



مجلس كنائس الشرق الأوسط

The Middle East Council of Churches

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### **“Call for Solidarity with Gaza People” Statement issued by the Middle East Council of Churches**

The Gaza Situation continues to be on our mind. In spite of the opening of the borders with Egypt which gave Palestinians in Gaza some respite from the Israeli-imposed siege, the long term prospects for the Gaza Strip and its 1.5 million populations remains a cause for grave concern.

From communication with DSPR Gaza the situation on the ground will not see any betterment of conditions. There is fear that the population will continue to suffer the consequences of the siege. According to Mr. Constantine Dabbagh, the Executive Director of DSPR Gaza, the impression people worldwide get is that Israel was providing the Gaza Strip with fuel, food and all kinds of commodities out of its generosity. In fact, the people of Gaza were paying for each item, including medications that came via Israel. Israel continues with the closure; does not allow critically ill people to move out of the Gaza Strip to receive treatment either in Israel or in Arab countries. Over 70 patients have died since Israel imposed the hermetic closure. More are candidates for this awful fate unless the international community comes in with the needed intervention. Thousands of Gazans are not allowed to move out of the Strip in any direction which explains why Egypt has not opposed their crossing of the border in order to buy the essential commodities in Sinai that are needed for their living.

The prospects for a quick improvement in the living conditions of the Gaza population are indeed slim. Accordingly, the Middle East Council of Churches calls on all to do whatever possible to end the siege on Gaza and to find the mechanisms that will enable innocent Palestinians to live in peace. It is imperative to enable Palestinians to move in and out freely from the Gaza Strip. This is particularly important for chronically ill people who cannot find proper care in the Gaza Strip itself. It is also true of hundreds of students and of those whose livelihood and or family require them to cross the borders regularly. Restricting the movement of the overall population is collective punishment that cannot be accepted on moral grounds.

The Middle East Council of Churches is in constant communication with DSPR Gaza. Given the current and anticipated situation in the Gaza Strip, it is important for emergency aid to keep coming and for all concerned to think of a long term strategy in order to enable Palestinians in Gaza to continue living with dignity.

We trust and pray for a just and lasting solution in order that the Palestinians can exercise their rights and for all to live in peace that can lead to real reconciliation.

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