



Northern Territory Council of Churches

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To all people of goodwill,

We look to the Holy Land with a heavy heart, for all the death, destruction and trauma being inflicted on the people of the land. We listen to the cries of innocent children, women, and men, who suffer so grievously and unjustly from this brutal violence. We lament with all who suffer – Israelis bereaved, held hostage, or otherwise affected by the attacks on 7 October by Hamas, the people of Gaza displaced from their homes, grieving for loved ones buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings, and enduring continuous intense bombardment.

The Northern Territory Council of Churches (NTCC), joining with the World Council of Churches (WCC), yearns for peace and for justice, for an end to the seemingly endless cycle of violence and suffering, and for its fundamental root causes to be addressed. We lament the abject failure of the international community and of political leaders in the region who did not persist in the search for a sustainable peace and who kept the cycle of violence turning. Peace must be founded on justice and mutual respect for the equal human dignity and rights of all. As we stand on this precipice of morality and faith, we pray for peace, for justice, for wisdom, for understanding, and for restoration of our humanity.

Examining the current situation in Gaza, we listen to our Christian brothers and sisters in the region, who have condemned Israel's disproportionate retaliation to the attacks on 7 October. We have seen and strongly oppose the targeting of civilians, hospitals, churches, and mosques.

Additionally, in the West Bank we oppose what we see happening with unprecedented high levels of violence from the occupation, against Palestinian civilians, schools and communities by both settlers and Israeli armed forces, and closure of access to all Palestinian villages.

The NTCC:

- **Supports** all movements for peace, reconciliation, and justice. That recognise and affirm the humanity, dignity, and desire of all peoples to live in peace. Such work recognises our common humanity. This is the path that we advocate for peace in the Holy Land.
- **Asks** the Australian government, and diplomatic authorities, to advocate for an immediate ceasefire and the opening and ongoing safeguarding of humanitarian corridors.
- **Condemns** acts of antisemitism or attacks on Muslim or Palestinian communities, historically, globally and in Australia.
- **Calls** for people to seek justice and peace in ways that do not harm, vilify or incite further violence.
- **Appeals** for all parties to uphold international humanitarian law by ensuring the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, places of worship and holy sites.
- **Asks** all people of good will to join us in prayer: 'Let us unite in prayer and action for a lasting peace in the Holy Land, all places of conflict in the world. Peace can only come from justice'.



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In Psalm 130 we hear: 'Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord; hear my voice. O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.' May we too be attentive to those who call out to us from the depths of despair and destruction.

May we commit ourselves to be instruments of peace.

Bishop Charles Gauci, President of the NTCC
On behalf of
Northern Territory Council of Churches (NTCC)
24 November 2023

Anglican Church in the NT
Baptist Union of the NT
C3 Church
Catholic Church in the NT
Darwin Presbyterian Church
Lutheran Church
Uniting Church in Australia
AnglicareNT
Scripture Union of the NT