



Statement Regarding the Current Escalation of the Middle East Conflict

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Faced with the increasingly intensifying conflict in the Middle East, we say to the general public as well as the political and social leaders of our country: our solidarity is with the State of Israel as the Jewish national home; at the same time we understand the right of the Palestinian people to their own state.

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With dismay and outrage we see the daily pictures and reports reaching us about suicide assassinations by Palestinian terrorists and the extensive military countermeasures of the Israeli government. Observing the lack of political perspective on both sides, we are at a loss and almost left speechless, yet we must not be silent.

We most sharply condemn the Palestinian terror assaults against children, women and men. The bloody tracks thus laid down prevent any approach to an agreement. Such assaults cannot be the foundations of a just and peaceful state. They are clearly intended to obliterate Jewish life at any cost and in the final analysis put in question Israel's right to exist.

We understand Israel's countermeasures as means of defense and self-protection. Insofar as the human rights of the Palestinian civil population are being violated, we equally condemn this and call Israel to adhere to the moral values it affirms.

Our concern and sympathy go out to the civilian population and to those who are still trying to maintain civility on both sides. We request all those who have influence in any way to use every opportunity to help settle the conflict.

In this regard, also the media is especially challenged. We notice in many places a one-sided reporting in picture and word: The Israelis are presented primarily as brutal culprits, the Palestinians mainly as victims. In this way, anti-Israel sentiment is subconsciously, but, no

doubt, in part also consciously, stirred up. It is also clear that this sentiment can be and is being used by antisemitic circles. We fear that the conflict may increasingly be expressed against the Jewish community in Germany.

We can do little to influence the situation in the Middle East,

but here in our country it is up to us

to stand by the Jewish community,

to oppose antisemitism camouflaged as anti-Zionism,

to repudiate generalized condemnations of Israel,

and to counter one-sided assignments of guilt,

as well as to promote a peaceable solution of the conflict.

The Executive Committee of the German Coordinating Council of Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation

Rabbi Dr. Henry Brandt, Jewish President

Dr. Eva Schulz-Jander, Catholic President

Prof. Berndt Schaller, Protestant President