

April 1, 2022

*Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness; cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord God. (Ezekiel 45:9)*

Dear CMEP friends,

We at Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) are deeply grieved by the news coming out of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). Reports of stabbings, shootings, and other aggression have heightened fears and resulted in one of the most violent periods of militant attacks in recent history. I and CMEP have reached out to our Jewish friends and [condemned the violence](#) that has - as of March 29 - [left 11 dead](#) and many more injured. We oppose all violence and pray for the victims, their families, and all who are in recovery. And we are committed to raising awareness, speaking out against such atrocities, and advocating for the safety and security of all people living in Israel and the oPt.

The tragedy experienced by one people group does not negate the loss and tragedy experienced by another. As incidents of violence have escalated against Israelis, Palestinians living in the village of Al-Walaja outside of Bethlehem have been traumatized by the threat of displacement. On March 30, the Israeli Supreme Court heard an appeal against demolition orders that would have affected 38 homes and displaced approximately 300 people. CMEP [wrote](#) about these realities, calling on the American government to work with the Israeli government to permanently halt the demolitions in Al-Walaja. The Israeli Supreme Court decided to postpone the hearing until November 1, 2022. The case of the families from Al-Walaja is one of many where Palestinians are living under the threat of displacement and home demolitions.

Demolitions and displacement are only one of the concerns Palestinians experience living under a military occupation that has existed since 1967. We must not ignore the oppressive consequences of the occupation, including but not limited to violence experienced at the hands of military, police, and militant settlers against Palestinians. None of the sufferings of Palestinians provides any excuse for the recent attacks against Israelis. Both are tragedies that must be addressed.

We call and pray for a deescalation of violence as holy days for Jews, Christians, and Muslims approach. This time of Lent is sacred for Christians as we look toward the good news celebrated at Easter. As Muslims prepare for Ramadan and Jews look toward Passover observances, peace must prevail. Sacred days are a time for reflection and prayer, in addition to a renewal of commitment to principles of equality, peace, and human rights. As the verse in Ezekial reminds us, we must “put away violence and oppression” and “execute justice and righteousness.”

This is our commitment at CMEP. May the God of the universe empower us in our efforts to unceasingly pursue peace, boldly speak out against injustice, and advocate for a Middle East where all people will live in peace and prosperity.

May God go before us in our efforts as we work together toward these ends. We remain grateful for your solidarity, partnership, and support.

In the name of Christ Jesus,

Mae

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mae Elise Cannon".

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon  
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