

Translation from German

Pax Christi Austria

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Statement by the board of Pax Christi Austria on the resignation of Bishop Scheuer as President

Linz, 5th July 2017 -- Pax Christi Austria regrets the resignation of Bishop Manfred Scheuer as president of the peace movement, Pax Christi Austria, and thanks him for his 12-year presidency.

In the context of the resignation of Bishop Scheuer, Pax Christi was publicly accused of anti-Semitism and it has even been stated as the ostensible reason for the resignation.

Not only do we resolutely reject this, but Bishop Scheuer has also expressly stated: "I share with Pax Christi the decisive condemnation of anti-Semitism, which has been expressed several times. Pax Christi Upper Austria was founded in Mauthausen. The dedication for persecuted people by the Nazis and for the commemoration of the victims of these crimes are part of the core commitment of Pax Christi."

Pax Christi Austria has been working for decades for peace, disarmament and nonviolent conflict resolution. In this context, we are also working – together with Pax Christi International - for an understanding between Israelis and Palestinians on the basis of international law and human rights. In accordance with the United Nations, the European Union and the Holy See, we hold that the two-states solution continues to be the best model to ensure self-determination and safety for both, Israelis and Palestinians. This includes the recognition of the right of existence of the State of Israel within internationally recognized borders and its protection, as well as the right of Palestinians to their own, viable state within the borders defined by the United Nations. More than 130 states - including the Vatican - have recognized Palestine as a state.

Both the United Nations and the European Union have identified the current Israeli settlement policy as a major obstacle to the two-state solution. At the same time, there is a tendency to denounce criticism of this settlement policy as well as other human rights violations in Israel as "anti-Semitic". This abusive use of the term "anti-Semitism" as an instrument of political debate does not only mean a relativization of the terrible historical crimes of the real anti-Semitism, but also obscures the actual emergence of new forms of anti-Semitism, which we strongly reject and fight. Especially now, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Pax Christi stands up for the end of this occupation and for a two-state solution; this has nothing to do with "anti-Semitism" but it is an expression of our fundamental commitment to peace, nonviolence, international law and human rights.

For the Board of Pax Christi Austria:

Dr. Meinrad Schneckenleithner, Adalbert Krims (Vicepresident)