



YMCA calls for an end to violence and a just peace in Israel and Palestine

24 October 2023

We watch with horror the unfolding tragedies in Israel and Palestine, which have already taken thousands of innocent lives and which could easily escalate into greater regional violence, in the West Bank, in Lebanon, and even further afield.

Our hearts go out to all who have lost loved ones, and to all living with the trauma of the current situation.

We have called unequivocally for an immediate end to hostilities, the release of hostages, and the removal of restrictions on civilians which range from a lack of basic necessities such as water, to inadequate access to education.

The World Alliance of YMCAs is in contact with all of the YMCAs in the region, in Gaza, East and West Jerusalem, and Beirut.

We are devastated to report that YMCA family members were killed when their place of shelter, a church, was bombed in Gaza City on Thursday 19 October. We send our deepest condolences to our friends and colleagues.

East Jerusalem YMCA has launched an [emergency humanitarian appeal](#) to support its continuing work. A further appeal may be launched by YMCA Gaza when the extent of its needs is established.

World YMCA Secretary-General Carlos Sanvee has commented:

"I am clear that what we are witnessing is a reminder that we will continue to fail future generations if we do not choose the paths of peace and justice now. I plead for calm, for sanity, and for humanity.

I restate the immediate need for an end to violence, and the protection of innocent civilian lives. Violence leads only to a perpetual cycle of hatred and revenge, which only drives communities further apart.

And I restate the longer-term need to establish a deep, lasting and just peace. No progress can ever be made until both sides see the legitimacy of the other's grievance. We can fully understand the vulnerability felt by the people of Israel, and the oppression and injustice experienced by the people of Palestine. We believe this is essential to lasting peace."

The 20th YMCA World Council in 2022 passed a [Resolution](#) pledging to help work for a just peace in Israel and Palestine, and to involve young people in that quest, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2250.

The YMCA Movement will continue to act on its hope and belief that peace and reconciliation will ultimately prevail in Israel and Palestine.