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November 22, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

We're writing to you today to express our cautious optimism at the recent news of a four-day pause in the Hamas-Israel war with release of some civilian hostages, and humanitarian aid access to Gaza. Thank you for Canada's role in advocating for this to happen. More than ever, it is important to call for a lasting ceasefire and a negotiated end to the conflict including the release of remaining hostages.

We also note with gratitude Minister Joly's November 20, 2023 statement on X condemning extremist settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and its negative impact on achieving a negotiated two state solution.

We continue to be gravely concerned about Canada's role in the conflict, particularly the recent actions to vote against resolutions in the November 9<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly. These include:

1. A resolution which recognizes UNRWA and urges the international community to support its work. It passed 160-4.
2. A resolution which reaffirms that Palestinian refugees are entitled to their property and asks the UN to protect Arab assets and property rights in Israel. It passed 156-6.
3. A resolution to condemn Israel's illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. It passed 145-7

The ecumenical statement "A Cry to End the Violence and to uphold the rights of all civilians to life and freedom from violence and discrimination" issued by KAIROS and member denominations and organizations on October 18, 2023 includes the following:

*In addition to condemning the spiraling violence and doing everything in its power for an immediate ceasefire, Canada must work with renewed effort toward peace with justice that upholds the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis to life and to freedom from violence and discrimination, and an end to the occupation.*

As of the writing of this letter, this KAIROS-led statement has now been endorsed by the following churches and faith-based agencies.

Anglican Church of Canada  
Development and Peace – Caritas Canada  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice  
Mennonite Central Committee of Canada  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
The United Church of Canada

We shared it with you at the time of our last letter to you on October 20<sup>th</sup>, and attach it here again for your reference. We continue to call on Canada to act with moral conscience to uphold the dignity and rights of all, and to uphold international law and international humanitarian law at all times.

We call on you to support and amplify the voices of faith-based and grassroots civil society peace and development organizations in Palestine and Israel who are calling for an end to the violence and a just and lasting peace.

KAIROS has continued to stay in touch with our partners in the region, and their messages of solidarity and a vision of security in which both Israelis and Palestinians live lives of flourishing gives us hope that the imagination for a different kind of future is there, if only given space to bloom and grow.

This is articulated in the words of Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, KAIROS' Women, Peace and Security (WPS) partner in the West Bank:

*The Palestinian people, like all people, love life and wish to live it, with dignity and freedom, enjoying all that this world has to offer. As such, we call for an immediate ceasefire first, followed by immediate provision of basic needs, including shelter, food, medicine, and services, an exchange of hostages, and an end to occupation. We also affirm every person and community's right to security, and our basic interconnectedness, understanding that our security is also intertwined and must never come at the expense of another.*

KAIROS solidarity partner HaMoked, based in Jerusalem, writes:

*The universality at the heart of human rights necessitates unequivocal support for Israelis' right to be safe, and the demand for accountability for the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7, and unequivocal support for these same rights – security and accountability – for the Palestinian civilians of Gaza.*

*The most important message is that there is no contradiction in working for all of this, exactly the opposite: it is in all our interests to insist on universal humanity precisely at this time.*

Prime Minister Trudeau, we urge you to stand up for the human rights of all in Israel and Palestine, and to call for a lasting ceasefire and an end to the occupation. We pray for justice and for lasting peace, in a good way.

Sincerely,

Rev. Murray Pruden  
Steering Committee Chair  
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Leah Reesor-Keller  
Interim Executive Director  
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

cc: The Honourable Melanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
The Honourable Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Official Opposition  
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of New Democratic Party  
Yves-François Blanchet MP, Leader of the Bloc Québécois  
Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party

David DaSilva, Representative of Canada to the Palestinian Authority.