



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
Possible.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Media Contact: [media@cmepe.org](mailto:media@cmepe.org)  
202-543-1222

**CMEPE affirms the October 17th statement of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.**

October 19, 2023  
Washington, D.C.

**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEPE) affirms the [October 17th statement of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem](#), “mourning civilian victims of the massacre in Gaza and extending solidarity to the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.” CMEPE issued a statement [expressing sadness and outrage](#) at the bombing of Al Ahli Hospital and agrees this attack is a “profound transgression against the very principles held by humanity.” We stand in solidarity with the churches of the Holy Land and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and call for people to [respond through Prayer, Giving, and Action](#).**

See below for the full text of the letter.



## PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

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### MOURNING CIVILIAN VICTIMS OF THE MASSACRE IN GAZA AND EXTENDING SOLIDARITY TO THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

October 17, 2023—Jerusalem, The Holy Land

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, join together in profound solidarity with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem as we bear witness to the criminal attack that unfolded within the precincts of the Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital in Gaza. This heart-wrenching crime occurred on a day when the Christian community had convened in earnest prayer, beseeching the heavens for peace, reconciliation, and the cessation of the war on Gaza.

Drawing inspiration from the enduring human spirit in the face of overwhelming adversity, we recall the verse from Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." This spirit is embodied in the face of the horrifying shattering of a sanctuary of compassion and healing in Gaza, culminating in the tragic loss of hundreds of innocent lives.

In unyielding unity, we vehemently denounce this crime with our strongest condemnation. The initial reports of the Church hospital in Gaza tragedy have left us steeped in sorrow, for it represents a profound transgression against the very principles held by humanity. Hospitals, designated as sacred havens under international law, have been desecrated by Military Forces.

We unequivocally declare this atrocity as an egregious crime, one demanding the severest censure and international accountability. We implore the global community to embrace its sacred duty to shield civilians and to ensure that such heinous transgressions are never again permitted.

With heavy hearts, we acknowledge the profound loss of life at Al Ahli Anglican Episcopal Hospital. We hereby declare full solidarity with our brothers and sisters who have borne the unfathomable weight of this assault. As one united voice, we implore our friends, partners, and all people of goodwill to stand with us as we grieve the tragic results.

Our prayers and support remain steadfast, and our collective voices rise as an impassioned chorus, calling for justice, peace, and the cessation of the suffering that has descended upon the people of Gaza.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

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*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.*

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#### Previous CMEP statements about the Israel-Hamas War:

**October 17, 2023: [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Expresses Sadness and Outrage at Bombing of Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza.](#)** Today, Christians around the world followed the call of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem for a day of prayer and fasting for peace and reconciliation and an end to the war between Israel and Hamas. Even as we pray, we find ourselves confronting immense pain and a devastating death toll after the bombing of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, an Anglican hospital in Gaza. Al-Ahli Arab

Hospital has provided a critical and courageous ministry of health care provision to serve the people of Gaza for many years.

**October 13, 2023: CMEP Joins United Nations in Call Not to Ignore Gazans “Dying at the World’s Watch.”** CMEP and our member communions call for the world not to ignore the catastrophic crisis happening in Gaza.

**October 13, 2023: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Affirms Statement from Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.**

**October 12, 2023: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joined 25 other Church-based denominations and organizations** in a letter to Congress to call for a ceasefire, restraint by all sides, protection of civilians, and release of hostages.

**October 9, 2023: CMEP Implores Restraint, De-escalation of Conflict, Humanitarian Access, and Addressing Core Issues of Conflict** Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) continues to grieve the devastating loss of life in Israel/Palestine. As the numbers of those killed and injured climb, we ask people of faith to remain committed to praying and working toward an immediate end to the violence. Yet, cessation of conflict will not automatically bring justice. Without attention to the core systemic issues of the war and the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory, there will be no real peace. At a time when the rush by governments will be for more military responses, CMEP prays for the de-escalation of violence to prevail. We urge an escalation of diplomatic efforts by the United States, through the United Nations, and other regional bodies. Too many people are already grieving the loss of loved ones.

**October 7, 2023: CMEP Condemns All Acts of Violence, Calls for Prayer, and Implores Global Leaders to Address Core Issues of the War between Hamas and Israel:** Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply grieved by the news coming out of Israel and Gaza today. CMEP condemns all acts of violence against civilians that have occurred in the past twenty-four hours, as fighting has escalated between Hamas and Israel. As of late Saturday (EDT), reports indicated that hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded, both Israelis and Palestinians. CMEP mourns with the victims of the violence and their families.

## Contact Us

### Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 505

Washington, District of Columbia 20002

(202) 543-1222 [info@cmepeg.org](mailto:info@cmepeg.org)

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