

Your Name
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09 September 2021

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Dear Mr Chalk,

As a member of St Philip and St James church Leckhampton, I am writing to ask you to use your influence to persuade the Israeli authorities to abandon their plans to put 21-year-old Christian student, Layan Nasir, on trial.

Layan is a student at Birzeit University near Ramallah. She attends the Anglican church of St Peter's in Birzeit which is the sister church of St Andrew's church in Ramallah, with whom we have a strong partnership. You yourself have met Rev Fadi Diab and several members of his congregation in Cheltenham.

Layan was arrested by the Israeli security forces in a raid on her family home at 5.30 a.m. on 7th July. She was held in Damon military prison until 26th August. Although now on bail, she is to be tried in an Israeli military court on 5th October.

She had taken part in protests over the death in detention, at the hands of the Palestinian Authority security services, of the activist Nizar Banat. She is one of seventy-four students from Birzeit who have recently been detained and imprisoned by the Israeli authorities. She was charged with membership of a student society that the Israeli government has designated an "unlawful association".

Fadi Diab describes her as "a remarkable young woman with a calm demeanour, tender spirit, and incredible potential. Layan was raised in a devout Anglican family to live her faith in whatever challenges may come in life."

Nothing suggests that Layan's involvement in the protests was anything but peaceful. Surely the freedoms of expression and peaceful association are fundamental, universal human rights?

I call upon you to request Mr Raab (or Mr Cleverly) to instruct HM Ambassador in Tel Aviv to raise the case with the Israeli authorities. I also ask that you write to the Israeli Ambassador in London. I would be very grateful if you would send me a copy of your letters to them.

Yours sincerely,