



Demand Immediate Release for Lutheran Youth Natalie Abu Dayyeh and Classmates



Natalie Abu Dayyeh, 21 year old Lutheran Youth

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

1 Corinthians 12:26

Dear ELCA Sumud Community,

Bishop Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) has repeatedly called for the release of Palestinian University Student and Lutheran Youth, Natalie Abu Dayyeh. Natalie is 21 years old, and one of four siblings. Her parents are pharmacists and active members of the ELCJHL Lutheran Church of the Reformation Congregation. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in media at Birzeit University to follow her passion for photography, storytelling, and reporting. She aspires to work with international news organizations and contribute behind the camera as part of a professional production team.

Natalie also has a deep passion for football (soccer) and began training in Bethlehem. She has represented Palestine in numerous international competitions. Her dedication, leadership, and determination earned her the role of team captain. She stepped away from this passion to focus more thoroughly on her studies.

Natalie is fluent in Arabic, English, and German, and is described by her siblings as a free spirit who is not afraid to embrace opportunity even when it took her far from home.

In the early hours of June 2, 2026, Natalie, along with three of her classmates – including one who is an American citizen- were taken at gunpoint from their dormitory at their university and detained. As of today, 22 days later, she is being detained and has yet to be charged. She has been denied access to seeing her family or her pastor to receive communion, and she has had limited access to her lawyer.

We as ELCA members have named our commitment to "defend the human rights of groups most susceptible to violations, especially all minorities, women, and children." in our ELCA Social Statement "[For Peace in God's World](#)", and we are reminded in 1 Corinthians 12:26 that "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it". Our voice as Americans and as Christians matters in proclaiming Natalie, her classmates, and the thousands of other Palestinians being held without charge, have human rights and must be treated with the dignity, respect, and the humanity they deserve.

Natalie is the latest victim of an institutional system of incarceration that mistreats Palestinian prisoners. Palestinians are processed in Israeli [military court](#), while Israeli citizens are processed under a civil court, which offers more rights and freedoms.

Please take a moment to advocate for the release of Natalie and her classmates. Use the buttons below to find your Senators and Representative, and feel free to send the following message to all three.

[Find Your Senators](#)

[Find Your Representative](#)

Script

(Copy And Paste from Below, and Feel Free to Edit)

Dear (Congressional Member),

My name is _____ and I am an ELCA Lutheran. My Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, is partnered with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), who have six congregations in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Jordan. One of their congregants is Ms. Natalie Abu Dayyeh, a member of the Church of the Reformation in Beit Jala, who was detained at gunpoint by Israeli authorities along with three of her fellow classmates on June 2nd and continues to be held without charge in Israeli detention.

Natalie is a smart and driven young Christian woman who has an impressive soccer and University career in her short life, and cares very much about her Church and family. The nature of her detention was traumatic and a violation of Natalie and her classmates' human rights. Israeli authorities denied Natalie permission to see her family and also denied her the right to see her priest and receive communion. This unjust treatment of Palestinian prisoners - including Palestinian Christians- goes against American values, which includes a right to know what Natalie is being detained for, and a right to her religious beliefs being respected, including the ability to see her priest and receive communion.

I urge you to call for the release of Natalie and her three classmates, demand Congress intervene in the case of these four young women either through the submission of a resolution and through public advocacy, and demand engagement with the State Department to secure their release. If this treatment of prisoners is allowed without intervention in a country the United States Government officially recognizes as a democracy, this sets a dangerous standard for prisoners in democracies around the world.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Thank you for your advocacy! Please keep Natalie, Bishop Imad and the ELCJHL in your prayers.



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