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South Africa's Primate: "Pray for Gaza and Ukraine"

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The Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba

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[ACNS by Bellah Zulu] The Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba has made an urgent call for prayer for the war affected Ukraine and Gaza region.

Archbishop Makgoba made the call yesterday in a statement released to ACNS and other media outlets. He said, "Both situations need urgent and intentional intercessions" and urged all Christians to "uplift in prayer those who have been devastated by war."

Despite the recent plea by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon for a cessation of hostilities, Gaza and southern Israel have seen an increase in violence. International media report that more than 1,000 Palestinians and at least 52 Israeli soldiers and three civilians have died since the conflict began on July 8.

"The conflict in Gaza is a senseless, unnecessary conflict," said Archbishop Makgoba. "No war will bring peace and security to Israel and Palestine, in particular not when it involves the heartless use of brute force which has been deployed in the past week."

The Archbishop condemned the killings and the occupation and said he "joins those who are calling for a conversion of brief suspensions of hostilities into a permanent ceasefire."

Archbishop Makgoba also bemoaned the blowing up of a Malaysia Airlines plane over Ukraine. "The aggressive killing of God's people – so soon after the disappearance of another over the Indian Ocean – is almost unpardonable," he said.

"We pray for the souls who died in this unnecessary conflict, we extend our condolences to the families of those who died, and we pray for the safety of airline passengers and for an end to this costly war."

He prayed for those who have since died and conveyed his condolences to those who have lost loved ones. He also prayed also for the international leaders and diplomats who are seeking long-term solutions.

Archbishop Makgoba concluded: “The Israelis and the Palestinians can find a solution – now they must find one, and the international community needs to bring maximum pressure to bear on both to ensure they do.”