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Possible.

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**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**

July 8, 2024

Washington, D.C.

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. We stand alongside the Most Reverend Archbishop Hosam Naoum in protesting this closure and calling for an end to all suffering and trauma. We call for a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire and for immediate and comprehensive humanitarian access into Gaza. CMEP's executive director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, says, "Hospitals are sacred places where the sick and suffering come to receive healing and care. For more than nine months, healthcare workers in Gaza, including those at Al Ahli Hospital, have put their lives in danger by providing basic services under the worst conditions and with limited and inadequate supplies. International humanitarian law must be respected, and the lives of all people must be protected. The more than nine months of war on Gaza that has had such devastating effects on

civilians must be brought to an immediate end." In addition, CMEP calls for an immediate return of hostages and the release of prisoners held unjustly in Israeli prisons and for a negotiated settlement that will address the core issues of the ongoing conflict.

*The Episcopal Church
in Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Diocese of Jerusalem*



الكنيسة الأسقفية
في القدس والشرق الأوسط
مُطرانية القدس

**A STATEMENT FROM THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM FOLLOWING THE FORCED
CLOSURE OF AL AHLI ANGLICAN HOSPITAL IN GAZA**

8th JULY 2024

In the midst of escalating military activity in the Old Gaza City area of the Gaza Strip we are sorry to report that the Al Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital has been compelled to close by the Israel army. Suheila Tarazi, Hospital Director, reported that on Sunday July 7, between 6pm-7pm a large amount of firing from drones occurred in the immediate vicinity of the hospital. This was immediately followed by an IDF announcement that the area had been declared a Red Zone and everyone should immediately evacuate all the buildings including everyone in the hospital. As a result, all vulnerable people sheltering in the hospital grounds, the staff and all patients had to leave the safety of the grounds of the hospital. Inevitably this placed the injured and the sick in great jeopardy.

To our great dismay, our hospital is now out of operation at a time when its services are in very significant demand and where injured and sick people have few other options for places to receive urgent medical care.

We are also deeply distressed that today, one of our ambulances was fired at en route to the hospital. We currently have no information about the condition of our driver and any patients who were being transported for treatment.

Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, has said: 'We protest the closure of our hospital in the strongest possible terms. In a time of warfare and great suffering it is essential that emergency healthcare services are maintained to treat the injured and the dying. We appeal to the Israeli forces to permit us to continue our sacred ministry of medical care and healing. We plead for an end to the targeting of civilians and all vulnerable people and demand all parties agree to an immediate ceasefire.'

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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:

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](#).

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