

October 20, 2023

Dear President Biden,

We, the undersigned national Catholic organizations, are writing today to ask you to be an agent for peace and call for a humanitarian ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict. As people of faith, we condemn Hamas' deadly attacks and taking of hostages on October 7, and Israel's retaliatory violence on the people of Gaza. We mourn the loss of all life. We affirm that each person has been created in the image and likeness of the God of Love. We respond to conflict in accord with commitments to such sacred dignity, to just peace, and to accountability rather than retribution.

We lift up and call for what Pope Francis calls "gestures of humanity" to break the cycles of dehumanization and violence. For example, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, [offered himself](#) in exchange for the children taken hostage. Much like St. Maximilian Kolbe did in 1941, he offers to risk his own life to protect people, without killing others. We need many more concrete, creative gestures by our religious and political leaders to shift the energy and dynamic of hostility.

As fellow Catholics, we urge you, President Biden, to:

1. Publicly call for de-escalation, humanitarian ceasefire, and restraint by all sides.
2. Call on all parties to prioritize the establishment of more corridors for humanitarian aid to reach the people in Gaza currently in desperate need of food, water, shelter, medical care, and electricity.
3. Prioritize steps to secure immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians.

If we continue to send weapons to this conflict, we will increase the dehumanization, destruction, and trauma of all communities involved. Yes, everyone has a right to defense. Yet, how we choose to defend can either perpetuate cycles of violence and trauma, or it can break cycles of violence and trauma. **Now is the time to call for de-escalation and ceasefire, before more lives are lost and the conflict spreads.**

We affirm the words of Pope Francis: "War does not solve any problem, it only sows death and destruction, increases hatred, multiplies revenge. War erases the future."

We implore you, President Biden, and the U.S. Congress to focus on efforts to de-escalate the conflict and establish a humanitarian ceasefire. As Pope Francis said in response to the desperate situation in Gaza, now is the time to take the side of peace. Mr. President, we pray for your safety, good health, and strength of spirit as an agent for peace.

Sincerely,

Benet Hill Monastery of Colorado Springs, Inc.
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Peace Center, Clinton, Iowa
Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Nuns Against Gun Violence
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Pax Christi USA
Quixote Center
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Atlantic-Midwest Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province
Sisters of Bon Secours, USA
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Institute Justice Team
Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary of the Woods, Indiana
Sisters of Saint Anne, USA
Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa.
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Albany Justice Committee and Office
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA
Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Sisters of the Presentation, San Francisco, California
Stuart Center for Mission
U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
U.S. Province of the Society of Helpers