



**Statement from Bishop Azar on Israeli Settler Attack in Taybeh**

*Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Early on the morning of Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, Israeli settler terrorists once again attacked the Christian village of Taybeh in the West Bank. This attack was part of a systemic pattern of intimidation, violence, and destruction by Israeli settlers in Palestinian towns. These settlers, often protected or aided by Israeli soldiers, attack Muslims and Christians indiscriminately, killing and stealing livestock, burning cars and homes, and even murdering Palestinians. Israeli settlers killed two Palestinians in the West Bank already this week. The message to Palestinians is that we are not safe on our own land.

Monday's attack in Taybeh hit close to home for our Church. Jeries, a member of our church and the nephew of one of our staff, was in his home with his family around 2 a.m. when settlers began throwing homemade bombs at his home and car. Terrified, he was trapped inside with his wife and two-year-old son as smoke began to fill the house. They called for help, but friends and neighbors were unable to reach them because the fire blocked the main door to the home. Jeries's son began to cough from the smoke. Thankfully, they were eventually able to escape safely to a neighbor's house. Their car was intentionally burned, destroying it and all the equipment Jeries uses as a photojournalist. Without his car and photography equipment, he is in danger of losing his livelihood. Due to the damage in their home, Jeries and his family cannot return right now.

As he said when sharing his story with us, "The world must know what is happening here."

These attacks, whether on Christians or Muslims, must stop. World leaders, including faith leaders, can not be silent. In Taybeh, in al Mughayyir, in Masafer Yatta, Palestinians are being driven from their homes and lands by this brutality. The Christian community is at risk of extinction. We call on our siblings in Christ around the world to speak up for the safety of Palestinians, including Christians. We call on the international community to take action to end this assault on our people and bring justice to the Holy Land.

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