

Seven days, seven themes – for the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel 2024



This material has been developed by the World Council of Churches for use by churches and partners worldwide during the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, observed on 16-22 September 2024.

Each day of the week presents a specific sub-theme of focus, an overview of current realities, key data and/or individual testimonies, a Bible reference and prayer.

Bible verses and prayers for each day have been drawn from Catholic Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah's daily reflections during the war in Gaza.

The main theme for the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel in 2024 is "Whatever you did...you did for me." (Matthew 25:40)

Seven days, seven themes

Day 1 – **Human loss**

Day 2 – **Injured and disabled**

Day 3 – **The displaced**

Day 4 – **Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel**

Day 5 – **Women and children under fire**

Day 6 – **The international community**

Day 7 – **Gaza reconstruction: needs, challenges, and future path**

A word of prayer

God of love and justice,

We ask you to open our hearts for empathy for the suffering on all sides. For those in Gaza who are in darkness in the face of death and destruction. Hear their cries. For those in the West Bank who are victims of settler violence and theft of land. Strengthen them in their struggle for justice. For those who are held in Gaza as hostages. For their desperate families who fear the worst. For those who mourn the death of their loved ones. Send light into their darkness. Open the door for a release of all hostages, and all those unjustly detained.

We bring before you hate and division around the world as a reaction to the war in the Holy Land:

- Hateful acts against Arabs and Muslims being labelled as terrorists while seeking a just peace.
- Attacks on Jews who are falsely held responsible for the actions of the government of Israel.

Send your spirit of love and reconciliation into our hearts, so we have the courage to uphold the sanctity of life, see the beauty of all human beings created in your image and overcome all hate.

God of reconciliation,

Send your spirit of wisdom and prudence into the hearts of those in power that a just and sustainable peace with room for a good life for both Palestinians and Israelis may become possible.

Amen

Day 1. Human loss

Numbers of lost loved ones

Israel's total casualty count is 1,410 killed. Of these, 1,139 were killed in the 7 October 2023 attacks, and at least 1,271 have been wounded, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

As published by UNOCHA, at least 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in 10 months, including at least 10,627 children of whom 663 were under one year of age, the Gaza Ministry of Health reports.

According to the Palestinian Civil Defence organization, from 7 October until the end of April 2024, there were over 78,000 injured in Gaza, and each day the war claims more civilian victims. The International Labor Organization estimates that, so far, 25 percent of the people killed in Gaza have been men of working age. In addition, Israel does not declare the number of Palestinians it arrests in detention camps under subhuman conditions and torture, with no legal rights, trial, or due process.

As Christians, we are called to embody the principles of justice, peace, and security in all aspects of our economic, social, and political life. Our faith obliges us to respond to the cries of hardship and work towards lasting peace and justice. The current crisis reminds us of our responsibility to advocate for those in distress and to use our collective voice to call for an end to violence and the establishment of lasting peace.

Even in times of darkness and despair, our faith calls us to hold on to hope, even as we see the injustices in the Holy Land today, and to provide accompaniment and renew efforts for a just peace for all people.

Prayer

"Do not put your trust in the human beings who act glorious; those who cannot save other human beings. When they take their last breath, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them. God upholds the cause of the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, and frees the oppressed."

—Psalm 146: 3-4, 7

Have mercy, dear Lord. On you we have relied; not on those who are glorious on earth, not on human beings who cannot offer salvation. There are those that bring war to us. Our only reliance is on you, dear Lord. You administer judgment to the oppressed, you provide bread to the hungry, and you loosen the chains of captives. Come, dear Lord, quickly, to Gaza, to Rafah, and to all human beings in the Holy Land. There are those who forgot about you, and they became lost on the path of death. Please save them, have mercy, dear Lord.

لا تتكلموا على العظماء، ولا على ابن آدم الذي لا خلاص عنده، من تخرج روحه فيعود إلى ترابه يومئذ تتلاشى أفكاره. مجري الحكم للمظلومين، رازق الجياع خبزاً. الرب يخلق فيود الأسرى" (مزمور ١٤٦: ٣-٤ و ٧)

ارحمنا، يا رب. عليك اتكالنا، لا على عظماء الأرض، "لا على ابن آدم الذي لا خلاص عنده". ابن آدم يحمل إلينا الحرب. اتكالنا عليك فقط، يا رب. أنت الذي "تجري الحكم للمظلومين، وترزق الجياع خبزاً وتخلق فيود الأسرى". تعال، يا رب، ولا تبطل. تعال إلى غزة ورفح، وإلى كل هذه الإنسانية التي في هذه الأرض المقدسة. إنها نسيتك، وتاهت في طرق الموت. تعال وخلصها. ارحمنا، يا رب

Day 2. Injured and disabled

The data on injured and disabled is not clear due to the continuation of hostilities that do not permit proper care and recording of injured and disability cases.

