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Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

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Media Contact:

media@cmep.org

925-766-9050

CMEP Executive Director Leads Delegation for High-Level Interfaith and Diplomatic Meetings in Cairo to Address Atrocities in Gaza

Churches for Middle East Peace's (CMEP) executive director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, led a small interfaith delegation of Christian and Islamic leaders to Egypt between April 5-8, 2025. Meetings in Egypt included conversations with religious and political leaders for the purpose of discussing the role international religious leaders can play in calling for an end to all violence, especially the devastating toll of ongoing bombing and military incursions by the Israeli military in Gaza and the West Bank.

In the meeting with Egypt's Foreign Minister, His Excellency Badr Abdellatty, CMEP expressed appreciation for the role of Egypt and other Arab nations in encouraging a return to the ceasefire agreement and negotiations. CMEP has consistently called for a permanent ceasefire, an end to all violence by state and militant actors, the release of hostages held in Gaza, and the release of Palestinian prisoners held unjustly by Israel. Only a return to negotiations will determine a lasting solution that will allow for the rebuilding of Gaza, lasting resolutions that will break the ongoing cycles of violence between Hamas and Israel, and bring an end to the occupation of the Palestinian people and security for Israelis and all living in the region.

In addition to meetings with government officials, CMEP was honored to meet in Cairo with His Excellency Muhammad adh-Dhuwaini, Deputy Head of the Islamic Council of Al-Azhar, and Minister of Islamic Endowments Dr. Osama al-Azhari. Meetings with Christian leaders included Rev. Dr. Andrea Zaki of CEOSS and His Eminence Nicolas H.M.D. Thevenin. CMEP is committed to interfaith engagement and partnerships with leaders of all Abrahamic and other faiths who are people of goodwill committed to peace, recognizing the common humanity of all and working to end the ongoing atrocities having such devastating effects on the civilian population in Gaza. These meetings underscored the essential role of interreligious collaboration in the pursuit of peace and justice throughout the Middle East. The delegation also met with Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Khaled el-Bakly.

At the heart of these meetings was a shared conviction: that peace can only be achieved through the protection of human dignity and adherence to the international rules-based order. In a time when children and civilians throughout the Middle East are being killed with impunity, when hospitals, ambulances, humanitarian personnel, and places of refuge are being bombed in violation of international law, all people must raise their collective voices in moral and spiritual outrage.

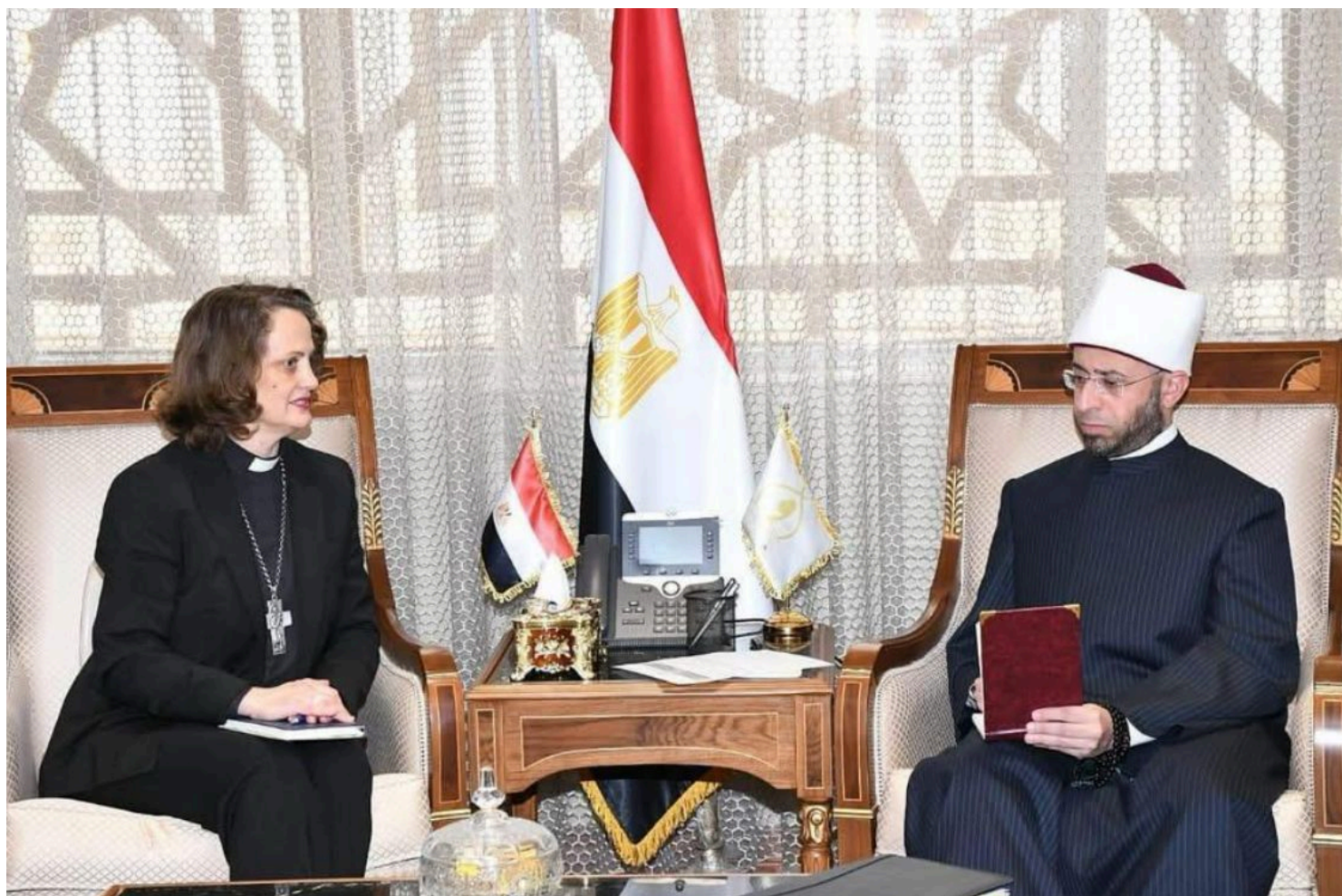
If Israel, Hamas, and Western powers that continue to arm the ongoing violence continue to abandon international norms and human rights in this moment, future generations in the Middle East will grow up having witnessed the total erosion of global diplomatic efforts and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people. This moral collapse will not go without long-term consequences that will have devastating effects on all people in the region, and ultimately in the world. The very future is at stake, with seeds of violence being planted and fueled by the trauma and devastation unfolding daily in Gaza.

