

Reflections on Israel-Hamas War by *Peacemaker in Action* Yeny Gloribel Nolasco Quijada

Peacemaker in Action Yeny Gloribel Nolasco Quijada, from El Salvador, shares reflections in response to the war between Israel and Hamas that started on October 7, 2023.

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“For a long time, I have felt the need to express what I feel towards what is happening between Israel and Palestine, and what is happening in many parts of the world. However, I have been left speechless for a long time.

I have been overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness and sadness that has blocked my spirit and my ability to express what I feel. Since the day I met all of you, *Peacemakers*, I have felt a deep admiration for each of you, for the courage to face the situations, the strength with which you fight for your people, your beliefs, your culture, your love for your people. Lately, I have focused on pursuing my university career, feeling an apparent peace that I believed I did not have the right to feel. But what is happening around me is bigger than me. As I wrote in a poem years ago, peace is the pure water that seems impossible to drink. Our world is contaminated with hatred, resentments, and intolerance. I believe my peace ceases to exist when that of others is broken.

Chencho [member of the *Peacemakers in Action Network*] always said that the most important value is respect, and how true that is. If we were to respect the smallest of this creation of this universe, everything would be in perfect order. But human behavior, without the guidance of the spirit, is like matter without reason or feelings. I regret the sadness that many of you are going through, for the losses or the uncertainty about the well-being of your family. It is not easy to know that the ones we love may not be seen again. It is so sad to notice that the most innocent victims of any conflict, whatever its nature, are children.

I imagine a child in their early stages of life. I think that when children are born, they do not know if they are Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, or Christian. The only thing they want and know is the warmth of their mother's and father's love. And as they grow, they only think about playing, creating, bringing joy, imagining, laughing, giving love, giving purity, and giving life. And then I reflect that children are the purest, holiest, and most beautiful beings in the world. And I wonder, do religions not lose their meaning if we do not protect the children? All religions would become one if we protected the holiest and purest of this world.



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Love lately seems like something unknown or withered, even something senseless. I notice it in many young people. Now it seems that love is not something worth fighting for. In the world, there are powers, there are powers of various levels. But I believe that the most perfect power would be the one that can build and strengthen peace and love. However, that level of power has not been attained by mankind, and history itself has taught us how easy it is to make war and how difficult it is to live in peace. I believe that the country and religion no longer matter when a child suffers. With the crying of

a suffering child, life loses its meaning. Because when humanity harms the small and innocent, it sinks to the lowest and most depraved of this world. I wonder, if it is impossible to live without wars, why not save the children first? What fault do they have that those who hold power in the world have forgotten the joy of living? It is sad how evil grows in the hearts of people, especially those who have forgotten or never knew love.

And to think that if there were no bullets or missiles, these same people would take stones and sticks. Because for those who do not know love, everything seems insignificant.

In conclusion, I can only express that the true struggle and war [is] within ourselves. It is the struggle against hatred, intolerance, and resentment. We all can be builders of peace, every person. And if it were so, if we all came together, we could even reach the highest levels of power. That would allow us to make decisions to safeguard life. How beautiful it would be if the philosophy of life were the engine that moves the world. I remember the words of Jesus Christ, 'Let the little children come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' If the main rule were to instill and nurture love and respect in our children, in all the children of the world, and if that rule were instilled at home, in schools, on the street, in the park, everywhere, in every corner, our world would be almost perfect. It is a dream, from a woman who, since childhood, knew sadness, hatred, and fear.

That is my reflection for you, this is what I managed to express with a lump in my throat."