



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
Possible.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Washington, D.C. - October 17, 2023**

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**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Expresses Sadness and Outrage  
at Bombing of Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza**

October 17, 2023  
Washington, D.C.

*Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.*

Today Christians around the world followed the call of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem for a day of prayer and fasting for peace and reconciliation and an end to the war between Israel and Hamas. Even as we pray, we find ourselves confronting immense pain and a devastating death toll after the bombing of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, an Anglican hospital in Gaza. Al-Ahli Arab Hospital has provided a critical and courageous ministry of health care provision to serve the people of Gaza for many years.

We are shocked, outraged, and devastated by an air strike on the Anglican Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, leaving at least 500 dead and thousands more injured or unaccounted for. Our hearts are deeply grieved at hearing this news. We express our deepest condolences and ask that the Lord be with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, staff, and all people affected by the bombing of Al-Ahli Hospital. We join in lament and prayers that God will come alongside and comfort all people who are suffering, and support Archbishop Hosam Naoum, the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, in his pastoral care and leadership.

This attack is a grave violation of international law, and it is an affront to our shared humanity. This attack is the second on Al-Ahli hospital in the past few days. These attacks on civilians, including children and the elderly, must stop. The indiscriminate bombing of places of refuge must stop. The

dehumanization of vulnerable people must stop. The people of Gaza are suffering, and they have almost no options for much-needed medical treatment or surgeries, or for receiving pain and other medications.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby issued a statement in response to the October 14th bombing of Al-Ahli Hospital that was damaged by Israeli rocket fire. He warned then that hospitals and patients in Gaza were in “grave danger” and appealed that the evacuation order issued by Israel on hospitals in northern Gaza be reversed.

CMEP calls on President Joe Biden in his meetings with Middle Eastern leaders, including with Prime Minister Netanyahu, to demand the establishment of humanitarian corridors in Gaza to allow for needed humanitarian aid to flow to populations in critical need. All efforts must be made during the President’s visit to pursue an immediate ceasefire and begin to address the root causes of the suffering.

We once again urge the President and 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.

Atrocities against civilians are never justified. We join with the [Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem](#) as they declare a day of mourning in all of their churches and institutions. We heed their call to stand in solidarity, mourning with them for the heinous assault on their dedicated staff and vulnerable patients.

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*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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**Previous CMEP statements about the Israel-Hamas War:**

**[October 13, 2023: CMEP Joins United Nations in Call Not to Ignore Gazans “Dying at the World’s Watch.”](#)** CMEP and our member communions call for the world not to ignore the catastrophic crisis happening in Gaza.

**October 13, 2023: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Affirms Statement from Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.**

**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.

## Contact Us

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