



WORKING TOGETHER:

Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Washington, D.C. - October 13, 2023

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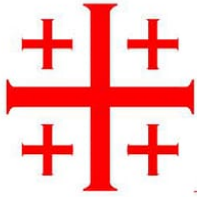
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**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Affirms Statement from Patriarchs
and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem**

October 13, 2023

Washington, D.C.

CMEP affirms the statement on the Escalating Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza from the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem. See below for the full text of the letter.



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

STATEMENT ON THE ESCALATING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA Jerusalem, October 13, 2023

“God created mankind in his own image” (Gen 1,27)

Today, an emergency committee of the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem met for prayer and consultation over the grave humanitarian crisis that has befallen all of us.

Our beloved Holy Land has changed dramatically over the past week. We are witnessing a new cycle of violence with an unjustifiable attack against all civilians. Tensions continue to rise and more innocent and vulnerable people are paying the ultimate price as the dramatic level of death and destruction in Gaza clearly show.

The order to evacuate the north of Gaza and to ask 1.1 million people—including all the members of our Christian communities there—to relocate to the south within 24 hours will only deepen an already disastrous humanitarian catastrophe. Gaza’s entire population is being deprived of electricity, water, fuel supplies, food, and medicine. According to UN sources, 423,000 people have already been displaced because of the destruction of their homes. Many civilians in Gaza have said to us that there are no realistic ways in which they can evacuate to safety in any direction.

We call upon the State of Israel, with the support of the International Community, to allow humanitarian supplies to enter Gaza so that the thousands of innocent civilians may receive medical treatment and basic supplies. Moreover, we call upon all parties to de-escalate this war in order to save innocent lives while still serving the cause of justice.

Finally, in support of all those who have suffered in this war and of the families reeling from the violence, we call upon the people of our congregations and all those of goodwill around the world to observe a Day of Prayer and Fasting on Tuesday, October 17th.

There is yet time to stop the hatred.

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

CMEP's Previous Statements on the Hamas and Israel War Can be Found Here

October 12, 2023: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joined 25 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 9, 2023: CMEP Implores Restraint, De-escalation of Conflict, Humanitarian Access, and Addressing Core Issues of Conflict Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) continues to grieve the devastating loss of life in Israel/Palestine. As the numbers of those killed and injured climb, we ask people of faith to remain committed to praying and working toward an immediate end to the violence. Yet, cessation of conflict will not automatically bring justice. Without attention to the core systemic issues of the war and the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territory, there will be no real peace. At a time when the rush by governments will be for more military responses, CMEP prays for the de-escalation of violence to prevail. We urge an escalation of diplomatic efforts by the United States, through the United Nations, and other regional bodies. Too many people are already grieving the loss of loved ones.

October 7, 2023: CMEP Condemns All Acts of Violence, Calls for Prayer, and Implores Global Leaders to Address Core Issues of the War between Hamas and Israel: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply grieved by the news coming out of Israel and Gaza today. CMEP condemns all acts of violence against civilians that have occurred in the past twenty-four hours, as fighting has escalated between Hamas and Israel. As of late Saturday (EDT), reports indicated that hundreds have been killed and thousands wounded, both Israelis and Palestinians. CMEP mourns with the victims of the violence and their families.

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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