

Israel/Palestine – An Unholy War

A Report by the Church of England's Board for Social Responsibility

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PREFACE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, members of the General Synod of the Church of England,

Salaam and grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and blessed greetings from Jerusalem. I send you greetings from the Church in Palestine, and all the Christians in the country who trace their history to the many who have passed through this land since the earliest periods of prehistory, and to the first roots of Christianity in Palestine. As the conflict between Israel and Palestine persists, we call upon all our brothers and sisters in England, and other parts of the world to continue listening to the needs and aspirations of our people who have been looking for Peace with Justice for so long.

We are grateful that you are relating to the conflict in your deliberations, and hope that your voice may be heard for the enhancement of peace with justice for all the peoples of the land of the Holy One. Below, I share with you something of our story in order for you to understand the living conditions of our people, who experience a constant deprivation of their fundamental rights. There is a growing feeling of insecurity and fear among our people and our Churches, a fear that puts at jeopardy the future of Christianity and its right to exist in the land where it began. You have rightly named this discussion: "An Unholy War".

The Palestinians are no strangers to the land today, and as mentioned above, they trace their history to the many who have passed through this land since the earliest periods of prehistory, thereby showing that there was no ground whatsoever for the Zionist picture of "a land without a people to a people without a land". These people are today denied access to places of worship, work, learning, and education, as well as medical institutions.

Since the Palestinian uprising began over 1,600 people have been killed including 450 children under the age of eighteen. In addition, more than 40,000 people have also been injured. The Gaza Strip has been totally cut off from the West Bank. Gaza itself has been split into four areas, while West Bank towns and villages have been cut off from each other with hundreds of roadblocks to the point of physical and psychological strangulation. Towns are surrounded by ditches and barbed wire. It is not humanly possible to live with the tortures imposed by the Israeli Army.

The total destruction of the economy has devastated families the most, and increased the level of poverty. People face daily dehumanisation, humiliation, harassment, and risk their lives to go to work and school. Israeli restrictions on

movement are impeding hospital staff and patients from getting to their hospitals and often preventing doctors from reaching rural clinics. All this does not amount to a war on terrorism, but rather to the systematic humiliation of an entire people. The result of all this is anger, frustration and a desire for revenge. The Israelis may think, and may claim that they are rooting out terrorism, but in fact they are creating it. No one is left with enough sanity to heed the value of human lives. The bottom cause of all this, is not terrorism, as some would think, rather, it is the unjust and illegal occupation of Palestinian land. Terrorism is a symptom of the real root cause: the occupation, which in the view of many is state terrorism.

The Israeli occupation is not only damaging the Palestinian population, but is also corrupting the Israeli culture, and society. An Israeli Jewish lawyer, representing the Israeli Conscripts who refuse to serve beyond the 1967 borders says: "The occupation has eroded our code of ethics, and it has even contaminated the Hebrew language of the fight against the murderous and unforgivable terror that struck Israeli cities. We have grown accustomed to check-points in which thousands of Palestinians have been detained for hours and humiliated by young soldiers. We have been accustomed to pointing our rifles at children and women. We have become tolerant of large-scale demolitions of houses. Finally, we have accepted a state-sponsored policy of assassinations, neatly labelled by Israel as 'focused prevention'. We have learned how to distinguish between roads for settlers, and roads for locals. We have been asked to implement discriminatory laws for the sake of the illegal settlements that have trapped our country with war".

This is an unholy war indeed. The story of this conflict, and of the Zionist claim in Palestine more specifically, shows how the far distant history is so politicised in this land like in no other place, creating opposing ideologies, and presenting to the world, a version of history that only comes from the mighty, as if the Palestinians have no right to exist, or have no narrative to share.

This is an unholy war in a land we call holy. We have called this land holy, and continue to do so, not because holiness is by any means construed to this part of the world – far from it. Rather, we call this land holy, precisely because it is here that God's commitment to the whole world has been revealed in his own unholy and brutal death.

The Church has witnessed for 2000 years in this land for the faithfulness of God to this land, and to the world. Today the Church faces a serious threat of extinction, as the conflict goes on. It is with great pain, and hope at the same time that we are called to press on. Nothing would be more tragic than if our 2000-year-old

presence comes to an end. This may be avoided, but only if Peace is established on Justice. This means implementing US Resolutions 242, 338, withdrawing from all the Occupied Territories to the 1967 borders, and then finding a just solution to the refugee problem in accordance with UN Resolution 194. For this to happen the Church cannot but be directly and positively involved. What is needed is action, at the level of Governments, Parliaments, Synods, and the media. From that point onwards there may be a chance to work towards the reconciliation among all the peoples in this land, which is and remains our own ministry.

Know that this comes with my prayers and best wishes,

In Christ,

+Rt. Rev. Riah Abu El-Assal
The Bishop of Jerusalem

Introduction

1. What follows is an attempt to update the Board for Social Responsibility's November 2001 Report, *Demanding Peace: A Church Response to the Intifada*, in light of the recent cycle of violence in Israel/Palestine. *Demanding Peace* was produced with the expectation that there would be a General Synod Debate in November 2001. However the tragic events of 11 September 2001 meant that time was quite rightly set-aside for reflection on the international situation.
2. In *Demanding Peace* the BSR set out how the failure to find agreement at Camp David in July 2000 led to the collapse of the Oslo Peace Process and the start of the second intifada. The report recognised that the full implementation of the recommendations put forward by the 2001 Mitchell Commission provided arguably the best way out of the conflict, and that international diplomatic and economic pressure should be used to encourage both sides to return to the negotiating table. In looking at ways that the Church of England could respond to the crisis, the report documented the numerous relationships that exist with the Diocese of Jerusalem and how the Church's resources could be better deployed to respond to the crisis. The report stressed the need for the Church to be in critical solidarity with fellow Christians in Israel and Palestine, and for such partnership to be informed by prayer and expressed through a Christian witness that takes seriously the biblical call to peace with justice.
3. The events of the last six months add greater urgency to the task of bearing witness to the struggles of persons, communities and peoples for sustainable and peaceable life in Israel/Palestine. The cycle of suicide bombings and retaliatory action by F16s, Apache helicopters, extra-judicial assassinations has all dragged the region into a downward spiral of continuing violence that has inflicted considerable human suffering on all sides. The prospects for peace look more remote than ever before. The events of 11 September 2001 have complicated the quest for peace by placing the conflict in a terrorist paradigm that legitimates Israel's military response while paralysing the United States of America from adopting a coherent policy to Israel/Palestine in particular and the Middle East in general.
4. The July 2002 General Synod offers the opportunity to escape the paralysis. Short-term the Church needs to urge all sides to cease their military activity and accept the Mitchell Report's recommendations as a preliminary step to a negotiated settlement that provides for a two-state solution guaranteeing security for Israel and justice for the Palestinians. The First Alexandria

Declaration is an important step in this direction. However, the immediacy of recent events ought not to cloud judgement as to the causes of the violence. Many have argued that the current crisis stems from Israel's occupation and establishment of settlements in the 1967 territories and its refusal to abide by relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The challenge of working for peace with justice has led a number of Churches and Church related organisations to focus their advocacy strategies on securing an end to the occupation. This report examines these advocacy strategies and suggests that they might usefully inform the General Synod's thinking on this issue. Papers attached to this report provide information as to ecumenical statements as well as the views of Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

5. In grappling with an issue as sensitive as Israel/Palestine, the Church needs to be aware of the rise of antisemitism. As Christians, we need to take with utmost seriousness the recent rise in antisemitic incidents across Europe, seen also to some extent within this country. Attacks on Jewish people are particularly poisonous when linked to denial of the reality of the Holocaust, or when coded in language of 'Nazism' or Holocaust. However, it is wholly unreasonable to suggest that criticism of the Israeli Government or military is necessarily a sign of antisemitism. While some antisemites may feel that 'anti-Zionism' provides a respectable cover for their pernicious views, on the other hand critics of current Israeli tactics and policies also include many (both Jews and Christians) firmly committed to the principle of Israel's right to a secure and permanent existence.

Jenin, Ramallah and the Church of the Nativity

6. Since November 2001 the situation in Israel/Palestine has deteriorated in ways that few could have imagined or predicted. The previous cycle of Palestinian suicide bombings against innocent Israeli bystanders, matched by Israel's extra-judicial killings and helicopter gun-ship diplomacy has given way to Israel's full scale military invasion of Palestinian areas entailing house demolitions, closing off of populated areas, targeted killings as well as intense bombings within civilian areas. Under the weight of Operation Defensive Shield the Palestinian Authority has all but collapsed. The scale of the offensive, the biggest since Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, is so forbidding and overwhelming that it is impossible at the time of writing to provide an accurate picture as to the scale of the destruction. While most international attention has crystallised on Jenin, Ramallah and the Church of the Nativity, and although they provide the focus of this report, the scene in Hebron, Nablus, and countless other villages and towns in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is equally devastating and should not be overlooked.
7. It is difficult in such a report to convey the deep despair that leads young Palestinians to seek 'martyrdom', or the anguish felt by Israeli families mourning the loss of loved ones that legitimates military retaliation. What motives three 14-year old Palestinian classmates to mount a suicide attack on a Jewish settlement in Gaza, or a 20-year old Palestinian woman to blow herself up by a bus stop in central Jerusalem? Without an understanding of this despair, merely condemning suicide bomb attacks as immoral glosses over the deep-rooted social, economic and political disenfranchisement experienced by Palestinians. Such attacks are evil and must be condemned unequivocally. However, if peace is to be achieved the cycle of suicide bombings has to be broken. This requires the circumstances that give rise to them to be understood and resolved.
8. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine the grief felt by Israeli families when a Jewish girl's bar mitzvah party in Hadera turns into a bloody massacre leaving six dead and thirty wounded or when a night out in Tel Aviv at a discotheque or snooker club ends in horrendous circumstances. While these are tragic incidents, for the majority of Israelis they have become daily events. A bus journey, a cup of coffee with friends at a cafe or celebrating Passover can all end in tragedy. Without an understanding of the widespread insecurity created by such suicide attacks merely calling on the Israeli Government to cease its military activities appears to ignore the fact that many Israelis believe their government is taking all necessary measures to provide for their security.

9. Israel is clearly entitled to take measures to protect its population, but its recent actions appear to be grossly disproportionate and far exceed the limits of self-defence. Meeting terror with terror is not the solution. The scale of Israel's most recent military incursions will arguably only make the sense of frustration and hatred amongst Palestinians stronger, so nurturing a new generation of suicide bombers. While nation states have a monopoly on the use legitimate force it is incumbent upon them to act with restraint when exercising such force. There is clear international consensus that such restraint was lacking from Operation Defensive Shield.

Jenin

10. The attack on Jenin began on 3rd April when Israeli forces blasted their way into the Palestinian refugee camp; strafing homes from helicopter gun ships and pounding them with tanks shells. Fourteen days later the centre of the camp had been completely destroyed with scores of people missing and thousands made homeless. As part of its strategy to avoid booby-trapped streets, Israeli forces systematically bulldozed Palestinian homes. These efforts became more indiscriminate after 9 April when Palestinian gunmen killed thirteen Israeli soldiers. Although the Israeli troops withdrew from Jenin on 16 April they continued to deny access to aid organisations and human rights workers. At the UK's instigation, the United Nations Security Council on 19 April agreed Resolution 1405, which welcomed the initiative of the Secretary General, Kofi Annan, to send a fact finding team to Jenin to establish what had happened.
11. Although Prime Minister Sharon initially agreed to this mission, objections were raised both as to the team's composition as well as its remit. Amongst other things, the Israeli Cabinet demanded that military and terrorist experts be added to the investigating team and that the Israeli government should decide who the investigators could talk to and which documents they could review. The Israeli Cabinet also insisted that the investigation should not reach any conclusions nor that evidence gathered be used in any war crime tribunal. In addition they argued that the UN team should also examine the activities of Palestinian 'terrorists' in the camp over recent months. Despite considerable international pressure that Israeli co-operate with the UN team, the obstacles set down by the Israel Government proved insurmountable. Rather than seeking authority from the UN Security Council to impose the investigation on Israel, the UN Secretary General disbanded the team before it had even been properly assembled. Instead the UN Secretary General was left with no other option but

to invite Israel and the Palestinians to "provide information" on events so that a report could be drawn up as quickly as possible.

12. Jenin illustrates the complexities of the current crisis and the difficulties in attempting to draw accurate conclusions. The failure to agree terms of reference for the UN fact finding mission means it is impossible to know for certain what happened in Jenin with the result that myth and propaganda will prevail over hard facts. President Arafat has already called Jenin Palestine's Stalingrad. Although it will be impossible to establish whether or not a massacre did actually occur, there remains little doubt that Israeli troops used disproportionate force involving the extensive destruction of property. Some NGOs and Human Rights' Organisations have argued that the scale of the destruction contravenes Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits "the extensive destruction or unlawful appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity committed either unlawfully or wantonly". The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) estimate that 800 homes were destroyed and many more damaged leaving 4,000 to 5,000 people homeless.
13. In its defence the Israeli Government argues that the refugee camp was a haven for terrorists who turned it into a battleground and that 13 soldiers were killed precisely because the army used only limited force. They argue that while the destruction is to be regretted, it was justified by the harsh fighting, the levels of resistance experienced by Israeli forces and the infiltration by the Palestinian fighters of the refugee camps. From this perspective the actions of the Israeli forces were "justified by military necessity".
14. Despite this argument the international community was left wondering why if the Israeli Government claimed their actions to be proportionate it did not admit the UN fact-finding mission. Israel's refusal to co-operate with the UN underlines how marginal the UN has become to the Middle East Peace Process and how important it is for the USA and the EU to develop more coherent strategies to the region. While the EU possesses the will to intervene it lacks the means. Conversely, while the US\ possesses the means to intervene it lacks the will.
15. It is also interesting to note how the saga surrounding UN's fact finding mission was viewed by public opinion in Israel/Palestine. At a domestic level Israeli Jews view UNSCR 1405 as evidence of an international conspiracy against them, which fuels their bunker mentality, while Palestinians accuse the UN and

the international community of double standards in its dealing with Israel and Iraq.

Ramallah

16. Some commentators have argued that many within the Israeli Cabinet objected to the UN fact finding mission on the grounds that the concessions made to end the Ramallah stand off set precedents for growing international intervention, which should be resisted at all costs.
17. The Ramallah stand off originated in December 2001 following the murder last October of Mr Rehavam Ze'evi, a member of the Israeli Cabinet. Those responsible for the assassination as well as the *Karine A* arms shipment affair in January 2002 were detained in the compound. As a result, Israeli forces surrounded the compound and restricted access to and from it. At the end of March following a series of suicide attacks in Israel, Israeli tanks crashed through the perimeter walls of the compound forcing the Palestinian leader to seek refuge in a few rooms virtually cut off from the outside world.
18. The issue was resolved by Israel's acceptance of a United Kingdom brokered initiative, under which Israeli troops would pull back from President Arafat's compound and from Ramallah itself so leaving President Arafat free to travel within the Occupied Territories and elsewhere. In return, six Palestinian men were removed from the compound and were to be held at a secure Palestinian facility in the Occupied Territories. Under the initiative Britain and the United States agreed to provide a small number of supervisory wardens to oversee the men's detention.
19. The Ramallah siege suggests to many observers that Israel has wanted, in effect, to destroy the Palestinian Authority set up by the Oslo Accord, or at least to undermine the authority of President Arafat both nationally and internationally. Although President Bush and other heads of government made repeated demands on President Arafat to do more to stop suicide bombings, it is difficult to see how President Arafat could have effectively responded to such requests when cooped up in his bunker in Ramallah armed with nothing but a telephone. Throughout the siege President Arafat issued a number of statements condemning terrorism including the one issued on 13 April following a meeting with Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State Colin. Similarly, such demands ignore the devastation done to the Palestinian Authorities infrastructure, including its capacity to maintain law and order. Israel's retaliation for the bar mitzvah attack of 18 January 2002, for instance, resulted in Israeli jets

destroying the Palestinian Authority's main police headquarters in the West Bank town of Tulkarem.

