



# The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

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## Message of Aroha - Humanitarian Crisis and Genocide in Gaza

As followers of Jesus Christ—who called us to love our neighbour, seek justice, and walk humbly with God—the Methodist Church of New Zealand | Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa cannot remain silent in the face of the ongoing humanitarian crisis and genocide in Gaza. With broken hearts and deep concern, we witness the unrelenting violence, destruction, and loss of innocent lives. Thousands of civilians, many of them children, have perished. Many have been torn apart and traumatised. Homes, hospitals, schools, and places of worship have been reduced to rubble. The intentional deprivation of food and clean water in Gaza constitutes a serious violation of human rights. Such actions intensify the brutality of occupation, inflicting profound harm on the most vulnerable—especially children. We affirm that this cruelty stands in direct defiance to the justice of God, desecrating the divine image inherent in every human being. This is not merely a tragedy; it is a violation of international law, a stain on our shared humanity, and a grave moral failing of the global community.

## A Call for Justice and Immediate International Response

We unequivocally condemn the ongoing acts of collective punishment against the Palestinian people in Gaza, which the international community must now recognise as genocide. As a church committed to justice, peace, and human dignity, we call upon:

- **The New Zealand Government** to take an unambiguous stand by formally recognising the genocide in Gaza, advocating for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, and suspending all forms of military or economic support to parties responsible for the violence.
- **The United Nations and International Community** to mobilise immediate and unimpeded humanitarian aid, including food, medical supplies, shelter, and water, to the people of Gaza. Aid must be distributed with urgency, transparency, and according to international humanitarian principles.
- **Global faith communities and civil society** to rise in solidarity, raise their prophetic voices, and advocate for peace rooted in justice and the right of all peoples—Palestinians and Israelis alike—to live in safety and dignity.

The call for justice is not political rhetoric; it is a moral imperative grounded in our faith and our understanding of the Gospel. We remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah: *“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.”* (Isaiah 1:17)

## **A Word to Our Palestinian Whānau**

To our Palestinian whanau (family) in Aotearoa and across the world, we extend our aroha (love), prayers, and solidarity. Your pain has not gone unnoticed. You are not alone. The Methodist Church of New Zealand stands with you in mourning and in hope. We honour your resilience, and your right to live free from occupation, fear, and violence. We lament the decades of displacement and dispossession that have brought us to this moment and recommit ourselves to working for a just and lasting peace.

In the spirit of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our bi-cultural journey, we also speak from a uniquely Aotearoa context. Māori, as tangata whenua and as a people who have experienced colonisation, land confiscation, and systemic injustice, bring a vital voice to this moment. Our histories and wisdom deepen our understanding of what it means to resist injustice with dignity, mana (authority), and hope.

Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa acknowledges the longstanding solidarity between Māori and indigenous peoples around the world, including the Palestinian people. This is a time to strengthen those ties, to uplift the voices of indigenous struggle, and to work together for liberation, healing, and peace.

We call upon all New Zealanders, regardless of background, to open their hearts, educate themselves, and stand up for what is right. Let us not be silent bystanders. Let us become a nation known for compassion, courage, and an unwavering commitment to human rights.

## **Our Hope and Our Prayer**

We are a people of hope. Even amid great suffering, we believe that peace is possible, that justice can prevail, and that love is stronger than hatred. The road to reconciliation is long and difficult, but it must begin with truth, accountability, and a collective commitment to end the violence. We urge our global leaders, our communities, and our churches to act now—not later, not when it is politically convenient, but now—because every moment of delay costs more lives. May the God of justice stir our spirits. May the Christ of compassion guide our hands. May the Spirit of peace unite us all.

**I roto i te aroha, i te whakapono me te tumanako.**

Ngā manaakitanga,



Te Aroha Rountree

President - Methodist Church of New Zealand | Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa