

Date: 26/10/2023

The Most Revd. and Right Hon Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

Dear Archbishop,

Grace and Peace,

We write to you in Christian love and fellowship, but also with great concern about some of your statements regarding the current situation in Gaza.

We represent the largest parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Our parish has served as a witness to 75 years of exile, occupation and apartheid of the Palestinian people. Our community was founded in 1948 and today is principally composed of Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their homeland, including their descendants, and the native Jordanians who welcomed them. Today we are one people, both Jordanians and Palestinians, and whatever affects our brothers and sisters in Palestine also deeply affects us in Jordan.

The Israeli government with its maximalist war perpetuates the denial of national rights to the Palestinian people. In your statement before the House of Lords on October 24, you contrasted Hamas with the state of Israel, and described Israel as a "legitimate state whose citizens since 1945 have written much of the laws of war." We want to remind you that the struggle between Israel and Palestine is a national struggle which extremist voices on the Israeli side would like to end in the defeat of Palestinian dreams for a national home for their people in the Holy Land. While Hamas is responsible for igniting the latest round of hostilities, Israel's policies over the course of decades are also preventing the international community from achieving peace. You know well know that the latest hostilities will be used as a *casus belli* for a ground operation by the Israeli government inside Gaza. This will ostensibly be to disarm Hamas, but it may well result in the accomplishment of long-term Israeli war aims (demonstrated by decades of settlement in the West Bank and Jerusalem) to expel many thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and to subsequently settle these lands with Jewish settlers from abroad.

We utterly oppose the killings of any civilians, regardless of their national, ethnic or religious origin, so it is with disappointment that Palestinian Anglicans perceive an incongruity between how, as their advocate and as head of the Anglican Communion, you have spoken about the perpetration of these crimes on the different sides of the conflict. Specifically, in your recent interview with British media, you have asked for the worldwide condemnation of violations of human rights by Hamas; whereas you have cautioned against criticisms of Israel. We appreciate your subsequent clarification that "the people of Gaza, and all Palestinians, must be able to express their trauma, anger and horror at the profound suffering being endured by innocent people living under Israeli bombardment and siege." We would also emphasize that from the Palestinian perspective; however, Israeli violations of Palestinian rights are not limited to military bombardments.

We reaffirm our opposition to acts of violence against any civilians and note that, the Israeli crimes did not begin on October 7, 2023. Israel has consistently violated dozens of UN resolutions since 1948 and is engaged in a campaign widely described as ethnic cleansing, Apartheid and other genocide against the Palestinian people. Our congregation feels marginalized when they hear your remarks generalizing the over 300,000 people that took over the streets of London demanding justice for Palestine, many of whom include Anglican and Christian voices. We continue to have concerns, as expressed by others, that the British government's relationships with Jewish leaders matter more to Anglican leaders than the basic principles of justice, freedom and the right of return for the oldest Christian community in the world.

As the leader of the Anglican Communion, we expect to hear from you a strong call for justice and freedom for the Palestinian people, and to use the term Palestinian to describe our people in the Holy Land. Our people in the occupied territory are facing ongoing violence, oppression and deprivation. Israel will interpret anything less than support for the Palestinian cause for statehood as *carte blanche* for further Israeli violations of our rights and sovereignty

Our Holy Sites remain under threat in occupied Jerusalem, and most of us are not able to even visit Palestine for a religious pilgrimage due to the policies of the Israeli government. We ask for your support to speak truth to power for the sake of a just and lasting peace, and to avoid any remarks that can be interpreted as siding with Israeli politicians who seek to oppress and displace the Palestinian people or who seek to challenge a Christian presence in the Holy Land.

We will continue to pray and act for justice as we also keep you personally in our prayers.

Redeemer Anglican Church
Amman Jordan
St. Paul Anglican Church
Ashrafieh Amman
Jordan
St Luke Anglican Church
Marka Amman
Jordan
St. John the Baptist Anglican Church
Husoun Irbid
Jordan
St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church
Irbid
Jordan
The Anglican community
Fuhais Amman
Jordan