



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release

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Statement from Australia's Catholic bishops on the situation in the Holy Land

The violence in the Holy Land has shaken many people around the world. We too, have been shaken. We care deeply for the people of the Holy Land - Jews, Christians and Muslims. They are our brothers and sisters. We care for the Holy Land because it was the home of Jesus Christ and its story is unimaginable without Christianity.

With Pope Francis, we put our faith in the possibility of a just resolution to the worsening crisis between Israelis and Palestinians. With him we say: "Enough, please! Let us all say: Stop! Please stop!". The people of the Holy Land are suffering in a way that cries out to the world to pray for peace, to call for peace, to work for peace.

The historical persecutions of the Jewish people, climaxing in the Shoah, remain on the conscience of the world. For many centuries they have been scapegoated, and anti-Semitism has surged again recently, even in this country. To that too we say: Stop!

For their part, at least since 1948, the Palestinian people have suffered dispossession and discrimination of many kinds and have been victims of frequent violence, climaxing in the atrocities now unfolding. This too has to stop.

The background to the present conflict is longstanding and complex. Palestinians and Israelis have suffered greatly, and on both sides there are those committed to violence, believing that Israel and Palestine can never be at peace, that it must be one or the other. But there are others who believe that peace is possible, and we join them in this belief, conscious that there have been times when Jews, Christians and Muslims have lived in peace together.

We believe that a just ceasefire with the release of all hostages and unhindered access for desperately needed aid are essential at this time. We support global efforts to negotiate a lasting peace.

(This statement was endorsed by an Australian Catholic Bishops Conference plenary meeting in Sydney on May 8, 2024.)