



October 13, 2023

The Ohio Council of Churches is shocked and outraged over the vicious attack unleashed on Israel on Saturday, October 7, 2023. We join our Jewish friends and people of goodwill everywhere in mourning the horrific and catastrophic loss of life in Israel while calling for the release of all hostages and praying for an end to the ongoing violence that is devouring lives in Israel and Gaza.

There is no way for anyone to legitimize or make sense of the unspeakably obscene October 7 bombing of Israel by Hamas forces, and we lament this horrific act and all related violence against Israelis. Simultaneously, we lament the Israeli military's massive and seemingly indiscriminate retaliation on the Palestinian people and the growing humanitarian crisis it has caused in Gaza.

Though missiles continue to pierce the sky and scorch land that both Palestinians and Israelis call home, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to envision a hopeful future for the people of the Holy Land. Nevertheless, we are convinced that God desires that Israelis and Palestinians experience justice and live in peace.

Accordingly, we pray for the day to quickly come when death gives way to life in these sacred lands as leaders find their way out of the dark night of strategic humiliation and calculated violence and move toward the bright dawn of mutuality. May mutuality enable Palestinians and Israelis to project and create a future where Jews, Muslims, Christians, and all people will honor each other as they flourish amid the radiant light of peace. Amen

The Executive Committee of the Ohio Council of Churches

The Reverend Dr. David Long-Higgins  
President of the Ohio Council of Churches Governing Board;  
Conference Minister, Heartland Conference,  
the United Church of Christ

The Reverend Melanie W. J. Slane  
Vice-President of the Ohio Council of Churches Governing Board

The Reverend Adam B. Sornchai  
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Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church (Windfall),  
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The Reverend Allen V. Harris  
Secretary of the Ohio Council of Churches Governing Board;

Regional Pastor and President,  
The Christian Church in Ohio (Disciples of Christ)

The Reverend Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.  
Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Churches