



Community of Christ

Human Rights Team Statement on Israel-Hamas War

4 December 2023

The Human Rights Team joins the Peace and Justice Team seeking justice and reconciliation between Israel and Palestine. Together, we affirm World Conference Resolution (WCR) 1311 *Palestine & Israel*, which affirms God’s love for Muslims and Jews, and denounces Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. We uphold its call to recognize the state of Israel’s right to exist secure within its borders, as well as the recognition of a Palestinian state in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolutions.

The Human Rights Team condemns acts of terrorism and offensive acts of war, and seeks the rule of just laws between peoples as conditions for human rights. We uphold the aim of diplomatic, coalitional, interfaith, and interpersonal efforts to negotiate just peace and preserve the fundamental human rights of Israelis and Palestinians. We restate our witness that fundamental human rights are beyond the property of any state but are based on the inalienable human worth inherent in all persons.ⁱ

Since October 7, 2023, the United Nations (UN) reports thousands of civilians including women and children have been killed.ⁱⁱ We fear more are imminent. After 48 days of hostilities, the [UNRWA](#) (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) reports over one million internally displaced persons seeking shelter in over 150 UNRWA [shelter installations](#). Concern of genocide has risen from both sides.ⁱⁱⁱ

Community of Christ’s Human Rights Team echoes the joint statement of the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), UNICEF, WFP (World Food Programme) and WHO (World Health Organization), which supports a ceasefire and unrestricted humanitarian access throughout Gaza to allow humanitarian actors to reach children and civilians in need. We affirm the declarations of that joint statement here^{iv}:

- We call for safe and sustained access to water, food, health – including sexual and reproductive health – and fuel, which is necessary to enable essential services.
- We call for the protection of all civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including health-care facilities.
- We call for the protection of humanitarian workers in Gaza who are risking their lives in the service of others.
- And we call for the utmost respect of international humanitarian law by all parties.

WCR 1177 *Peace* states, “We, as a church, oppose all forms of destructive violence, such as national and international conflict, war, withholding of food, terrorism, and mental and physical abuse.” Facing violence and injustice, the Human Rights Team advocates for peace by affirming the inalienable worth of all persons in the shared struggle for human rights.^v

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ⁱ See Human Rights Team, “Theological Foundations for Human Rights,” in 2023 World Conference Human Rights Team report to the World Conference. Online publishing forthcoming

ⁱⁱ UN News, “Gaza: ‘Thousands of children killed’ within a few weeks, says UN’s Guterres.” (20 November 23) Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143772>. See also, United Nations Secretary General, “Secretary-General’s press conference

on UNEP Emissions Gap Report Launch.” Available at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/press-encounter/2023-11-20/secretary-generals-press-conference-unep-emissions-gap-report-launch> (20 November 2023) Accessed 26 November 2023.

ⁱⁱⁱ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against#> (16 November 2023); <https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-actions-are-war-crimes-could-constitute-genocide-international-law-experts/> (15 October 2023) Accessed 26 November 2023.

^{iv} See “Joint statement by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO on humanitarian supplies crossing into Gaza” (21 October 2023) Available at <https://www.who.int/news/item/21-10-2023-joint-statement-by-undp--unfpa--unicef--wfp-and-who-on-humanitarian-supplies-crossing-into-gaza>. Accessed 26 November 2023.

^v See “Theological Foundations for Human Rights,” 2023 Human Rights Team report to the World Conference