

Call for calm, respect

JEWISH Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP) strongly condemns the recent killings in Jerusalem. There can be no justification for the murder of innocent civilians.

On November 18, two Palestinian men entered a synagogue in Jerusalem and murdered four men in prayer. A policeman later died from his wounds. At least seven more civilians were seriously injured.

Senseless killings encourage extremism and hatred, and move Israelis and Palestinians further away from a just end to the occupation of Palestinian territories. For JVJP, the killing of civilians is morally deplorable and politically unjustifiable.

No alleged provocation could ever serve to excuse these killings.

In the hopes of de-escalating the tension in and around Jerusalem, leaders should take cognisance of the fact that the atrocity took place amid an atmosphere of increased provocation and violence in Jerusalem over the past weeks.

Political and religious tensions are high, due in part to the recent issues around closures and Jewish entry into the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex, as well as the psychological impact of the destruction of religious sites during Israel's incursion into Gaza this year – more than 70 mosques were destroyed.

As an organisation calling for an end to the continued illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, JVJP takes the view that extremism in all its forms must be marginalised and discredited.

For this reason, moral leadership, condemning violence against civilians, and calling for calm and respect at such a critical moment, is key to being able to move forward and to avoiding a descent towards further senseless, unacceptable and politically harmful violence.

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