

## An Open Letter from Mindfulness Practitioners of Plum Village UK, who follow the teachings of Vietnamese Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh

Dear Prime Minister,

### Your Middle East Mission

We write with care and compassion for you and your Ministers. We are a growing community of engaged Buddhist and Mindfulness Practitioners committed to working towards developing a culture of non-violence and peaceful co-existence.

We ask you, in your global leadership role, to call for an immediate ceasefire to end the bloodshed in the Middle East, and to work to open unrestricted humanitarian aid to those suffering in Gaza.

We have seen throughout history that warfare does not bring peace. Violence always breeds more violence and killing brings retaliation in kind. This war, and every other war, affects us all. Human beings are interconnected. At such times what is needed is strong political leadership, intent on using every non-violent means possible to prevent loss of human life and to broker just and peaceful outcomes.

Our teacher, Ven. Thích Nhất Hạnh, a Vietnamese scholar, author, monk and lifelong peace activist, was nominated by Dr Martin Luther King for the Nobel Prize for Peace. He was tireless in his work in seeking non-violent dialogue to bring about reconciliation, justice and peace between individuals, society and nations. His teachings remind us that we can never achieve peace by eliminating the other side.

**“There is no way to peace, peace is the way.”** Thích Nhất Hạnh

We believe our teacher’s universal message of true peace can offer hope. History shows us that war can be transformed into peace. We have seen in South Africa how non-violent solutions were harmoniously achieved through multi-party engagement and how the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, instead of retribution, promoted dialogue as the way for opposing parties to move forward.

At this time, when Israel and Palestine cannot see beyond the pain of the suffering of their people, we need strong leadership, intent on bringing about non-violent, engaged, and inclusive dialogue to achieve equitable, peaceful and sustainable long-term solutions. We see already how this conflict is escalating globally with an increase of violence and hate crimes against Muslim and Jewish people around the world.

Commitment to peace and non-violence does not break any political alliances and could be the only possible way to end this ongoing cycle of bloodshed and loss of life.

Now, there is an opportunity to employ a different approach towards building a safer world for us all and for generations to come.

It is our sincere hope, Prime Minister, that you will succeed in initiating dialogue in the Middle East that includes all those engaged in conflict, to bring about true peace.

We invite you to share this letter with other leaders in Parliament.

Yours faithfully,

**Lay Teachers**

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