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**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Denounces Israel's Killing of Civilians in Gaza And
Calls for an End to the Violence**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns the recent [Israeli air strikes in Gaza](#). CMEP grieves the loss of Palestinian lives that resulted from the most recent air strikes in densely populated areas, and calls for an immediate end to the violence.

In the early morning hours of Tuesday, May 9th, Israel launched 40 air strikes into Gaza, targeting buildings known to include civilians in densely populated areas. Like previous Israeli air strikes in Gaza, they were devastating to the civilian population, resulting in the deaths of 15 people, most of whom were civilians, including a well known hospital director and at least [4 children](#). An additional 20 people were wounded in the strikes.

Prior to these attacks, CMEP has [expressed](#) deep concerns about the acute humanitarian crises in Gaza. With over two million people crammed into less than 18 square miles, Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Approaching its 16th year, people in Gaza are hemmed in by a military blockade that restricts the flow of people, goods, and materials in and out of the area. Gaza is forced into a continual state of desperation and dependance on outside assistance. Yet, following the most recent air strikes, Israel closed key border crossings, blocking workers, medical patients, humanitarian resources, and fuel for Gaza's power plant from passing. The closure of these crossings will intensify the humanitarian crisis at a time of already heightened tensions.

CMEP calls for an instant end to all violence. To protect life and reduce tensions, airstrikes and rockets from both sides should be halted. Israel should also immediately reopen border crossings to allow essential resources to flow where they are desperately needed.

Beyond the immediate opening of border crossings, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) will continue advocating for an end to the blockade itself. The restrictions on movement are a structural contributor to the ongoing conflict and must be removed before any lasting peace can be achieved.

Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of 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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