



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

In the Name of God, end the siege over Gaza.

One and a half million people imprisoned and without proper food or medicine. 800,000 without electricity supply; this is illegal collective punishment, an immoral act in violation of the basic human and natural laws as well as International Law. It cannot be tolerated anymore. The siege over Gaza should end now.

Voices from our people there say "We feel the threat of being exterminated by this siege"

In the Name of God, we, the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land urge the International Community, President Bush and the leaders of Israel, to put an end to this suffering and call upon Israel to activate Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's initiative for Palestinian responsibility control of the borders thus ensuring sufficient normal flow of medicine, food, fuel and goods to Gaza.

We urge the International Community and the European Union to act according to their recent pleas. There is no time to waste when Human life is endangered.

We urge the Palestinian Leadership to unite in ending their differences for the sake of their people in Gaza. Put the differences aside and deal with this crisis for the good of all human beings demonstrating that you care for your brothers and sisters who have suffered enough already. We would say to all concerned parties; while ever you persist in firing rockets into Israel you encourage public opinion outside this Land to feel there is a justification for this siege.

We urge Israel to act responsibly and to immediately end this inhuman siege. To deny children and civilians their necessary basic commodities are not the ways to security but rather throw the region into further and more dangerous deteriorations. This siege will not guarantee the end to rocket firing, but will only increase the bitterness and suffering and invite more revenge, while the innocents keep dying. True Peace building is the only way to bring the desired security.

We pray for the day when the people of Gaza will be free from Occupation, from political differences, from violence and from despair. We pray for the Israelis and Palestinians to respect human life and God's love for every human life, and to take all possible measures to end this suffering. Only bold steps towards just Peace and ending the violence will protect the Human life and dignity of both People.

With the Prophet we keep praying and hoping;

*" A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;*

*he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope" (Isaiah 42:3-4)*

Heads of Churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land