20. Central to the Ramallah stand off was the Israeli claim that the Palestinian Authority's security apparatus acted like a revolving door when it came to Palestinian militants. Israel claims that these suspicions are well founded because the information gathered during the military incursions allegedly establishes a relationship between the Palestinian Authority and the bomb attacks. They argue that the Palestinian Authority has diverted overseas assistance to finance terrorist activity. In view of these allegations a number of donor countries including the UK, which gives the Palestinian Authority 10 million Euros a month in grants, are seeking further guarantees about the intended use of such funds. The British Prime Minister has even proposed sending an international monitoring force to the West Bank to test President Arafat's claims that he is not secretly backing the suicide bombings. The USA and other European countries are also looking at ways to reform the Palestinian Authorities security apparatus to make it more transparent and accountable.
21. The events following the bomb attack on Tel Aviv on 3 March, which killed 15 Israelis illustrates some of the tensions surrounding the security debate. Yasser Arafat attempted to starve of reprisals in the Gaza Strip by arresting 17 activists from the Islamist radical group Hamas. He also gave orders to his security forces to "prevent any terrorist operation against Israeli civilians", which following on from the Ramallah deal threatened to further undermine his position domestically. Although President Bush called such efforts "an incredibly positive sign", his Security Advisor Condeleessa Rice stated that President Arafat would need to do more to stop such terrorist attacks, while the US Congress and Senate took steps to increase the US aid budget to Israel. The Israel Government argued that it was too little too late and insufficient to starve of military action against the Gaza Strip, the headquarters of Hamas and the home of the suicide bomber.
22. While efforts to reform the Palestinian Authority are important, there is a danger that this will divert attention from the undercurrents in Palestinian society that are more than likely to see a reformed Palestinian Authority as quisling of the Israelis or its ally the United States. A Palestinian Authority that prioritises the cessation of violence against Israel at the expense of developing the instruments of statehood, is unlikely to prove popular with the Palestinian 'street'. The resolution of the stand-off at Ramallah as well as the ending of the siege at the Church of the Nativity have raised fears amongst Palestinians that they could be

ejected from the West Bank and The Gaza strip, where they are supposed to be building a state. Similarly, since the reform of the Palestinian Authority will no doubt be a protracted affair, the standing of President Arafat will continue to wane, creating a power vacuum with all that this entails.

The Church of the Nativity

23. An agreement similar to the one that resolved the siege in Ramallah also helped resolve the five-week siege at the Church of the Nativity. The siege started on 2 April 2002 when Israeli tanks moved into Bethlehem as part of a series of raids on West Bank cities. Local civilians and Palestinian militants alike sought refuge in Churches throughout the city including the Church of the Nativity. It is estimated that 200 Palestinians including a number of Hamas backed militants took refuge in the Church of the Nativity. In addition there were 40 friars, 4 Franciscan nuns, and about 30 Orthodox and Armenian monks inside the compound at the start of the siege.
24. Under intense diplomatic and religious pressure to show restraint the Israeli army avoided a full-scale assault on the Church. Instead it set up a crane outside the compound from which snipers fired on those inside and loudspeakers broadcasted loud music in an attempt to sow confusion. These unorthodox methods were to have tragic results when on 10 April an Armenian bell ringer was killed and when fires broke out in a Church dormitory after Israeli flares were fired during the night of 1 May. Although about 75 civilians left the Church during the siege the situation was not resolved until the EU and the USA brokered a deal, with the assistance of the Vatican, allowing the majority of the 132 still left inside the Church to walk free. The deal also involved another 26 being transferred to the Gaza Strip to stand trial and a further 13 men were transferred to Cyprus before being further dispersed throughout European countries.
25. The manner in which the siege was resolved illustrates the potentially constructive role that the European Union can play in the Middle East. Mr Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief, the Spanish Government which holds the EU Presidency and Miguel Moratinos, the EU's special Middle Eastern envoy all played a role in brokering the agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. However European governments have to tread a difficult line in the Middle East to avoid the charge of being soft on terrorism or being biased towards the Palestinians. This is especially important at a time when there have been spates of antisemitic attacks across Europe. The EU insists that President Arafat remains a partner for peace even though Israel with the implicit backing of the

USA is willing to isolate and undermine him. Although the EU has resisted calls for the introduction of sanctions against Israel they make no secret of their disdain for Prime Minister Sharon or his refusal to comply with a UN investigation into Jenin.

26. The political and religious concern at events surrounding the Church of the Nativity stands in marked contrast to the international response to the damage done to surrounding Church property. Although this is understandable given the status of the Church of the Nativity as one of Christianity's most sacred sites, some have questioned whether religious and political leaders are more concerned about an ancient Church than the welfare of Christian communities in Israel/Palestine. Rev Dr Mitri Rahbeb, the Director of the International Centre of Bethlehem, whose Centre borders the Church of the Nativity, documents how Israeli troops used the Christmas Lutheran Church and the buildings of the International Centre of Bethlehem to shoot at gunmen on the street. The damage done to the building seems perverse given the vast sums of Western money poured into the Centre. Dr Mitri estimates that over half a million US dollars will be needed to rebuild and restore what has been destroyed during the four-week siege on the Church of the Nativity. The scale of the damage has left Dr Mitri wondering whether or not the goal of the Israeli invasion was to destroy the main cultural, educational and community centres in the West Bank.

Resolving the Conflict

27. Amidst the despair of recent months there have also been signs of hope. On 12 March 2002, the United Nations Security Council endorsed for the first time a resolution endorsing an independent Palestinian state. UN Security Council Resolution 1397 provides a vision of the region where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognised borders. UNSCR 1397 also demanded the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction. In addressing the Security Council, Secretary General Kofi Annan urged Palestinians to halt "morally repugnant" acts of terror and called on Israel to end their "illegal occupation" of Palestinian territory and to stop using excessive force. UNSCRs 1402 and 1403 further strengthened UNSCR 1397 by calling upon both parties to move towards a meaningful cease fire by implementing the Tenet security plan as a first step towards implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations, with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

28. International interest has also galvanised round Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia's peace initiative. This involves Arab League countries promising Israel peace, security and a normalisation of relations in exchange for a full withdrawal from Arab countries since 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Not only does this initiative have the support of the Arab League, it has the endorsement of President Bush and Javier Solana, the EU's Foreign Minister. The degree of international support for Saudi Arabia's peace proposal was reflected in a declaration on 10 April by Russia, the UN Secretary General, the EU and US Secretary of State immediately prior to the latter's visit to the region. Secretary of State Colin Powell hopes to use this initiative as the basis for an international ministerial conference later this year.

29. Even at a religious level, progress has been made with the First Alexandria Declaration, signed by prominent religious leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities. This called for a religiously sanctioned cease-fire and for the implementation of the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations. His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury played an instrumental role in bringing this initiative to fruition with the help of the Centre for International Ministry at Coventry Cathedral. Although this declaration was not widely reported in Western media, the Secretary General Kofi Annan saw it as an important contribution. On 24 February 2002 he stated he "felt that such contributions are essential if the Middle East peace process is to succeed and is an illustration of

what individuals can do in the pursuit of peace." It is encouraging that the Memorandum of Heads of Churches in Jerusalem setting out their concerns in advance of their meeting with Colin Powell, US Secretary of State, highlighted this declaration as an important interfaith initiative that needed to be supported. Coventry Cathedral's Centre for International Ministry is playing a crucial role in helping all sides to this declaration to maintain the momentum gained by this declaration.

30. While these initiatives are encouraging their success will depend on the extent to which they tackle the root causes of the conflict. A common theme throughout the submissions produced by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem is an understanding that the violence is only a symptom of the root causes of the Middle East conflict, namely Israel's illegal occupation of the 1967 territories. The current cycle of violence provides for neither peace nor security. United Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1402 promote the idea of "land for peace" culminating in the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian state in line with the 1967 borders. The Heads of Churches in Jerusalem believe that the dismantling of settlements and the return of Palestinian refugees must be part of this solution, as must the sharing of sovereignty over Jerusalem. This solution recognises that Israel's security is dependent on freedom and justice for Palestinians.
31. While there are encouraging signs of greater involvement in the Middle East, the worry remains that these interventions will be piece meal and incremental, involving individual countries like the US and the UK rather than the wider international community. Prime Minister Sharon appears resistant to any initiative that might internationalise the issue so restraining his efforts to find a solution through military means. It is disconcerting that no sooner had the UN passed a resolution enshrining the goal of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, that the Israeli military pulled the plug on the Palestinian Authority, and the Likud Party, to which Sharon belongs, voted to prevent such aspirations becoming reality. Similarly, it is worrying that in the background more hard line forces are massing, among them Hamas and the young fighters of Fatah, who have already lost patience with President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. Paradoxically, therefore, despite the flurry of international efforts the realisation of a two-state solution looks as remote as ever, with the result that rather than a full-scale war or the quantum leap to peace, the region will experience a 'managed conflict'.

Churches and the Struggle for Peace with Justice

32. The challenge of working for peace with justice has led a number of Churches and Church related organisations to focus their advocacy strategies on securing an end to the occupation. The World Council of Churches has called for a concerted effort by its member Churches to focus efforts in 2002 around ending the occupation. The Catholic Bishops Conference of England Wales, the Methodist Conference and the United Reformed Church have all responded positively to this challenge by issuing statements which acknowledge the link between the cycle of violence and the occupation of Palestinian territories. The Quakers have gone one step further and called for an embargo on the export of arms from the UK to Israel.
33. Christian Aid and its partners in APRODEV, an association of comprising 15 major Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe have developed advocacy strategies, which have led them to lobbying European governments to take economic and political steps to end the occupation. They have argued for the suspension of the European Community-Israel Association Agreement and a review of the EU's bilateral relations with Israel, with particular reference to scientific, technical and military related agreements, as the Scientific and Technical Co-operation Agreement. On 10 April the European Parliament adopted a Resolution calling for a suspension of this agreement citing both human rights abuses as well as rules of origins as justification for such a measure. Although European Foreign Ministers have resisted such moves they are conscious that important domestic constituencies are mobilising around this issue.
34. The EU-Israel Association Agreement came into force on 1 June 2000 and is an extensive free trade agreement which includes the liberalisation of goods and services, the free movement of capital, rules on competition, economic and social co-operation, political dialogue and cultural co-operation. The agreement makes provision for its suspension if either party fails to comply with the details of the agreement. APRODEV members have argued that Israel has long been in violation of two aspects of the agreement. In the first instance the agreement stipulates that, "relations between the parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself, shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of the Agreement". Secondly, the rules of origin stipulate that the agreement applies only to products originating in the territory of the State of Israel.

35. APRODEV argues that Israel has been in violation of both these principles. In respect to human rights they suggest that Israel has been guilty of gross human rights violations in both the Occupied Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which are particularly grave given the fact that civilians are often the target of military action. Second APRODEV claims that it has been repeatedly proven that Israel exports products produced in these areas as if they originated in the territory of the State of Israel. They argue that these actions are fraudulent and the EU should, therefore, suspend the agreement since the economic gains that Israel derives from the agreement contributes to its military prowess at the cost of thousands of lives and livelihoods. In short they argue that the core principles that underpin the Association Agreement are being systematically flouted and it should be suspended forthwith.

Developing a Church of England Policy

36. *Demanding Peace* gave examples of the complex and varied ways in which the Church of England has related to the Middle East. These relationships have helped to shape its response to the Israel/Palestine conflict. In the past there have been three complementary threads to the Church's views on the subject. First, there has been the recognition that any solution to the long-standing conflict must be based on international law and human rights as enshrined in UN Resolutions and the Geneva Convention. International law recognises both Israel's right to exist within safe borders and the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Second, the recognition that the ongoing conflict has had a detrimental effect on indigenous Christian communities, which need support through acts of solidarity and prayer. Third, the Church has a responsibility to facilitate inter faith dialogue as a way of encouraging greater understanding between the three Abrahamic faiths. In the light of this tradition, what can the Church of England do in the current crisis? Obviously any strategy needs to be responsive to the needs of our partners, whilst being informed by prayer and expressed through advocacy.

Partnership

37. Partnership brings us into critical solidarity with the aspirations of fellow Anglicans and fellow Christians in Israel and the occupied territories. The Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Bishop Riah, is among the Church's partners in the Diocese of Jerusalem. St George's College in Jerusalem is a ministry of the Anglican Communion at which a number of British clergy and lay people have served. These are people, brothers and sisters who serve Christ in the midst of terror and violence. Within the unity of the body of Christ there are a number of special relationships that exist between the Church of England and the Diocese of Jerusalem. These include amongst others the mission agencies (USPG, CMS and CMJ), the Jerusalem and Middle East Association, Christian Aid and the Diocese of Exeter's companion link with Jerusalem. Similarly the Diocese of Coventry has established a formal link with the Syrian Orthodox Diocese of Jerusalem, Jordan and the Holy Lands, while the Bishop in Europe plays a lead in maintaining good relations between the Church of England and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

38. The varied and extensive links between the Church of England and the Diocese of Jerusalem are set out in greater detail in the BSR report *Demanding Peace* and need no further elaboration here. Such partnerships need the support of the wider Church especially as they assist the Diocese of Jerusalem in the process of

reconstruction and reconciliation. The scale of the recent destruction led Christian Aid to launch an appeal in early April, which was endorsed by the Archbishops' Council meeting later that month. USPG and CMS are also examining how best they can respond to the needs of their partners, and their efforts will also need the support of the wider Church.

Prayer

39. Prayer is a crucial part of our response. Through prayer we find the courage and strength to stand in partnership and solidarity with our sisters and brothers. Worship material is available from the Anglican and ecumenical organisations listed above and a number of other organisations have also produced helpful prayer material to assist individuals, parishes and dioceses in this task.
40. The World Council of Churches, *Prayers for Peace from the Churches of Jerusalem*, produced in the context of the *Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010)*, is one such resource (<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/resourcepack.html>). Sabeel, an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians, has also compiled several links and resources for worship, prayers, and sermons, all of which can be found at <http://www.sabeel.org/worship.html>. Pax Christi has produced two worship resources combining elements from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian traditions. A "Muslim-Jewish-Christian Prayer for Peace" can be found at http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news_events_more.asp?id=210. Similarly Rabbis for Human Rights, an Israeli organisation which opposes the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, offers a supplementary prayer (Al Kheyit) for use during Yom Kippur (<http://jewishpeacefellowship.org/MiddleEast2.htm>). Scriptural resources from the Jewish tradition that support the pursuit of nonviolent peacemaking are listed on <http://www.jewishpeacefellowship.org/index.htm#Tradition>.

Advocacy

41. Advocacy joins our identity as citizens to our identity as people of partnership and prayers in the Anglican Communion. Throughout the Communion, such advocacy takes different forms in different circumstances. For Bishop Riah and other heads of Churches in Jerusalem, advocacy is immediate, and reflects the courage of their convictions to act as a witness to peace with justice. In the Church of England advocacy has often taken the form of seeking to influence governments and other opinion leaders, and expressing publicly the call of our faith to peace with justice.

42. The current situation requires the Church to call on the Israeli Government to indicate that it will, without prejudicing other international obligations, take steps to end the occupation. This is not to excuse the current violence rather it is to understand that the violence is a symptom of a deeper injustice, namely Israel's refusal to withdraw from the Occupied Territories as required under international law. Yet, in pressing for an end to the occupation, the Church ought, at the same time, to press the Palestinian Authority, and through it the leaders of Hamas, for a full and unequivocal recognition of the state of Israel and its right to exist. Ultimately, reconciliation can only be based on justice for both sides, even though at the moment the lack of justice in one direction is very much more obvious.

43. The deep despair resulting from the Al-Aqsa intifada has emphasised the need for a just and lasting peace. The Mitchell Report provides the best basis for ending the violence and rebuilding confidence in the negotiations. In the longer term the basis for a peaceful settlement must be international law. This report suggest that the framework of future negotiations should include the following five principles of international law

- The right of return of the Palestinian refugees as laid down in UN General Assembly Resolution 194
- The recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people as well as Israel's right to secure and recognised borders
- The right to protection against further annexation of Occupied Territories and from forced changes in the demographic composition of Jerusalem
- The full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, as stipulated in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1402.
- A respect for human rights by all parties.

