



WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Dear Media contacts:

The following quote can be attributed to Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, executive director of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP): “As Israel and the world are in shock at the news of past days, grief, lament, and horror are appropriate responses to the violence that has occurred. For Palestinians, many feel their own suffering and catastrophes, at the hands of a decades-long military occupation and encroaching settlement expansion and violence has long been ignored. Neither tragedy negates the other. If there is ever to be long-lasting and sustainable peace, the core causes of the conflict must be addressed and resolved. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) remains committed to prayer, education, and advocacy so that all people might experience security, self-determination, and peace.”

**Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Implores Restraint, De-escalation of Conflict,
Humanitarian Access, and Addressing Core Issues of Conflict**

October 9, 2023
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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.

CMEP calls for an immediate end to all violence and calls for restraint from all parties. CMEP is deeply concerned by the prospect of an Israeli protracted military offensive and possible ground invasion into Gaza that could result in considerably more deaths and destruction and a broader regional war. Half of the [2.2 million people](#) of Gaza are children.

CMEP abhors reports from the Israeli government that they have [shut off power, water, and fuel](#) to the people of Gaza. These actions constitute collective punishment, and [international law](#) designates such actions as illegal and unconscionable. The lack of water, electricity, fuel, and access to medical supplies will have a disastrous impact on millions of civilians in Gaza, especially those who need immediate medical attention. We urge the resumption of power, water, and gas for the people of Gaza. CMEP calls for the protection of access to humanitarian aid and the cessation of conflict so that emergency medical care can be offered.

The call from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu telling Gazan residents “[to leave](#)” is completely unrealistic given that all border crossings in and out of Gaza are closed, and leaving is not an option for the more than two million people living there. CMEP calls on Hamas to [do no harm](#) and to release all hostages held in captivity. CMEP continues to hold in prayer the families of those held hostage and the families of all who have been wounded or lost their lives already in the violence of the past few days. CMEP calls on the international community and the United States to stop supporting further militarization and pursue every alternative means to protect all Israeli and Palestinian civilians.

The United States has long failed to serve as a constructive partner in helping to secure a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine. During heightened tension, CMEP implores the U.S. government to refrain from steps that only exacerbate the violence and increase the risk of expanding war into the broader region. Core issues of the conflict must be addressed, including but not limited to: ceasing the expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories; ending impunity given to settlers when they attack Palestinians, their homes, their lands, and religious sites; reversing de facto annexation of Palestinian land; ending the blockade of Gaza while ensuring the legitimate security needs of Israelis; ensuring freedom of access and movement for Palestinians. These are among numerous other issues that the United States and many in the international community have not held Israel accountable for decades.

While mourning the tragic events happening in Gaza and Israel, CMEP remains committed to prayer and the belief that peace is possible even in these devastating times

[Click here to find our statements.](#)

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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