

# The YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus Switzerland Tour 2017 | Lausanne & Geneva Hosted by **Coexistences**



Jerusalem International YMCA  
ימקא הבינלאומית ירושלים  
جمعية الشبان المسيحية الدولية - القدس



July 2017, the [YMCA Jerusalem Youth Chorus](#) embarked on its fifth international tour in five years, to Switzerland. We were invited to Switzerland by a Lausanne-based organization called [Coexistences](#), a network of families who host Israeli-Palestinian groups in Switzerland to provide a space for them to deepen their relationships through dialogue and shared experiences in a space outside of the conflict.

For the vast majority of singers, it was their first tour with the chorus, and for some, their first time abroad. But over the course of just eight days, the chorus was transformed, musically and interpersonally, into a group that is stronger, more confident, and better able to care for one another.



We learned about Swiss culture and politics, from a visit to the Red Cross Museum to a chocolate-making workshop! We discussed direct democracy and the concept of neutrality. And our host families treated us to incredible experiences - our singers couldn't believe that you could simply spend an afternoon in France without anyone checking your passport!



We had two major [performances](#) during our week in Switzerland - one at the United Nations in Geneva and one in Lausanne. Our singers brought new levels of intentionality into their singing and many in our audiences were left in tears. Both the Palestinian and the Israeli representatives to the UN in Geneva attended our UN Concert and both were very moved. We also had the opportunity to connect with our Swiss YMCA family!

Throughout the week, we had the honor to work with a Swiss choir, sharing music in Arabic and Hebrew and learning Swiss folk songs in return. Our joint performance in Lausanne was such a rousing success that afterwards it turned into an hour-long spontaneous dance party. Memories like those last a lifetime.



We are extremely grateful to Coexistences for hosting us so generously during our time in Switzerland. Our singers had the time of their lives and returned to Jerusalem so proud of what they had accomplished together. As Jerusalem's reality becomes ever darker and more challenging, we return with a reinvigorated light to shine for all to see. *Merci beaucoup!*