



Pax Christi International Decries Escalating Violence in Israel and Palestine

Pax Christi cries out for an end to this new cycle of violence, believing that its roots are firmly planted in the persistent structural violence of occupation.

Tragically, a new escalation of horrific violence has engulfed the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinian civilians. Last month's abduction and murder of three young Israelis in Hebron and the kidnapping and murder of a 16 year old Palestinian have fuelled this new cycle of violence, which has been further fed by a flood of racist and hate-filled demonstrations.

Gaza is under relentless attack once again with serious humanitarian consequences. Israel has intensified its airstrikes and Palestinian armed groups are sending rockets as far into Israel as possible. Innocent people on both sides of the divide are suffering and dying and those responsible for the attacks should be held accountable for that.

Palestinian armed groups have set terms for a cease fire but the prospects for an immediate Israeli pullback seem remote. Many in positions of power and political leadership remain entrenched, not only unwilling to enter into any real and meaningful process of dialogue but also pouring oil on the fire with words and acts that nurture the conflict.

Pax Christi cries out for an end to this new cycle of violence, believing that its roots are firmly planted in the persistent structural violence of occupation. Both Palestinians and Israelis have a fundamental right to live in security and without fear, but true security will not be guaranteed for either until the occupation ends and each recognizes the human dignity of the other.

While the parameters of a negotiated solution to the long and violent conflict between Israel and Palestine are clear, little progress has been made to date. Renewed dialogue is essential. Pax Christi International believes that the reconciliation of Hamas and Fatah is an important step toward a negotiated solution, bringing Hamas into a legitimate political process that could lead it to abandon its armed struggle. That unity should not be undermined!

The United Nations has warned about the possibility of a full blown war. We call the U.N. Security Council to immediately take all necessary measures to end this new cycle of violence in Israel and Palestine and to set directions for new talks toward a just and sustainable peace.

At the invocation for peace in Israel and Palestine, held in the Vatican on 8 June 2014, Pope Francis said: "Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage to say yes to encounter and no to conflict: yes to dialogue and no to violence; yes to negotiations and no to hostilities; yes to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation; yes to sincerity and no to duplicity. All of this takes courage, it takes strength and tenacity".

Pax Christi International members around the world offer our sincere condolences to all those in mourning, both Israelis and Palestinians. We pray that those who have fallen recently will be the last to die violent deaths in this escalation of hatred and vengeance. We stand in solidarity with our Member Organisations in Palestine and with peace and human rights activists in Israel and Palestine. We are convinced that voices for a just peace in the region will not be silent.

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