



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

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Washington, D.C. - September 6, 2024**

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#### **CMEP Mourns Death of Hostages and Massive Civilian Deaths in Gaza**

Washington, D.C.  
September 6, 2024

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply grieved by the death of six hostages killed late last week in Gaza. One of the hostages was an American citizen, Hersh Goldberg-Polin, whose parents, Rachel Goldberg-Polin and Jonathan Polin, spoke at the Democratic National Convention on August 21.

Since October 7, CMEP has continually called for the release of hostages taken captive into Gaza, as well as thousands of Palestinian prisoners held without due process of law. Our hearts go out to all families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives over the past ten-plus months. The value of every human life is sacred, and we mourn the loss of all lives caught in this ongoing conflict. We continue to demand the release of hostages who are held in Gaza and to call for an end to all violence between combatants and the Israeli military.

The continual cycles of violence and death must come to an immediate end. We must demand a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire based on international law through negotiations, which have consistently proven to be the most effective mechanism for securing the safe return of hostages. The path to peace and the preservation of life lies in dialogue, not in continued violence and increased militarization.

CMEP remains deeply concerned about the conditions of both the hostages in Gaza and the more than [9,000 Palestinian prisoners](#) held by Israel. The reports emerging from Israeli detention facilities

are alarming, and alongside other international NGOs, we strongly urge that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) be granted immediate access to both the hostages in Gaza and those held in Israeli prisons. Transparency and accountability are essential to ensure the humane treatment of all detainees and to prevent further loss of life.

We continue to mourn the deaths of the more than 40,000 Palestinian individuals who have been killed as a result of the larger context of the forced displacement and ethnic cleansing happening daily in Gaza and now increasingly in the West Bank by the Israeli military and extremist settlers. Between August 29th and September 2, 2024, [184 Palestinians](#) were killed in Gaza. In the past week, more than [30 Palestinians](#), including seven children, have been killed as a result of military incursions into the West Bank, specifically focused around the area of Jenin. Israel's ongoing mass killings of civilians in Gaza must end immediately. To that goal, the international community must do everything it can to stop the military campaign, including ending the provision of military arms and assistance.

As a community committed to peace and justice, we call on all parties to prioritize human life and dignity above all else. We continue to advocate for a permanent solution to this conflict that addresses the core causes and decades of violations of international human rights and for the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

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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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Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

**[August 29, 2024: Churches for Middle East Peace Condemns the Escalation of Settler Violence and Illegal Land Confiscation in the West Bank](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) unequivocally condemns the escalating violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank and the ongoing illegal confiscation of Palestinian land. We stand in solidarity with Palestinian families facing dispossession and violence, as well as with those who have been wrongfully detained for defending their internationally recognized human rights.

**August 26, 2024: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Stands with Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem on the Urgent Need to Conclude the Present War and Turn from the Pursuit of Death and Destruction toward the Promotion of Life and Peace**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) and our 35 member communions stand in solidarity with the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in the urgent need in calling for an end to war, death, and destruction toward the promotion of life and peace. We pray alongside our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land and especially those who continue to take refuge in the St.Porphyrus Orthodox Church and the Latin Family Catholic Church in Gaza after more than ten months of nearly constant bombardment, deprivation, and massive civilians deaths in Gaza.

**August 20, 2024: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins Aid Agencies and Medical Professionals in Warning of Dangers of Mass Polio Outbreak without Urgent Action, endangering a generation of children in Gaza**

Aid agencies and medical professionals have joined forces to call urgently for a ceasefire to allow life-saving polio vaccinations to be administered to about 640,000 children aged under 10 following confirmation of the first case of polio in Gaza in 25 years, with reports of other suspected cases emerging. At least 50,000 children born during the past 10 months of hostilities are highly unlikely to have received any immunizations due to the collapsed health system, while older children among the one million children in Gaza will have had their regular vaccine schedules disrupted or halted by violence and displacement.

**August 16, 2024: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Stands with Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem and all Christians in calling for Religious Freedom in Israel**

CMEP stands with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in its criticism of the decision by the Israeli police to close and ban Christian worshipers from participating in the sacred services of the Feast of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor in Israel. The protection of religious practices and the freedom to worship for all people regardless of creed or belief is a fundamental principle of a democratic society.

**August 14, 2024: Gaza Humanitarian Access Snapshot #3**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) and leading humanitarian agencies outline how new 'evacuation orders' and relentless airstrikes have forced the displacement of over 200,000 Palestinians since mid-July, many of whom had already been displaced multiple times. Israel's ongoing blockade has only tightened, leaving aid convoys stranded and essential supplies inaccessible to the millions in need.

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

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