44. It is unlikely that any such framework will emerge so long as the peace process remains dependent on the United States of America as the sole interlocutor. The transition in American foreign policy following 11 September places a greater responsibility on other international actors such as the Arab League and the EU to play a more active role in resolving the conflict.

45. If this analysis is accepted, it follows that the EU and its member states should insist that the minimum requirements for a viable Palestinian state, as set out in the EU's Berlin Declaration of March 1999, be fully addressed. Any EU political initiative should be backed up by economic considerations. The EU should take steps to ensure that no products produced by Israeli settlements in

the Occupied Territories are imported into the EU as Israeli products under EU preferences. Not only is this contrary to the Association Agreement between Israel and the EU, but it also undermines the economic viability of a Palestinian state. Similarly the EU needs to examine whether there is a case for suspending this Association Agreement given the reports of human rights abuses in Jenin and other areas. In addition, while recognising that Israel has legitimate defence and security needs, the EU and its member states should place an embargo on arm sales to Israel so avoiding the risk that equipment might be used for internal repression or might adversely affect regional security. The EU should also insist on the PA improving its own human rights and security record before receiving further financial and other forms of assistance.

46. It is clear, however, that the success of any Church advocacy strategy depends on raising awareness as to those issues that obstruct the Middle East Peace Process. The most realistic way to achieving this awareness is through re-considering the way in which dioceses engage in pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Too often pilgrimages explore the landscape of the Bible and see the ancient archaeological sites, but never take steps to engage with indigenous Christian communities. By taking steps to meet with the 'living stones', pilgrims will be better placed to understand the despair felt by all communities. Some of this despair stems from the sense of divided loyalties experienced by Christian communities who for the most part are Arab Israeli citizens. The development of more ethically responsible pilgrimages to the Holy Land will not only be seen by local Churches as an important act of solidarity, but it will also encourage a more nuanced understanding of the Israel/Palestine conflict and the measures needed to bring peace to this troubled land. Developing alternative pilgrimages could provide a new way of engaging with Middle Eastern Christianity in its largely Muslim context, which could renew our understanding of inter faith dialogue.

APPENDIX

Statements from the Region

- Memorandum for meeting of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem with Mr Colin Powell (13 April 2002)
- Letter from Bishop Riah in Jerusalem (Easter 2002)
- A call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem (9 March 2002)

The Church of England and the Anglican Communion

- Statement of the Archbishops' Council (19 April 2002)
- Statement of Anglican Primates on the Middle East (14 April 2002)
- Statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury (2 April 2002)

Ecumenical and other Denominational Statements

- Statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (April 2002)
- APRODEV letter (12 April 2002)
- World Council of Churches letter to EU Foreign Ministers(8 April 2002)
- Church of Scotland (3 April 2002)
- Cardinal Murphy O'Connor (2 April 2002)

Interfaith and Other Statements

- Statement by the Council for Christians and Jews (5 April 2002)
- The Alexandria Declaration (February 2002)

Memorandum for Meeting of Patriarchs and Heads of Christian Churches in Jerusalem with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, 13 April 2002

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem, represent four families of Churches: Greek Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox (Copts, Armenians, Syrians, Ethiopians), Catholics (Roman Catholic, Custody of the Holy Land, Greek Catholic, Maronites, Syrians, Armenians), Evangelicals (Anglicans, Lutherans). We are very concerned about the present situation in Palestine and Israel, and about the present and the future of both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian. We believe that the United States has a decisive role in this present and future of both peoples.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine:

There is a symbiotic relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians in this land. Security for Israel means justice and freedom for the Palestinians.

There is an urgent need to surround Israel with friends in the region:

The Arab population in the region and elsewhere are now-a-days hostile to Israel because of the Palestinian cause. Since the Palestinian cause is the core problem of the Middle East conflict, the Arab world will become friendly with Israel once it is solved in a just way, accepting Israel's existence in the Middle East. But in order to get to that point, justice must be implemented according to international legitimacy as represented by UN resolutions 242, 338, and 1397, which call for a political solution. This means that the principle of land for peace ought to be implemented. The Israeli occupation in all its forms must end and Arab land must be returned so the State of Palestine can exist within the 1967 borders. The Israeli settlements must be an element in the solution of the question of the Palestinian right of return. The sovereignty of Jerusalem must be shared by the two peoples. All forms of violence and counter-violence will end when a political solution is implemented and guaranteed by the international community.

The Palestinian/Israeli conflict is not a mere question of violence:

Violence is only a symptom of the root cause of the Middle East conflict, namely, the Israeli occupation of 1967 territories. The Palestinians today are satisfied to have their own state within the 1967 borders which only amounts to 5000 square kilometres of the historic Palestine. Continuing to address only the question of violence will keep us all, Palestinians and Israelis, in an indefinite circle of violence. Enough blood has been shed from both sides. It is time now to start a new era of just peace and mutual recognition of each other's human, civil, religious and political rights.

The inter faith dialogue:

The Interfaith Dialogue among Jews, Christians and Muslims will continue to be a tool for peace education and a catalyst for reconciliation. This process has started in the Alexandria Declaration in January 2002, and was supported by the local, regional and international religious and political leadership.

The present situation of conflict, suffering and death:

We believe that all kinds of military attacks and operations and spiral violence ought to be stopped immediately. A total cease-fire must be immediately declared on both sides to understand what Prophet Zechariah said: "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." This means there must be a total withdrawal of the Israeli army without any delay from the re-occupied Palestinian territories, as President Bush said, easing the life of Palestinians in their daily lives and work, and at the Israeli checkpoints. At the same time a parallel political negotiation must take place immediately.

We still see that Mr. Arafat is the elected president and the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and he is the only one who can deliver the peace agreement in this period of history. At this time we strongly believe that international protection must be imposed in order to secure the lives of the people.

The issue of the Basilica of the Nativity:

We believe this situation must be handled in two ways:

- Humanitarian aid including water, food and electricity must be given to the 250 people who have taken refuge in the church. As we know, not all of them are fighters, but there are many civilians in the church, including women and children.
- A possible solution for the Palestinians inside is to have a three days truce declared in which the Israeli army will withdraw from Bethlehem, including the area of the basilica. Then the Palestinian Authority will be asked to collect the weapons and allow the people to go outside the basilica and go safely home.

Mr. Secretary, we have represented Christianity in this part of the world for the last two thousand years. We believe that the future of Palestinian Christianity is also in peace and not in war. We believe that the Christian Church can be an instrument of peace, justice and reconciliation. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "I have a dream." Our dream is that these two peoples who represent the three monotheistic religions may live in just peace and freedom, in security and reconciliation.

+ Patriarch Irenios I: Greek Orthodox Patriarch
+ Patriarch Michel Sabbah: Latin Patriarch
+ Patriarch Torkom II: Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarch
Father Giovanni Battistelli, O.F.M.: Custos of the Holy Land.
+ Anba Abraham: Coptic Orthodox Archbishop
+ Swerios Malki Mourad: Syrian Orthodox Archbishop
+ Abba Cuostos: Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop
+ Paul Nabil Sayyah: Maronite Patriarchal Exarch
+ Bishop Riah Abu Al-Assal: Episcopal Church Bishop of Jerusalem
+ Bishop Mounib Younan: Lutheran Evangelical Bishop
+ Archimandrite Mtanious Haddad: Greek Catholic Patriarchal Exarch
+ Georges Khazzoum: Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch
Fr. Elias Tabban: for the Syrian Catholic Exarchate

Letter from Bishop Riah of Jerusalem Lent, 2002

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Salaam and grace in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ and blessed greetings to you from Jerusalem. We in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem are desperately concerned as the situation in the Land of the Holy One continues to deteriorate almost by the hour, bringing with it tragic loss of life, innumerable injustices and the damage and destruction of infrastructure, hospitals, schools and the homes of innocent people, among them our own people. We call upon all our partners and friends to do all that is in their power, to bringing an end to this pain and suffering in our homeland. The recent hostilities as well as the reoccupation of liberated Palestinian towns and villages have proved catastrophic and tragic for both parties. No one with common sense believes that a whole nation can be controlled with the power of the gun. Justice is the only possible way. The root cause of all of this is the occupation and the Israeli occupation must come to an end.

At present we are faced with a total disregard for the suffering of so many of our people. The recent incursion of tanks and military personnel into many of the Palestinian towns and cities has caused an enormous amount of suffering. In Bethlehem, 3000 people recently gathered in Manger Square from neighbouring refugee camps. Local organisations were being asked to help feed them. A Lutheran school was occupied and missiles hit Bethlehem University, which is a Roman Catholic institution, causing its closure. All electrical power was cut to two Ramallah hospitals during the height of fighting, leading many to great harm from lack of emergency health care.

I have just returned from visiting Ramallah, shortly after the Israeli tanks pulled out of the city centre. One of my priests, the Rev. George Al-Kopti, who is in charge of the parish of St. Andrew's in Ramallah, reported to me about the situation in the city in the aftermath of the Israeli incursion. He said: *"About 150 tanks entered the city, occupying every corner and preventing movement, even movement of the injured to the hospitals and clinics in town. They occupied houses and apartment buildings, asking families to congregate in one house with no regard to their age or their health. Cars that belong to families of the parish were destroyed by tanks."* He adds: *"The children of the Evangelical Home lived for a few days of fear and trauma. We had three days of severe imprisonment, without the ability to move or even provide ourselves with food."*

It was chilling to see the apartments that the occupying soldiers had marked with a large spray painted X, reminiscent of the markings the Nazi forces used to identify Jewish families. One of the apartment buildings that was taken over included the flat of Mrs. Patricia Rantisi, the widow of the late Rev. Audeh Rantisi. She is a 70-year-old British citizen. Kent Wilkens, a Canadian friend staying with Mrs. Rantisi reports on the situation after the invasion of the building by soldiers. He says: *“We have adequate food supplies. The Ramallah water has been cut so we will run out of water in this flat in a day or so. We still have electricity. We are not allowed to set foot in the hall. We are 13 adults, including two elderly, and 10 children from 18 months old to 10 years. Two of the adults are physicians who work at Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem. They are denied the ability to reach their hospitals, and cannot telephone their patients, or have their patients telephone them.”* He concludes, *“The soldiers have no need to hold 4 families as hostages to accomplish their so called security.”*

The ongoing conflict has had a dramatic effect on the work of the Church in the Land of the Holy One. Every one of our institutions and parishes has felt the crushing economic repercussions of the situation. When the new century began we looked towards an increase in our joy. Unfortunately this has not been the case and we watch as the quality of the lives of our friends and colleagues spirals downward into increasingly more difficult circumstances.

Our ministry would not be possible without the support and prayers of our countless friends throughout the world. Knowing that you stand with us makes an immense difference in our lives and our ministries. We are greatly encouraged by the number of people who have written us, to express their solidarity and offer their prayers. Let us all come together, and join hands and efforts. I challenge you to speak out on behalf of the people of this Land; to your families, your friends, your co-workers and neighbours, your politicians and your government leaders. We pray for peace with justice, justice with truth and truth with righteousness, as well as for the safety and protection of all people. Peace is the only alternative left. This can only be a peace established in truth and justice, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions 242, 338 and 194. The best security comes from reconciled neighbours.

Know that this comes with our prayers and our gratitude for all you have been doing to help us stand firm in our commitment to His calling. May you be richly blessed.

A Call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem to all the People in this Holy Land, Palestinians and Israelis, 9 March 2002

"There is a time for killing, a time for healing; a time for knocking down, a time for building; ... a time for throwing stones away, a time for gathering them; ... a time for war, a time for peace" (Eccl. 3,3-8).

We, the Patriarchs and the Heads of Churches in this Land, are concerned for the recent developments and the spiral of violence directly affecting the lives of the people. We are distressed to find that the bloodshed is increasing in this country. We are saddened to see more widows, orphans, mourning fathers and mothers on both sides. We deplore the increase of injured people because of killing, shelling bombarding, violence and incursion. We ask *"Is this the future that we all want for our children?"*

We believe that the key to a just peace is in the hands of both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority. War shelling and destruction will not bring justice and security; rather it will intensify hatred and bitterness. We believe that Israeli and Palestinian peoples are called to be partners in an historic peace. We confirm that we care for the security of both Peoples just as we care for the security of every human being.

But the way the present Israeli Government is dealing with the situation makes neither for security nor for a just peace. We believe that the Israeli security is dependant on the Palestinian freedom and justice. For this reason, we join our voices with every Israeli and Palestinian seeking for a just peace. We ask everyone to take the appropriate measures to stop further massacres or tragedies for our two peoples. We want to say a frank, honest word to the Israeli conscience and the Israeli Government asking that you stop all kinds of destruction and death caused by the heavy Israeli weaponry. What assurance can be offered to a people deprived of freedom, self-determination, sovereignty and equality with every Israeli citizen?

To the Palestinian people we urge an end of every kind of violent response. We believe that the way of peace is the way of negotiation. If there is a strong will for making peace all the pending disputed problems will find a dignified solution. We appeal to the Israeli people to work for their security in such a way that is just and in which the Palestinians may enjoy their rights as represented under international law. We ask you in the name of the 'Living God', whom we all worship, to raise

your voice for justice, peace, and reconciliation which are the cry of the soul of all peoples of the world.

Inspired by the words of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes, We can say: *"We have tried war, stones, killing and destruction all the period of the conflict. Time has come for peace, justice and the collecting of stones for building, reconciliation and healing"*. Our prayers for peace are more urgently needed than ever. Know that we have contacted our partner Churches abroad with their respective Governments to seek their assistance in our quest for peace.

"I will hear what God proclaims; for He proclaims peace to his people, and to his faithful ones, and to those who put in Him their hope" (Ps 85,9).

- + Patriarch Irenios I: Greek Orthodox Patriarch
- + Patriarch Michel Sabbah: Latin Patriarch
- + Patriarch Torkom II: Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarch
- Father Giovanni Battistelli, O.F.M.: Custos of the Holy Land.
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- + Abba Cuostos: Ethiopian Orthodox Archbishop
- + Paul Nabil Sayyah: Maronite Patriarchal Exarch
- + Bishop Riah Abu Al-Assal: Episcopal Church Bishop of Jerusalem
- + Bishop Mounib Younan: Lutheran Evangelical Bishop
- + Archimandrite Mtanious Haddad: Greek Catholic Patriarchal Exarch
- + Georges Khazzoum: Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch
- Fr. Elias Tabban: for the Syrian Catholic Exarchate

**Statement of The Archbishops' Council on The Middle East and the Holy
Land,
19 April 2002**

The Archbishops' Council, dismayed by the horrific events in Israel/Palestine, endorses the appeal made by the Archbishop of Canterbury for an immediate cessation of violence. The Council welcomes the Alexandria Declaration by religious leaders and urges all parties to work together in implementing it.

We also affirm the recent statement of Anglican Primates denouncing the shelling, suicide bomb attacks and military incursions as both evil and futile, and call upon people of good will everywhere to unite in prayer for justice, peace and reconciliation so that the healing process can begin.

The continuing military action can only worsen the humanitarian crisis that is emerging with many thousands of innocent victims, many of them women and children, in urgent need of food, water, shelter and medicine. This reinforces the need for the suicide bomb attacks to cease, for Israel to withdraw immediately from the Occupied Territories in compliance with UN Resolutions, and for a UN-backed team of international observers to be deployed as quickly as possible to ensure respect for the norms of international humanitarian law.

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. We also call for a clear condemnation of suicide bombing, as morally unacceptable, from leaders of all faiths in the Middle East.

We welcome Christian Aid's launch of an appeal for the Middle East and we encourage parishes and dioceses throughout the country to support this initiative generously as they pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury in his continuing efforts to bring peace and reconciliation to the Holy Land.

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.

