



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA Jerusalem, October 13, 2023

"God created mankind in his own image" (Gen 1,27)

Today, an emergency committee of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem met for prayer and consultation over the grave humanitarian crisis that has befallen all of us.

Our beloved Holy Land has changed dramatically over the past week. We are witnessing a new cycle of violence with an unjustifiable attack against all civilians. Tensions continue to rise and more innocent and vulnerable people are paying the ultimate price as the dramatic level of death and destruction in Gaza clearly show.

The order to evacuate the north of Gaza and to ask 1.1 million people—including all the members of our Christian communities there—to relocate to the south within 24 hours will only deepen an already disastrous humanitarian catastrophe. Gaza's entire population is being deprived of electricity, water, fuel supplies, food, and medicine. According to UN sources, 423,000 people have already been displaced because of the destruction of their homes. Many civilians in Gaza have said to us that there are no realistic ways in which they can evacuate to safety in any direction.

We call upon the State of Israel, with the support of the International Community, to allow humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza so that the thousands of innocent civilians may receive medical treatment and basic supplies. Moreover, we call upon all parties to de-escalate this war in order to save innocent lives while still serving the cause of justice.

Finally, in support of all those who have suffered in this war and of the families reeling from the violence, we call upon the people of our congregations and all those of goodwill around the world to observe a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Tuesday, October 17th.

There is yet time to stop the hatred.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem