



WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joined 26 other Church-based denominations and organizations in a letter to Congress to call for a ceasefire, restraint by all sides, protection of civilians, and release of hostages.

October 12, 2023
Washington, D.C.

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joined 26 other Church-based denominations and organizations in a letter to Congress calling on Congress to take proactive steps to de-escalate the ongoing violence in Israel/Palestine. Specifically, the letter asks Congress to:

1. Publicly call for ceasefire, de-escalation, and restraint by all sides
2. Call on all parties to abide by the laws of war, including the Geneva Conventions and customary international law
3. Prioritize steps to secure the immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians

A full copy of the letter is below.

October 12, 2023
Dear Members of Congress,

We have watched in sadness the devastating loss of life in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories over the last several days. As Church-based denominations and organizations with deep ties to the Holy Land, we mourn with our Israeli and Palestinian siblings as they grieve the loss of loved ones and remain fearful of continued violence. Our commitment remains to a future in which both Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace, with security and human rights protected for all.

We unequivocally condemn Hamas' attacks and call for the immediate release of all hostages in captivity. We also condemn the indiscriminate and violent Israeli response that has already claimed hundreds of civilian lives. The Israeli government's decision to shut off power, water, and fuel will have a disastrous impact on millions of civilians in Gaza, including over a million children, especially those who need immediate medical attention.

At this critical time, it is incumbent upon Congress to act in ways that will help de-escalate the violence and stop further loss of life. Specifically, we call on Congress to:

1. Publicly call for ceasefire, de-escalation, and restraint by all sides
2. Call on all parties to abide by the laws of war, including the Geneva Conventions and customary international law
3. Prioritize steps to secure the immediate release of hostages and ensure international protection for civilians

During this time of heightened tension, we implore Congress to refrain from steps that only exacerbate the violence and increase the risk of expanding war into the broader region. Any Congressional effort that is one-sided and rushes to send new weapons to Israel will only intensify the conflict, leading to further deaths and destruction. Congress must work to prevent the spread of more violence, including against Palestinian civilians in Israel and the West Bank.

Year after year, we have seen that increasing violence begets more violence. Our past responses have failed to end the bloodshed. As these horrific events unfold, we are reminded once again that only by addressing core systemic issues, including decades of institutionalized oppression and collective punishment of Palestinians through brutal military occupation and a 16-year Gaza blockade, will Israelis and Palestinians live in peace.

We are grateful for your service to this country. We pray for wisdom and discernment on your behalf in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists
American Baptist Churches USA
American Friends Service Committee
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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