

28 March 2016

National Council of Churches in Pakistan,
Church of Pakistan
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

Respected church and ecumenical leaders in Pakistan,

We are deeply shocked and saddened to receive the news of a suicide bomber killing more than 70 people and injuring more than 300 others at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Park in Lahore on Easter Sunday. We learnt from some of you that the deadly suicide attack on Easter evening caused untold sufferings for many people as several families from predominantly Christian settlements in Youhanabad and Bahar Colony areas were spending time with their children in the park after Easter services in churches.

It is unfortunate that sectarian violence and blatant terrorism continuously takes place in Pakistani society due to widespread religious hatred. Such cowardly actions, in fact, destroy the very core of the social fabric and communal harmony in the country. The recent attack on innocent people, affecting mostly children and women, is a heinous crime. The increasing trend of attacks against innocent people raises questions over the security measures by the government to protect the lives of its citizens. It is our sincere appeal to the government of Pakistan not to allow these savage inhuman actions to over-run the lives of people who have every right to live in peace, security and freedom of movement.

The Christian Conference of Asia is concerned with the plight of the minority Christians in Pakistan, who are constantly faced with deadly attacks but the perpetrators continue with impunity. In fact, we are also reminded now of the suicide attacks carried out in 2013 at All Saints Church in Peshawar's Kohati Gate area, killing 80 and wounding hundreds as well as other suicide bombings at two churches in Youhanabad area in March 2015. These incidents are clear indications of the vulnerable situations in which Christians in Pakistan are forced to live. While we express our solidarity with you all at this time of grief and ordeal, we send our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those loved ones killed and injured during the blast. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people and communities affected with this tragedy. Please convey our profound sorrow and condolences to the bereaved families and the injured.

The CCA also hastens to assure the people of Pakistan that Christians are nurtured on the best practices of peace and harmony and the values of fairness, justice and unconditional love. We urge all member churches and councils of CCA to pray for the comfort and solace of numerous victims irrespective of their religion or faith.

Yours along the journey.

Mathews George Chunakara
General Secretary, CCA