



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Priests Against Genocide USA Urge Catholic Leaders to Speak Out on “Board of Peace” Amid Ongoing Suffering in Gaza

February 17, 2026 - Priests Against Genocide USA—part of a global network of 2,200 priests from 58 countries, along with 22 bishops, archbishops, and two cardinals—issued an open letter to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) calling on Catholic leaders in the United States to speak with moral clarity regarding President Trump’s convening of the “Board of Peace” on February 19, 2026 in Washington, DC. The group warns that the initiative risks sidelining Palestinian voices and legitimizing ongoing injustice amid the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The appeal echoes concerns raised by Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who described the Board of Peace as *“an initiative that appears to be primarily aimed at protecting the interests of the major powers, without real recognition of the Palestinian people and their rights.”* He further emphasized that *“Christ is not absent from Gaza. He is there, crucified in the wounded, buried under the rubble, and yet present in every act of mercy.”*

Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM—who recently returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land—spoke forcefully about the urgency of the moment. *“As a Franciscan friar, I’m passionate about peacebuilding. But appearances can be deceiving. Palestinian people in Gaza continue to be starved, killed, deeply traumatized, denied access to water and basic medical care. You can’t build peace and security on injustice and ethnic cleansing, excluding Palestinian people, shielding with impunity war criminals, and providing them with more weapons, denigrating the United Nations, and bringing back raw colonial exploitation for the highest bidder.”*

In their statement, Priests Against Genocide USA call on U.S. Catholic bishops to help *“inform the conscience of our nation”* about the implications of the Board of Peace and to guide the faithful toward a Gospel-rooted understanding of authentic peace—one grounded in truth, justice, and the protection of human dignity.

The group urges Church leaders to summon Catholics to a Lenten conversion of heart through prayer, fasting, and action in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Their appeal highlights the Church’s longstanding teaching that peace cannot be built while systemic injustice persists or while the rights of the oppressed are subordinated to political or economic interests.

Priests Against Genocide USA concluded their message with a call for renewed commitment to international humanitarian law, multilateral cooperation, and the institutions—especially the United Nations—that safeguard peaceful coexistence among nations.

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