

**WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES STATEMENT
ON
THE CRISIS IN GAZA**

[Executive Committee, WCC, June 6-11, 2024]

“In a spirit of moral urgency founded upon the faith that binds us together, we:

“**CALL** upon all parties involved to immediately commit to a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, to ensure unhindered humanitarian access from all borders and the delivery of sufficient quantities of aid to all those who need it, and to engage in meaningful political processes that allow the peoples of the region to live in peace and dignity. It is imperative that all actions respect the sanctity of human life and prioritize the protection of civilians, ensuring their safety, security, and their right to return to their own homes and land.

“**DEMAND** the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza without violence, as well as of persons detained in Gaza and the West Bank without due legal process.

“**URGE** all members of the international community to rediscover their moral and legal commitment to the equal human rights of all, to uphold and apply the principles of international law without discrimination, and to intensify their efforts to promote and implement a just peace in the region based on these principles. We especially call upon the UN [United Nations] Security Council to fulfill its mandate in this context, and for the Permanent Members of the Security Council not to abuse their veto power for improper political purposes.

“**CALL** on governments worldwide to support initiatives that aim to reduce violence, de-escalate tensions and foster long-term peace and stability in the region, including for arms embargoes and stopping the arms transfers that sustain the violence and bloodshed. This must entail revisiting and strengthening international treaties and agreements that undergird prospects of peaceful coexistence.

“**ENCOURAGE** WCC [World Council of Churches] member churches to support the people of Gaza and the region in prayer and action, including through advocacy towards their governments, solidarity and support for the young people calling for an immediate ceasefire and for justice and an end of occupation, as well as to provide support to refugees and displaced persons, and to collaborate with other religious communities to promote mutual understanding, reconciliation, and peace. We urge our member churches to address the challenge of Christian Zionism in their own communities, which absolves the State of Israel of its legal and moral responsibilities, and victimizes the Palestinian people including the Palestinian Christian citizens of the Holy Land.

“**IMPLORE** all people of faith and goodwill around the world to pray and work for the restoration of peace, to advocate for justice, and to provide support through humanitarian aid, conflict resolution programmes, and educational initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of peace.

“APPEAL to the Israeli authorities and all members of the international community to ensure accountability for and prevention of the escalating settler violence in the West Bank, house demolitions, and arbitrary arrests.

“AFFIRM the essential role of the relevant judicial organs with regard to accountability to applicable obligations under international treaties and customary law.

“DEMAND full legal accountability through the relevant judicial organs for all war crimes, crimes against humanity and other gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws committed by Israeli forces in Gaza and elsewhere in the region, as well as for those committed by Hamas militants during the attacks of 7 October 2023, without discrimination.

“UNDERLINE the critical importance of respecting the religious and historical status quo in Jerusalem, as well as the city’s pluralistic identity and holiness to the three monotheistic religions. Increasing threats to the status quo in Jerusalem have exacerbated tensions and conflict risks throughout the region, including in Gaza.”