According to Palestinian Civil Defense organization, from 7 October until the end of April 2024 there were over 78,000 injured in Gaza, as [published by the WHO](#).

There has been a dramatic deterioration in the mental health of children in Gaza, according to Save the Children.

According to an assessment by UN OCHA, 5,000 persons with disabilities acquired from injuries sustained in hostilities in Gaza suffer from a lack of accessible shelters, potential exploitation, insufficient medical services, and neglect of their needs.

Women and girls make up approximately 45 percent of the population with disabilities. Most shelters are not adequately equipped for persons with disabilities. Shelters lack the required medical mattresses and beds, causing ulcers and other medical issues that cannot be treated in unsterilized conditions. Others who have been injured face the risk of long-term disability due to the lack of supplies to treat even minor injuries or fractures.

People with disabilities in Gaza have been put in extreme distress with the expectation that they will be the first and the next to be killed because of the limited opportunities to flee or take part in evacuations due to their impairment, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reported.

The committee cited the case of Y. M., an advocate for a nongovernmental organization, who had a visual impairment that caused him to be unable to escape his house, which was located in an area under attack and bombardment. He was killed at home on 7 December 2023, leaving behind four children ages two, three, eight, and 10.

“He did not get evacuation information in a timely or accessible format, nor did he or his relatives benefit from any specific accessible passages, accommodations, and shelters where he could have found the safety measures and escaped the airstrike,” the committee reported, expressing regret that disability rights advocates, like Y.M., are among those injured, traumatised, and killed.

Children with disabilities are at heightened risk of family separation, and their suffering is unendurable, the committee warned.

The committee was shocked by the account of a 14-year-old girl with cerebral palsy, a refugee in Eastern Rafah, who had lost her assistive devices, including a wheelchair, during military attacks and thus had to be carried by her parents while fleeing from North to South Gaza.

Exhausted and exposed to danger along the way, the girl cried out in desperation, “Mama, it’s over. Leave me here, and you run away.”

Prayer for those who are injured

“He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. The Lord supports the humble, and He brings the wicked down to the ground.”

—Psalm 147:3 and 6

Have mercy, dear Lord, and heal those with broken hearts and wounds in Gaza. In the middle of manmade evil, protect the weak, the wounded, and those with no home and no bread. Guide those who want peace, bring to their senses the masses who want war, and purify the hearts from revenge and death. Dear Lord, your children have faith in you. No one else can save them, you are the only God, you are the only father, and you are the most loving. Dear God, please salvage humanity from sin. Lord, have mercy.

فإنه يتنني منكسري القلوب ويضمّد جراحهم. الربُّ يؤيدُّ الوضعاء ويذلُّ الأشرارَ حتّى الأرض" (مزمور ١٤٧: ٣ و٦).

ارحمنا، يا رب. اشف منكسري القلوب في غزة، وضمّد جراحهم. أرنا وجهك، يا رب، في وسط شرور الناس. أيّد الوضعاء، والجرحى، والذين صاروا بلا مأوى، وبلا خبز. وأذلّ الذين يصنعون الحرب. أيّد العدد القليل الذي يريد السلام. وأعد إلى رشدهم العدد الكبير الذي يريد الحرب. نقّ القلوب من الانتقام والموت. اللهم، أبناؤك وضعوا ثقتهم فيك. لا أحد غيرك يخلصهم. أنت الإله الوحيد، أنت الأب الوحيد، أنت مجبُّ البشر. اللهم، خلص الإنسان من خطيئته. ارحمنا، يا رب".

Day 3. The displaced

An estimated 85% of Gaza's population, around 1.93 million individuals, are forcibly displaced. Nearly 1.4 million displaced persons seek refuge in overcrowded United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East facilities, exacerbating their vulnerability.

