



## Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

My grim guess is that even if there were a cease-fire today (which hasn't come soon enough), there will be over 100,000 Palestinian deaths after we count those buried in the rubble, those who die because they can't be treated medically, and those who die from starvation (the UN estimates over 500,000 Palestinians are suffering from severe malnourishment).

In Matthew's gospel, we have the story of King Herod wanting to kill the Christ child who is prophesied to be the new king. Mary and Joseph were warned, but other families were not. This resulted in over 2,000 infants being murdered by the government of Rome.

In our time, it is the government of Israel, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that is trying to subvert Israel's Supreme Court (who has ruled against him), and other right-wing leaders, who don't see any Palestinian as human or worthy of compassion, much less having a right to life and liberty. As long as the 'war' (many others calling it genocide) continues, then Netanyahu can avoid any challenges to his elected position. I know this sounds like a conspiracy, but it is a piece of the puzzle. The leadership of Israel has no incentive to stop, even though many of their own citizens in Israel and Jews around the world are protesting the bombings and occupation.

It is time that our nation, the United States of America, steps up to be a more balanced and just broker to bring about a real peace. Everyone is endowed with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, not just people we think are right. Our leadership needs to do more.

Israel will want Palestinians to eventually move to Egypt so they can claim Gaza for themselves. Once the Palestinians leave, they won't be allowed to return, which is why we have this densely occupied land in the first place, as many were kicked out of their villages, homes, and farms and not allowed to return over 50 years ago, forcing them into Gaza and refugee camps.

I believe the latest casualty count is over 8,000 children killed. There is no peace in Israel or Palestine. There is only occupation and destruction and injustice. The innocents are dying because the leaders lack compassion and reject the other's right to exist. May God have mercy on all who let this continue. May God help us give aid and comfort and water and food and medical supplies and hope and freedom to those who have none.

Peace