

## Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice

According to Al Jazeera, since the current war in Gaza, Israeli Forces have killed at least 10 000 children. On the Al Jazeera website the categories of the children have been identified under specific headings. I will share some of them today.

0 years old - did not live to their first birthday  
1 year old - killed before their first birthday  
2 years old - not able to use their first words  
3 years old - they died as toddlers  
4 years old - deprived of the joys of preschool  
5 years old- did not make it to primary school  
6 years old - silent playgrounds  
7 years old - broken young friendships  
8 years old - countless empty classrooms  
9 years old - didn't reach double digits  
10 years old - lives ended before adolescence

The list goes on and on. Additionally, every single university in Gaza has been destroyed. Children are now also being subjected to starvation, injuries, and completely inadequate medical care. Children are also having to deal with the deaths of their family members and communities.

Let us pray:

The barbed wire represents every child in the world who is exposed to war and who has to bear the brunt of its violence and the shame of the adults who cannot prioritise a working peace and co-operation over violence and competition.

We pray for a world where if a child is affected by war and violence, common sense prevails, and alternatives are sought, but this is not the world we live in. But it is the world children die in.

Dear God help us to be compassionate to every child we see, right here in our own war-torn communities, in countries like the Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan on our own continent and further afield in Haiti who are experiencing violence and pain. Give us the courage to stand up for what should be a different way to live and love.

We live in a world where we can watch the names of thousands of children killed scroll past on a television screen and it does not stop the clocks or immediately create the circumstances for a ceasefire to be called. Forgive us for how we have forsaken the least of these.

We pray for those who continue to protest and shine a light on what is happening in conflicts all over the world.

We give thanks for organisations like the Gift of the Givers, the United Nations Relief workers Agency for Palestinian Refugees. UNICEF and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent who are working tirelessly to bring hope, relief, healing, and aid.

God of miracles of justice and of peace remind us how to be family, to make kin, and to show love especially when it is difficult. We pray for a world where a list of children dying in conflicts will never make the news for the headline should actually read - no children killed in conflict today. Help us make this world a reality.