



April 6, 2018

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

RE: Canada must call for an investigation into violence on Gaza-Israel border

Dear Prime Minister,

Greetings in the name of the Resurrected Christ from The United Church of Canada.

Our hearts are once again heavy with grief as we mourn the killing of 18 Palestinians on Good Friday March 30th in the Gaza Strip. The United Church has consistently condemned the use of violence by both Israelis and Palestinians, especially against civilians. We urge the Canadian Government to join United Church partners, the United Nations' Secretary General and the European Union in calling for an independent and transparent investigation into the Israeli shooting of people engaged in rightful protest, and for an end to Israel's blockade on Gaza.

The United Church of Canada has strong links with a number of Palestinian and Israeli partner organizations. For over five decades, churches in Canada have supported the Near East Council of Churches (NECC) in Gaza which works to build up Palestinian civil society and provide key services particularly medical care and job training. Indications are that the situation on the ground will deteriorate further over the coming weeks, with more protests planned, and the Israeli army stating that its policy of using live ammunition will not change. The NECC is appealing for action, saying: "The silence of the international community before an indiscriminate use of force against Palestinians living under siege imposed by an illegal occupation outlines the immediate need for Security Council intervention, to protect Palestinians, and to take measures to end the Israeli occupation by implementing the UN resolutions concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This strategy must be based on the principles of accountability and the ending of impunity in order to enforce a just peace and human security for occupied Palestinians."

The economic blockade is creating a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Gazans are without adequate water, food, electricity, fuel, shelter, or health care. Canada has pledged to step up to play a constructive role in foreign affairs to preserve and strengthen a "rules-based" global order. As Israel's friend and ally, Canada's leadership is needed to hold Israel to account for the violations under the Fourth Geneva Convention that the economic blockade represents.

For Christians, Easter marks the triumph of life over death through Jesus' resurrection. As people of the resurrection, The United Church of Canada supports Palestinian and Israeli partners united in their desire to claim life over death, to end to the Israeli occupation, and to realize a just and lasting peace for both

peoples. As children, women and men struggle for life under occupation, economic blockade and repeated violent military action, we urge Canada to support an immediate end to the blockade on Gaza.

The United Church of Canada looks to the Government of Canada to show leadership in pursuing a just and lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis, within the framework of International Law and the relevant United Nations' resolutions. As the devastation this past Good Friday clearly demonstrates, the time for action is now.

We pray for your efforts to secure a just and more peaceful world for all.

Sincerely,



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c.c.

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