Interim Paper on the Holy Land/Israel/Palestine. October 18th 2023.

I had intended to bring my previous paper up to date, but recent events have overtaken me. I am writing this in a state of horror and grief at the events unfolding in the Middle East.

First, we must condemn the horrific acts of terror perpetrated by the Hamas Group on Saturday 7th October. Indiscriminate murder of civilians, men, women and children, and the taking of hostages, must be condemned. No-one can justify these murderous acts. We call upon those still holding hostages to release them, unharmed and into safety.

The response of Israel has still to play out. However, there can never be any justification for bombing civilian areas. To claim that they want to destroy Hamas completely, by killing civilian men, women and children, cannot succeed. Even if Hamas members are using their own families to hide behind, it cannot be right to kill innocent people indiscriminately. What we have already seen must be against International Law. We call upon Israel to pause the attacks on Gaza, and to restore humanitarian aid, power, water and food to the people of Gaza.

The events of the past ten days are not just the result of the attack by Hamas. The conflict between Israel and Palestinians dates back to at least the years following the first world war. We, in the U.K. should familiarise ourselves with these events because the U.K. Government were given a mandate to resolve the situation. We therefore have a responsibility to ensure our Government acts in the interests of peace and justice, not taking sides, but seeking a just solution.

I cannot see how the situation may end. I do know that language is important. I do know that it is not difficult to become inured to the images we see on our news bulletins and dismiss this horror as something that has nothing to do with me.

We all need to pray. Pray for an end to the killing. Then pray for an agreed solution which is just to all. Pray for forgiveness.

Phil Mayland.

Oct. 18th 2023.