

Rise up and act or forever be downtrodden

By Sam Bahour

A new and ultra-creative initiative has been launched from Palestine, it is called *Kumi Now* and is an inclusive call for nonviolent action to achieve a just peace. The outfit behind this call for action is the well-respected Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, based in Jerusalem. *Kumi* in Aramaic means to “Rise Up” and that’s exactly what this initiative is calling for, all people of conscience to take at least one action a week aimed at bringing a just peace to Palestinians and Israelis.

“*Talitha kumi* (Little girl, rise up),” it is said of how Jesus instructed a dying girl who then rose and walked. *Kumi Now* aims to wake up a world in coma, allowing crimes against humanity to happen without accountability. *Kumi Now* is not about merely talking the talk of peace and justice, but rather walking the walk by offering actions for all of 2019, one focal point a week.

Actions are also color-coded around:

Political Advocacy: *Involves writing to or calling public officials, representatives, and embassies as well as using humor to poke fun at those who have power to make legal changes.*

Social Advocacy: *Involves connecting friends and fellow activists across the globe to build a community of coordination to raise awareness in local and global settings.*

Educational Advocacy: *Involves learning more about the particular issues of injustice in individual and communal settings, sharing information with friends, and experiential learning activities.*

Spiritual Advocacy: *Involves building coordination among different faith traditions and communities through prayer, activities, vigils, etc. as well as reminding Church leaders of their call to be prophetic voices in our world.*

At the core of the *Kumi Now* initiative are its partners, organizations invited to join *Kumi Now* and were chosen by Sabeel based on their commitments to nonviolence, equal rights, and respect for international law. These partner organizations span a diverse network of Palestinian, Israeli, and international organizations.

From the first pages of this guidebook one understands it not your traditional read. The opening page starts with the “*Kumi Commitment*” which reads:

This declaration of commitment sets out how much time you intend to spend on Kumi each week. It is intended as a personal motivator and prayerful goal rather than something set in stone or something that you will be judged on. It is yours and yours alone.

The Commitment then goes on, asking the reader to devote a self-defined number of hours a week to peace in Palestine and Israel.

The *Kumi Now* initiative is founded on three values: Inclusivity: everyone is welcome to join the movement; Justice: based on international law, ending the occupation (including Gaza, the West

Bank and East Jerusalem), the right of return, and equal rights for all citizens of Israel; and Nonviolent resistance: a commitment to using nonviolence as the only form of resistance.

Rising up is exactly the missing ingredient to bring this human tragedy in Palestine and Israel to an end. The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center is to be congratulated for lighting the candle to lead people forward to peace with justice.

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