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### **EMO statement on Palestinians' right to demonstrate peacefully**

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) supports the Palestinians' right to demonstrate peacefully in their decades-long conflict with Israel, and we call for an end to violence in the region.

We believe that the decision by the current administration to unilaterally move the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was an unwise and prejudicial action that makes a peace settlement even more difficult to achieve, and that this decision has led to more violence. We are indeed seeing the tragic results of the move, which dashed the decades-long hope of the Palestinians for a shared capital of two states in Jerusalem.

Since March 30, when Palestinians began several weeks of planned nonviolent demonstrations in the Gaza Strip near the fence with Israel, dozens of people have been killed and thousands injured. Organizers ended the demonstrations on May 15, the date which commemorates the 1948 displacement and dispossession of 750,000 Palestinians. We cannot be silent in the face of such violence. Many of those killed are civilians, including women and children, medical personnel and the disabled.

This week marks the beginning of the fast of Ramadan, the holiest month of the year for Muslims. Violence at any time is abhorrent, but particularly during this sacred time for Muslims, we call for an end to the use of violence against the protesters, especially the use of weapons and force by the Israeli military. We ask that Israeli soldiers refuse orders to shoot. We also ask for an investigation into the deaths and injuries suffered by the use of force.

According to statements of US Churches and Christian Agencies on Gaza, "More than 1.3 million of Gaza's nearly 2 million people are refugees. The Israeli blockade of Gaza has resulted in uninhabitable conditions for the people there, including poverty and lack of sufficient access to clean water, food and medicine. The Gaza demonstrations are an assertion of Palestinian rights: the rights of refugees, the right to

demonstrate peacefully against injustice, and the right to live in and with dignity, not under closed military confinement or blockade. In this time, we pray fervently, speak clearly, and act diligently in support of peace, justice and equality.”

*Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, eartg ministry and public policy advocacy.*