

November 27th, 2023

"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6)

Dear President Joseph R. Biden Jr., the 46th President of the United States

Subject: A Call to the End the War from Bethlehem

We bring you greetings on behalf of the Christian community in Bethlehem, the city of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Next week, we were supposed to begin our advent and Christmas season. This should have been a time of joy and hope. This year, it is a season of death and despair. This year, Christmas prayers are the only moment of hope in the middle of this human catastrophe caused by the war. There will be no manifestation of joy for the children. This year, Christmas celebrations are cancelled in Bethlehem.

We write to you in deep sorrow and pain. We are devastated by the images of death and destruction we see in our land, regardless of the victim. We lament the death of all peoples, Palestinians and Israelis. We pray for freedom for all. We affirm that every human being is created in the image of God and is worthy of living a dignified life and "a life more abundant". We hold firm to the truth that all humans, regardless of their religion or nationality, have the right to live in dignity and justice. We lament the death of all peoples and condemn the killing of all innocent civilians. We pray for peace and prosperity for all.

Yet at the same time, we are broken because this war could have been avoided. For years, as followers of Jesus, we have called for peace that is based on justice. This land has been crying for peace and justice for 75 years. It is time justice is served. It is time everybody can live with dignity in this land. The Palestinian and Israeli children deserve to live, hope, and dream.

Dear Mr. President: There can be no peace and security without justice and equality. There can be no peace and security without equal rights for all. Siege, violence, and

war cannot bring peace and security. A comprehensive and just peace is the only hope for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

We are writing to plead with you to help stop this war. God has placed political leaders in a position of power so that they can bring justice, support those who suffer, and be instruments of God's peace. We want a constant and comprehensive ceasefire. Enough death. Enough destruction. This is a moral obligation. There must be other ways. This is our call and prayer this Christmas.

As followers of Jesus, we find our comfort and consolation in the son of our Bethlehem. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the Prince of Peace. From Bethlehem, from the midst of pain, we send a message of peace and life to all humanity.

Respectfully

Leader of the Christian Community in Bethlehem

Rev. A. Bahian



Bishop Benedictos
Orthodox Bishop of
Bethlehem

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