



HA-3501-03-01

13 October 2023

Rabbi Mordechai Abergel
Chief Rabbi
Jewish Welfare Board

Maghain Aboth Synagogue
24 Waterloo St
Singapore 187950

Dear Rabbi Mordechai,

We read with deep sadness, worry and grief, the escalation of conflict and violence affecting Jews and Muslims in Israel and Palestine.

We fear for, and mourn the loss of innocent lives; young children, mothers, the elderly and vulnerable, who are trapped and victimised in this conflict.

There is no place and no justification for any form of violence and brutality on civilians by anyone, including those by Hamas, or in any retaliatory response. The right of civilians to live peacefully must be protected at all times.

We offer our sincerest condolences, prayers and solidarity to those whose lives were taken unjustly, to those who have been injured and to their loved ones. May their sorrows heal and may they find peace in these troubling and challenging times.

We fear and weep for the world's holiest sites in Jerusalem. For Muslims, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Al-Haram Al-Sharif is our third holiest site after the Holy Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Madina. Al-Aqsa is situated close to Jewish and Christian holiest sites, and the recent escalation of tensions in these sites affecting worshippers is a deep cause for concern for everyone.

This conflict has a long and complex history. Our scriptures emphasise the human need for mercy and compassion. In our respective traditions, this is an extremely important yet shared quality: *רחمة* and *חיים*.

It is this quality that ensures each community has the basic right to believe and practice that belief, and to live peacefully in this world. If these fundamental rights are under threat, it will almost certainly unleash enmity and conflict. And the greatest victim and loss in wars and conflicts is humanity itself, when it loses its character of care, concern and compassion for the well-being of others.

We fear and weep for the sad state of the human soul in this time of unprecedented violence and suffering in the world; how hatred will be entrenched in the minds of victims, how conflicts will be exploited to sew enmity between communities, how compassion and forgiveness will be replaced with anger and vengeance.

I pray and hope that both the Jewish and Muslim communities in the conflict zones can work collectively to liberate themselves from being defined and constrained by the politics of the day and seek to live with a different model of respect, tolerance and harmony.

There are many peace loving Jews and Muslims who do not want conflict and have worked hard to create peaceful communities. Like us, they want to live constructive and happy lives.

I cherish the trust and confidence between our communities, where we can speak freely and candidly on what matters most to us, and work together towards commonalities that strengthen, not focus on differences that divide.

Our work to put forth a different model of peaceful co-existence, where every community in Singapore can live peacefully alongside other faiths and celebrate diversity, has now become even more critical.

I hope we can share our model of co-existence with the communities in the affected regions and communicate the urgency of peaceful relations to their leaders. Despite the overwhelming challenges, achieving peaceful relations is not impossible and is now the greatest urgency.

May the God of Abraham restore peace and compassion in a world that desperately needs it.

Yours Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in Arabic calligraphy: "ناظر الدين محمد ناصر" (Nazirudin Mohd Nasir).

USTAZ DR NAZIRUDIN MOHD NASIR
MUFTI
THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE