

# VOX

## A Christian Voice - a Human Concern

*"Those who desire to see good days... Let them turn away from evil and do good;  
Let them seek peace and pursue it." (1 Peter 3: 10, 11).*

### *Statement of Church Related Organizations on the Current Situation in Lebanon and Palestine*

The undersigned Church Related Organizations, appalled by the destruction and use of blatant military force by Israel in both Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, have gathered in prayer at St. Stephan's Cathedral in Jerusalem. The sadness and the sense of despair that have taken over these holy lands as hundreds have perished, homes destroyed, thousands injured and made refugees and essential service infrastructure purposely targeted, highlight the immoral logic of war and the use of military force.

The responsibilities of the international community have most disappointingly been absent as governments and the powers that have allowed the progress of destruction to go on in order to supposedly prepare the ground for a politically agreeable ceasefire. This shows the double standard of world powers and it also sends a message that evokes anger and frustration of millions of ordinary citizens across the world, thus worsening the already bad situation as there is a clear absence of leadership.

We in the Holy Land, source of divine inspiration and monotheistic beliefs, are as frustrated as our fellow world citizens with the double standards of the United States and other allegedly democratic countries when it comes to dealing with the Middle East conflict and its just and lasting resolution. Security is not exclusive nor can it be used as an excuse to justify horrendous acts of military force and abuse and continued occupation instead of subscribing to a political negotiating process that would have spared all of us in this region the pain and suffering of the last few weeks and years.

We call upon religious forums of all persuasions as well as our partners, churches and civil society organizations and free citizens of the world:

- To condemn in the strongest possible language the ongoing war crimes inflicted on Lebanon and Palestine, and to call upon governments and international bodies to work for an immediate end to the bloodshed and for a lasting and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- To address the General Secretary of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan with a clear message that the UN needs to take a serious stand and assert its role in the Middle East region. It is high time for the UN to implement its resolutions pertaining to the Middle East conflict.
- To inform and raise awareness in their societies and communities about the root causes of the Arab/Israeli conflict; the violations of human rights that this conflict continues to generate and the need for a just and lasting solution to this long drawn conflict that guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people.
- To recognize the desperate humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon and to respond to the appeals of relief and aid at this critical time.

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*In this VOX,  
we wish to  
share with  
you the  
Statement  
issued by the  
Church  
Related  
Organizations in the  
Holy Land,  
regarding  
the current  
situation in  
Lebanon  
and the  
Occupied  
Palestinian  
Territories.*

- To identify with the victims and all those who suffer physical, psychological and material ill effects due to this war and continued Israeli occupation in the Palestinian Territories that they may have courage to withstand these terrible times.
- To continue with prayers so as this situation of war and enmity may be lifted and that a just and lasting peace will reign in this region and usher in an era characterized by respect for human rights, justice and insistence on political solutions rather than the use of blatant force and merciless military machines.

**Signatories:**

**Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (Sabeel)**

**Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Palestine**

**The East Jerusalem YMCA**

**Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR)/ MECC**

**Near East Council of Churches (NECC)- Gaza**

**Caritas Jerusalem**

**International Christian Committee – ICC Jerusalem**



**What can you do...?**

*VOX appeals to the world's Church leaders to pray and act to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians as a consequence of the extremely harsh measures and policies imposed by the Israeli occupying forces. Vox urges all national leaders, international governmental and non-governmental institutions to take action and pressure Israel to abide by international humanitarian law.*

VOX is an electronic newsletter representing a unified Christian voice of Church related organizations (CROs) who consent to this initiative. Vox's rationale is to monitor and report on the humanitarian situation on the ground in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Vox was initiated in March 2003 at the start of the Iraqi war in order to continue providing news about the ongoing deterioration of Palestine's living conditions. VOX embraces The East Jerusalem YMCA, YWCA of Palestine, the Near East Council of Churches Gaza, Sabeel Liberation Theology Center, Justice and Peace Commission Jerusalem, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem, Caritas Jerusalem and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

For information, contact the sender of this message if your CRO is interested in joining VOX or for any comments.

**VOX NEWSLETTER**