Preventing arbitrary displacement, and providing protection, assistance, and durable solutions to displaced persons are neither optional nor acts of charity; they are Israel's obligations as an occupying power under international law.

Palestinian lives are not mere statistics. These are families struggling to make ends meet, loved ones torn apart, children trying to find joy amidst unimaginable trauma, people like anywhere else.

The Holy Land desperately needs an immediate and permanent ceasefire, coupled with meaningful measures to document and ensure accountability for all atrocities committed.

To achieve real peace with justice for all people in Palestine and Israel, there needs to be an end goal of just coexistence, a future built on justice instead of military power, where international law is applied consistently without partiality.

The journey from Gaza City to Rafah crossing borders

*A testimony by Mayadah Tarazi**

5 April 2024

The day came when a group of 20 people, my family among them, decided to leave the shelter of the Holy Family Church.

After almost seven months my family in Gaza decided to leave their beloved homeland.

They were born, lived, raised, got their education, and worked in Gaza City.

My 82-year-old aunt decided to leave Gaza with her son and daughter-in-law and their twin 11-year-old boys.

Their decision came after my aunt's husband died, and she lost her home and belongings. My aunt's husband died due to the lack of medication while they were sheltering at the church—sheltered a long time with no proper food, no water, no medication, and no electricity.

The journey was very hard and risky.

It entailed lots of walking. No cars could operate as the roads have been totally damaged. They had to cross an Israeli military checkpoint by foot to go through, but for some reason it was closed for some time. Shooting started towards the people who were walking, and by a miracle they managed to cross the checkpoint without getting shot.

After over eight hours of walking, they finally reached the Rafah crossing border, which unfortunately was closed. They spent hours waiting, hoping that the border would open. After few more hours of waiting, and some procedures between the

Palestinian and Egyptian border of checking and renewing passports, they finally succeeded in passing.

This was followed by a 6-hour drive by bus to Cairo.

They arrived the next day to Bahrain, where my aunt's daughter lives.

She had been longing to see her mom, brother and his family, with tears of happiness seeing her mom safe and tears of sadness for the loss of her father who died earlier in November.

The last time she saw her father was 10 years ago when she visited her home in Gaza.

After almost seven months, my family was able to have a proper shower, sleep on a normal bed, eat bread and proper food, just like all other people in any other country.

My aunt shared that the first thing she saw and ate on their way when reaching Rafah was cucumbers; they hadn't seen them for such a long time, as the price of one kilo of cucumbers was about \$30 in the city of Gaza—and now cucumbers are not available at all.

She also shared that as they were walking, they found out that Gaza was totally destroyed...it was all gone.

As they walked through the sea path, they saw how there was nothing left from the coffee shops or restaurants, homes, buildings.

There was no sign of life.... It was all gone and empty...

The wife of my cousin shared: "the second of April was the most difficult day since the beginning of this war—the first time we walked with the Israeli military tanks driving next to us, we couldn't believe we arrived at the crossing borders after what we have seen. We were trying to give hope for each other to keep going; until now we are not able to overcome the fatigue, fear, and humiliation we have been through. May God give strength for people who will walk through same path."

I came across this narration as well. Sister Nabila, director of Rosary Sister's School, was with my family leaving Gaza. She narrated the journey of torment and humiliation from Gaza City to the south to the Rafah crossing.

"Arriving at the Nabulsiyeh roundabout by the beach was a miracle. After arriving, a celebration was held, torturing us for hours. The celebration began with shooting over our heads. Then the tanks quickly rushed around us, throwing sand and mud until they almost buried us.

We decided to return to death, where we were more comfortable, but they prevented us and we gathered around ourselves. Then they allowed us to pass through the gates. We got rid of our bags and personal belongings after they were buried and we did not have the ability to carry them. Then we walked a long walk and reached the crossing after darkness had fallen."

Since 7 October after leaving their homes and being sheltered at the church their lives have totally changed.

We pray for God to protect all people who are still in Gaza and insisting on not leaving.

Prayer

“He grants peace within your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat. He sends his word to the earth; and His judgement reaches his enemies swiftly.”

—Psalm 147:14 – 15

Have mercy, dear Lord. Peace is within reach, as the door where wheat is available for the hungry. But where is it? Where is peace when we cannot cross the border? Where is the wheat that will feed the children? In whose hands have you placed it? Dear Lord, people are not worthy to be your agents, and instead of giving bread they are giving death. They have not kept your children safe. Please, dear Lord, do not leave war in the hands of those who are dead and want the others dead. Please save your creation, your children, from the evil of your other children. Have mercy, dear Lord.

