

**Jesuit Mission Australia and The Xavier Network call for a ceasefire and humanitarian assistance in Gaza**

Jesuit Mission Australia and The Xavier Network strongly support the statement issued by the Society of Jesus on March 29th condemning the on-going violence in Gaza and other areas of Israel/Palestine, spilling over into the surrounding countries in the Middle East, echoing its words: "We cannot be silent."

These Jesuit organisations involved in responding to humanitarian crises around the world, are shocked at the killing of 7 aid workers who were delivering essential food aid on April 2. It is reported that 196 aid workers have been killed in Gaza since last October. This is the latest horrific event in a war in which tens of thousands of civilians, many of them children, continue to be the main victims.

Jesuit Mission and the Xavier Network, join the Jesuits' call for "an immediate ceasefire, for the release of all the 7 October hostages, for negotiations and for the beginning of a process that will bring freedom, liberty and justice for all in the Middle East, the only road to true peace."

"The human cost of inaction is simply too high. As leaders committed to the Jesuit values of compassion and justice, we stand together, united in our commitment to peace and understanding," said Helen Forde, CEO of Jesuit Mission.

The Xavier Network brings together Jesuit mission offices and non-governmental organisations from across Europe, North America and Australia. It responds to the needs of victims of conflict, many of whom are civilians, in many parts of the world, including in Syria and Lebanon.

For this reason, members of the Xavier Network are deeply disturbed by the current conflict in the Middle East, just as it also deplores the violence inflicted on innocent victims of other conflicts such as those in Sudan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Haiti, Ukraine and many other places.

The members of the Xavier Network call for:

- an immediate ceasefire in Gaza
- the opening of a humanitarian corridor to allow the immediate delivery of aid to Gaza with guaranteed safe passage of all aid workers

- respect for international humanitarian law and the Geneva conventions governing the legal use of force in armed conflict
- the unconditional release of all hostages abducted on 7 October 2023
- an end to all arms sales which are fuelling this conflict
- the resumption of negotiations towards a political agreement which guarantees the right of the two peoples to self-determination, security and freedom

In his Easter message on March 31, Pope Francis appealed for a ceasefire: “Let us not allow the current hostilities to continue to have grave repercussions on the civil population, by now at the limit of its endurance, and above all on the children....War is always an absurdity and a defeat.”

The Xavier Network supports international solidarity and the universal mission of the Society of Jesus as stated in its General Congregation 36: “Our vision is to place faith, justice, and solidarity with the poor and excluded as central elements of the mission of reconciliation.” (D1 para 3)

The members of the Xavier Network are:

- ALBOAN, Spain
- Canadian Jesuits International, Canada
- Entreculturas, Spain
- Fundação Gonçalo da Silveira, Portugal
- Irish Jesuits International, Ireland
- Jesuit Mission Australia
- Jesuit Missions, Britain
- Menschen für Andere-jesuitenweltweit, Austria
- Jesuitenmission, Germany
- MAGIS Italy
- Magis Americas, USA

- Oeuvre des Missions Catholiques Françaises d'Asie et d'Afrique, France
- Stiftung Jesuiten weltweit, Switzerland

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Caption: Xavier Network members at a recent meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

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**About Jesuit Mission Australia**

Jesuit Mission Australia works in over 14 countries across Asia and Africa to uphold the innate dignity of people living with the effects of poverty, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable. Funds from our supporters:

- Break cycles of poverty through teaching and education
- Protect the health of communities by providing medical care and programs that improve access to clean water and toilets
- Develop independent, sustainable communities through livelihood training and income-generating projects
- Provide vulnerable individuals with pastoral care, social inclusion and advocacy
- Support refugees in crisis
- Enable effective disaster response and relief.