

A STATEMENT BY THE HEADS OF CHURCHES REGARDING THE INCREASING CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN THE HOLY LAND

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, call upon all parties in the Holy Land to practice restraint and self-control. We have been constantly warning of an exploding, senseless cycle of violence that will only cause hurt and suffering to everyone. Such a state of affairs will almost certainly bring further atrocities and anguish, driving us away from the much sought-after peace and stability that we all seek.

In closely monitoring this regrettable situation, we have concluded that this proliferation of violence that has led to the unwarranted deaths of 32 Palestinians and 7 Israelis since the start of the New Year seems to be self-perpetuating. It will surely continue and even escalate unless a robust intervention is resolutely undertaken by community and political leaders on all sides.

Everyone must work together to defuse the current tensions and to launch a political process based upon well-established principles of justice that will bring about a lasting peace and prosperity for all. Consonant with this, in these most difficult of times we call upon all parties to reverence each other's religious faith and to show respect to all holy sites and places of worship.

In the aftermath of this latest, tragic wave of violence, we pray for those killed and injured, and we ask that God stay close to their families and loved ones. We pray also for healing for the wounded, and that the Almighty would give

strength and perseverance to those caring for them.

Finally, we ask that God grant wisdom and prudence to political leaders and people of influence on all sides, leading them to devise ways to help us overcome violence, keep our communities safe, and work tirelessly to bring about a just and peaceful solution for our beloved Holy Land.

– The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

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