جَعَلْ حُدُودَكَ سَلَامًا وَمِنْ أُبَابِ الحِنْطَةِ يُشْبِعُكَ. يُرْسِلُ إِلَى الأَرْضِ كَلِمَتَهُ فَيُسْرِعُ قَوْلُهُ فِي عَدُوِّهِ" (مزمور ١٤٧: ١٤ - ١٥).

ارحمنا، يا رب. السلام على الحدود، ولباب الحنطة الذي يُشبع، أين هو، يا رب؟ أين السلام على الحدود التي لا يقدر الإنسان أن يتجاوزها؟ وأبن خبز الحنطة الذي يشبع الأطفال؟ في أي أيدي وضعته، يا رب؟ الناس لا يستحقون أن يكونوا وكلاءك. بدل أن يعطوا الخبز إنهم يعطون الموت. لم يبقوا أبناء لك. اللهم، لا تترك الحرب بين أيدي أناس موتى وبميتون. خَلِّص خَلِيقَتَكَ، خَلِّص أَبْنَاءَكَ مِنْ شَرِّ أَبْنَائِكَ. ارحمنا، يا رب.

**Mayadah Tarazi is an operational and management professional passionate about her community service and dedication to fostering positive change, and a member of various Jerusalem church-related organizations.*

Day 4. Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel

By April 2024, there were 9,500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jail, including 60 women, and 170 children, out of which 40 are in administrative detention. This is in addition to an unknown number of arrests from Gaza and the West Bank since 7 October 2023. The prisoners are sentenced in military courts where there is no appeal, and no transparent due process. The acquittal rate does not exceed 0.03%, which means that a Palestinian taken to military court, irrespective of the accusation, has a 99.97% chance of being convicted. According to Palestinian prisoner rights institutions, there are also 350 dead bodies in refrigerators, some of them withheld by Israel for years without allowing for proper burials, and an unidentified number of Palestinian dead bodies are also buried in cemeteries not disclosed by Israel.

As of 8 June 2024, 120 hostages remained in captivity in the Gaza Strip, 116 of whom were abducted on 7 October 2023, with other four hostages captured earlier. Hamas has offered to release all hostages in exchange for Israel releasing all Palestinian prisoners.

Prayer for those under siege

To you I lift my eyes, dear Lord who dwells in the heavens. I do so like servants who look to the hands of the masters. Also, we lift our eyes to the Lord until he has mercy on us. Have mercy, dear Lord. Have mercy, dear Lord, for we have had plenty of humiliation and death.

—Psalm 123: 1-3.

Have mercy on us, dear Lord, for we have had plenty of humiliation. We have lots of pain, death, hunger, thirst, and illness. Our Father who is in heaven, look to us and have mercy. To you we lift our arms, to you we cry, our Lord and Father, have mercy. Can you hear us dear Lord? Do you see the evil ones and what they are doing? Please see, dear Lord, and spread justice throughout earth. Gaza is under siege by those whom you have created. Will they prevent you from breaking the siege and saving the oppressed? Have mercy, dear Lord. Our souls are tired of humiliation and death.

إِلَيْكَ رَفَعْتُ عَيْنِي يَا سَاكِنَ السَّمَوَاتِ، كَمَا يَرْفَعُ الْعَبِيدُ عُيُونَهُمْ إِلَى يَدِ سَادَتِهِمْ، كَذَلِكَ عُيُونُنَا إِلَى الرَّبِّ إِلَهُنَا حَتَّى يَتَحَنَّنَ عَلَيْنَا. تَحَنَّنْ عَلَيْنَا يَا رَبِّ، تَحَنَّنْ عَلَيْنَا فَقَدْ شَبِعْنَا هَوَانًا" (مزمو ١٢٣ : ١-٣)

