



WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

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CMEP Calls on Biden Administration to Advance Efforts Toward Peace

As an organization of Christian denominations and organizations committed to peace, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) calls on President Biden and his administration to do all that he can to advance efforts toward peace instead of war and further militarization that increases violence and causes immeasurable death and destruction. The United States government must do all that is possible to protect and preserve human life, especially innocent civilians, to honor and protect the humanity of all people who are created in the image of God instead of enabling more actions that will inevitably lead to more suffering, inhumanity, and pain.

We call on President Biden to put an end to empty rhetoric and be consistent in holding Israel accountable for its continual violations of human rights in Gaza. After announcing the U.S. will not supply weapons to be used in a Rafah ground invasion because of the potentially devastating effects and loss of civilian life, reporting indicates the Biden administration will proceed with a \$1 billion package of weapons aid for Israel, alerting Congressional leadership of the planned sale so that it can go through the necessary process to ultimately be dispersed.

President Biden had said he would not supply U.S. weapons – the same weapons he acknowledges have killed thousands of Gazans so far – for Israel to “go into Rafah.” The fact is that Israel has already gone into Rafah and has attacked the people there for weeks, and evacuations of residents continue, with more than [600,000 displaced](#) for the second or third time in seven months. We acknowledge the limited actions President Biden has taken to push back against Israeli Prime

Minister Netanyahu's destructive intentions and orders, given that Israel has apparently and repeatedly refused to heed any warnings from the Biden administration throughout the past seven-plus months. Nonetheless, President Biden has continued to shift, bend, and blur his unclear "red lines" to accommodate Netanyahu's publicly stated desire to invade Rafah and greatly expand the already appalling death toll in Gaza, allowing Israel's aggressive war to push on. As of May 15, 2024, the [death toll](#) in Gaza is reportedly 35,233 fatalities and 79,141 injuries. In this context, it is inescapable to ignore the fact that any decision to provide further weapons would be unconscionable and against Christian values.

President Biden must take immediate, serious, and transparent measures to deter further operations in Rafah and to bring an end to the devastating effects of the ongoing war for people in Gaza, which has already had broader repercussions for the people of the Middle East. Beyond the Middle East, we have seen antisemitism and anti-Muslim attitudes and actions rise drastically every day. Globally, the United States' unwillingness to hold Israel accountable, consistently delegitimizing international bodies like the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and International Criminal Court (ICC), and being inconsistent in the application of international law and universal human rights has damaged virtually any credibility it may have still held. On May 10, the State Department released its [report](#) in response to the National Security Memorandum 20. In the report, the Biden administration acknowledged it was "[reasonable to assess](#)" that Israel violated international law with the use of U.S. weapons but that the specific incidents could not be verified. Thus, the U.S. has continued to send weapons to Israel despite the Biden administration's assessment and extensive documentation of Israel's gross violations by international humanitarian and human rights organizations.

CMEP calls on the Biden administration to be consistent, insistent, and transparent in enforcing U.S. law and to cease shipments of weapons of all kinds to Israel. Now is the time for President Biden to advance a holistic and consistent approach that will help bring about an end to the destruction of Gaza and an end to the death of the Palestinian people there for the sake of Palestinians, Israelis, and Americans. Justice and peace must be pursued at all costs. The U.S. cannot speak of truly pursuing peace if it continues unjust policies marked by empty rhetoric and mixed signals.

Millions of Christians in the United States and around the world support calls for a comprehensive ceasefire and an end to the daily bombardment of Gaza that has caused so much death, harm, and suffering. We deeply lament the pain and suffering caused by all loss of life and call on President Biden to do everything possible to end the United States' participation in perpetuating the ongoing violence and death.

Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of more than 30 national church communions and organizations, including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to encourage US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. CMEP works to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.

Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

May 10, 2024: [CMEP Welcomes President Biden’s Assurances that U.S. Weapons Will Not Be Used in a Rafah Ground Invasion](#). Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes recent remarks from President Biden indicating he would stop the transfer of offensive U.S.-sourced arms to Israel, should they proceed with an invasion into Rafah’s population centers. This follows the decision by the Biden Administration to pause at least one shipment of U.S. weapons slated to be delivered to Israel over concerns they could be used in an invasion of Rafah. For months, CMEP – along with Christian leaders from across the country and globe – has called for a demilitarization of the conflict and for halting arms sales to Israel. [Human rights groups](#) have already documented how Israel has used U.S.-supplied weapons in violation of humanitarian and human rights law throughout Gaza.

May 9, 2024: [CMEP Calls for Protection of Student Protestors](#). As the deadly violence in Gaza stretches into the seventh month, student protests are sweeping college campuses across the country, calling on college administrations and universities to divest from companies that profit from Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. Many of the groups are also using their encampments to highlight that: many Palestinians in Gaza have been killed or injured including students and academics, most Palestinians in Gaza are displaced and living in tents, all of Gaza’s universities have been destroyed, and Palestinian academics in Israel are being [targeted for harassment](#). Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) admires the students’ commitment to highlighting the realities unfolding in Gaza.

May 2, 2024: [Sign-On Letter from U.S. Catholics on Israel-Palestine](#). In May 2024, when this letter is being released, we continue to plead for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and adherence to international law by all parties. 71% of U.S. Catholics support a Gaza ceasefire, echoing the position of Pope Francis, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Society of Jesus, and other U.S. Catholic organizations and leaders. As of this letter’s publication, over 34,000 Palestinians in Gaza— the majority civilians—have been killed by Israel’s military assault marked by indiscriminate bombing. We mourn each life lost. Tens of thousands more are severely injured without access to adequate medical care; half of Gazans are facing famine; and most have been displaced from their homes, 70% of which have been destroyed. We are also deeply concerned about the recent spike in attacks and killings of Palestinians in the West Bank by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

April 26, 2024: [CMEP Executive Director Highlights Three Palestinian Christian Legal Cases.](#)

We are in regular contact with Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land who face difficult, life-threatening situations at the hands of military authorities and a judicial system that methodically and systematically discriminates against Palestinians according to legal and human rights groups. At this time, we would like to bring three recent cases to your attention: Shadi Khoury, Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, and Layan Nasir.

See all of our [CMEP Statements](#) and [Press Releases](#).

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