

Date: October 20th 2023

Subject: Bombing The Church of Saint Porphyrius

Dear Honorable Prime minister Justin Trudeau

We are writing to you on behalf of all Palestinian Canadians Christians and Muslims alike and as concerned citizens to express our deep sorrow, outrage, and condemnation regarding the recent bombing of the historic Christian Church in Gaza - The Church of Saint Porphyrius.

The church was bombed while providing shelter for an estimated 500 Palestinians, mostly Christians, who sought refuge from the Israeli bombardment. At least 176 people were killed and unknown number injured. This comes just a day after bombing Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in Gaza during the Israeli strikes there that left more than 8500 dead, and hundreds more injured.

Citing 2 Cor. 4:8-9 a, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed". We reflect on the unwavering spirit in the face of adversity. These heinous acts of violence not only violate the sanctity of institutions such as hospitals and religious institutions that are considered sanctuaries by the tenets of international humanitarian law. These sacrilegious attacks shatter the core values of humanity, peace, and coexistence that our society upholds.

The Church of Saint Porphyrius (originally founded in 425 CE) is the oldest active church in Gaza. It has stood as a symbol of faith, hope, and unity for generations, offering solace and support to the Palestinian people regardless of their religious background. The bombing not only undermines the religious freedom and tolerance we cherish but also inflicts irreparable damage to the fabric of our diverse and harmonious community. Because of the illegal 17-yr Israeli siege on Gaza and the dire living conditions the Christian population in Gaza has dwindled into a several hundred only, with their existence further threatened by the ongoing bombardment and siege.

We implore you, as representatives of our government, to take immediate and decisive action to bring the perpetrators of these horrendous acts to justice. We call on our Canadian Government to uphold its commitments to International Humanitarian Law, and Human Rights; to demand an immediate ceasefire, opening of a humanitarian corridor for the entry

of medical aid, water, food and fuel supplies. AND stand against the forceful transfer of the Palestinian population outside of Gaza

We call on Canada and stress how crucial that we all uphold the principles of justice, equality, and respect for all faiths, ensuring that such incidents are not repeated, and do not go unpunished. Let us demonstrate Canada's unwavering commitment to preserving our religious heritage and promoting freedom of religious practice.

We beseech our friends, partners, and individuals of good will to stand in solidarity and mourning with us after the heinous assaults on our Palestinian people.

Give Justice and Peace a Chance!

With respect,

Sincerely,

The Coalition On Canadian Palestinian Organizations

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