



Statement on the Escalating Situation in The Holy Land

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land is shocked and distressed by the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip and its surrounding areas; and we are particularly concerned by the potential for today's events to trigger even greater violence throughout all of Palestine and Israel. We lift in prayer the families of innocent civilians whose lives were lost today as they mourn their loved ones. We also pray for healing for all the injured and traumatized.

As the language of "war" is now being used to characterize this violence, it is important to remember that the warfare of today is not isolated. It is connected to a larger context and a longer history. As a church, we continue to advocate for non-violence; but we also believe it is crucial to understand the circumstances from which violence emerges. In this case, it is a symptom of a people deeply wounded by extended and systematic violence and oppression. The Holy Land has also seen unprecedented attacks on religious sites in recent years, which makes our situation even more personal and emotional.

The ELCJHL will take part in joint efforts to promote the rights of the Palestinian people and assist in providing critical and timely assistance to those affected by this war. Psychological assistance, especially, will be prioritized as an important response to those living through these conditions. We appeal to the international community to stand with us in these efforts to address the crisis in Gaza and to urge all involved to uphold the principles of international humanitarian law.

As always, we pray for a peaceful resolution that extends human rights to all. We remember that the peace Jesus offers, that which is based in justice and solidarity with the suffering and oppressed, is at the root of true peace.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27) NRSV.

Bishop Dr. Sani-Ibrahim Azar

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land