



## **A heartfelt appeal for peace in the Holy Land and all the Middle East**

**Statement of H.E. Mgr. Mariano Crociata  
President of COMECE**

On behalf of the Bishops of COMECE, I wish to express our deepest concern about the vortex of violence that has engulfed the Holy Land, Lebanon and other parts of the Middle East in recent months. Each day brings the risk of further escalation, intensification and expansion of the conflict across the region, threatening the dignity, lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people.

As we approach the tragic anniversary of the October 7 terrorist attacks on the Israeli people, we cannot fail to reiterate our great sorrow over the devastating waves of violence that the Holy Land and the Middle East region have witnessed in these past twelve months. This has not only resulted in an exceptionally grave humanitarian crisis and inconceivable human suffering in all communities, but also generated dangerous regional political dynamics involving an increasing number of actors.

This situation is source of grave concern to us also for its repercussions in Europe and in the world. The resurgence of anti-Semitism, radicalisation and xenophobia not only threatens social cohesion, but also leads to deplorable acts of violent extremism and terrorism.

Echoing the repeated peace appeals of Pope Francis, we urge all conflict parties, as well as all persons and groups inciting violence, to refrain from any actions that could lead to further escalation and polarisation.

We call for an immediate ceasefire on all fronts and for respect of international and humanitarian law. We appeal for the necessary protection of civilians, hospitals, schools and places of worship, as well as the release of all hostages and safe, unhindered humanitarian access.

The European Union, together with other regional and international actors, is called to pursue with determination the dialogue with all conflict parties in view of a just and lasting peace. This should include renewed diplomatic efforts towards a two-state

solution, one Israeli and one Palestinian, as well as an internationally guaranteed special status for the City of Jerusalem, so that all Israelis and Palestinians may finally live in dignity, security and peace.

We invite all people of good will to join the appeal of Pope Francis to observe a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the world on Monday, 7 October 2024. In view of this occasion, on which the Catholic Church prays in a particular way to Mary, Our Lady of the Rosary, we wish to share the following prayer for peace proposed by H.Em. Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem:

### **Prayer for peace**

Lord our God,  
Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and Father of all mankind,  
Who in the cross of Your Son  
and through the gift of His own life,  
at great cost You wished to destroy  
the wall of enmity and hostility  
that separates peoples and makes us enemies:  
Send into our hearts  
the gift of the Holy Spirit,  
that He may purify us from every feeling  
of violence, hatred and revenge,  
enlighten us to understand  
the irrepressible dignity  
of every human person,  
and inflame us to the point of consumption  
for a peaceful and reconciled world  
in truth and justice,  
in love and freedom.  
Almighty and eternal God,  
in Your hands are the hopes of men  
and the rights of every people:  
Assist with Your wisdom those who govern us,  
so that, with Your help,  
they will become sensitive to the sufferings of the poor  
and of those who suffer the consequences  
of violence and war;  
may they promote the common good and lasting peace  
in our region  
and throughout the earth.  
Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope,  
obtain the gift of peace  
for the Holy Land that gave birth to you  
and for the whole world. Amen.