

July 30, 2014

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing today to invite you to join us in lamenting the conflict between Israel and Hamas. In particular, we mourn the loss of life in Israel and Gaza, and we are sure you will agree that this situation is tragic.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has been working for peace in the Middle East for more than 65 years, partnering with organizations who embrace nonviolent approaches to working for justice and peace in this troubled region. This work is a ministry of six Christian denominations in Canada.

We find ourselves struggling to know how to respond to recent events, even as we provide aid to those affected by the conflict. For the third time in six years, MCC's partners in Israel and Palestine have called on us to appeal for an end to violence in and around Gaza, and for international support to address the underlying causes of this conflict.

As the latest round of this violence approaches its fourth week, it is difficult to imagine how it is not planting seeds for the cycle of violence to continue in the coming years. Indeed, it seems to us that the prospects for alternative approaches to resolving long-standing issues between Israelis and Palestinians are only diminishing.

Nonetheless, in addition to offering our lament, we cling to hope, and continue to support efforts to work toward the vision described by the prophet Isaiah:

*Then justice will dwell in the land  
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.  
The effect of righteousness will be peace  
and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isaiah 32:16-17)*

We invite you to join with other world leaders—and with concerned citizens such as ourselves—in expressing your concern for the deaths of both Israelis and Palestinians, and to actively support efforts to secure a lasting and meaningful ceasefire.

Sincerely,



Donald G. Peters  
Executive Director, MCC Canada



Willy Reimer  
Executive Director, Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches



Douglas P. Sider Jr.  
Canadian Director, Brethren in Christ Canada



Willard Metzger  
Executive Director, Mennonite Church Canada



Tim Dyck  
General Secretary, Evangelical Mennonite Conference

CC: The Honourable John Baird, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development  
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