



International Christian Peace Movement

National President: Father Claude Mostowik MSC

+61 (0)411 450 953
mscjust@smartchat.net.au

Statement on Palestine and Israel

Pax Christi Australia is part of the international peace movement Pax Christi International, based in Brussels, working to promote peace with justice and nonviolence.

Pax Christi Australia joins with many around the world mourning the suffering endured in Israel and Palestine and calls on peace groups to continue to stridently promote active nonviolence in the struggle for peace with justice. We have witnessed for many years the demonisation and dehumanisation of people. This dehumanisation can lead only to violence and eventually crimes against humanity and war crimes. Palestinians and Israelis have dehumanised each other to such an extent that each side is considered less than human, and now Palestinians are termed as 'human animals' who must be eradicated. The alarming statements by Israeli military officers must be condemned as they escalate their attacks on Gaza as well as depriving a whole people of water, electricity, food, and medicines to the people. This is collective punishment.

Pax Christi Australia calls on the Australian government and all governments to condemn all violence which only increases and never leads to a more just and nonviolent future. The threats to invade is itself a form of terror as the people have few options to protect themselves. Under the UN's statutes, Israel's 'total siege' on Gaza is deemed a war crime. Israel has till now held a siege of Gaza for 16 years with impunity and the humanity of the people has been ignored. Sympathy for Israel cannot ignore the dehumanisation and demonisation of the Palestinian people.

Pax Christi believes that Western democracies, in which many of us live and elect governments (Australia, US, UK, EU, etc.), have for various reasons endorsed and supported Israel over the decades, but now must accept part of the responsibility for the deep frustration endured by Palestinians.

Pax Christi condemns Western double standards which have undermined the integrity of the international legal order (a rules-based order), when they sanction a recent occupation (by Russia in Ukraine) and, in effect, justify another by Israel towards Palestine, in violation of UN Resolutions.

Pax Christi acknowledges the frustration of the Palestinian people. This is not a new development but has been simmering and exploding for over 76 years and reached its breaking point in the recent violence.

Pax Christi will not allow us to forget that the majority of the 2.2 million living in Gaza are descendants of refugees, who were evicted by Israel during the *Nakba* from their ancestral homeland which has become southern Israel. During the *Nakba* some 700,000 Palestinians were killed.

Pax Christi hopes that Israel, and other countries, will learn that despite their military might, they have been unable to snuff out the innate and legitimate desire for self-determination of the Palestinian people. They have only become more insecure.

Pax Christi believes that there is no shame or humiliation, only humanity and dignity in learning, acknowledging and realising that violence does not resolve deep-seated conflict. Negotiations and mutual trust are the only way forward, or else, the violence will keep on spiraling deeper and deeper. It is in this that there is real security.

*Pax Christi is a Christian worldwide movement for peace and disarmament.
It regards justice and human rights as central to peacebuilding
and fosters the spiritual dimension of peacemaking.*

Postal Address: PO Box A681 Sydney South NSW 1235 Australia

'The Middle East does not need war but peace, a peace built on justice, dialogue, and the courage of fraternity'
Pope Francis

Fr Claude Mostowik msc
President
Pax Christi Australia
October 15, 2023

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