



Pax Christi International calls upon UN Security Council members to strongly oppose the US government's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Pax Christi International is appalled by the decision of U.S. President Trump, on 6 December 2017¹ to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as well as to start the process of moving the U.S. embassy there. We are very concerned about the devastating consequences it will have for reaching a just resolution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In line with the EU, the UN and governments around the world, we condemn this unilateral decision by the U.S. government which violates international law and is detrimental to any Israeli-Palestinian peace effort. We call upon UN Security Council members to strongly oppose this decision in the emergency meeting that is expected to take place on 8 December 2017 at the UN in New York.

We recall that in UN Resolution 181², the international community, including the U.S., decided that Jerusalem should have special status, given its pluralistic and religious importance. With its latest decision, the U.S. government is departing from the foreign affairs policies of governments around the world which respect the 'status quo' of Jerusalem.

Pax Christi International also wants to highlight that with UN resolution 478³, which followed the enactment of "basic law" in the Israeli Knesset proclaiming a change in the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem (annexation of East-Jerusalem), all states are obliged to have their embassies in Tel Aviv.

Pax Christi International urges respect of the 'status quo' as any change should be the outcome of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. A letter from the Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches in Jerusalem to President Trump states, "We are certain that such steps will yield increased hatred,

¹ His statement can be found on the website of the Whitehouse: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/12/06/statement-president-trump-jerusalem>.

² UN Security Council Resolution 181, 29 November 1947, A/RES/181(II), online available at: <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DP/UNISPAL.NSF/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>.

³ UN Security Council Resolution 478, 20 August 1980, S/RES/478 (1980), online available at: <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DP/UNISPAL.NSF/0/DDE590C6FF232007852560DF0065FDDB>.

conflict, violence and suffering in Jerusalem and the Holy Land moving us farther from the goal of unity and deeper toward destructive division."⁴

We are convinced that the decision of the U.S. government is an international threat to peace and security in the Middle East region and the world. We welcome the request of eight UN Security Council Member States⁵ to schedule an emergency meeting to discuss the decision. We ask the UN Security Council members to take the following action:

- To strongly condemn the decision of the U.S. government as a violation of international law and UN resolutions and to demand the continued recognition of the present international status of Jerusalem.
- To reaffirm the position taken by UN Security Council Resolution 2334⁶, in 2016, that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 boundaries, including in regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.
- To confirm its determination to support the Israelis and Palestinians to reach a just and sustainable solution, guaranteeing the fundamental rights of both Israelis and Palestinians.
- To consider, as a possible solution, the reunification of the city of Jerusalem by recognising two legal, political parts, each with its own political capital, working to ensure equal rights for all.
- To protect and preserve the unique religious interests of the city: the three great monotheistic faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Pax Christi International welcomes the recent statement of Pope Francis during his General Audience in Paul VI Hall on 6 December 2017 in which he called for the maintenance of the "status quo" of Jerusalem:

"Jerusalem is a unique city, sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, where the Holy Places for the respective religions are venerated, and it has a special vocation to peace. I pray to the Lord that such identity be preserved and strengthened for the benefit of the Holy Land, the Middle East and the entire world, and that wisdom and prudence prevail, to avoid adding new elements of tension in a world already shaken and scarred by many cruel conflicts."⁷

Brussels, 7 December 2017

⁴ Patriarchs and Heads of Local Churches in Jerusalem, letter of 6 December to USA President Donald Trump, online available at: <https://www.lpi.org/heads-local-churches-send-letter-to-president-donald-trump-regarding-status-of-jerusalem/>

⁵ Bolivia, Britain, Egypt, France, Italy, Senegal, Sweden and Uruguay

⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 2334, 23 December 2016, S/RES/2334 (2016), online available at: <http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

⁷ Zenit, 'Jerusalem: Pope Urges Status Quo', 6 December 2017, online available at: <https://zenit.org/articles/jerusalem-pope-urges-status-quo/>.