CMEP reaffirms its deep concern about the intensifying humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the blatant disregard for international humanitarian law that contributes to the dehumanization, harm, and death of Palestinians in the enclave. The indiscriminate bombing of medical facilities, the targeting of aid workers, and the failure to protect civilians are not only violations of international legal obligations — they are affronts to our shared moral conscience.

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon says, “CMEP acknowledges Egypt’s continued role in mediation efforts between Hamas and Israel and its leadership in facilitating ceasefire negotiations. We also recognize Egypt’s vital involvement in planning for the eventual reconstruction of Gaza, which must be rooted in justice, accountability, and Palestinian

agency. Gaza, the Palestinians, Israel, and the entire region need not only Arab states but the world to stand together to demand an end to the ongoing Israeli invasion of Gaza and a return to a ceasefire that will become permanent. Negotiations are the only way forward toward a lasting peace.”

CMEP remains committed to working in partnership with religious, political, and civil society leaders across the region to promote a vision of peace built not on militarization or domination but on human dignity, reconciliation, and shared responsibility.



Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon and Minister of Islamic Endowments Dr. Osama al-Azhari, Cairo, Egypt (April 2025)

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:

Mar 11, 2025: [CMEP Affirms Joint Statement by Patriarchs in Syria Regarding the Recent Increase in Violence](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) stands in solidarity with the Patriarchs in Syria as they raise their voices against the horrific escalation of violence that has swept across portions of the country in recent days. CMEP unequivocally condemns these acts of violence and calls for an immediate end to the bloodshed.

Feb 28, 2025 [Humanitarian Snapshot #10](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) raises the alarm alongside 42 other humanitarian aid and advocacy organizations about the escalating violence and restrictions in the occupied West Bank and the unprecedented obstruction as Israeli forces and settlers intensify violence and movement restrictions. Since the pause in hostilities in Gaza on January 19, 2025, aid workers have encountered direct threats, while aid deliveries are routinely delayed or blocked by newly established checkpoints.

Feb 21, 2025 [CMEP Affirms Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem responding to foreclosure against Armenian Patriarchate](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) stands in solidarity with the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem and their defense of the Armenian Patriarchate. The Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem faces a foreclosure order posing a significant threat to their ongoing sustainability. The threat against the Armenian Patriarchate reflects a broader challenge facing the Christian community in Jerusalem relating to taxation issues. CMEP remains committed to advocate for the continued sustainability of the churches in Jerusalem whose presence and ministry provide vital services to the greater community.

Feb 21, 2025 [CMEP's Cover Letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio](#)

In a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) highlights the ongoing challenges faced by Christian communities in Jerusalem, particularly the renewed pressures surrounding the Arnona tax dispute and the breaking of the historic status quo. CMEP also affirms the concerns raised by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem regarding the foreclosure threats against the Armenian Patriarchate. CMEP warns that these actions threaten the Christian presence in the Holy Land and urges U.S. and international intervention to protect religious freedom and the sacred nature of Jerusalem for all faiths.

Feb 14, 2025: [CMEP Expresses Deep Concern Over Escalating Israeli Military Operations in the West Bank](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is deeply alarmed by the ongoing Israeli military operations in the West Bank, including the recent large-scale offensive, the most extensive since the Second Intifada. According to the United Nations, these operations have displaced over 40,000 Palestinians. Additionally, the destruction of 11 buildings in Masafer Yatta is part of a continued effort to forcibly remove Palestinian communities from their land, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation.

Feb 6, 2025: [CMEP Condemns President Trump's Call for the Forced Displacement of Palestinians from Gaza](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) vehemently opposes President Donald Trump's recent comments advocating for the forced removal of the Palestinian population from Gaza. This is an open call for ethnic cleansing and a blatant violation of international and humanitarian law, as well as a fundamental affront to the sanctity of human life. Additionally, such language further undermines the current ceasefire, which the Trump Administration worked hard to secure and is directly responsible for ensuring all parties continue to adhere to its tenants through the completion of phase three of the deal.

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

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**Churches for Middle East Peace
(CMEP)**

110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 505
Washington, District of Columbia 20002
(202) 543-1222 info@cmep.org

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