World Council of Churches

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Video Conference
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ADOPTED

MINUTE ON GAZA

To the Lord who spoke to her she gave a name, saying "You are a God who sees me."
Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram named the son whom Hagar bore him Ishmael.
Genesis 16: 13 and 15
(Ishmael means: "God has heard".)

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting online on 12-16 May 2025 unequivocally condemns the atrocities being perpetrated in Gaza by the State of Israel, recognizing that the current government is pursuing extremist policies that are not supported by many Israelis. Since Israel's destruction of Gaza began in October 2023 following the attacks in southern Israel by Hamas fighters, the scale of devastation of lives and communities in the territory has reached unspeakable levels. The deliberate targeting of civilians, widespread destruction of hospitals and other essential infrastructure, and the total blockade of humanitarian aid since 2 March 2025 represent serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and can never be justified by the claim of targeting militant Hamas fighters. In addition, these actions sabotage all efforts to come to a solution for ending the occupation and bringing back Israeli hostages to their families. The actions mentioned undoubtedly constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. For the leaders and perpetrators of such crimes, whether by Israelis, Palestinians or Hamas, there must be personal accountability.

The enormity of the current humanitarian crisis notwithstanding, this catastrophe for the people of Gaza has deeper roots than the last two and a half years of brutal armed violence. It is rooted in the structural violence of decades of occupation, dispossession, and impunity. The now openly-stated intention to re-occupy Gaza and permanently displace the Palestinian population, including refugees from 1948, amounts to a policy of ethnic cleansing that must be firmly denounced by all members of the international community who have committed themselves to international law and morality.

The Executive Committee further denounces the complicity—whether active or passive – of other states whose action or inaction has enabled this ongoing brutality.

The World Council of Churches reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles of international law and justice, without discrimination, in this and all contexts. We call on all governments to respect and implement the provisional measures and rulings of the International Court of Justice, and to support the vital role of the International Criminal Court in ensuring accountability for crimes committed.

The churches of the world cannot remain silent in the face of such appalling inhumanity. We call urgently for:

- An immediate and unconditional ceasefire;
- An end to the blockade of Gaza, and to all forms of collective punishment of the population of the territory;
- Immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need in Gaza; and
- Coordinated international action to halt the destruction, to provide sufficient humanitarian assistance commensurate with the scale of the need as assessed by the United Nations and independent humanitarian agencies, and to bring perpetrators of crimes under international law to justice.

Beyond Gaza, we are concerned that the policies and actions of the Israeli authorities are posing increasingly grave threats to the Palestinian communities of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, including for the churches and Christian communities of the region. We appeal for equal justice and rights for all people, in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem and throughout the region, and for an end to the impunity with which violations of the rights of Palestinians have been committed for so many years.