

Statement by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

In Light of the Tragic Events in the Middle East (Sunday, October 8th, 2023)



We are deeply grieved by the news coming from the suffering Middle East. We mourn the souls taken during the recent tragic events. May God's embrace comfort the grieving families.

Our thoughts and prayers are particularly with the civilians, who experience painful moments of anguish, terrorized by the eerie sound of the sirens and the imminent threat of the explosions, and especially with all the innocent children, who deserve to get raised in a truly "Promised Land" of peace and prosperity.

Amid anger and destruction, amid evil and bitterness, human beings are easily tempted to think and to act violently. While many deem violence as a necessary means of dispute resolution, we can never see it as part of God's good creation, nor can we ever approve the use of violence to pursue peace. Instead, we must look back to the "good" that God first created and the perfect peace to which he desires us to go, exhorting with the Psalmist: "Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). Besides, the struggle for peace is not only a divine commandment, but also a universal value and an essential precondition for the respect and protection of human dignity.