

25 June 2023

Mission Partner prayer and update from Embrace Jericho

Dear Friends,

Once again, I can't thank you enough for your care and support for our friends at the Palestinian Bible Society in Jericho. Things have been really tough of late, and Elias and his team are really grateful for your prayers.

Jericho has, until recently, been one of the most peaceful towns on the West Bank. Its economy relies heavily on the tourist industry and over recent years the Palestinian Bible Society (PBS) has been building capacity and has enjoyed welcoming more and more pilgrims and visitors. Almost overnight, the situation changed at the beginning of this year. The IDF (Israeli Defence Forces) believe that the Palestinian refugee camp inside Jericho is harbouring terrorists and so they have been raiding the camp. Nine Palestinians have been killed to date in Jericho this year. The worry is that escalating violence will radicalise young people living in the camp and the wider city, making life more difficult and challenging for all who call Jericho home.

The city has also been subject to intermittent blockades, meaning that tourists can't visit, and residents can't leave. However, the staff from PBS have not had any problems entering and leaving since the end of Ramadan. Please pray that this continues.

In a busy city, quiet and reflective spaces are few and far between. PBS have been working on a garden to give participants in the Leadership Academy somewhere peaceful and beautiful to sit and reflect. The work is now complete. Sadly, the recent troubles have seen teargas canisters shot into the garden. Please pray for protection for staff and participants and that the garden may remain a safe haven.

As the political situation continues to deteriorate, please pray for the protection of Jericho's children and young people.

Blessings and all good wishes, *Su McClellan*