



For Immediate Release: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP): Over One Hundred Members of Congress Add Their Names to a Letter Urging President Trump to Reinstate Much-Needed Funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

Washington, D.C., February 7, 2018: On Wednesday, 102 representatives, led by [Rep. Peter Welch](#) (VT) and Rep. David Price (NC), released a letter to President Trump urging the Administration to reconsider the recent withholding of funds to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) aid to Palestinian refugees.

On January 19th, the Trump Administration made the determination to withhold \$65 million of its \$125 million scheduled payment to UNRWA, the sole UN agency working with Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The U.S. has for many years been a main contributor to UNRWA's humanitarian projects which include vital services such as education, healthcare, and the provision of basic humanitarian care for Palestinian refugees. CMEP strongly believes that removal of this funding undermines U.S. and Israeli security interests and will do significant harm to the Palestinian population; particularly to, children, many of whom already live below the poverty line.

Kyle Cristofalo, Government Relations Director for CMEP, states: "Defunding UNRWA has the effect of politicizing aid and undermines U.S. credibility in the region. CMEP stands behind the 102 representatives who are calling for the Administration to reverse this dangerous decision, and urge others to lend their voice and support to this cause."

CMEP strongly opposes the Trump Administration's recent decision to withhold UNRWA funding in that it increases the hardship of the Palestinian people and further hinders the ability to reach a comprehensive peace solution. CMEP stands in support of the Welch-Price letter, and supports the United States' commitment to security in Israel as well as the safety and dignity of both Israelis and Palestinians. We strongly urge President Trump to heed the advice of the Welch-Price letter and fully reinstate U.S. aid to UNRWA.

Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of 27 national church denominations 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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Formed in 1984, [Churches for Middle East Peace](#) is a [coalition of 27 national church denominations and organizations](#), including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant traditions. It works to encourage U.S. government policies that actively promote a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring security, human rights and religious freedom for all people of the region. [Click here to unsubscribe](#).

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