



A Statement by The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Church Unites in Prayer, Firmly Condemns Massacre at Hospital, and Grieves the Loss of Hundreds of Innocent Civilians

Jerusalem

October 17, 2023

In a solemn observance of a global day of fasting and prayers for peace, reconciliation, and an end to the harrowing conflict, Christians stood united in the Holy Land. However, this day of reflection was marred by a brutal attack on our Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in Gaza during the Israeli airstrikes there. Citing 2 Cor. 4:8-9a, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed," we reflect on the unwavering spirit in the face of adversity.

In the strongest terms, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem condemns this atrocious attack that has transpired in the heart of Gaza. Initial reports suggest the loss of countless lives, a manifestation of what can only be described as a crime against humanity. Hospitals, by the tenets of international humanitarian law, are sanctuaries, yet this assault has transgressed those sacred boundaries. We heed the call of Archbishop Justin Welby, who implored for the safeguarding of medical facilities and the rescission of evacuation orders. Regrettably, Gaza remains bereft of safe havens.

The devastation witnessed, coupled with the sacrilegious targeting of the church, strikes at the very core of human decency. We assert unequivocally that this is deserving international condemnation and retribution. An urgent appeal resonates for the international community to fulfill its duty in protecting civilians and ensuring that such inhumane horrific acts are not replicated.

As we grieve the loss of countless souls who perished on our premises, we declare a day of mourning in all our churches and institutions. We beseech our friends, partners, and individuals of goodwill to stand in solidarity, mourning with us the heinous assault on our dedicated staff and vulnerable patients.

End.

In this regard a press conference will be held tomorrow Wednesday 18th October, and we'll notify details in due course.