

An Open Letter From the Public Square Group

The Public Square Group is an open body, concerned with the Church's interaction with social and political issues and the challenges these present both nationally and internationally.

London, 20th July 2025 - *for immediate release*

Genocide in Gaza and War Crimes in the West Bank



We, along with so many of our fellow-citizens, are appalled by the atrocities being committed in Gaza and the West Bank, which is causing so much widespread starvation, death and destruction to thousands.

What is happening is beyond words of horror at the suffering. There is a strong feeling of impotence that many of us feel at the injuring and killing, particularly of children, their mothers and fathers trying to get food for their families, losing their homes, lands and especially their olive trees, which are planted for the livelihood of future generations,

It really is time for a strong public witness from our Church and nation in spite of any political pressure to refrain, silence is not an option. Four of our bishops wrote to The Guardian recently about the dire situation on the West Bank.ⁱ Now is the time to lend support to them, calling for peace, humanity, and justice in Gaza and the West Bank for the sake of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

We would make the following points:

1. The situation in the near east is too often seen as intractable; but with good intentions, skilled diplomacy and the will to engage in these, it is not.
2. There is a religious dimension to this conflict, which involves Jews, Muslims and Christians, and leaders in all three faiths could do more to bring about peace and justice in the region.
3. Governments, including our own, need to speak out and take action to secure a lasting settlement: this entails recognising the rights of all to live in freedom and safety, together with the recognition of Palestinian statehood, which in turn means the end of illegal Israeli settlements and land appropriation in the West Bank.
4. We call for an embargo on the supply of all arms for Israel by our government and other governments.
5. International organisations, including the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and the Red Cross and Crescent need our wholehearted support.
6. Aid agencies and medical charities must be allowed to carry out their work freely, safely and unhindered.
7. The Netanyahu government in Israel and the American government must be called to account.
8. The situation must be reported on freely and frankly by news agencies including the BBC.
9. The right of freedom to protest must again be unfettered in this country.
10. We call on the Church of England and the Church in Wales, particularly through their bishops in the House of Lords, to be more vociferous in calling for an immediate end to the genocidal campaign against Palestinians and the continuing holding of hostages by Hamas.

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ⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jul/13/bishops-call-on-uk-government-to-take-action-over-settler-violence-in-west-bank>