Archbishop of Canterbury Condemns Latest Middle East Violence, 2 April 2002

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has appealed for Israelis and Palestinians to step back from "the brink of catastrophe" in the Holy Land. In a statement from Lambeth Palace, Dr Carey strongly condemned the continuing and worsening bloodshed and violence, warning that they were "a dead end." Dr Carey said: "As a Christian leader, this appalling wave of violence and bloodshed at Eastertide-enveloping as it has now the town of Bethlehem - is especially disturbing and will appal all people of good faith. Having returned very recently from the Holy Land myself, I am convinced more than ever that the international community must redouble its efforts to help the two ancient peoples - Jews and Arabs - to find a lasting peace. That belief is reinforced by conversations at all levels both on the ground and since my return. I appeal to all concerned to step back from the brink of catastrophe. The time has come for an immediate cease-fire. It is imperative that all sides stop the violence and start again the search for a constructive and peaceful settlement. It is the ordinary citizens of both communities who are paying the price of political failure. This cannot continue. It is the duty of political leaders to work for a sustainable way forward, not towards a dead end. We are witnessing an increasingly polarised situation, in which dangerously simplistic diagnoses provoke equally dangerous would-be remedies. We must seek to help solve the pain and frustration of Palestinians who long for a land of their own, where they can live in freedom and create a new and prosperous future. Instead, they face the daily reality of military repression and domination in which innocent lives are lost; of an economy close to meltdown; of growing poverty and deprivation. We must also honour the deep Israeli yearning for peace and security and for an end to the hostility towards Israel's very existence. Suicide attacks, claiming the lives at random of innocent Israelis, are totally wrong and must stop. I also call on fellow religious leaders in the region to intensify their efforts to end the bloodshed. The Alexandria Declaration, signed earlier this year, represents an unprecedented commitment by religious leaders in the Holy Land - Christian, Muslim and Jewish - to work together and in their communities for peace and security. It is a commitment which they should honour with all the strength and goodwill at their disposal."

**Statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales on the
Desperate Situation in the Holy Land
Low Week 2002 Meeting**

The Bishops' Conference wishes to endorse and affirm Pope John Paul's urgent appeal to the entire Church for prayer for those populations now being "lacerated" by violence and suffering "an unstoppable tide of human brutality". We also reiterate the recent public statement of Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor in the face of events that "appal the mind and heart": and we join with an appeal from the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem that the international community "come to the rescue of all our peoples".

The recent murderous attacks mounted from the Palestinian territories against innocent Israeli civilians, such as the one at a Passover supper, cannot be tolerated: they are moral outrages, both in their indiscriminate targeting of the civilian population, and in their effects. They betray the legitimate claims of the Palestinian people, and they inevitably erode aspirations for a just peace among Israeli leaders and the general public.

Recent days have also seen a renewed onslaught on the Palestinian territories, with indiscriminate and grossly excessive use of force in civilian areas and refugee camps. Scores of people, many of them unarmed, have been killed. Entire sectors of the population have been arrested. There has been seemingly systematic destruction of water pipes and domestic water-tanks, of countless houses, and of roads and electricity-supplies. There have been attacks on churches, other religious buildings, educational institutions and public buildings, so that normal life has been paralysed, and people brought to the brink of destitution.

Public authorities have the right and duty to defend their people: indeed, advocates of each side invariably speak of their actions as "responses". Nevertheless, the invasions of the Israeli forces into the Palestinian towns go far beyond the limits of self-defence, and even beyond the attempt to arrest or kill known militants. The invasions themselves escalate the levels of violence, so undermining any prospects of a peaceful resolution of the conflict, especially since their massively destructive force seems intended to crush all Palestinian institutions and to block the emergence of a viable Palestinian state.

Nor can violence be ended, or a just peace and reconciliation achieved, until the root of the present conflict is adequately addressed: namely the illegal occupation

of the Palestinian territories in defiance of the relevant Security Council resolutions, UNSC 242 of 1967 and UNSC 338 of 1973.

We are encouraged to note that the international community is now seeking urgently to influence the conflicting parties. In particular, two recent resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, UNSC 1397 and 1402, rightly call on all concerned to ensure the safety of civilians and to respect the universally accepted norms of international humanitarian law: they also call on outside leaders to do all that they can to assist the parties to bring about a halt to violence and a resumption of the peace process. In this connection, too, we commend the courageous witness of the international peace observers.

Criticism of the actions of the Israeli Government or military neither constitutes anti-Semitism nor warrants anti-Semitism in any of its forms. In fact one tragic element of the situation in the Holy Land is its possible impact on the profound spiritual bonds uniting Jews, Muslims and Christians. The relationship with Judaism is intrinsic to the mystery of the Church; and the Church is constantly seeking to engage theologically and spiritually with both Jews and Muslims.

We offer our prayers to all those whose lives have been shattered by this terrible conflict, and will strive to express our solidarity with the Christian communities of the Holy Land, the 'Mother Church', in practical form.

APRODEV Letter to The European Union, 12 April 2002

To the General Affairs Council of Foreign Ministers of the European Union
(convened in Luxembourg, 15 April 2002)

To the Spanish Presidency of the European Union

To the Secretary General of the Council of the European Union and High
Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European
Union, Mr. Javier Solana

Your Excellencies,

We, the Members of the Executive Committee of the Association of World Council
of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe (Aprodev), together
with the Executive Committee Members of Coopération Internationale pour le
Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE), express our deep concern at the
unprecedented grave humanitarian situation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories,
and the suffering of the Israeli society.

Aprodev is the Association of the 15 major Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox
development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe. Nationally, the
Aprodev agencies are related to the Churches in their respective countries.
Globally, Aprodev works together with the World Council of Churches and the
Lutheran World Federation. With them, it participates in the World Council of
Churches campaign to end the illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories.
Being part of the worldwide ecumenical movement, in the Middle East the
Aprodev agencies work with partner organisations both in the Palestinian Occupied
Territories and Israel. With them they share a common vision of political,
economic and social rights for all people, and work to eradicate poverty and
promote development in the framework of international law. CIDSE is the
Association of 14 Catholic Development NGOs in Europe and North-America, who
is kept informed by its partners in the region on a daily basis about developments
there, and shares with Aprodev the same vision on the grave situation in the Middle
East.

We unite our voices addressing an urgent appeal to you. As European citizens, we
are deeply aware of Europe's responsibility in the present crisis: after the second
world war, the UN General Assembly resolution 181/1947 was the expression of
the international community's will to create two homelands for two peoples in
historical Palestine. This responsibility remains until a just, comprehensive and
lasting peace is achieved in the Middle East. In the present crisis, the EU and its
Member States should use all lawful and peaceful means at their disposal in order

to promote peace. The European Community-Israel Association Agreement was meant to be an instrument in this respect. With Israel's material breaches of its obligations under the Agreement, the EU has no alternative but to suspend it.

Therefore we call for immediate suspension of the European Community-Israel Association Agreement, in line with the European Parliament Resolution on the Middle East adopted on 10th April 2002. For the same reasons, the EU and its Member States should review all their bilateral relations with Israel, with particular reference to scientific, technical and military related agreements, such as the Scientific and Technical Co-operation Agreement.

Indeed, we firmly believe that the success of the European project itself, based on values of democracy, human rights, development and peaceful relations with our Mediterranean neighbours also depends on the role the EU will play in the present crisis.

WCC General Secretary Urges EU Ministers to Take Leading Role in Seeking a Just and Sustainable Peace in the Middle East, 8 April 2002

Dear Foreign Ministers,

I write to express appreciation for the efforts you and your European Union counterparts have undertaken recently to bring an end to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. In particular, we welcome the Joint Statement of the EU, the US, Russia and the UN on the escalating confrontation in the Middle East issued yesterday following their meeting in Madrid. At the same time, we deeply regret the slow progress made by the international community in obliging the two sides, and in particular Israel, to comply with UNSC Resolutions 1397 of 12 March, 1402 of 30 March and 1403 of 4 April. As a result, hundreds more Palestinian lives have been lost and untold additional damage done to Palestinian homes, institutions and infrastructure. The cycle of violence has not been halted, claiming an unconscionable number of Israeli lives as well.

The international community bears full, continuing responsibility for the effective implementation of UN resolutions since the adoption by the UNGA of the Plan of Partition in Resolution 181 of 1947. Yet it has consistently allowed the State of Israel to ignore or openly violate successive General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions with virtual impunity. For the international rule of law to be universally respected, and for the decisions of the United Nations to be credible, their selective application must be avoided at all costs.

