

# UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

P. O. Box 96014  
Brixton 2019  
Johannesburg  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 10 215 0374  
Cell: +27 83 650 0115



10, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Edenvale 1609  
Johannesburg  
South Africa  
E-mail: [gensec@uccsa.co.za](mailto:gensec@uccsa.co.za)  
Website: [uccsadenomination.org.za](http://uccsadenomination.org.za)

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## For Immediate Release

Date: January 17, 2025  
Contact: United Congregational Church of Southern Africa  
Email: [media@uccsa.co.za](mailto:media@uccsa.co.za)/[gensec@uccsa.co.za](mailto:gensec@uccsa.co.za)  
Phone: +27 836500115

### **United Congregational Church of Southern Africa receives the news of the Ceasefire Agreement with Hope for a lasting Peace Between Israel and Hamas.**

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) stands in solidarity with all those affected by the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. As the potential ceasefire deal unfolds, we emphasize the need for a just and lasting peace that respects the human rights of both Palestinians and Israelis. The UCCSA expresses cautious optimism regarding the recent draft agreement for a **42-day ceasefire** between Israel and Hamas.

This initiative marks a significant step toward alleviating the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza and restoring hope for peace in the region. The proposed ceasefire entails a halt to hostilities, allowing for the safe return of many Palestinian families to their homes and the release of dozens of Israeli hostages alongside hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. As humanitarian aid begins to flow into Gaza, we recognize this moment as a crucial opportunity to address the urgent needs of those affected by the conflict.

We call upon all parties to honor this ceasefire and ensure that it leads to meaningful negotiations aimed at a lasting peace. This agreement should not merely be a pause in fighting but a vital opportunity for dialogue and reconciliation. The church emphasizes that justice and human rights for both Palestinians and Israelis are essential foundations for a sustainable peace. As the ceasefire unfolds, it is imperative that the international community supports efforts to safeguard the rights and dignity of all individuals in the region.

NB. In light of these developments, we urge all stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue that prioritizes justice and the protection of human rights. We echo the words of the prophet Micah who declares the following:

***"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*** (Micah 6:8)

The UCCSA believes that this ceasefire is a crucial first step toward ending the violence and encouraging an environment where lasting peace can thrive. We stand in solidarity with all those yearning for peace and justice in the region. The recent draft agreement proposes a **42-day cessation of hostilities**, during which hostages may be released and humanitarian aid can flow into Gaza. However, the path to peace requires more than a temporary pause in violence; it demands a commitment to addressing the root causes of the conflict. As faith leaders, we are called to advocate for justice and reconciliation.

As we reflect on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, we reaffirm our commitment to advocacy for peace, justice, and liberation for all. **Let Gaza live**, and may we collectively work towards a future where peace reigns. Empowered by faith, united in purpose: transforming communities and systems for a just and hopeful future.

### **A Prayer for Peace**

We invite all to join in prayer:

*Heavenly Father,*

*We seek Your guidance and grace in this time of uncertainty.*

*May this ceasefire be a beacon of hope for those suffering in Gaza and beyond.*

*Grant wisdom to leaders and courage to all who strive for peace.*

*Let justice roll like a river, and may Your peace reign in our hearts.*

**Amen.**

For more information, please contact the UCCSA office or visit our website at [www.uccsadenomination.org.za](http://www.uccsadenomination.org.za)

**Signed by**



**UCCSA President**



**UCCSA General Secretary**