

Statement of Anglican Primates on the Middle East, 14 April 2002

We, the Primates of the Anglican Communion representing 75,000,000 Anglican Christians in 164 countries of the world, gathered in Canterbury, have taken counsel following a message concerning the escalating conflict in Israel/Palestine which we received from the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem the Right Reverend Riah H Abu El-Assal. This was delivered to us by the President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Most Reverend Iraj Mottahedeh.

We are deeply shocked and saddened by the spiralling violence which is creating more widows, orphaned children, mourning fathers and mothers, and which is intensifying hatred and bitterness on both sides of the conflict. We pledge our solidarity with all who have suffered loss of life, injury, and destruction of property in the area.

We denounce the shelling, suicide bomb attacks, and military incursions as both evil and futile. We see no way in which such acts can lead to peace with justice and security for the Holy Land and its peoples.

We urge the leaders of the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to act without delay to break the spiral of retaliation on both sides of the conflict. Every death puts resolution, reconciliation and justice further off. In particular, we urge the Government of Israel to cease activities in the occupied territories that threaten the lives of so many innocent civilians and put the human rights of so many communities at risk. We also call for an end to suicide bombing and for a clear condemnation of the morality of such acts from leaders of all faiths in the Middle East.

We fully endorse The First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land (21 January 2002) which declares that according to the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faith traditions, the killing of innocents in the name of God is a desecration of his Holy Name, and unite ourselves to the pledges and commitments of the religious leaders contained in the statement.

We call upon Anglicans and people of good will everywhere to unite in earnest prayer for an end to the violence and bloodshed.

We pledge our prayerful support to all Christian people, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches and the leaders of other faiths in Jerusalem.

We commit ourselves and our Churches to support the efforts of all religious, national and international leaders who are seeking a just peace.

Canterbury 14 April 2002