

The prayer of peace, hope and justice

Only 11 days had passed

From 10 May until 21 May 2021, of the 241 people killed who were mainly Palestinian, 69 children were killed in Gaza and 2 in Southern Israel. They were all under the age of 18. Their names and ages are known.

While we were sleeping, while we were watching news reports that are increasingly more difficult to get out of Gaza, with increasing violent intimidation of journalists, while some were protesting, children made more and more vulnerable by adults who are engaged in deadly acts of warfare are killed.

Every child's life matters but the billion dollars from the USA, that was just approved this week, for the sole purpose of reinforcing the iron dome that protects Israel from the rockets from Hamas mean the children of Gaza are made a billion dollars more vulnerable. The children of Gaza are already growing up in an area with deep insecurity around their safety and well-being. Under a constant threat of war. An average 15 year old living in Gaza would have lived and or died through 4 Israeli offences already.

So- the children die, and we watch the news. The children die and we read newspaper reports. The children die and we update our social media statuses to reflect our awareness...and only 11 days have passed.

Let us pray:

Just 2 weeks ago 69 children in Gaza and 2 in Israel have died. It is too soon to move on. Today we light the candle of peace, hope and justice for these 71 precious children. We pray for the 71 empty desks at their schools or places of learning – desks that will never be filled by these children again, a constant reminder to their classmates, so schools become the holders of memories instead. There will be 71 fewer exams to mark, 71 projects fewer to complete, 71 fewer birthday parties to plan for, fewer drawings to finish, soccer matches to play in. 71 fewer opportunities for a lifetime of laughter or even joy. We pray for the 500 schools in Gaza that are damaged and the 3 schools in Israel. We pray for the countless numbers of children who are having their education (and lives) disrupted so adults can go to war. Wars that are idolised, sentimentalised and memorialised. I pray for comfort for the families who have lost children, grandchildren, cousins and siblings.

Dear God,

I pray that it will be possible for the children of Gaza and Israel to know peace in this lifetime.

That the cruelty they live with will stop.

That war will be given another name for these three letters are not enough.

That one child's death could cause a ceasefire.

That saving one child's life would be enough.

Rose-Anne Reynolds