

# Humanitarian catastrophe: Church bells ring for peace

The Bishop's Conference of the Church of Norway calls the Cathedrals to use the bells and inviting the other churches to do the same on Thursday, August 7 at 3:00 p.m. CET, for the civilian population suffering because of the situation in Gaza.

"Day by day, we hear news reports about a worsening situation that has already become a humanitarian catastrophe. With over 60,000 dead in Gaza, we all feel a calling and a need to do something," says Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway, Olav Fykse Tveit.

"All people are created in God's image and have the same inviolable worth. Therefore, we cannot remain silent when people are deprived of their humanity," states the introduction to the statement issued by the full bishops' conference in May about the situation in Gaza. Since then, the situation has deteriorated further, and we see the need once again to break the silence. That is why we urge churches throughout the country to join the Cathedrals and ring the church bells on Thursday, August 7 at 3:00 p.m.," continues Fykse Tveit.

It is an extraordinary use of the church bells in the Church of Norway, used only in very rare occasions, when the Bishops have decided to call and invite local churches to use them in this particular situation in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Harald Hegstad, Moderator of the Church of Norway National Council, agrees and supports the bishops' appeal.

"What we are witnessing in Gaza now are images the world has not seen the likes of in a long time. This demands something from us both as fellow human beings and as a church. Therefore, I hope as many as possible will take part in this act of solidarity," he says. "In addition, we encourage all churches that can, to invite people to light candles and offer prayers of intercession, so that we give people an opportunity to do something concrete and symbolic by lighting a candle in a dark situation."

The National Church Council leader emphasizes that the appeal is not binding and that participation may vary locally, depending on the situation in each place and because not all church buildings have enough staff available during the holiday period to respond at such short notice.

You can find the full statement on Gaza from the Bishops' Conference issued in May [here](#).