is happening now. If Christians rose up and spoke with one voice, truth to power, we could force our government to stop supplying Herod with his weapons, and support the calls to ceasefire in the UN.
- The house of Bishops has made no statement on the genocide in Palestine, since [February 2024](#). This is unbelievable.
- Please join the global call for the release of [Dr. Abu Safiya](#), Director of the destroyed Kamal Adwan hospital, whose life is in danger at the infamous [Sde Teiman](#) detention camp.
- [JUST](#) – is an action group who meet weekly. The convenor undertook research into the response of church leaders to Israel's actions over the last year. This shows that:- Of the 41 dioceses in England and Wales, 10 (nearly ¼) webpages returned no information for the search terms **Gaza** or **Palestine**; 12 dioceses had posted strongly worded information, prayers and statements in October 2023, but had not updated anything since. We found some reference to the ongoing conflict in the 2024 Easter sermons by 3 bishops. Only 5 bishops seemed to make explicit references to the conflict in the Holy Land in Christmas sermons of 2024. 6 dioceses took a much more proactive stance.
- What are you going to do this year, 2025, to make this stop?
- Here are some wonderful examples from diocesan websites that perhaps you could consider for your own website...from Gloucester, Salisbury, Chelmsford, Norwich, Manchester and Oxford

*A reflective and moving address and prayer on the website about actions for peace and the Christian message,*

delivered in English, Farsi and Arabic

Signposting peace vigils in the area

Days of fasting and prayer

Bringing people of different faiths together to share food and pray for an end to the conflict

Setting aside a place in churches where people can go to pray for the Holy Land – prayer trees – with prayers provided

Fundraising links to relevant charities

Resources for schools and parents to use with children

A link to [Pastor Munther Isaac's wonderful Christmas sermon](#), which teaches us about hope and resilience, from the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas church in Bethlehem.

Links to Christian groups (and others) supporting Palestine

## Emails addresses for Bishops.

Bath & Wells	Michael Beasley	bishop@bathwells.anglican.org
Birmingham	Michael Volland	bishopsadmin@cofebirmingham.com
Blackburn Burnley Bradford Lancaster	PhilipNorth Joe Kennedy Toby Howarth Jill Duff	bishop@bishopofblackburn.org.uk bishop.burnley@blackburn.anglican.org <a href="mailto:bishop.toby@leeds.anglican.org">bishop.toby@leeds.anglican.org</a> bishop.lancaster@blackburn.anglican.org
Bristol	Vivienne Faull	PA <a href="mailto:maria.quantock@bristoldiocese.org">maria.quantock@bristoldiocese.org</a> Sarah.simpson@bristoldiocese.org
Canterbury Dover	Vacant: contact Bishop Rose Hudson Wilkin	BishopofDover@bishcant.org
Carlisle	Vacant	contact one of the Deans or main office
Chelmsford	Guli Francis-Dehqani	Rev Rachel Pennant,chaplain@chelmsford.anglican.org
Chester	Mark Tanner Sam Corley, Stockport Birkenhead Julie Conalty	<a href="mailto:bpchester@chester.anglican.org">bpchester@chester.anglican.org</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/Northern_Bishop">@Northern_Bishop</a> <a href="mailto:bpstockport@chester.anglican.org">bpstockport@chester.anglican.org</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/SamCorley10">@SamCorley10</a> <a href="mailto:bpbirkenhead@chester.anglican.org">bpbirkenhead@chester.anglican.org</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/BirkenheadBish">@BirkenheadBish</a>
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