Archbishop of York's statement on Gaza

23/07/2025

*The Archbishop has issued a statement on the situation in Gaza. This follows in full.*

With each passing day in Gaza, the violence, starvation and dehumanisation being inflicted on the civilian population by the Government of Israel becomes more depraved and unconscionable. In the name of God, I cry out against this barbaric assault on human life and dignity. It is a stain on the conscience of the international community, and a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law.

The statement this week by the UK and 27 other states condemning the denial of aid, and the inhumane killing of civilians at aid posts, is an important – if long overdue – sign of growing international resolve to end this war. But while the group stated their preparedness to take further action, there is no time to wait. Action must be taken now to stop this ongoing assault on Gaza, end settlement-building and settler violence in the West Bank, and secure negotiation for a lasting and just peace.

My prayers remain with the steadfast and suffering Christian community in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and most particularly in Gaza after the recent deadly attack on the Roman Catholic Holy Family Church. I stand in pastoral solidarity with the Latin and Greek Patriarchs of Jerusalem, and give thanks for their recent visit to Gaza. There are no excuses for the bombing of places of worship where desperate people are taking shelter, or hospitals where the sick and injured are being cared for. I echo the words of Pope Leo XIV and say clearly that this barbarism must stop.

With my sister and brother bishops in the Church of England, I have condemned many times the horrific Hamas attacks on 7 October, and I continue to call for the release of those still cruelly held hostage. We deplore every assault on the innocent. But as we said in May this year, this war is now one of aggression – it is a grave sin and it must stop.

Last week the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Revd Hosam Naoum, spoke powerfully at the Church of England General Synod in York. I support Archbishop Hosam in calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, for the release of all hostages and captives and for the rebuilding of Gaza. I support him in rejecting any policy that would amount to the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian population from Gaza. And in the name of Jesus Christ, I encourage dioceses and parishes to continue praying for our Palestinian Anglican sisters and brothers and all other Christian communities – and for security, freedom and dignity for Palestinians, Israelis and all the peoples of the region.

Stephen Cottrell
Archbishop of York