



Statement from The Bishops' Conference of the Church of Norway, May 14th, 2025

– *Blessed are the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9)*

All people are created in the image of God and possess the same inviolable value. Therefore, we cannot remain silent when individuals are stripped of their humanity. We are disturbed by, and condemn, the unfolding events in Gaza. We hear the call from our Palestinian brothers and sisters in faith, urging us as a church to rise up against the abuses taking place before our eyes.

The world appears to be powerless in preventing a humanitarian crisis. Homes, schools, roads, water supplies, and sewage systems are destroyed. Mosques, churches, and hospitals are bombed. Access to basic livelihood necessities such as food, clean water, medicine, and healthcare have been cut off. This is destroying the living conditions for surviving Palestinians, to the extent that they no longer can remain in their homeland. The trauma inflicted on children will mark them for the rest of their lives. The Palestinian population is actively displaced from their homes and their country.

This humanitarian collapse is also a moral collapse. The international legal system—established to protect people and safeguard human rights even during war and occupation—is ignored. Hamas violated international law through their brutal acts of terrorism and hostage-taking and continues to do so as long as they hold hostages. Israeli government, through its excessively brutal military operations that severely impact civilians, displays contempt for the humanitarian laws of war. The gravity of the situation is underscored by the fact that the International Court of Justice has warned of a possible ongoing genocide in Gaza and emphasize the shared responsibility of all to prevent it. What is happening now is not only destroying the Palestinian people and their future but also undermines Israel's moral integrity and democracy.

When such events are allowed to unfold without intervention, it gives the impression that Palestinian lives are worth less than others. As fellow human beings, we cannot remain silent in the face of such dehumanization. Every single life lost or affected in Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel is created with equal human dignity and equally loved by God. Both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have the right to live within secure borders. There can be no peace until all who live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea—whether in one or two states—enjoy equal rights and the same opportunity to live in peace and safety.

A ceasefire must be restored, hostages must be released, humanitarian organizations must be allowed to deliver food and medicine to Gaza, and the violence against the Palestinian population of the West Bank must be brought to an end.

Diplomatic efforts toward peace and justice must be intensified. We call on the Norwegian government, along with other nations, to continue working to stop the current atrocities and to achieve a just solution that ensures lasting peace for both Palestinians and Israelis.

At this time, it is also necessary to increase pressure on the Israeli government to halt what appears to be an intentional policy of ethnic cleansing. All legitimate political and economic instruments, including various forms of sanctions that are typically used in response to violations of international law, must be considered. It is the responsibility and duty of political authorities to assess and implement the most effective measures in such a situation.

We observe that, more than in other armed conflicts, religious language is being used to legitimize violence and acts of war in Israel and Palestine. We reject any defense of atrocities



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based on references to the will of God. We encourage other churches, in Norway and around the world, to issue a clear condemnation of the warfare in Gaza and to express solidarity and strong support for the Palestinian churches and the Palestinian people in this situation. We especially urge the World Council of Churches to continue to do so on behalf of all member churches. Our Christian faith must never be used—directly or indirectly—to justify support for the treatment of the Palestinian population currently demonstrated by the Israeli government.

We call on all people to do what they can in this critical time, so that we together may uphold our shared humanity and humanitarian values.

As a church, we pray for all those affected by this catastrophe and for all who bear power and responsibility. Pray with us:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace!