



For Immediate Release:

CMEP Calls for Preservation of Status Quo and De-escalation of Violence in Jerusalem and West Bank

Washington, D.C. - July 21, 2017 - At least three Palestinians have been killed and more than 300 injured in violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Three Israelis were stabbed to death with at least two more seriously injured in the West Bank settlement of Halamish. Today's violence follows a week of escalations that started Friday, July 14 after two Israeli police officers were shot and killed by three Palestinian citizens of Israel outside the entrance to what is known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif and to Jews as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply grieved by the deaths of these Palestinians and Israelis. We condemn all acts of violence and call for a return to the status quo.

As we witness the escalating tensions and violence around the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, CMEP urges that the historical status quo allowing public access to the Haram al-Sharif be respected. CMEP raises the concerns expressed by the patriarchs and local heads of churches in Jerusalem. In a recent [statement](#) they wrote, "Any threat to [the historical status quo's] continuity and integrity could easily lead to serious and unpredictable consequences which would be most unwelcome in the present tense religious climate."

CMEP recognizes the religious importance of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. We promote a shared Jerusalem by Palestinians and Israelis, as well as full access to the Holy Sites of the three religious communities — Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), released the following statement: "Churches for Middle East Peace calls for an end to violence and security for all peoples. We believe unilateral actions in Jerusalem and incitement to violence only escalate tensions and undermine trust while making resuming the status quo more difficult. We call on all Christians and religious actors to pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

CMEP is a coalition of 27 national church denominations and organizations in the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to encourage U.S. policies that actively promote a just, lasting, and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, ensuring security, human rights, and religious freedom for all the 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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