تَحَنَّنْ عَلَيْنَا يَا رَبِّ، تَحَنَّنْ عَلَيْنَا فَقَدْ شَبِعْنَا هَوَانًا". كَثُرَتْ أَلَامُنَا، كَثُرَ الْمَوْتُ فِيْنَا، وَالْجُوعُ وَالْعَطَشُ وَالْمَرَضُ... أَبَانَا الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ، انظُرْ إِلَيْنَا وَارْحَمْنَا. إِلَيْكَ نَرْفَعُ أَيْدِينَا، إِلَيْكَ نَرْفَعُ صَرَاحِنَا، رَبَّنَا وَأَبَانَا، ارْحَمْنَا. هَلْ تَسْمَعُنَا، يَا رَبِّ؟ هَلْ تَرَى الْأَشْرَارَ وَالشَّرَّ الَّذِي يَصْنَعُونَهُ؟ انظُرْ، يَا رَبِّ، وَأَقِمْ عَدْلَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْأَرْضِ. غَزَّةُ حَاصِرَةٌ بِالنَّاسِ، أَلَا يُسْمَحُونَ لَكَ أَنْتِ أَيْضًا بِكَسْرِ الْحَصَارِ لِتَنْظُرَ وَتَتَفَقَّدَ الْمَظْلُومِينَ؟ ارْحَمْنَا يَا رَبِّ، لَقَدْ شَبِعَتْ نَفْسُنَا هَوَانًا وَمَوْتًا.

Day 5. Women and children under fire

*A testimony by Hana Kirreh**

As usual, during aggression against Gaza, the victims are typically civilians, including women, children, and the elderly. This is due to the densely populated nature of Gaza. Civilians are affected directly from bombings and shootings, as well as indirectly from lack of access to essential services like healthcare, clean water, and adequate shelter. This recent aggression in Gaza has resulted in significant humanitarian crises and has led to widespread casualties and diseases among noncombatants.

The situation for women and children in Gaza during current aggression, is dire and extremely challenging. I would like to mention some key aspects related to their situation.

Impact of bombings and attacks. Women and children are bearing a disproportionate burden during the aggression due to their vulnerability. They are often directly affected by bombings, airstrikes, and military operations, which lead to injuries, deaths, and displacement.

Healthcare and humanitarian aid. Access to healthcare becomes severely limited during conflicts, making it difficult to treat injuries and illnesses. Humanitarian aid, including food, water, and medical supplies, is restricted, which exacerbates the disaster.

Psychological impact. Children in Gaza have grown up amidst continuous aggression, which takes a significant toll on their mental health. They experience trauma, anxiety, and stress, which can have long-term effects on their development. The current aggression has the most negative psychological influence.

Education disruption. Schools and educational facilities often become targets and used as shelters for civilians under very difficult situations with a lack of hygiene and privacy. This disruption in education affects children's learning and future prospects.

Economic hardships. In addition to all above mentioned hardships, the current aggression in Gaza worsens economic conditions, leading to poverty and unemployment.

Displacement and shelter. Families often leave their homes, seeking shelter in overcrowded and inadequate conditions, such as UN schools or temporary shelters. This displacement further exposes them to health risks and insecurity.

Violence against women. In such hard times, rates of domestic violence and gender-based violence tend to increase. Women and girls face heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse.

International response. International organizations and humanitarian agencies usually work to provide assistance and protection to women and children in Gaza during aggressions. However, during this current aggression, access and delivery of aid are hindered by the ongoing hostilities and restrictions.

Overall, the situation for women and children in Gaza during the Israeli military aggressions on Gaza underscores the urgent need for humanitarian intervention,

protection of civilian lives, and long-term efforts to address the root causes of conflict in the region.

Addressing the consequences of war on women and children requires a multi-faceted approach involving humanitarian aid, policy interventions, and long-term support. The most important is that governments work hard towards a ceasefire. We pray hard for liberation, peace, and justice.

On 6 May, the UN published data showing that 34,735 people had reportedly been killed in Gaza, including over 9,500 women and over 14,500 children.

Prayer for the children

“Let your hand be upon the man at your right hand, and on the Son of Man whom I have sent to you. We shall never turn back on you. You revive us and we praise your name. Restore us, almighty Lord; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.”

— Psalm 80:18-20

Have mercy, dear Lord. There is war and death, and children are crying. You have said, Lord Jesus, “Let the children come to me.” Here are the children in the Gaza Strip, in Rafah, and throughout Palestine and Israel, they are crushed by war leaders like they are nothing. Have mercy on the little ones, dear Lord, on their cries and agony. Please hear our prayers. Let your hand be upon the hand of the Son of Man whom you have supported. Almighty God, show us the path, provide us with the light and salvation. Have mercy, dear Lord.

