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## Policy Statement on Suicide Bombings in Israel (December 3, 2001)

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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns unequivocally the suicide bombings carried out in Israel over the weekend. We mourn the many innocent lives lost and extend our condolences to family and friends of the victims.

We reject as inexcusable all such attacks against civilian targets, no matter who carries them out. Those who bear responsibility for suicide bombings and other attacks on civilians must be taken into custody and tried for their crimes.

The urgent quest for an end to violence between Israelis and Palestinians also requires that leaders on both sides refrain from acts of force and retaliation, and restrain those under their command. Neither victory nor security can be gained through military force or through guerilla terrorism. Only a path of mutual respect, negotiations, and conformity to international law will lead to a just and lasting peace.

CMEP reiterates what it wrote to Chairman Arafat in June, "These heinous acts of violence are counterproductive to any hope for a just peace. We understand the right of the Palestinian people to resist the Occupation, but implore you to emulate other great leaders who used nonviolent action to bring about change." That letter, addressed also to Prime Minister Sharon, concludes: "No good purpose is served by continuing this vicious cycle that dehumanizes your people as well as the other. We look to you both to take courageous steps forward to negotiations that can promptly establish a sovereign Palestine free from Occupation and an Israel at peace and security with her neighbors."

With due urgency, we urge the government of the United States to work with other nations to dispatch an international monitoring and observer force to the conflicted region as one immediate means of discouraging further violence.