



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND - FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL - FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

H.E. Mr Ariel Sharon
Prime Minister
State of Israel

12 March 2002

Your Excellency,

I refer to my recent letter to you of 8 March 2002, and once again I am moved to write this letter in response to the pleas of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem. I have received information concerning the occupation by the Israeli armed forces of the Dar al-Kalima School and Wellness Center in southern Bethlehem on 9 March and again on 11 March 2002.

I write to protest in the strongest possible terms to these actions on the part of the Israel Defense Forces. This school is an institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem and currently has an enrolment of 240 students. The Wellness Center was due to open on 24 May 2002, with one of its functions being to bring healing to the many traumatized children and adults of the Bethlehem area. I am categorically advised by the leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem that no shooting has taken place from this or any of the church's premises in Bethlehem at any time.

Places such as this institution are oases of hope in a wilderness of violence, and the military occupation of such an institution is in grave violation of that hope and of the principles of international humanitarian law.

I therefore call for the Israeli armed forces to desist from all such actions of this type and to make good all damage done to the premises of the Dar al-Kalima School and Wellness Center.

Yours respectfully,

Ishmael Noko
General Secretary