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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Joins U.S. Christian Faith Leaders to Show Support for Christian Community in Jerusalem After Attack at Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, joined 28 other Christian faith leaders in a statement in support of the Christian community in the Holy Land. The statement comes after an attack at the Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem, on Sunday, March 19th, perpetrated by two Israeli radicals.

In the letter, copied below, the leaders write, **“the International community, including the U.S. government, must do everything in their power to ensure Jerusalem is a city in which freedom of religion and free access to worship for all are strengthened and respected.”**

—
March 29, 2023

As church-based leaders in the United States, we stand in solidarity with our siblings in Christ in Israel/Palestine. We condemn the attack at the Church of Gethsemane in East Jerusalem, on Sunday, March 19th, which occurred during the service. The perpetrators, two Israeli radicals, must be held accountable for their actions. It is not insignificant to note the attack came during one of the holiest times for Christians—the season of Lent—when we seek repentance and prepare to celebrate Christ’s resurrection.

We affirm the statement released by the [Greek Orthodox Patriarchate](#) in Jerusalem, which notes, “attacks on Christian holy sites, properties, heritage, and identity constitute a violation of international law, which explicitly calls for the protection of religious sites in Jerusalem and emphasizes the need to

respect this basic human right to worship freely.” Jerusalem is a sacred city to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Over the past few years there has been a steady rise of attacks against Christian clergy, churches, and church-owned properties. The International community, including the U.S. government, must do everything in their power to ensure Jerusalem is a city in which freedom of religion and free access to worship for all are strengthened and respected.

We offer our prayers and support to the members of the Church of Gethsemane, and the entire Christian community in the Holy Land.

Rev. Eddy Alemán
General Secretary
Reformed Church in America

Joyce Ajlouny
General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
Ecumenical Director and Diocesan Legate
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)

Bishop Thomas Bickerton
President of the Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

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President, Division of Overseas Ministries
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Co-Executive
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

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Executive Director
Churches for Middle East Peace

Carole Collins
Co-Director
Alliance of Baptists

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ

Reverend Emmett Lafayette Dunn
Executive Secretary/CEO
Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention

Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Very Reverend James Gannon, ofm;
Provincial Minister of the Province of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Susan Gunn
Director
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

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Christian Reformed Church in North America

Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
Interim President and General Secretary
National Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr. Betsy Miller
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Moravian Church Northern Province

Bridget Moix
General Secretary
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church (USA)

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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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Vicar-General
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Rev. Elijah R. Zehyoue
Co-Director
Alliance of Baptists

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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