

Press Statement on the Escalating Violence in Gaza Strip

New Delhi: 14 July 2014

CBCI Office for Justice, Peace and Development is gravely concerned over the more than six-day long Israeli offensive against Hamas in the northern Gaza Strip that has killed more than 160 people, most of whom are civilians including children. Besides, the military offensive has caused a power outage to some 70,000 Gaza civilians. Israel's talk of a possible ground invasion of Gaza and bombardment of the area, as reported by the media, despite international calls for a cease-fire, is distressing. Thousands of troops have reportedly massed along the border in recent days. Consequently, some 17,000 thousands of Palestinian residents of the northern Gaza Strip fled their homes.

On the other side the counter attack of Hamas escalated the situation in Gaza region. Both the groups fighting against each other and killing the innocents including the children is not acceptable. The new escalation of horrific violence has engulfed the daily lives of Israelis and Palestinian civilians. Both Palestinians and Israelis have a fundamental right to live in security and without fear.

In this connection we are reminded of the words of wisdom that Pope Francis uttered in St. Peter's square while reciting the Angelus Prayer on last Sunday and called on the faithful to pray: *"Now, Lord, help us! Grant us peace, teach us peace, guide us toward peace."* *"Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!" "Everything is destroyed by war."*

Affirming Pope Francis' quest for peace, and reiterating that collective retribution is not justice, nor will it lead to peace, we appeal to both the governments to immediately halt the military aggression in the Gaza strip and to bring about a just peace which will benefit both Palestine and Israel, peace that will save lives of Israelis and Palestinians and their families from grief.

CBCI Office for justice, peace and development appeals to Christian faithful and the people of good will to devoutly and earnestly pray for lasting peace in the Holy Land.

Yours truly,

Rev Dr. Charles Irudayam

Secretary, CBCI-JPD Office

--

Secretary

CBCI Office for Justice, Peace and Development

1 Ashok Place

Near Gole Dhakkana

New Delhi - 110001

Tel: +91-11-23366127

Mob: +91-9868103400