



Draft Statement on Palestine and Israel: A Call to End Apartheid, Occupation, and Impunity in Palestine and Israel

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

- Amos 5:24 (NRSV)

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 18-24 June 2025, gathers in deep lamentation and outrage as the crisis in Palestine and Israel escalates to levels that flagrantly violate international humanitarian and human rights law as well as the most basic principles of morality.

We recognize a clear distinction between the Jewish people, our siblings in faith and the acts of the Government of Israel, and we reaffirm that the WCC stands firm against any kind of racism, including antisemitism, anti-Arab racism, and islamophobia. However, the unbearable suffering inflicted on the people of Gaza, and the escalating violence and oppression in the West Bank and in Jerusalem compel the global fellowship of churches to speak with clarity, urgency, and commitment to the principles of justice under international law and ethics.

The Government of Israel's military campaign in Gaza has entailed grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention which may constitute genocide and/or other crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Simultaneously, the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem continue to experience intensified violence, illegal settlement expansion, and systemic human rights violations. These actions defy international legal norms, including the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Conventions, international human rights treaties, and numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The World Council of Churches reaffirms its long-standing commitment to inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, and to international law as a framework for peace, justice, and accountability.

In this spirit, the WCC Central Committee calls for:

1. **Naming** the Reality of Apartheid: We recognize and denounce the system of apartheid imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people, in violation of international law and moral conscience.
2. **Implementing** Sanctions and Accountability: We call on states, churches, and international institutions to impose consequences for violations of international law, including targeted sanctions, divestment, and arms embargoes. Full support must be given to the International Criminal Court and UN mechanisms investigating potential war crimes and crimes against humanity.
3. **Affirming** Palestinian Rights and Freedom: We uphold the inalienable human rights of Palestinians to freedom, justice, return, and self-determination. We demand the end of the occupation and the lifting of the unlawful blockade on Gaza.
4. **Support** for the resilience and witness of Palestinian Christian churches and communities, upholding their right to remain on their land and to freely practice their faith.

We commend the leadership of the South African government in seeking justice and accountability to international law through the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and urge all states to comply with the ICJ's rulings. Churches worldwide are called to witness, to speak out, and to act.

"And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." — James 3:18