



"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" (Psalm 122)

**Statement of the COMECE President H.E. Mgr. Mariano Crociata
on the current situation in the Holy Land**

I am filled with deep sorrow and worry by the ongoing reports from the Holy Land, following the massive attacks from Gaza targeting innocent civilians in Israel and the escalating spiral of violence, causing hundreds of deaths and injured.

On behalf of the Bishops of COMECE, I wish to express my prayerful closeness and solidarity with all the victims and their families.

Sharing Pope Francis' sorrowful concern for this grave situation, I wish to call on all parties involved to cease the attacks, release the kidnapped hostages and halt the spiral of violence, since *"terrorism and war do not lead to any resolutions, but only to the death and suffering of so many innocent people"*.

I equally appeal to the international community, including the European Union, to make every effort in contributing to a de-escalation of the situation, while ensuring the fundamental rights of all people in the region and respecting the historical and legal Status Quo of all the Holy Shrines.

It is also my hope that the continuing bloodshed may remind members of the international community, including the EU, of the urgency to pursue with more vigour the efforts towards a lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East region, based on international law, justice, and equal rights for all.

Turning to Mary, the Queen of Peace, let us pray that there be peace in Israel and in Palestine.

✠ Mariano Crociata
Presidente della COMECE

+ Mariano Crociata