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Ceasefire Now! Biden Administration's Response Inadequate to Catastrophe in Gaza

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The devastating October 7 murder of nearly 1,400 Israelis and internationals by Hamas does not justify the [displacement of 1.5 million people](#), more than sixty percent of the population, in Gaza - many of whom are refugees already; the indiscriminate impact upon civilians by large-scale bombing; the destruction of hospitals, churches, cultural centers, and other infrastructure. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the death toll in Gaza as of November 2 is 9,061, more than 60 percent of whom are women and children. The total number of Palestinian children killed totals 3,760. The mass slaughter of civilians by any party to the conflict is unacceptable and must stop. The lives of all people, be they Israelis or Palestinians, must be protected.

The results of the White House's efforts have been unacceptable as it has not pressed enough to provide life-sustaining relief. The Biden Administration overstates the success of humanitarian measures and instead significantly exaggerates its very limited support toward meeting the catastrophic needs that exist on the ground. Since October 8, Israel has [cut off nearly all of the water, gas, and electricity](#) from Gaza, putting even more pressure on a population that was already suffering from a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Before October 7th, due to the longstanding blockade, the average number of trucks needed in Gaza was more than 500 per day, five days a week, to keep malnutrition at bay, to provide basic medical supplies, and meet basic needs. As of November 2, only [374 trucks with food, water, and medical aid](#), over a 13-day period, have been allowed into Gaza through the Rafah crossing. Many hospitals in Gaza have run out of fuel and cannot treat patients. According to OCHA, currently, 14 out of 35 hospitals with inpatient capacities are [not functioning](#), and 71 percent of all primary care facilities across Gaza cannot operate due to damage or lack of fuel.

Now is the time for principled and strong leadership. The United States must end its complicity in the deaths of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza and the collective punishment against millions of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The U.S. must demand that the Government of Israel stop the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people to prevent more death, destruction, and displacement. The White House's unwillingness to support an end to the assault has already had devastating effects on people in Gaza and beyond. The White House, including officials from the National Security Council, have argued that a ceasefire would only benefit Hamas. CMEP rejects this assumption and instead asserts a ceasefire would help to ensure that no additional Palestinian or Israeli lives are lost. We believe an end to the military campaign is also in the best interest of the United States, Israel, and all those who affirm the value of human life.

CMEP reiterates our call for the White House to push - as immediate first steps - for an immediate ceasefire, for the protection of civilians, the release of all hostages held in Gaza, and for the immediate and adequate flow of much-needed humanitarian aid into Gaza. Beyond those minimum requirements, the root causes must be addressed, and the decades-long occupation of the Palestinian people must be brought to an end. Each passing hour brings news of more bombings and deaths in Gaza. Each passing hour brings news of more violence with impunity by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the West Bank. The current posture of the United States government is contributing to the ongoing dehumanization and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people in Gaza. The United States must end its complicity immediately and show support for the protection of all human life, advocating for a just and durable resolution to this crisis in which all Israelis and Palestinians might realize a vision of a just peace, illuminating human dignity, advancing security and self-determination for all.

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.

Recent CMEP Statements:

November 1, 2023: [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Co-Sponsors: Catholic Pray-in at the White House Calls for President Biden to Support Israel-Hamas Ceasefire.](#) Washington, DC – On Thursday, November 2 at 12:30 PM, Catholic and other Christian peacemakers will conduct a “pray-in” near Lafayette Park outside the White House to call on President Joe Biden, a Catholic, to abide by Jesus’s way of courageous love and heed Pope Francis’s plea to take the side of peace, and urge all parties to de-escalate hostilities; abide by an immediate ceasefire; and release all hostages.

October 26, 2023: [End the War Now: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Fears Catastrophic Deaths of Civilians in Gaza.](#) The war in Israel and Palestine must be brought to an end. Churches for

Middle East Peace (CMEP) calls for an [immediate ceasefire](#), an end to all violence, and a rapid and substantial increase in the delivery of lifesaving aid to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of people in Gaza. CMEP calls on Hamas to release all hostages and do no harm to those still remaining. CMEP also 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.

October 23, 2023: [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Affirms the October 21st Statement of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem](#). CMEP affirms and echoes the call of The Patriarchs and the Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem's condemnation of the attack against a sacred place at the Orthodox Church compound of Saint Porphyrius in Gaza on the night of October 19, 2023. CMEP furthermore supports their call upon the international community to immediately enforce protections in Gaza for Sanctuaries of Refuge, such as hospitals, schools, and houses of worship.

October 20, 2023: [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Condemns Attack Against St. Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza](#). CMEP reiterates that even during times of active hostilities, all efforts must be made to protect religious institutions.

October 19, 2023: [CMEP Calls for a Ceasefire and Issues Desperate Plea: President Biden's Humanitarian Relief is Not Getting to People in Gaza](#). While the United Nations reports the convoy includes [ready-to-eat food](#), development experts on the ground in Gaza have communicated to CMEP concerns that at least some of the food in the trucks waiting in convoy in Egypt would need to be cooked, requiring water, gas, and/or electricity to which displaced people in Gaza do not have access. . . . Water is not getting to people in Southern Gaza because there is no electricity to pump water through the system and because there is so much damage to pipelines because of extensive bombing.

[See all of our public statements by clicking here.](#)

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