



FOLKEKIRKENS
MELLEMKIRKELIGE RÅD

*Bishop Dr. Sami Ibrahim Azar
and the Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Jordan and the Holy Land*

Copenhagen, 19. May 2025

Dear Bishop Azar,

In the Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark we continue to hear the call from our Christian sisters and brothers in Palestine and Gaza. As we follow the messages from our international ecclesiastic networks, we are deeply saddened by the ongoing violence and suffering experienced by thousands in Palestine and Gaza in the last 1½ years and intensified in the last months due to the blockade of humanitarian assistance. These messages urge us as churches to rise up and follow Christ's commission to peace and protection of the vulnerable.

We strongly condemn the politics which has led to the humanitarian crises targeting civilians and affecting vulnerable members of Palestinian society the most. We call for immediate humanitarian assistance to the huge number of civilians now experiencing a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, created by a cynical political calculation. Access to basic necessities such as water, food, medicine and healthcare is hindered, destroying the lives, living conditions, and futures for Palestinians living in Gaza.

From our perspective, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is also a moral and spiritual crisis. Ignoring the duty to protect people and the duty to secure safety of everyone – and in contrast actively hindering assistance to civilians – is undermining the moral integrity of the ruling Israeli government. The Palestinians in Gaza is suffering directly and physically from this ignorance, but also the Israeli people is affected by the afflicted violence although in a different form. Rhetoric and politics which dehumanize Palestinian civilians and serves to justify their sufferings and deaths becomes a spiritual problem in that it compromises the dignity and sanctity of the individual, even the most vulnerable and marginal members of a society. That we are witnessing a moral and spiritual crises becomes clear when impression is given, in word and deed, that Palestinian lives are worth less than others. As Christians we cannot remain silent witnessing this suffering and dehumanization but must call it what it is: a blasphemy and a sin.

We encourage national and international political authorities to continue working to stop all forms of violence and atrocities and to work for just peace for all Palestinians and Israelis. Together with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and other churches in Palestine and Israel we ask that terror, violence and meaningless suffering must end and we unite in a call for sustained and faithful prayer by all for justice and peace.

Therefore, we point to the words of the psalmist: "For he [God] has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help" (Psalm 22:24).

Prof. Dr. Peter Lodberg

Chair, Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark