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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) on the U.S. to Broker a Regional Ceasefire and Prevent Further Escalation in Lebanon and Beyond

In the last few weeks, the people of the Middle East have seen the intensification of what has been a regional war for months involving Israel, the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Yemen. The ongoing violence, especially Israel's relentless aggression and bombardment of Lebanon, has resulted in the tragic loss of [over 2,000 lives](#), including more than 100 women and children, as well as [at least 28 healthcare and rescue workers](#) and journalists. Its imminent invasion of Lebanon threatens to create a major humanitarian catastrophe. Already, [over one million Lebanese](#) have been displaced, fleeing their homes and communities to escape the assault. Israel has issued evacuation orders for the southern coastal region to the Awali River, which lies halfway between the southern border and Beirut. Should Israel's invasion continue, it would lead to further devastation, costing a tremendous number of human lives, with Lebanese civilians bearing the brunt of the suffering.

A comprehensive ceasefire and de-escalatory measures by both Israel and the United States are necessary to end this devastating war.

Israel's invasion of Lebanon is creating risks on multiple fronts: 1) the displacement of Lebanese from southern Lebanon and specific neighborhoods in Beirut is creating intercommunal tensions between Lebanon's various religious communities, potentially setting up the country for increased intercommunal conflict in an already unstable country and; 2) risks drawing other regional actors deeper into the conflict. A full-scale Israeli invasion would only heighten insecurity and further destabilize an already fragile region.

Additionally, Lebanon has been where some [1.5 million Syrians](#) who fled Syria's 13-year war have sought refuge and have not been able to return to Syria. Already the least resourced and having minimal legal rights in Lebanon, Syrian refugees are at extreme risk of being yet another casualty of a conflict not of their making. The continued invasion of Lebanon creates two refugee crises simultaneously while immediately involving neighboring Syria in a humanitarian crisis it has no capacity to manage. And that is not to mention the quarter-million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, many of whom have lived in camps since 1948 and are denied the right to return to their homes by Israel. Now, more than ever, is the time for de-escalation.

The United States should immediately work to establish conditions for a ceasefire in Gaza, which could pave the way for a ceasefire on Israel's northern border. Additionally, the U.S. must pressure Israel not to respond with additional force to Iran's targeting of Israeli military facilities, which have come after multiple provocations and escalatory actions, including assassinations and violations of sovereign Iranian territory, by Prime Minister Netanyahu's government.

The U.S. must urgently pressure Israel to follow a path of de-escalation and refrain from violating Lebanon's internationally recognized boundaries. This must include embargoing offensive weapons shipments to Israel. Only through bold diplomatic action, including calling on all parties to respect United Nations Security Council resolutions and international law, can further bloodshed be prevented. It is crucial that all parties involved adhere to these legal norms to ensure a just and lasting peace in the region.

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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:

Oct 18, 2024: [CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE \(CMEP\) JOINS 19 OTHER CHRISTIAN FAITH LEADERS IN LETTER TO HARRIS AND TRUMP CAMPAIGNS](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon joins 19 other Christian faith leaders in a letter to both Harris and Trump campaigns to express a shared deep concern regarding the ongoing injustice and violations of human rights in Israel/Palestine. The leaders write, "Even as our primary focus for months has been on calling for an immediate end to the violence in Gaza and throughout Israel/Palestine, we know more must be done by the United States government to work toward a just and permanent solution that addresses the core issues so that international human rights are upheld and the most vulnerable are protected. To that end, we offer the following recommendations for what we feel must be addressed by the next administration in their first 100 days in office."

Oct 15, 2024: [Northern Gaza is being erased – global leaders must act now](#)

CMEP along with other Humanitarian and Aid organizations warn of the dire situation in Northern Gaza. The Israeli forces' assault on Gaza has escalated to a horrifying level of atrocity. Northern Gaza is being wiped off the map. Under the guise of "evacuation," Israeli forces have ordered the forced displacement of an estimated 400,000 Palestinians trapped in northern Gaza, including Gaza City. This is not an evacuation—this is forced displacement under gunfire. Since 1 October, no food has been allowed into the area, and civilians are being starved and bombed in their homes and their tents.

October 9, 2024: [Gaza Humanitarian Snapshot #6](#)

A year into the devastating war on Gaza the humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to worsen. Medical supplies, hygiene kits, building supplies, fuel, and more continue to be in rare supply as Israel impedes aid deliveries. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) and leading humanitarian agencies outline the delay of aid distribution, safety concerns, forced displacement orders, and logistical constraints in this latest Humanitarian Snapshot.

October 7, 2024: [Churches for Middle East Peace Commemorates the One Year Anniversary of Oct. 7th](#)

As we commemorate this tragic anniversary, let us renew our commitment to peace, to the end of the occupation, and to a future where all people in the region can live in security, free from fear and repression, and with their full rights and dignity.

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

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