



Holy Land Churches implore political leaders to reach agreement for peace

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26.08.2024 - A statement released by the Patriarchs and the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem expresses grave concern for heightened tensions that place the region on the precipice of full-blown war and appeals for a negotiated agreement for peace.

Approaching the twelfth month of “the present devastating war” and as heightened regional tensions involving the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group with bases in Lebanon, threaten to create the conditions for “full-blown regional war”, the leaders of the Churches in Jerusalem have released yet another call for a negotiated solution to the conflict.

In a joint statement on Monday, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, express their need to “once again” voice their grave concerns over the dire direction the war has taken.

They note that “despite repeated calls for the de-escalation of violence from ourselves and the international community, the situation in our beloved Holy Land has only continued to deteriorate.”

“Millions of refugees remain displaced, their homes inaccessible, destroyed, or beyond repair. Hundreds of innocents are weekly killed or severely wounded by indiscriminate attacks. Countless others continue to endure hunger, thirst, and infectious disease. Among these are those languishing in captivity on all sides, who additionally face the risk of ill-treatment from their captors. Still others, far from the battlefields, have suffered unchecked attacks against their villages, pastures, and farmlands,” the statement says.

[Wording of the statement](#)

The signatories note that throughout all this, ceasefire negotiations have dragged on interminably. “The leaders of the warring parties seemingly more concerned with political considerations than bringing an end to the pursuit of death and destruction,” they write.

The Church leaders go on to note that these “repeated delays, coupled with other provocative acts, have only served to heighten tensions to the point where we stand at the precipice of a full-blown regional war.”

Appeal

Thus, they say, again they “implore the leaders of the warring parties to heed our calls and those of the international community (UNSC Resolution 2735) to reach a rapid agreement for a ceasefire resulting in the end of the war, the release of all captives, the return of the displaced, the treatment of the sick and wounded, the relief of those who hunger and thirst, and the rebuilding of all public and private civilian structures that have been destroyed.”

Two-state solution

The Patriarchs and Church leaders also call upon political leaders, “in concert with the international community, to take up without delay diplomatic discussions addressing longstanding grievances between them, leading to concrete steps that promote a just and lasting peace in our region through the adoption of an internationally legitimate two-state solution.”

Concern for Christian communities

In their statement, the Patriarchs and Church leaders do not neglect to express special concern for Christian communities in the conflict zone: “These include those taking refuge in Gaza at St. Porphyrios Orthodox Church and Holy Family Catholic Church, as well as the courageous staff of al-Ahli Anglican Hospital and the patients under their care.”

“We pledge to them our continued prayers and support both now and at the conclusion of the war, when we will labour together to rebuild and strengthen the Christian presence in Gaza, as well as throughout the Holy Land,” they write.

Blessed are the peacemakers

Finally, they issue an appeal “to Christians and all those of goodwill around the world to promote a vision of life and peace throughout our war-torn region, recalling Christ’s words Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Source: [Vatican News](#).