"لِتَكُن يَدُكَ عَلَى رَجُلٍ يَمِينِكَ عَلَى ابْنِ الْإِنْسَانِ الَّذِي أَيْدَتْهُ لَكَ، فَلَا نَرْتَدُّ عَنْكَ. تُحْيِينَا فَندَعُو بِاسْمِكَ. أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ إِلَهَ الْقُوَاتِ أَرْجِعْنَا أَنْزِرْ عَلَيْنَا بَوَاجِهَكَ فَتَخْلُصَ" (مزمور ٨٠: ١٨-٢٠)

ارحمنا، يا رب حرب وموت، والصغار يبكون. وأنت قلت، أيها الرب يسوع: دعوا الصغار يأتون إليّ. ها هم الصغار في غزة وفي رفح، وفي كل أنحاء فلسطين وإسرائيل، يسحقهم زعماء الحرب كأنهم لا شيء. ارحم الصغار، يا رب هم صلاتنا إليك، وصراخهم ودموعهم. استجب لنا واستجب لهم. "لِتَكُن يَدُكَ عَلَى ابْنِ الْإِنْسَانِ الَّذِي أَيْدَتْهُ لَكَ ... أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ إِلَهَ الْقُوَاتِ أَرْجِعْنَا، أَنْزِرْ عَلَيْنَا بَوَاجِهَكَ فَتَخْلُصَ." (ارحمنا، يا رب)

Prayer for the women

“Woman, behold, this is your son,” Jesus said to his mother, as He entrusted to her the church with all its happiness and sadness. Lady Mary is the mother of the church, protector, and intercessor with God. That type of protection enables us to persevere on our path with confidence, and to carry our cross and walk with our happiness as well as our sorrow.

We are in the middle of war and injustice towards fellow men, while thousands of persons are injured or killed. Let us put our confidence in Lady Mary. She told her Son: “There is too much death, destruction, and pain. Please increase righteousness in the hearts of the few who still have some.” Lady Mary tells Jesus: “Due to intercession by children—those who lack status among others—please salvage the people, salvage the older ones who are destroying humanity and stop the devastation they are bringing to the world.”

Oh, Lady and Mother Mary, watch over the church and all of humanity. Watch over the Holy Land, your land and that of your son Jesus. Teach us all, teach those who are powerful over the weak, how to make peace on earth. Amen.

يا امرأة، هذا ابنك"، قال يسوع لأمه ووكّل إليها الكنيسة كلها، كل أفرانها وأحزانها. مريم أمّ الكنيسة وحاميّتها والشفيعة لدى الله. وبهذه الحماية نسير، واثقين، نحمل صلباننا ونسير. بأفراحنا وأحزاننا نسير

نحن في حالة حرب. ألوف القتلى والأسرى، وظلم الإنسان للإنسان، لنكلّ هذا الواقع إلى سيدتنا مريم العذراء. وهي تقول ليسوع ابنها: إن الموت فيهم كثير، والدمار كثير، والآلام كثيرة. كثير الصلاح القليل الباقي في قلوب القليلين منهم. تقول سيدتنا مريم العذراء ليسوع: بشفاعة الصغار، والذين لا اعتبار لهم بين الناس، خلّص الناس، خلّص الكبار الذين يدبّرون البشرية وأوقف دمارهم

يا سيدتنا وأمنا، مريم العذراء، اسهري على الكنيسة، وعلى الإنسانية. اسهري على هذه الأرض المقدسة، أرضك وأرض ابنك يسوع، وعلمينا جميعًا، علمي الأقوياء والضعفاء، كيف يصنعون السلام في هذه الأرض. آمين

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Day 6. The International community

21 September marks the day of the International Day of Peace in the United Nations calendar.

At the United Nations, there have been 191 resolutions on Palestine and Israel, yet a solution to long-term conflict remains to be seen.

Resolution 2735 of 10 June 2024 backed a hostage and ceasefire proposal in the Hamas-Israel war and reiterated support for a two-state solution. This gave hope for an end to the bloodshed but also failed in practice of implementation. With so many UN resolutions and ways of trying to settle the issue, one might ask: Why, even now, is there no solution? How come things are only getting worse?!

In January 2024 the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to take all measures to prevent a genocide in Gaza, yet in the following months at least another 5,000 lives were lost.

The International Criminal Court also had a ruling over war crimes being committed by Israeli leaders during this cycle. Measures are yet to be seen in this respect.

The Holy Land should be protected for all people, irrespective of religious or national identity. May church leaders and elected representatives worldwide pray for peace, take meaningful action to advocate for human rights and dignity to be upheld, and support work for an end to violence and towards a just peace for all people in the region.

Prayer for the international community

“For how long, dear Lord, will hardships continue? For how long will the enemy continue to take your name lightly? For how long will your hands and your right arm remain folded? You have been my king since ancient times and the creator of salvation on earth.”

—Psalm 74:10-12.

Have mercy, dear Lord. They have plans for genocide, expulsion, and replacing the people. Millions of people are homeless on the roadside. Have you abandoned us, dear Lord? You are the one who said: “If the nursing woman abandons her son, I will not abandon you.” Dear Lord, in you we trust. The situation is getting worse. Have mercy, dear Lord.

”اللَّهُمَّ إِلَهِي مَتَى يُعَيِّرُنَا الْمُضَاقِقُ، وَبِاسْمِكَ يَسْتَهِينُ الْعَدُوُّ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ؟ لِمَاذَا تَكْفَتَ يَدُكَ وَتَبَقِيَ مُحْتَضِنًا يَمِينِكَ؟ عَلَى أَنْكَ مَلِكِي مُنْذُ الْقَدَمِ، وَصَانِعِ الْخَلَاصِ فِي وَسْطِ الْأَرْضِ” (مزمو ر ٧٤: ١٠-١٢).

ارحمنا، يا رب. خَطَطُهم خَطَطُ إبادة وترحيل، وتبديل السكان. الملايين على الطرقات تبحث عن مأوى. هل تركتنا، يا رب؟ لكنك قلت: لو تركت المرضع ابنها لما تركتكم أنا. اللهم فيك وضعنا نقتنا. الوضع يزداد سوءاً. ارحمنا، يا رب

Day 7. Gaza reconstruction: needs, challenges, and future path

A World Bank report published in early April 2024 said the war by Israel has caused damages worth \$18.5 billion to Gaza's critical infrastructure. The damage includes 370,000 housing units that were destroyed and another 370,000 that were damaged. Right now, over one million Palestinians are without homes. Should rebuilding homes in Gaza start immediately, it would cost \$40 billion and go on until 2040, according to a World Bank report.

A UN report in July 2024, indicates that clearing Gaza of almost 40 m tons of war rubble will take years. Assessment puts that cost at [\\$500-600 million USD and 15 years of work](#).

An early recovery program for three years to bring back hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to temporary shelters in their original locations, with comprehensive support to the community, will cost between \$2-3 billion. This on top of the damage done to agricultural facilities, whereby 50% have been destroyed, and 9% of commercial properties have also been destroyed, and massive investment will be needed. But first, 37 million tons of debris must be removed, according to estimates from the United Nations Development Programme.

In the Gaza Strip, close to 90 percent of health facilities have been damaged or destroyed. With the high number of casualties and the big destruction of health facilities, overall life expectancy has already been reduced.

Destruction of Gaza's health infrastructure has left only 10 out of 36 hospitals barely functioning--amputations are carried out without anaesthesia, and miscarriages have increased. The health crisis has been worsened by a lack of clean water and essential medical supplies. Hospitals and clinics struggle to operate without electricity, and many healthcare workers have been injured or killed, which drastically affects the capacity of the healthcare system.

All schools in Gaza have been destroyed or turned into shelters for the newly homeless, and all 12 universities have been decimated. All roads, sewers, water pipes, and other critical infrastructure have suffered massive damage. No less than 2 million people are stranded without services, and basically every Palestinian in the Gaza Strip has been affected in some way by the war.

Gaza has witnessed an almost complete destruction of economic activity in all sectors. The International Labor Organization estimates that more than 200,000 jobs have been lost in Gaza—amounting to some 90 percent of the pre-conflict workforce. The United Nations agency further calculates that income losses in Gaza have reached \$4.1 million per day, which equals an 80 percent decrease in Gaza's gross domestic product (the value of total output of goods and services produced by the economy).

