Mr. Ajay Banga
President
The World Bank Group
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Moral Objection to the World Bank's Participation in the so-called "Board of Peace"

Dear President,

We write to you as *Priests Against Genocide*, an international network of 2,200 priests from 58 countries, joined by 23 bishops, archbishops, and two cardinals. Our vocation obliges us to defend human dignity, accompany those who suffer, and speak with clarity when structures of power place lives at risk. Today, as **two million Palestinians in Gaza** cry out for protection, we feel compelled to raise our voices. We have already appealed to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and to the Italian government regarding its involvement in the so-called *"Board of Peace"*, whose meeting took place in Washington, D.C. on 19 February 2026. We now address you directly because silence in the face of injustice would betray our pastoral mission.

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has already expressed profound concern, describing the *"Board of Peace"* as *"an initiative that appears to be primarily aimed at protecting the interests of the major powers, without real recognition of the Palestinian people and their rights."* He further characterized it as a **colonialist project**, imposed from outside and detached from the lived reality of those most affected. His concerns echo what communities, civil society actors, and humanitarian workers have already observed: the *"Board of Peace"* replicates patterns of domination rather than fostering justice, reconciliation, or protection.

This raises profound questions about the compatibility of the *"Board of Peace"* with the mission of the Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank was founded to promote reconstruction and development, reduce poverty, support economic stability, advance inclusive growth, and ensure that development benefits all peoples. These principles presuppose transparency, accountability, and the meaningful participation of affected communities. Yet the *"Board of Peace"* stands in contradiction to these commitments.

Despite its name, it is associated with actions and policy orientations that - directly or indirectly – will enable or legitimize violence against Palestinians. Its governance lacks transparency, its decision-making excludes those most impacted, and its planned interventions fail to uphold justice, accountability, or the protection of life.

For an institution of the World Bank's global stature, lending credibility to such a body risks normalizing practices that undermine the foundations of peace, the norms of human rights, the ethical commitments of development, and the very mission entrusted to the Bretton Woods system. Even well-intentioned participation inadvertently reinforces a structure that excludes Palestinians and perpetuates a colonial logic.

As clergy, we must speak when silence would amount to complicity. As global citizens, we must call for accountability when institutions diverge from their stated mission. As partners in the pursuit of a more just world, we appeal for moral clarity.

We therefore respectfully urge the World Bank to:

- **Suspend participation** in the so-called *"Board of Peace"*.
- **Publicly reaffirm** its commitment to protecting populations at risk, especially where development and conflict intersect.
- **Engage directly** with civil society, faith leaders, and affected communities to ensure that partnerships reflect the highest ethical standards and uphold the sanctity of human life.

The World Bank has long emphasized social inclusion, transparency, and the meaningful participation of affected populations. This moment calls for precisely that kind of leadership -courageous, principled, and willing to withdraw from structures that undermine the values we collectively uphold. As Pope Leo XIV has reminded the international community, humanitarian law, multilateral cooperation, and the United Nations must remain essential pillars of peaceful global coexistence.

With respect and unwavering commitment to equality, justice, and peace.

Priests Against Genocide