



# Anglican Church of Australia

Primate: The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith

## **A statement from Archbishop Geoffrey Smith on the war in Israel/Palestine**

19 October 2023

Today I join the Anglican community in Gaza, Israel, and the West Bank as they mourn all the lives lost since this current conflict began last week and, most recently, the hundreds of lives lost in the horrifying blast at the Anglican-run Al Ahli Hospital yesterday.

The hospital had already been damaged by air strikes on the weekend.

Atrocities such as this, that take innocent civilian lives, are crimes against God and humanity and can never be tolerated.

As the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, which administers the hospital, stated, the attack strikes at the very core of human decency.

I join with the Archbishop of Jerusalem, Archbishop Hosam Naoum, in calling for all international parties to help protect civilians and do all in their power to ensure there is no repetition of such suffering of innocents.

At the same time as we condemn the evil terror attacks by Hamas on the people of Israel and affirm its right to defend itself in a proportionate way to ensure its security, we note with alarm the growing toll in civilian casualties from the bombing campaign in Gaza and urge all efforts to avoid such suffering.

Australian Anglicans also join with the international community to appeal for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and for Israel to allow humanitarian access into Gaza to prevent a greater catastrophe.

I pray for peace in the region and a lasting resolution to this long-term conflict that recognises the worth and dignity of all lives.



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***The Rev'd Dr John Deane, Executive Director of Anglican Board of Mission and AID writes:***

We are rightly shocked by the events over the past week in the Holy Land. The fatal blast at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, that killed civilians seeking shelter and sanctuary, shows that there truly are no winners in war.

I join with Archbishop Geoff and Archbishop Hosam to condemn all attacks on civilians and call for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian corridors. I pray also that those in positions of authority work for a long-lasting peace. I encourage parishes to observe a period of silence at the beginning of their Sunday services and to use the appeal prayer during their intercessions.

My prayers are with the Diocesan and Hospital staff and the patients and their families caught-up in the conflict. I praise the Diocese and Hospital, beacons of hope to the people of Gaza who care for all regardless of religion and nationality. I commend them for their bravery as they continue to care for their patients, keeping the hospital open to serve all who are in need.

For more than 30 years the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) has partnered with the Al Ahli Hospital, through the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, and we will continue to support the Hospital and Diocese as requested.

As St Paul reminds us in 2 Cor 4:8-9 that although afflicted they will not be crushed, while perplexed, they will not be driven to despair, while persecuted they will not be forsaken and while struck down, they will not be destroyed.

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