Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
Living Out God's Grace & Unconditional Love

September 19, 2025

Dear Beloved Members of God's Family in the ELCIC,

I write to you today deeply troubled by the news coming from Palestine and Israel. Israeli military operations in Gaza City are escalating and now include a ground assault. It is devastating to witness hundreds of thousands of people forced out of Gaza City with nowhere to shelter and no access to bare necessities.

Despite repeated warnings from the United Nations and other international organizations, the government of Israel continues to disregard appeals to protect civilians. On Tuesday, a United Nations Commission of Inquiry in Geneva concluded that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza.

I am reminded of the words shared by Bishop-elect Imad Haddad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land at our 2025 ELCIC National Convention: "Our reality in Palestine, is an ongoing genocide. People are dying. People are losing their homes. A loss of generations, a loss of human dignity, a loss of faith in humanity and human rights..."

In a statement released September 17, The Lutheran World Federation condemned the ongoing suffering of civilians in Gaza and called for urgent global action. We join the LWF in this call. We fear for the lives, dignity and future of the Palestinian people who continue to endure immense suffering, displacement and destruction.

As a global communion of churches, rooted in Christ's call for justice, peace, and the protection of human life, we once again raise our voice in the face of this devastation. I encourage you to write to your Member of Parliament to express your concerns, advocate for an end to violence and share your hope for peace. In addition to urging the Canadian Government to end all arms transfers to the State of Isreal, ask them to call on the State of Israel to:

- immediately end indiscriminate attacks,
- guarantee humanitarian access,
- work tirelessly for a ceasefire and peace with justice and accountability.

Our partner, KAIROS Canada, also provides an online pathway to send a letter to the Prime Minister calling for action to end human suffering in Palestine.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Gaza and the West Bank who are paying the heaviest price for this war. Our prayers remain with our Palestinian siblings, and our commitment is to continue walking with them in their struggle for justice, dignity and peace.

In Christ Jesus,

+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

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The ELCIC acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast, are on traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples.