# United Church Statement on Ceasefire and Humanitarian Corridor in the Middle East

## Transcript from OFL press conference, Oct. 26, 2023

My name is Éric Hébert-Daly and I’m the Regional Executive Minister of The United Church of Canada for Eastern Ontario and Quebec, and The United Church of Canada is a signatory of the joint statement.

Christians follow a model in Jesus, who regularly put the dignity of others ahead of all other considerations. He reached out to those who were oppressed, excluded, marginalized. He questioned the status quo when it was used to undermine other people’s dignity.

The escalating situation in Gaza and the tensions in the whole region need a ceasefire and a humanitarian corridor. Relief of human suffering is at the heart of the call for a ceasefire by all parties.

C’est un principe de base de notre foi de vouloir réduire la souffrance, et mettre la dignité humaine au cœur de nos préoccupations. La vie humaine a de la valeur, peu importe son identité nationale. Il est primordial d’arrêter la violence qui nuit à la vie humaine et perpétue un cycle meurtrier. C’est pour cette raison qu’il faut créer un corridor humanitaire et aussi faire place à la création d’un moment de calme qui pourrait devenir un corridor vers une paix durable.

In a report from one of the United Church’s partners in the Middle East Council of Churches, they express it powerfully in describing the situation:

The biggest concern is the fear and horror people are going through, where there is no possible safe place anywhere in Gaza, and those who are still alive, they live only by God’s mercy.

Grief, suffering, and loss do not create winning conditions for long-term peace, justice, and healthy relationships. Killing cannot be justified regardless of the banner under which it takes place, and it generates in us a human desire for retaliation. However—an eye for an eye makes us all blind. As this conflict escalates and lengthens, the path to peace becomes harder, longer, and more difficult. This is why we call for a ceasefire and a humanitarian corridor today.