The United Nations Development Programme estimates that the human development index in Gaza has regressed by 40 years. The index assesses factors including years of gains in schooling, education attainment, health, and life expectancy at birth. In other words, all investment in human resource development during the last 40 years in Gaza has been decimated.

To move forward, Gaza needs the largest post-war reconstruction effort since the end of World War II in 1945, the United Nations says. According to the United Nations Development Programme, the estimated post-war reconstruction will cost up to \$50 billion.

On top of the physical destruction, the humanitarian situation inside Gaza has been deteriorating amid restrictions on the number of aid trucks allowed to enter the strip. The devastating impact of the humanitarian needs will stay for a long time, unless the needs in temporary schooling, temporary health care, psycho-social support to the population, and bringing back basic services like water, sanitation, and electricity are quickly addressed. Also at the humanitarian level, the United Nations says that 1 million children – almost every single child in Gaza – will need mental health and psychosocial support.

Since 7 October, and due to attacks by Israel, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency – which plays a key role in the humanitarian work in Gaza – has incurred losses in all health program assets and components of any healthcare system, including loss of access to health facilities with repeated evacuation orders and mass displacement of entire areas and cities in Gaza.

The ongoing conflict has resulted in widespread abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights.

Reconstruction of Gaza requires open land crossings and facilitated aid access and urgent work to stem the humanitarian crisis and looming man-made famine.

Support is needed for agencies to fulfill their humanitarian mandate, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Middle East Council of Churches Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees, ACT Alliance, Caritas Internationalis, and others involved in humanitarian operations.

As the World Council of Churches [has recently stressed](#) – beyond the immediate need for a ceasefire, an end to war and humanitarian needs in terms of access and aid – roadmaps are also needed for how churches and other faith communities can work together to help build peace long-term.

Prayer

“The Lord is exalted over all the nations, and His glory is above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God who sits enthroned in the highest, the one who looks down humbly to the heavens and the earth? He is the one who raises from the soil those who are downtrodden.”

—Psalm 113: 4-7

Have mercy, dear Lord. Today is Pentecost Sunday; the day of the Holy Spirit, your spirit dear God among the people. This is the day when the church was born, and human beings were born anew. The Gaza Strip, and Rafah, need a new birth. The people endure under the shelling and destruction, and those who carry out the bombardment want the people to die. Send the Holy Spirit to Gaza, dear God, and renew life there from amidst the rubble. Dear Lord, you are the all powerful and ever present God. “You looked with compassion towards the heavens and the skies? So that the downtrodden will rise from the soil?” Please, dear Lord, have Gaza rise from

the rubble and from the destruction caused by man. Please look to our situation. From the heavens, please look at man's cruelty and the indifference of some world leaders. Let us pray for an end to the indifference and cruelty and for peace to prevail in the hearts and minds. Lord have mercy.

تَعَالَى الرَّبُّ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأُمَمِ وَفَوْقَ السَّمَوَاتِ مَجْدُهُ! مَنْ مِثْلُ الرَّبِّ إِلَيْنَا الْجَالِسِ فِي الْأَعَالِي، الَّذِي تَنَازَلَ وَنَظَرَ إِلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ؟ يُنْهَضُ الْمِسْكِينَ مِنَ الثَّرَابِ" (مزمور ١١٣: ٤-٧)

ارحمنا، يا رب. اليوم، أحد العنصرة. الروح القدس، روحك يا الله، بين الناس. الكنيسة وُلِدَت اليوم، وُولِدَ الإنسان الجديد. غزة ورفح، يا رب، بحاجة إلى ولادة جديدة، هم، الأهل تحت القصف والدمار، والذين يقصفونهم ويريدون لهم الموت. أرسل روحك، يا رب، إلى غزة وابعث فيها وفي أنقاضها حياتك الجديدة. أنت الرب، أنت الإله القوي الذي لا يموت. "تَنَازَلْتَ وَنَظَرْتَ إِلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ؟ لِنُنْهَضُ الْمِسْكِينَ مِنَ الثَّرَابِ". أنهض، يا رب، غزة من أنقاضها، من دمار البشر. تنازل وانظر حالتنا. من السماء ألق نظرة على قسوة الإنسان وعدم اكتراث بعض القادة في هذا العالم. لنصلي من أجل أن يتوقف عدم الاكتراث وتنتهي القسوة، وأن يعم السلام في القلوب والعقول. رحماك، يا رب