BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

BWA General Council Resolution 2024.3

PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Baptist World Alliance General Council, meeting in Lagos, Nigeria, July 7-12, 2024:

REMEMBERS the biblical call to be peacemakers (Nahum 1:15; Matthew 5:9; Acts 10:36; Romans 12:18; James 3:18). As followers of Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6-7), we proclaim "a gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15) and serve Christ as messengers of "reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

REAFFIRMS the BWA General Council's prior resolutions concerning peacemaking in relation to the Middle East (1981.4; 1988.5; 1991.3; 1997.2; 2002.5; 2003.5; 2011.4; 2013.10). The Council's 1981 resolution sets forth principles that have informed the BWA's peace-focused agenda for the Middle East for four decades, including a "commitment to the pursuit of peace, liberty, and social justice simultaneously," as well as a "call on Baptists in every land to pray for peace" in the Middle East.

LAMENTS the violence, wars, oppression, persecution, discrimination, and bigotry that have for decades plagued much of the Middle East.

CONDEMNS the attacking, kidnapping, and killing of civilians (BWA General Council Resolution 1982.6, BWA World Congress Resolution 1985.6) as well as the destruction of civilian property and facilities and supplies indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. We also denounce genocidal rhetoric by any party or country, especially that which utilizes biblical passages.

REAFFIRMS BWA General Council Resolution 2019.2 in condemning all forms of religious intolerance and religiously motivated violence. We condemn all forms of antisemitism and Islamophobia, and we seek to continue our commitment to multifaith dialogue for the pursuit of peace (BWA General Council Resolution 2002.5).

PRAYS for the following actions to bring about a holistic peacemaking agenda:

1. URGES an immediate ceasefire in Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and Yemen.

2. CALLS for the immediate return of all hostages (as well as the bodies of dead hostages) by Hamas.

3. Appeals for all States and non-State actors to follow and ensure respect of international humanitarian law.

4. BACKS a coordinated multi-national response to the famine, medical, and housing crises on behalf of Gazan civilians. We support immediate humanitarian efforts and greater access to prevent more deaths from starvation.

5. REASSERTS the BWA General Council's commitment to a just and lasting peace process in which Israelis and Palestinians recognize one another's right to exist as neighbors who seek each other's welfare. While supporting initiatives for a peaceful resolution of this conflict, we also believe it must be a peace with justice and with a hope rooted in the equal opportunity for a flourishing freedom for both Palestinians and Israelis.

6. COMMENDS Baptists and other Christians in Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Lebanon, and across the region who continue to faithfully share the good news of Jesus, serve the humanitarian needs of their neighbors, and work toward peacemaking initiatives. With the significant damage to Gaza Baptist Church, we commit to support the Baptist presence in Gaza and the preservation of Christian community and witness throughout the Middle East.

Approved by the General Council (Thursday, July 11, 2024)