

**Declaration
by the CCEE-CEC Joint Committee
on the situation in Middle East**

The violence and cruelty of Hamas terrorists, who struck Israel on 7 October, stunned and horrified the world. We, the leaders of the Christian Churches in Europe, express our deep compassion for those who died, were injured, or lost a loved one, and we turn our thoughts to the hostages and their families. We acknowledge the historical context of colonialism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia which has led to the current situation. We acknowledge the immense suffering on both sides of this conflict. We are deeply saddened by the destruction of sacred sites which are traditionally seen as places of refuge. We stand in solidarity with those in Israel and in Palestine who work to promote peace and we affirm that violence cannot be a way to defend a cause. The destruction of life advances no freedom, no truth, no justice.

We call on the political leaders of all parties to exercise their responsibility to ensure a ceasefire on all fronts. We demand that terrorists are brought to justice, that all civilian lives – Jewish, Christian and Muslim – are protected, and that humanitarian corridors are opened to allow access to care and evacuation. The grave situation in which the people of Gaza live, restricted in their fundamental rights and forced to suffer injustices, has been going on for too long. We demand the entire international community to mobilise and uphold the international law, in particular the UN resolutions, with the aim of opening serious negotiations to create a lasting peace, in truth and justice.

It is urgent, now more than ever, to seek the way of righteousness, revealed to us in the Gospel, following the example of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who, by his death and resurrection, reconciled us with God, making us all children of God.

We invite the faithful of our Churches to pray for all those who are suffering, and we invoke God's mercy for all, remembering that we are all members of the one common humanity.

We also pray and hope that those in authority over nations engage in a genuine dialogue that will uphold the human dignity of all and make a peaceful coexistence of the two peoples in two states possible.

7 November 2023