



KWAZULU-NATAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

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30 November 2023

Peace now in Israel and Palestine

A meeting of the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders Group in Mariannhill, 21 November 2023

On 21 November about eighty church leaders gathered in Mariannhill at the joint invitation of Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, the chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group, and Bishop Nkosinathi Myaka, the chairperson of KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council, to share information about and consider how to respond to the current crisis in Israel and Palestine.

Four speakers from various faiths introduced the discussion: Prof P. Denis (UKZN and KZNCC), Ms Saydoon Sayed (KZN Palestine Solidarity Forum), Rev Ntuthuko Nkosi (SACC Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) and Mr Ilan Lax (human rights lawyer).

The KwaZulu-Natal Church leaders adopted the following resolutions:

- Both Hamas' 7th October attack which cost the lives of at least 1200 innocent people and the disproportionate retaliation from the Israeli government against Gaza in the following weeks during which at least 15,000 people, mostly civilians and among them at least 6000 children, are unacceptable and must be condemned with vigour. According to international law, both fall within the category of war crimes.
- Both Jews and Palestinians suffered a long history of discrimination and massacres and deserve to live in peace. Since 1948, however, the balance of power has been clearly unfavourable to the Palestinians who daily experience oppression and the illegal occupation of their land. Only an end to this violence and a return to the borders of 1967 can bring peace and harmony.
- In this conflict external powers, with their own interests uppermost, favour one side or the other, thus prolonging the suffering of the inhabitants of both Israel and Palestine.
- On all sides the abusive use of sacred texts and of the Bible in particular to justify an unjust situation must be condemned.

- The extremely violent attack by Israel on Gaza has produced a staggering number of casualties and incalculable destruction of basic infrastructure which, far from bringing an end to the conflict, simply exacerbates it and threatens the security not only of Palestine but of Israel itself.
- Conscious of the precious value of every human life, the church leaders call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to stop the carnage and lay the foundations for a political solution which will benefit all parties.
- We invite the faithful to pray for peace, in the belief that only God's mercy and help will enable the leaders to bring an end to the war and usher in a period of reconstruction not only of buildings and institutions but especially of good human relation, which in our country we describe as Ubuntu - true humanness!

+ Wilfred cardinal Napier

Cardinal Wilfred Napier
KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group

Nkosinathi Myaka

Bishop Nkosinathi Myaka
KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council