



WCC-EAPPI update 2025: Resilience, Restoration, and Hope

A Message from the Programme: Prisoners of Hope

The year 2025 was a crucible for the World Council of Churches - Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI). It was a year that tested our resolve, challenged our operational capacity, and ultimately, reaffirmed our unwavering commitment to the principles of protective presence, documentation, and advocacy. We faced an unprecedented security crisis that necessitated the temporary evacuation of all Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs), a decision made with the heaviest of hearts but with the safety of our people as our paramount concern.

Yet, this is not a story of absence, but one of profound resilience. It is the story of how, in the face of adversity, our programme adapted, learned, and returned with renewed purpose. It is the story of Group 100, a historic milestone, deployed under the theme of "Prisoners of Hope," symbolizing a spiritual and operational restoration.

Throughout the year, both before the pause and after our return, our EAs stood in solidarity with vulnerable communities, documented the realities of occupation, and provided a powerful moral witness. Our advocacy efforts reached the highest levels of European policy, our research shed light on the creeping annexation of Jerusalem, and our new strategic plan laid a bold path for the future.

We invite you to read and reflect on this extraordinary year, a testament to the courage of our EAs, the resilience of our Palestinian and Israeli partners, and the enduring power of ecumenical solidarity.



The Year in Numbers

| Activities | 2025 Figure |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Ecumenical Accompaniers Deployed | 73 (across 5 groups) |
| Field Activities Conducted | 2,045 |
| Human Rights Violations Documented | 3,618 |
| Major Advocacy Campaigns | 1 (Stop Annexation – one month) |
| New Strategic Initiatives | 2 (Faith Leaders Delegation, EU Project Extension) |

Note: Quantitative data reflects the period of 1 January – 31 December 2025.

A Year of Crisis and Resilience: The 2025 Timeline

January – May: Intensifying Presence

The year began with Group 96 continuing their mission, providing stability across all four placements. They were succeeded by Group 97, an 18-member team that marked the full resumption of operations in the South Hebron Hills. This period saw an intensification of protective presence and documentation amidst escalating settler violence and preparations for a major advocacy push.

May – June: Campaign and Crisis

In May, EAPPI launched the Stop Annexation campaign, a global effort to mobilize action against de facto annexation policies in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The campaign utilized webinars, social media, and coordinated advocacy across 21 countries to raise international awareness and pressure governments to uphold international law.

Simultaneously, Group 98 deployed into an increasingly volatile security environment. In just over a month, they documented a staggering 557 human rights violations. The deteriorating situation culminated in mid-June, when a comprehensive security assessment indicated unacceptable risk levels, leading to the difficult but necessary decision to evacuate all EAs.



June – September: A Period of Reflection and Strategy

The temporary evacuation, carried out safely and systematically between 13-17 June, created a tangible void in the communities we serve, powerfully highlighting the critical value of an international protective presence. This three-month operational pause was not a period of inactivity. Instead, it became a crucial time for reflection, learning, and strategic realignment. Key activities during this period included a comprehensive debriefing to enhance security protocols, finalizing the EAPPI Strategic Plan 2025-2030, and securing a 12-month, no-cost extension of our EU-funded project.



September – December: Restoration and Renewed Advocacy

September marked a triumphant moment of restoration. Group 100, the 100th group of EAs since 2002, deployed under the theme "Prisoners of Hope" (Zechariah 9:12). Their arrival was celebrated with a "Passing on the Light" ceremony at St Anne's Church in Jerusalem, symbolizing a renewed and doubled commitment to the mission.

The final quarter of 2025 was characterized by a surge of strategic activities, including a successful Faith Leaders Delegation, olive harvest solidarity, and a dedicated advocacy week in Brussels.



Key Achievements and Initiatives

Draft Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The cornerstone of our future work, the draft strategic plan, focuses on enhancing resilience, deepening community impact, amplifying advocacy, fostering innovation (including digital accompaniment), and ensuring financial and operational sustainability.

EU Project Extension

This critical extension allows for the expansion of our work, including high-level lobbying activities, production of new fact sheets and a video on the Right to Education in East Jerusalem, a new targeted advocacy campaign, and expansion of the successful Faith Leaders Delegation model.

Research: The Isolation of Jerusalem's Northwest Villages

In late 2025, EAPPI highlighted damning research on the 16 villages of northwest Jerusalem, home to 70,000 people. The reintroduction of a strict permit regime at the Al-Jeeb checkpoint has, in the words of one community leader, turned the area into "a large prison." Our advocacy amplified findings on the devastating humanitarian impact, including economic strangulation, denial of healthcare access, and the tearing of the social fabric.

A Story of Hope: Faith Leaders' Delegation

In September, a successful pilot initiative with DanChurchAid (DCA) brought a delegation of Danish church leaders and parliamentarians to "live the experience" of EAs. This immersive experience created powerful new advocates for justice and peace in the region. The delegation witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by communities and the importance of protective presence. This initiative will be expanded in 2026, in collaboration with partners like DanChurchAid, Al Sabeel, and others, to bring more leaders to the region and build a broader coalition for change.

Looking Forward to 2026

As we move into 2026, WCC-EAPPI is stronger, more resilient, and more strategically focused than ever before. The outcomes of the latest programme evaluation and the lessons of 2025 have been integrated into our operational DNA. Our priorities for the coming year include the full implementation of the new strategic plan, the expansion of innovative advocacy models like the Faith Leaders Delegations, and a continued, unwavering presence alongside the communities who need it most. Challenges remain immense, but the hope that fuels our mission is inextinguishable. We will continue to be "prisoners of hope," working tirelessly for a just peace for both Palestinians and Israelis.



Get Involved

Your support is crucial to our work. Here's how you can get involved:

- **Pray:** Join us in praying for the people of Palestine and Israel, for our Ecumenical Accompaniers, and for a just and lasting peace.
- **Advocate:** Contact your elected officials and urge them to support policies that promote human rights and international law in the region.
- **Share:** Share this update and our stories on social media to raise awareness about the situation in Palestine and Israel.
- **Apply:** Consider becoming an Ecumenical Accompanier and serving as a witness for peace.

About the WCC-EAPPI

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel is a programme of the World Council of Churches that brings people from around the world to the West Bank to serve as human rights monitors. Since 2002, over 2,000 Ecumenical Accompaniers have served in the region.

About the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity. The WCC brings together churches, denominations, and church fellowships in more than 120 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 580 million Christians and including most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed churches, as well as many United and Independent churches.