

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has called for an end to the bloodshed in Israel and Gaza after the explosion at Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza yesterday.

Urging restraint on apportioning blame until the facts are clear, the Archbishop said the strike at the hospital “violates the sanctity and dignity of human life”.

The Archbishop added: “It is unconscionable that aid is being prevented from reaching children and adults who are not combatants in this war. It is indefensible that hospitals, schools and refugee camps are being struck. It is an outrage that hostages are being held by Hamas.”

“The bloodshed, slaughter and suffering of innocent people on all sides must stop.”

“What we know for certain is that this violence will not secure for the people of the Holy Land the future they deserve,” he said.

Read the Archbishop’s statement in full below:

Today I join my Anglican brothers and sisters in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank in their profound mourning after the atrocious attack on the Anglican-run Al Ahli Hospital yesterday, which follows so closely on from an attack on the same hospital on Friday evening. This is a hospital I have visited, and whose staff I have prayed with.

This atrocity violates the sanctity and dignity of human life. It is a violation of humanitarian law, which is clear that hospitals, doctors and patients must be protected. For this reason, it’s essential that we exercise restraint in apportioning responsibility before all the facts are clear.

The evil and heinous terror attacks by Hamas on people in Israel were crimes against God and humanity. Israel has a legitimate right and duty to defend itself, and to pursue a proportionate and discriminate response to establish its security. The rules of war are there to safeguard civilians and the value of every human life. They must be upheld to the highest degree possible amidst the chaos of conflict, otherwise the cycle of violence will continue for generations to come.

Israel’s bombing campaign on the heavily populated Gaza Strip is causing massive civilian casualties and suffering. The people of Gaza are running out of water, food, medical supplies and places of refuge. Families in Israel and around the world still wait for news of their loved ones. It is unconscionable that aid is being prevented from reaching children and adults who are not combatants in this war. It is indefensible that hospitals, schools and refugee camps are being struck. It is an outrage that hostages are being held by Hamas. The bloodshed, slaughter and suffering of innocent people on all sides must stop.

The fundamental question is this: what kind of society can be envisaged both for a secure Israeli state and a secure neighbouring Palestinian

state. That path is not clear, but it must be imagined – and that imagining must start again now. What we know for certain is that this violence will not secure for the people of the Holy Land the future they deserve.

I appeal again for hostages to be released and for civilians to be protected. I join the international call for all parties to grant immediate, safe humanitarian access into Gaza to prevent further loss of life. I pray again for the peace of Jerusalem, in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land. I grieve with Israelis and Palestinians still mourning and in fear.

In the name of Jesus Christ, I urge a different path – one that spares innocent lives and pursues justice, security and lasting peace for all.

3 min read

Source URL: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/archbishop-canterbury-appeals-end-bloodshed-after-gaza-hospital-blast>