

## Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem send their condolences

March 8, 2008

To H.E. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert  
To the Grand Rabbinate

We write to express our condolences for the killing of the Yeshiva students, not least to the parents and families of the victims. It is a sad and tragic event coming from the cycle of violence in which the whole Land is victim. We appeal to you, political and religious leaders of Israel, to find ways to put an end to all violence so as to free all of us from this infernal cycle of violence of which we all are victims. In the name of the believers in this Land, we reaffirm our determination to work for peace and the end of all violence. Only peace is needed and new ways must be found for the Land called to be Holy by the Almighty for the Jewish people and for the Palestinians. We pray that God will inspire all of us to submit to His ways in order to reach a comprehensive and just peace with a total security for you and for all.

Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem  
On Their behalf: Patriarch Theofilos III  
Patriarch Michel Sabbah  
Patriarch Torkom Manooghian  
Fr Pier Battista Pizziballa, of, Custos of the Holy Land

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Mr President Mahmoud Abbs Abu Mazen  
President of the Palestinian Authority

We the Patriarchs and Heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem address this letter to you to express our condolences for all the victims who have fallen and are still falling in this wave of violence in Gaza. We share the tragedy with our people and with all those who are exposed to death today and to further violence. We know that you do not spare any effort in your attempts to reach a comprehensive and just peace. Nevertheless, we urge you to do whatever possible to find rapid and opportune ways to bring back the unity of the Palestinian people; heal all the wounds, in order that the tragedy of which all of us are victims, today more than ever, will come to an end. We join you with our prayers as we ask God to inspire you in efficient ways to reach agreement with the concerned Israeli Authorities to stop all violence, so as to work for the achievement of peace, despite all the grave difficulties which are known to all of us.

May God give you strength and wisdom to keep you well in order to lead the Palestinian people to peace and security.

Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem  
Patriarch Theofilos III  
Patriarch Michel Sabbah  
Patriarch Torkom Manooghian  
Fr Pier Battista Pizziballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land