

The Most Reverend Hosam E. Naoum
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem
The Fifteenth Bishop of the Episcopal/Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem

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Dear Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you are all now painfully aware, in the early hours of this morning, February 28th, a coordinated and massive military assault was launched by the United States and Israel against numerous cities and installations within Iran. This operation, described by the leaders of the two nations as a “pre-emptive” attack, has brought fire and destruction to the heart of Tehran, Isfahan, and beyond, striking at the very centers of governance and civilian life. Moreover, just prior to these events, Israel had also “pre-emptively” attacked various targets in southern Lebanon, where the number of casualties has yet to be determined.

Tragically, the cycle of violence has expanded with terrifying speed. In the hours following, Iran launched a widespread reprisal, with missiles and drones targeting Israel and U.S. military assets across the Gulf—striking installations in Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kurdistan-Iraq, Jordan, and Qatar. Sirens also blared across the Holy Land, warning of incoming missiles from Iran. Suddenly, our people from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf find themselves once again huddled in shelters, fearing for their lives as the shadow of a total regional war looms over us.

These developments strike at the very soul of our Province of Jerusalem & the Middle East. Every single nation now engaged in this combat, and those bearing the brunt of the retaliatory strikes, resides within our ecclesiastical boundaries. Our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Iran are currently enduring the terror of aerial bombardment; our members in the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf are witnessing the arrival of war at their doorsteps; and our faithful in the Diocese of Jerusalem—extending across Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria—face an unprecedented threat of military escalation.

In the face of such overwhelming force, we recall the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matt 5:9). Today, that calling feels heavier than ever before. When the “spirit of fear” threatens to consume our hearts, we must anchor ourselves in the “spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim 1:7).

First, I call upon the global Church to join us in urgent, unceasing prayer. We implore God to protect the innocent—the mothers, the children, and the elderly—who are caught in the crossfire of this “Operation Epic Fury” and the subsequent “crushing responses.” We pray specifically for a “sound mind” for the leaders of the United States, Israel, and Iran, that they might recognize the futility of this bloodshed and turn back from the precipice of a global catastrophe.

Second, we must offer each other the sanctuary of Christian love. I therefore urge our clergy and laity to be beacons of comfort. In a time of “regime change” rhetoric and military ultimatums, let our message be the unchanging promise of Christ’s peace: to build each other up (1 Cor 8:1), for our hope is not in the strength of armadas or missile shields, but in the Prince of Peace.

Finally, we must remain “Bridge Builders.” Even as diplomatic windows seem to slam shut, the Church must keep the doors of reconciliation open. We refuse to see our neighbors as enemies, whether they be in Tehran, Tel Aviv, or the military bases of the Gulf. I extend an urgent invitation to the wider Anglican Communion and all people of goodwill: Intercede for us now. The hour is late, and the danger is great. We remain “battered and bruised, but not defeated.” May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

In Christ,

++ Hosam Jerusalem

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