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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. - July 22, 2024

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CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE (CMEP)

TO HOLD PRAYER VIGIL AHEAD OF NETANYAHU'S CONGRESSIONAL ADDRESS

July 22, 2024

Washington, D.C.

What:

Ahead of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech before congress, Christian groups, led by Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) will gather to pray for an immediate end to the violence being committed in Gaza and for peace for the day ahead. Speakers will include several notable Christian leaders.

Since October 7, CMEP has called for (1) a permanent bilateral ceasefire, (2) the allowance of adequate humanitarian assistance into Gaza, (3) the release of all Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners held without cause, (4) demilitarization, including no additional U.S. arms sales to Israel, (5) for the root causes of the occupation to be addressed. These positions reflect our desire for an end to the atrocities we have seen perpetuated in Gaza and our broader call for the rights and dignity of all people in the Holy Land to be upheld.

When:

9:00 to 10:00 AM EST on Wednesday, July 24

Where:

Steps of the United Methodist Building

110 Maryland Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002

Backup location—:

Friends Committee on National Legislation Quaker Welcome Center
245 2nd Street NE
Washington, DC 20002

** We are closely monitoring road closures and security measures as they are announced. If gathering in front of the United Methodist Building is not possible, we will notify registrants by 8am on July 24.

Co-Sponsoring Organizations: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP); Pax Christi USA; National Council of Churches; Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ; Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness; Alliance of Baptists; Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; The United Methodist Church — General Board of Church and Society; Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

Quotes:

Rev. Michael Neuroth, Director of the United Church of Christ Office of Public Policy & Advocacy: "As a tradition that upholds a vision of a Just World for All, the United Church of Christ speaks clearly on the injustice and humanitarian crisis happening in Palestine. We call for a ceasefire, for increased humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and for the release of prisoners and hostages. The suffering must end. As a nation, we must not be complicit in the mass killing that has resulted in nearly 40,000 dead. As such, we support the withholding of arms to Israel and demand a return to the diplomatic table. As Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addresses our Congress, we implore him and all policymakers to hear our fervent prayers calling for love, compassion, and a Just Peace."

Kyle Cristofalo, Senior Director of Advocacy and Government Relations, Churches for Middle East Peace: " For forty years Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) has advocated for a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict in Israel-Palestine. Before Prime Minister Netanayhu is set to address Congress, we gather with one voice to pray for our elected officials to do everything in their power to help bring about a comprehensive ceasefire in Israel and Gaza and prioritize the preservation of Palestinian and Israeli lives instead of prolonging suffering."

Colleen Moore, Director of Peace With Justice at the General Board of Church and Society, the social justice agency of the United Methodist Church: "For decades, the United Methodist Church has called for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and worked for a just and durable peace in the Middle East. Today, as Prime Minister Netanyahu prepares to address Congress, we continue that work by calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel and for all people in the Holy Land to seek full respect for human rights and freedom from military occupation."

Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Director of Advocacy, Presbyterian Church (USA): “The Presbyterian Church (USA) has for many years advocated for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We watch in horror as the current war in Gaza spirals out of control and is heartbreaking in its ferocity. Twenty thousand Palestinian children are missing, and thousands are presumed dead beneath the rubble. Israel’s horrific bombing of schools, hospitals, and safe zones, the withholding of humanitarian assistance from a civilian population facing famine, and the United States military support for these human rights violations in Gaza must end. The world must act to stop this madness - bring about a permanent ceasefire, release hostages and detainees, and provide humanitarian assistance to Gaza. We pray that our leaders have the wisdom and determination to bring this war to an end. And we pray for mercy and healing for all of the victims of violence in this conflict.”

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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.

Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

[JUL 8, 2024 Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Stands with the Diocese of Jerusalem in Expressing Dismay at the Closure of Al Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital in Gaza](#) The closure of the hospital, the evacuation, and the declaration of the area as a red zone, in addition to the firing upon the ambulance, are all unacceptable violations of humanitarian international law. International law demands that health establishments and units, including hospitals, should not be attacked. In addition, the already vulnerable, the wounded and the sick, and those seeking shelter should not be placed in further harm or jeopardy.

[June 28, 2024: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Stands in Solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land as Israeli Municipalities Attempt to Collect Taxes on Church-owned Properties.](#) Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) stands in solidarity with the Churches of the Holy Land as they undergo yet another attempt by Israeli municipalities to collect taxes on church-owned properties— a move that threatens the sustainability of the Churches to operate. CMEP recognizes the harm that these legal proceedings could cause to the ever-shrinking Christian

community in this land. The Status Quo which has ensured religious freedom and harmony in the Holy Land must be protected.

June 21, 2024: [CMEP affirms The Episcopal Church statement on Layan Nasir and detained Palestinians.](#) The Episcopal Church is one of the founding members of CMEP's 30-plus member communions committed to pursuing an end to the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. As the war on Gaza continues, we must not ignore the ongoing pressures Palestinians continue *to* face in other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories. CMEP stands with The Episcopal Church in advocating for the release of Layan Nasir, the Palestinian Christian woman who continues to be held unjustly in Israeli prison. We also call for an immediate end to the war on Gaza and for an immediate and sustained ceasefire, full humanitarian access, and the release of all hostages.

June 12, 2024: [CMEP to Hold Special Briefing About the War on Gaza at Westminster Presbyterian Church.](#) Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, the executive director of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), will host a briefing and community conversation in Delaware on Christian responses to current events in Gaza and broader Israel/Palestine. The briefing will follow morning worship and is open to the Westminster community and the general public.

See all of our [public statements](#) and [press releases](#).

Contact Us

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