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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. - June 04, 2025

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Press Release: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Elevates the Statement of Archbishop Elpidophoros on the Threat to the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine in Egypt

June 4, 2025, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, in expressing deep concern and sorrow over the recent judicial decision by Egyptian authorities that threatens the property and spiritual mission of the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai.

We elevate the powerful statement made by Archbishop Elpidophoros who rightly described the Monastery as “a testament to the enduring legacy of faith, scholarship, and interreligious harmony.” For centuries, this sacred site, recognized as the oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery in the world, has stood as a profound symbol of peace and coexistence. Its unparalleled spiritual, historical, and cultural significance must not be jeopardized.

CMEP affirms the importance of protecting international religious freedom and preserving sacred sites throughout the Middle East. We call upon the Egyptian government to

uphold its longstanding commitments to safeguard the autonomy and sacred mission of the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine. We further urge faith leaders, policymakers, and international institutions to advocate for the protection of this unique and irreplaceable spiritual treasure.

Alongside Archbishop Elpidophoros we "call upon religious leaders, international organizations, and all people of faith, to join in advocating for the preservation of the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine. Let us work collectively to ensure that this sacred institution continues to inspire and unite people of all faiths for generations to come."

You can read the full statement by Archbishop Elpidophoros [HERE](#).

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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:

[May 30, 2025: Press Release for Humanitarian Snapshot #12](#)

Nearly three months into Israel's total siege on Gaza, humanitarian conditions have deteriorated beyond crisis levels. A recent survey of NGOs found widespread obstruction of aid, with two-thirds unable to reach communities in need and one-third reporting staff killed or injured. In the West Bank, escalating settler violence and military restrictions have made nearly half of aid delivery efforts impossible, deepening an already catastrophic, man-made crisis.

[May 20, 2025: CMEP Affirms Statement by Israeli Civil Society Groups calling for Ceasefire and entry of Aid into Gaza](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) expresses its full support for the recent

statement issued by Israeli human rights organizations calling for the immediate and unconditional end to Israel's blockade on humanitarian aid to Gaza. Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to allow "basic amounts of food" into Gaza resulted in only five aid trucks entering the besieged territory on the first day, Monday, May 19, 2025. While this gesture has been cited as a measure of relief, this token action falls woefully short amid the spiraling famine and widespread nutritional deficiencies facing the vast majority of Gaza's population. CMEP calls on the U.S. government and the international community to exert urgent and sustained pressure on the Israeli government to end its policy of starvation and to immediately open all crossings for the unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid. We reject the U.S.-Israeli proposal to oversee limited aid distribution, as it fundamentally fails to meet the scale of need and does not adhere to internationally recognized humanitarian principles. The time for partial solutions has long passed—comprehensive, unimpeded aid access is both a moral and legal imperative.

[Apr 30, 2025: CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon Spends Holy Week in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories](#)

CMEP's executive director traveled to the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem for Holy Week from April 11 to 20, after leading a multi-faith delegation in Jordan and Egypt. Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), visited numerous local church leaders to stand in solidarity with the Christian community in the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel during Holy Week. Her visits included high-level meetings with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish community leaders and focused on ending the devastation and destruction in Gaza.

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

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