

Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice

On Wednesday 11 May, a Palestinian journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, was killed in a camp in the West Bank called Jenin as she was covering a raid of the camp by the Israeli Defence Force.

She was wearing a helmet and a bullet-proof vest clearly marked "PRESS", yet she was shot in a narrow gap beneath the helmet by a trained gunman.

Fellow journalists were injured during the attack, and their account confirm that it was military fire that killed her, not Palestinian gunman as claimed by the PM of Israel and the IDF spokespersons.

The tragedy didn't end with her death – when her body was being transported from the hospital mortuary to the church for burial in a casket draped with the Palestinian flag, the pallbearers and those accompanying the coffin were attacked by the military who insisted that the flag be removed.

Even in death, her voice rang fear into the hearts of the Israeli authorities.

As we mourn the death of a truth-teller, we pray for courage of everyone who dares to speak truth to power.

Let us pray, as we reflect on all that authorities are afraid to expose, symbolized by the barbed wire, and asking God for protection of those on the frontline of exposing the horrors of war, oppression and corruption, symbolized by the light of the candle.

Creator God, father and mother of us all,

We weep with you as we observe the suffering of people in all places of conflict: Ukraine, Palestine, Yemen, Ethiopia, South Sudan.

We remember your suffering on a cross at the hands of the powers, and know that you are present in the midst of the suffering, But you overcame death to bring us the hope of new life through your resurrection.

We give thanks for those who use their voice, skills and talents to speak up against injustice, even when it can cost them their lives.

We give thanks for the courage and witness of Shireen Abu Akleh, Pavel Sheremet, James Foley and the many journalists who paid the ultimate price and who inspired, and continue to inspire, others to expose injustice and become the voice of the voiceless.

Lord, give us the courage to speak up when we see injustice, to use our voice to break the cycle of violence in all its forms.

Remembering that you have gone before us, to show us the cost of discipleship and realizing your kingdom on earth as in heaven.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour.

We pray the prayer for Africa: God Bless Africa and all the world guard our children, guide our leaders and give us peace. Amen.