



May 18, 2024

**We call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of all hostages and prisoners.**

Our Christian witness calls us to oppose the unrelenting genocide and displacement of Palestinian civilians by Israel's ongoing retaliation for the brutal Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, in which 1,200 Israelis died.

In the past seven months, the Israeli forces killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of whom were women and children. More than 75,000 have been injured. The number of children killed in Gaza since October is higher than in the last four years of world conflict.

We believe that Israel's brutal assault is not only a war crime but constitutes a grave spiritual emergency that should raise alarm among Christians. In Matthew 25:40-45, our Lord Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me...whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

We have seen the helpless and innocent being mercilessly targeted in Gaza. We know about the horrific killings of patients and medical staff in As-Shifa, Nasser, and many other hospitals bombed and attacked by Israeli military forces. We know of hundreds of mass graves being uncovered on hospital grounds.

We know about the hungry being killed by Israeli fire as they seek to receive humanitarian aid. We know about humanitarian agency staff being killed as they heroically served the Palestinian population. By attacking the aid distribution network and withholding sufficient aid, Israel is directly causing a humanitarian disaster and famine. Newborns and infants are among those who are starving to death in Gaza. The lack of medication is contributing to rising preventable food-borne diseases, and doctors have to operate without anesthetics.

We know about journalists being routinely killed as they bravely report from what has become the most dangerous place on earth. Over 75% of journalists killed in 2023 were killed by Israeli forces in Gaza. We know about Israeli settler violence rising in the West Bank, where settlers attack villages: killing and destroying homes as well as water and energy supply.

We know that this recent conflict is part of a larger story of systematic, brutal disenfranchisement and occupation of Palestinians since 1948 that the South African delegation called in the International Court of Justice as "worse than apartheid." For decades, Palestinians have lived in an open-air prison without prospects for justice and self-determination.

The United States and European nations are complicit in this horror. The United States has repeatedly voted NO to ceasefire resolutions in the United Nations. In addition to the four billion dollars sent over annually to Israel in military aid, the House of Representatives just voted in favor of sending Israel an additional 14 billion dollars. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and other EU members supply hundreds of millions of dollars in funds and military systems to Israel as well.

As we call for an immediate ceasefire and release of all hostages, we name what we believe is the necessary condition for a safe future for Palestinians AND Israelis: the creation of a free, safe, and internationally recognized Palestinian state in which Palestinian people can flourish as God intended for all people on Earth.

It should matter to us, Christians, because whatever we do for the least of these brothers and sisters of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we do it for Him.

Drafted by Prophetic Witness Ministry Committee

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