



## JOINT STATEMENT ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN SITUATION

### BY THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE AND THE EUROPEAN BAPTIST FEDERATION

As leaders of the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation (which includes the Middle East), we want to express our grave concern over the heightened tensions between Israel and Palestine that have led to violence and many Palestinian civilian deaths, including those of innocent children, in Gaza in recent days.

As Christian leaders we stand in solidarity with all who suffer and who have tragically lost their lives. Especially we are concerned about the desperate situation inside Gaza. Even before the current medical emergency arising from the many hundreds of civilians wounded in the latest clashes, one of our Baptist leaders, who visits Gaza regularly, recently described the situation as 'virtually no electricity, water, money – or hope'.

We abhor the resort to violence from wherever it comes, whether by militant groups or state-sanctioned oppression. Violence begets violence and leads to both sides living in constant fear of the other. This cannot be the way to a lasting peace with justice.

We urge world leaders to avoid provocative actions and statements that serve to inflame the conflict and, instead, to restore the urgent priority of a process of negotiation towards a just peace so that Israelis and Palestinians may live together in harmony and dignity in the same geographical space. We believe that it is the responsibility of the international community to uphold the human rights of the Palestinian community and to seek to create the conditions where peace has a chance to flourish.

We stand in support of those Christian communities in Israel and Palestine, including our Baptist churches and similar evangelical churches that continue to witness to the Gospel of non-violence, reconciliation, and hope. We support those initiatives in both Israel and Palestine that bring Israelis and Palestinians together and seek the reconciliation and restored hope of God's Kingdom.

As Baptist leaders we share the heart cry of Jesus himself who, 'when he drew near and saw the city (of Jerusalem), wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace!"'

(Luke 19:41-42)

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