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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Mourns the Passing of His Holiness Pope Francis

Washington, D.C. – April 22, 2025, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins millions of people around the world in mourning the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis. We grieve the profound loss of a stalwart leader of the Christian faith—one whose moral clarity, deep compassion, and unrelenting pursuit of justice marked a generation.

Pope Francis was a tireless advocate for human dignity. He championed the rights of the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. He spoke boldly on behalf of refugees and displaced peoples, challenged global leaders to address the climate crisis, and insisted on the equal worth and rights of all people. His unwavering commitment to interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding reshaped the Church's witness in the modern world.

Even in his final days, Pope Francis continued to embody the radical love and humility of Christ. Until the very end of his life, he remained in daily contact with the Christian community in Gaza, offering pastoral care and solidarity amidst unimaginable suffering. He called persistently for an end to the war in Gaza, reminding the global community of our shared humanity and our sacred responsibility to protect life.

Pope Francis urged us—again and again—to love one another. He challenged the Church not to turn inward, but to go to the margins. He reminded us that peace is possible, but only through justice, mercy, and courageous action.

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of CMEP, reflects: "Pope Francis lived out the Good News of the Gospel in word and deed. His voice for justice and compassion was a beacon in a world so often divided by violence and fear. We mourn his passing with deep sorrow and deep gratitude for his extraordinary legacy."

CMEP will continue to honor Pope Francis' vision by advancing our mission to pursue peace, advocate for justice, and uphold the dignity of all people in the Middle East.

We share our condolences with Catholic leaders and others around the world who grieve this significant loss. May the memory of His Holiness Pope Francis be a blessing. May his call to love one another echo in our hearts—and in our actions.

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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:

[Apr 21, 2025 Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Stands in Solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land, Condemning the Egregious Violations of Religious Freedom during Holy Fire Saturday in Jerusalem](#)
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon reports from her experience at the Holy Fire Service in Jerusalem on Saturday, April 19, 2025 in which Israeli authorities denied thousands of Christian pilgrims the right to worship. CMEP stands in solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land, condemning the

egregious violations of religious freedom and amplifying the statement by the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem on the assaults against worshippers during Holy Fire Saturday.

Apr 18, 2025 Humanitarian Snapshot #11

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins 26 humanitarian aid and advocacy groups to shed light on the besieged state of Gaza and the West Bank. No aid has been allowed to enter Gaza in over six weeks. Increased military operations in the West Bank have displaced over 40,000 people, destroyed countless homes and businesses, and disrupted the flow of aid. The UN Secretary General referred to Gaza as an "endless death loop". Along with a report detailing the conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, this snapshot calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

Apr 17, 2025 CMEP Executive Director Leads Delegation in Jordan for High-Level Religious and Diplomatic Meetings

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) executive director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, led a small interfaith delegation of Christian and Muslim leaders to Jordan between April 9-10, 2025. His Excellency Bishop Mpumlwana Malusi, the former General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), and Imam Dr. Yahya Hendi, Director of Muslim Life at Georgetown University, joined Rev. Dr. Cannon as they met with high-level political and religious leaders to discuss the most recent events in the region with an emphasis on what can be done to end the war on Gaza. In addition to meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Safadi and other leaders, the delegation was honored to participate in a gathering with the Nobel Women's Initiative hosted by His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal.

Apr 13, 2025 CMEP condemns bombing of Al-Ahli Hospital and demands Protection for the Christian Community and all in Gaza

CMEP condemns in the strongest possible terms the bombing of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. Al-Ahli is an Anglican institution and one of the oldest, continuously operating hospitals in Gaza. It is Gaza's only Christian hospital and its only cancer treatment center. The bombing of the Anglican Al-Ahli Arab Hospital is a violation of the sacredness of life and it is especially abhorrent during this sacred time for Christians.

See all of our public statements and press releases.

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