

BWA calls for prayer for Israel and Palestinian territories

October 30, 2023

As Israel expands its ground offensive in Gaza in response to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, the Baptist World Alliance issued a call to “fervent prayer for just peace.”

The call for prayer originated with the 17 churches in the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel and the Council of Local Evangelical Churches in the Holy Land, which represents a Baptist congregation in Gaza and a dozen other Baptist churches in Palestinian territories.

“Baptists across Israel and the Palestinian Territories request fervent prayer for just peace,” the [prayer guide](#) issued by the BWA states.

“Together as a Baptist family that is one in Christ Jesus, let us mourn with all whose loved ones have been killed or held captive. Let us follow paths of peacemaking that unequivocally reject terrorism or any acts that target civilians, include dehumanizing language, or limit human rights on the basis of ethnicity or faith.

“Let us generously provide help and support with the compassion of Christ. Let us stand together with our Baptist family and all who are suffering, and in the midst of complexity and violence, hear again the words of the prophet Micah ‘to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly’ in pursuit of restorative justice and peace for all people.”

Prayer requests

Baptists in the region specifically listed 10 specific prayer requests. They

asked global Baptists to pray:

- “For a quick end to the conflict and the prevention of escalation into a larger war in the region.”
- “For the God of all comfort to be with those who are grieving the loss of their loved ones.” The Hamas attack on civilians in Israel on Oct. 7 and subsequent violence claimed 1,400 lives in Israel. As of Oct. 29, the [Gaza Health Ministry](#) claimed the Palestinian death toll topped 8,000.
- “For those who have been wounded during the conflict and for those providing medical assistance to them.” In mid-October, [Texas Baptist Men](#) provided funds to transport 50 doctors, nurses and paramedics from the United States to Israel to meet critical needs of both Israeli and Palestinian civilians.
- “For the safety and liberation of hostages, and pray for mediators to facilitate their release.”
- “For wisdom and discernment for the leaders, that they may make decisions that lead to lasting peace and alleviate suffering.”
- “That Christians from around the world will unit in prayer for peace, demonstrating the love of Christ to all peoples.”
- “For safety of local followers of Jesus and that they will be shielded from extremism and hatred, especially young people.”
- “For God to utilize our churches as effective witnesses during this challenging time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, including the Baptist church in Gaza and its ongoing ministry.”
- “That Christians around the world will give generously as our Baptist family across this area seeks to holistically minister in this critical time of suffering.” [TBM volunteers](#), working in partnership with Israel’s Emergency Volunteers Project, have prepared about 30,000 meals in Israel for civilians displaced by bombing, as well as serving hospitals and first responders.
- “For peace, hope and security for the entire region, and that the

sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays so that Israelis and Palestinians will experience life lived in peace and freedom with one another.”

In an Oct. 22 email to the *Baptist Standard*, the president of the Council of Local Evangelical Churches in the Holy Land noted an elder at Gaza Baptist Church had sustained minor injuries, and the elder’s sister was killed two days earlier.

“They want the war to stop. They have nothing to do with all that is taking place,” [said Munir Kakish](#), who is pastor of churches both in Ramallah in the West Bank and Ramla in Central Israel. “They are the innocent and are victims of hate, destruction and bombing.”

Expression of grief

On its [website](#), the BWA also included an expression of grief over the bombing of the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza, an Anglican facility operated by Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board personnel for nearly three decades.



Screen shot of the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, once managed by the Southern Baptist Convention, where a blast Oct. 17 killed hundreds (AP video).

Hamas blamed Israel for the hospital explosion, while Israel asserted the rocket that caused the blast was launched by Palestinians. After investigating available evidence, U.S. intelligence officials expressed “[high confidence](#)” the explosion was caused by a Palestinian rocket that broke up in midflight.

“As a global family, we mourn together the horrific bombing of the al-Ahli Hospital, often known as the Baptist Hospital. ... The Baptist World Alliance mourns the tragic loss of life and the untold cost that will continue to unfold in the lives of those who depended on this hospital for care and shelter,” the BWA stated.

“We stand in prayer with the leadership and staff of the hospital, the Anglican Church, and all who are grieving. We continue to plead for the protection of all citizens and the establishment of genuine peace.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: The next-to-last bullet point was edited after the article originally was posted to provide an updated count of meals prepared by TBM.