

## **Declaration of Religious Leaders from the Holy Land In Response to COVID-19**

The Kavod/Karama/Dignity Project:  
A Mosaica Community Action Supported by WHO/Europe  
An Initiative of the Solidarity Fund

We as religious leaders from different religious communities who serve in the Holy Land, hereby declare that the sanctity of life is the supreme value and saving every person created in the image of G-d is the highest religious obligation, and indeed, the Divine obligation to save lives is even more stringent than any human law. As a result, since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, we have undertaken to do all that is in our power to save lives and preserve human dignity.

We know that everything is the will of G-d, however, our limited understanding does not give us the insight as to why this fatal pandemic came upon us. At the same time, we know that the Creator gave to humankind intelligence and scientific resources to prevent, treat and respond to the pandemic. With this we must express our thanks and deep appreciation to the medical teams for their dedicated and professional care – with risking themselves – in caring for the many sick people who were hurt by the pandemic. We have personally experienced the immense impact of religious leaders working side by side with medical experts in responding to the pandemic. We also know that the pandemic does not discriminate between blood and blood, faith and faith or nation and nation. And finally, we know that the pandemic does not only take lives directly through illness but has led to an increase in domestic and inter-group violence that has resulted in the loss of human life and dignity.

1. We therefore call on the World Health Organization, Health Ministries and medical health experts and religious leaders and their communities to work together in response to the current and future pandemics in order to save lives.
2. We call upon all religious leaders, to work both within and between their communities, in response to the current and any future pandemic.
3. We call upon all of humanity to deeply reflect on ways to improve our behavior in the world, on how to enhance acts of kindness and dignity between one another, on ways to abstain from destructive and violent disputes and to overcome hatred towards one another, and to work to prevent wars and genocide.
4. We call upon all to pray for the recovery of all those sick, and for the end of the pandemic. Alongside prayers, we call upon all to get vaccinated as soon as possible when their turn comes, not to adhere to misinformation of a loud minority who oppose vaccinations in general, and anti-COVID vaccinations in particular.

We pray to G-d Almighty that we truly internalize these important lessons learned from the current COVID – 19 pandemic so that we can be even more prepared and worthy to face together whatever health and medical challenges await us now and in the future.