



For Immediate Release:

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP): Palestinian Residency in Jerusalem Should Not be Conditional upon Acceptance of the Occupation

Washington, D.C. - March 14, 2018

The Knesset's vote on Wednesday, March 7, to strip Palestinians in East Jerusalem of their permanent residency status for "breaching loyalty to the State of Israel" imposes undue restrictions on Palestinian political freedoms and threatens to accelerate the displacement of the Palestinian community from Jerusalem. **Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) opposes any legislation which would limit the ability of Palestinians to engage in nonviolent resistance and condemns any actions that would undermine a Jerusalem shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.**

East Jerusalem is the home to 420,000 Palestinians who--despite Israel's annexation of the city in 1980--lack the same basic rights granted to Israeli citizens. This law exacerbates the already tenuous situation of Palestinian Jerusalemites. Palestinians living under occupation should not be subject to tests of political loyalty that limit their right to self-determination. **CMEP expresses concern that such legislation could prevent Palestinians from engaging in nonviolent means of resistance if such means have been deemed a "breach of loyalty" by the state of Israel.** Allowing the Minister of the Interior to deport Palestinians whose residency status has been revoked will accelerate the ethnic homogenization of one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, destroying its rich heritage. The ability of Palestinians to continue to live in Jerusalem, as they have done for centuries, should not be conditioned upon their political views.

CMEP's Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon says: "For Palestinian Jerusalemites, the threat of losing residency status in the city they currently live in, as well as the loss of the community of their ancestors and historic cultural connection is appalling. Just as the Jewish people's ties to Jerusalem and the land of Israel must be acknowledged; so too must Palestinian ties to the Old City of Jerusalem, or what Arabs call "Al Quds," be acknowledged. The symbolic meaning and sacredness of the city to all people - and especially Jews, Christians, and Muslims - must be protected. Palestinians who live there must not be displaced. The current legislation could permanently diminish, if not entirely remove, a people group who have legitimate historical and contemporary ties to the sacred city."

CMEP recognizes the legitimate security concerns of the state of Israel and urges its leaders to respect the right of Palestinians to engage in nonviolent acts of resistance as they pursue policies to promote

public safety. Deporting Palestinians from Jerusalem will only escalate tensions between Israelis and Palestinians putting the lives of all at risk.

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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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