In its statement to the current session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the European Union has made its position on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and its causes clear in a way that we fully support. Now measures need urgently to be taken that translate declarations into actions to oblige compliance with the expressed will of the international community. This applies particularly to the repeated demand that Israel withdraws all its forces from Palestinian territories immediately and unconditionally. We therefore urge you to take further, decisive steps in this direction at the forthcoming meeting of EU Foreign Ministers along the lines of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 10 April. Specifically, we urge you to consider initiatives that:

- take account of Article 2 of the EU-Israel Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement that conditions “relations between parties, as well as all the provisions of the Agreement itself...on respect for human rights and democratic principles, which guides their internal and international policy and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement” and suspend this agreement until such time that Israel complies with these provisions;

- review all forms of military co-operation with the State of Israel including instituting a strict arms embargo;
- affirm the willingness of the European Union to participate in an international mission or third-party mechanism on the ground to oversee Israeli compliance with the Security Council's demand that it withdraw immediately and completely from Palestinian territories, and Palestinian compliance with the demand to cease all further terrorist attacks against the Israeli population.

We believe that the European Union should commit itself to taking a leading role in seeking a just and sustainable peace. This should apply not only to the immediate measures recommended above, but as EU High Representative Javier Solana told the European Parliament early this week, EU states must move rapidly towards;

- addressing and removing the causes of this and future crises by pressing for an end to occupation and the establishment of two states within guaranteed and secure borders;
- proposing modalities for a new negotiation framework and participating fully in its elaboration and implementation;
- participating fully in efforts to reconstruct the Palestinian Authority's capacity to administer the territories under its control and to construct the Palestinian State.

We make these appeals for prompt action not as retribution against any party, but rather in the spirit of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence that calls for non-violent means of resolving conflict and the application of restorative justice. In so doing, we echo the appeals and join with the intentions of the Heads of Christian churches and communities in Jerusalem who have consistently called for an end to violence on all sides and have offered their good offices in the interest of a durable, negotiated settlement.

Responding to the Churches' urgent appeals, the World Council of Churches has launched a campaign this year "To End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East." In relation to this campaign, we have also established an Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel in order to manifest the active solidarity of Christians around the world with the people living in the Holy Land at this critical time. The Churches of Europe have taken a significant lead in these initiatives, seeking to embody our shared hopes and aspirations for peace with justice for all the peoples in these lands where our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was received as the Prince of Peace.

The European Community has taken the lead and been generous in its support for Israel and the Palestinian people in the past. In particular, it has supported Palestinian aspirations as they have struggled for their rights, to establish their own independent state, and to rebuild and develop their war-torn lives and land. Much of what they have done with your help has again been destroyed. We sincerely hope that you will face up boldly to this new challenge and prove your willingness to provide badly needed new leadership for peace and a new future. We assure you of our constant prayers and support in your efforts to that end.

Cardinal Murphy O'Connor Calls for Political Intervention in Middle East Crisis, 2 April 2002

The recent escalation of violence in the Holy Land is profoundly disturbing. The death and injury of so many innocent people, seeming to doom so many heartfelt aspirations for peace, appals the mind and heart. It is imperative that the leaders of both communities renounce any hope of achieving their aims by violence and commit themselves anew to the road to peace. It is imperative also that the international community redouble its efforts to assist in this search for a just peace, one that recognises both the rights of the Palestinians to live in a state of their own, free from domination and military repression, and the right of Israel to peace and security. Recent attacks, such as suicide bombings, specifically directed at civilians are utterly to be condemned. Today, however, news is emerging that the Israeli Defence Forces' invasion of Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities and towns is itself being marked by wanton and indiscriminate killing. An urgent appeal by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem adds that ambulances and medical supplies are being prevented from reaching the wounded, and that there has been massive destruction and looting. Meanwhile Bethlehem and Ramallah have ominously been declared closed military zones, so that the media and other international observers are barred from the areas concerned. In this context, I wish to affirm the concern of the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 1402 of 30 March 2002. The Security Council "calls upon both parties to move immediately to a meaningful cease-fire; calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities" and "reiterates its demand in Resolution 1397 of 12 March 2002 for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction". I ask all to pray for all victims of the terrible violence, and ask our political leaders to do all that they can to intervene to assist the parties to halt the violence and resume the peace process.

The Ongoing Crisis: CCJ Action, 5 April 2002

As the situation in the Middle East worsens and we read of increasing anti-Semitic attacks in Europe, CCJ members and staff have worked hard to be pro-active in these fields.

The horrific and indefensible suicide bomb attacks on innocent civilians, both Jews and Arabs, throughout Israel act as a clear reminder of the vulnerability of all. Also, the tragic pictures and reports coming from the West Bank – the devastation and suffering – touch us all. We have kept in touch with, amongst others, Pastor Mitri Raheb in Bethlehem and continue to respond to and disseminate information.

Our prayers and support for those working in reconciliation and dialogue projects has continued. We hope for an end to the violence without delay – but the task of winning hearts will be a long and difficult struggle.

The recent attacks on synagogues in France and Belgium have been particularly worrying, making us acutely aware that lessons remain to be learnt 60 years after CCJ's foundation. Identifying and striving to combat prejudice, particularly in such contexts, is the whole *raison d'être* of CCJ.

We continue to deal with three interwoven but quite distinct strands: traditional Christian anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism in society at large, and concerns relating to Israel and the Palestinian territories. In relation to these specific topics, CCJ's small professional staff is currently engaged in the following:

- Urging those in positions of authority and responsibility to exercise all influence to bring a political solution to bear.
- Maintaining contact with those in Israel and the Palestinian territories who need our prayer and moral support.
- Supporting initiatives promoting dialogue and co-existence in Israel – e.g. The Galilee Bus Project. Our Young Leadership Section in particular is involved in raising funds for this project, which is part of Neil Harris' work 'Common Future'. We are also liaising with Mike Prashker of Merchavim, a shared citizenship education programme, in connection with his forthcoming UK study tour for Israeli teachers.
- Calling meetings and seminars (including our All-Party Parliamentary Group) to discuss practical approaches in terms of the Middle East and European anti-Semitism.

- Responding to incidents of Christian anti-Judaism and working with Christian organisations to promote a more balanced view of Israeli people wherever possible.
- Commending examples of Christian good practice in liturgy and teaching, particularly over the recent Easter period.
- Writing for publication on all related matters, especially, at the present time, Christian replacement theology.

The First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, February 2002

In the Name of God who is Almighty, Merciful and Compassionate, we, who have gathered as religious leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities, pray for true peace in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and declare our commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed that denies the right to life and dignity. According to our faith traditions, killing innocents in the name of God is a desecration of his Holy Name, and defames religion in the world. The violence in the Holy Land is an evil which must be opposed by all people of good faith. We seek to live together as neighbours, respecting the integrity of each other's historical and religious inheritance. We call upon all to oppose incitement, hatred and the misrepresentation of the other.

1. The Holy Land is Holy to all three of our faiths. Therefore, followers of the divine religions must respect its sanctity, and bloodshed must not be allowed to pollute it. The sanctity and integrity of the Holy Places must be preserved, and freedom of religious worship must be ensured for all.
2. Palestinians and Israelis must respect the divinely ordained purposes of the Creator by whose grace they live in the same land that is called Holy.
3. We call on the political leaders of both peoples to work for a just, secure and durable solution in the spirit of the words of the Almighty and the Prophets.
4. As a first step now, we call for a religiously sanctioned cease-fire, respected and observed on all sides, and for the implementation of the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations, including the lifting of restrictions and a return to negotiations.
5. We seek to help create an atmosphere where present and future generations will co-exist with mutual respect and trust in the other. We call on all to refrain from incitement and demonization, and to educate our future generations accordingly.
6. As religious leaders, we pledge ourselves to continue a joint quest for a just peace that leads to reconciliation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, for the common good of all our peoples.
7. We announce the establishment of a permanent joint committee to carry out the recommendations of this declaration, and the engage with our respective political leadership accordingly.