



## Statement on the Recently Announced Ceasefire between Israel and Hamas

January 19, 2025

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9)*

This past Wednesday evening, the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, announced that, after more than a year of unproductive deliberations, negotiations between the Israeli government and Hamas had finally reached an agreement for a ceasefire between the two warring parties.

The first phase of the ceasefire, lasting 42 days, was agreed to begin today.

During this time, hostilities are to cease and armed forces withdraw in order to facilitate the release of an agreed number of hostages and prisoners, a surge in humanitarian relief, and the return of all displaced Gazans to what remains of their neighborhoods and homes.

Concurrently, negotiations are to continue in order to work out the details of two additional phases. These would ultimately result in the release of all remaining hostages, the liberation of many additional Palestinian prisoners, the withdrawal of occupying forces, and the cessation of all hostilities. If successful, these envisioned phases would essentially bring the devastating 15-month-long war to an end.

Having repeatedly called for such a negotiated outcome, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem welcomes this ceasefire. Moreover, we appeal to fellow Christians and all those of goodwill to continue to advocate and pray not only for the adoption of the full agreement, but also for the region’s leaders and people to invest as much of their political and financial capital towards *peacebuilding* as they tragically have in *waging warfare* over these past many months—and in the decades preceding. Only through such a transformative change of hearts, we believe, can there emerge a just and lasting peace between the peoples of the Holy Land, as well as among all those living throughout the Middle East.

At this time, we would like to commend the courageous staff and volunteers of our Ahli Arab Hospital and its clinics in Gaza, who have endured unbearable hardships in extending Christ’s healing ministry to the thousands of wounded patients they have treated throughout the course of the war. They are the true heroes of this disastrous chapter in our region’s history.

We would also like to thank our many partners and donors around the world: Without your generous support, we could not have kept our hospital supplied and running amid the many adversities it has faced. In the weeks and months ahead, there will be more opportunities to contribute towards expanding the work of our hospital in order to meet the increasingly desperate needs of the battered Gazan community in the face of a largely demolished healthcare system.

Finally, we would like to call attention to Christ’s words from the Sermon on the Mount, quoted above: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” These are one of the eight *Beatitudes* or *blessed sayings* of our Lord, so-called because those who embody them will not only be blessed by God, but also become a blessing to countless others.

May it be our prayer that, in the days and weeks to come, the Almighty might indeed grant us the blessings of peace in our troubled region—and that those blessings might begin within each one of us.