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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement: CMEP Condemns the Israeli Settler Attack Against the Palestinian Christian Village of Taybeh

July 9, 2025, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns the most recent attack by Israeli settlers on the Palestinian Christian village of Taybeh, where on July 7, 2025, settlers deliberately set fire near the town cemetery and the historic Church of Saint George, dating back to the 5th century. This violent act, thwarted only by the intervention of local residents and firefighters, is part of what local Christian clergy describe as “a series of dangerous, systematic attacks” against the village’s land, holy sites, and people. Taybeh, historically known as Ephraim, is the last entirely Christian town in the West Bank, and these assaults represent not only a grave threat to its security but a direct effort to undermine the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

This incident is tragically not an isolated one. Christian communities throughout the West Bank and Jerusalem have faced increasing threats from extremist settlers and discriminatory Israeli policies. From repeated desecrations of Christian property to attempts at land confiscation, such as the ongoing expansion of the so-called “National Park” in East Jerusalem aimed at encircling Christian and Muslim neighborhoods, Palestinian Christians are being pushed toward exile. These targeted actions contribute to the alarming exodus of Christians from the very land where Christianity was born.

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of CMEP, stated:

“The settler violence and destruction in Taybeh are part of a much broader and deeply troubling pattern of attacks that are forcing Christians from their homeland. We cannot remain silent while churches are threatened, land is stolen, and families are driven from their communities. The global Christian community must respond with urgency and solidarity.”

CMEP joins the priests and residents of Taybeh in calling upon the Trump Administration and Congress , to launch a transparent investigation into these crimes, apply diplomatic pressure on Israeli authorities to hold settlers accountable, and provide tangible support to ensure that Christian life continues to flourish in the land of Christ’s birth. The Holy Land cannot survive without its indigenous Christian presence.

You can read the full statement by the priests of the churches of Taybeh below:

Statement by the Priests of the Churches of Taybeh – Ramallah / Palestine
Regarding the Repeated Attacks by Settlers on Land, Holy Sites, and Property

July 8, 2025

We, the priests of the three churches of Taybeh – the Greek Orthodox Church, the Latin Church, and the Melkite Greek Catholic Church – raise our voices on behalf of the people of our town and our parishioners to strongly condemn the ongoing and grave series of attacks targeting Taybeh. These assaults threaten the security and stability of our town and aim at undermining the dignity of its residents and the sanctity of its sacred land.

On Monday, July 7, 2025, settlers deliberately set fire near the town's cemetery and the historic Church of Saint George (Al-Khadr), dating back to the 5th century – one of the oldest religious landmarks in Palestine. Were it not for the vigilance of local residents and the swift intervention of firefighting teams, the damage could have been far more catastrophic.

In a scene that has become provocatively routine, settlers continue to graze their cattle in Taybeh's agricultural lands, including family-owned fields and areas near residential homes, without deterrence or intervention from the authorities. These violations go beyond provocation; they cause direct harm to olive trees – a vital source of livelihood for the people of Taybeh – and prevent farmers from accessing and cultivating their land.


The eastern area of Taybeh, which comprises more than half of the town's territory and includes the bulk of its agricultural activity, has effectively become an open target for illegal settlement outposts that expand quietly under military protection. These outposts serve as a base for further assaults on the land and its people.

As priests, we bear a pastoral and moral responsibility toward our community. We cannot remain silent in the face of these relentless attacks that threaten our very existence on this land. Taybeh – known in the Gospel as "Ephraim," the place to which Jesus withdrew before His Passion (John 11:54) – is the last remaining entirely Christian town in the West Bank. Its wholly Christian population represents a unique presence in the region, a living testimony that dates back to the time of Christ. This enduring spiritual and cultural legacy, preserved faithfully by the people of Taybeh across generations, is now at serious risk of erosion and displacement due to the systematic targeting of land, sacred places, and the local community.

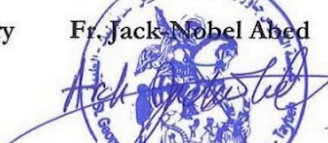
We call upon local and international actors – especially consuls, ambassadors, and church representatives around the world – to take the following actions:

1. Launch an immediate and transparent investigation into the incidents of arson and the ongoing assaults on property, agricultural land, and holy sites.
2. Apply diplomatic pressure on the occupying authorities to halt settler actions and prevent them from entering or grazing in Taybeh's lands.
3. Dispatch international and church delegations to conduct field visits, document the damages, and bear witness to the deteriorating reality on the ground.
4. Support the people of Taybeh through economic and agricultural initiatives, and strengthen their resilience with effective legal accompaniment.

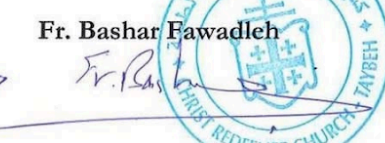
We believe that the Holy Land cannot remain alive without its indigenous people. Forcibly removing farmers from their land, threatening their churches, and encircling their towns is a wound to the living heart of this nation. Yet we remain steadfast in our shared faith and hope – that truth and justice will ultimately prevail.

Fr. Daoud Khoury


Fr. Jack-Nobel Abed



Fr. Bashar Fawadleh





A fire set by settlers surrounds the historic church of St. George on July 7, photos courtesy of the Taybeh residents.

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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:

[July 8, 2025: CMEP Joins more than 200 Humanitarian Organizations in Condemning Israel's Militarized Aid Distribution Scheme in Gaza](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins more than 200 humanitarian organizations in calling for the immediate end to Israel's deadly, military-controlled aid distribution scheme in Gaza and the restoration of a unified, UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanism. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, now responsible for food delivery, has replaced 400 community-based distribution points with only four militarized sites, turning the desperate pursuit of food into a death sentence. Since the scheme's implementation, over 500 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 4,000 injured while simply trying to survive.

[July 1, 2025: CMEP Calls for Release of Unlawfully Detained Palestinian Medical Personnel](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins twenty four other civil society organizations in calling for the release of the unlawfully detained Palestinian medical workers in Gaza and the West Bank. This includes doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals working for international humanitarian organizations such as MedGlobal and Children Not Numbers.

[June 24, 2025: CMEP Welcomes Iran-Israel Ceasefire and Urges U.S. to Prevent Further Escalation; Calls for Immediate Focus on Ending the War in Gaza](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes the ceasefire between Iran and Israel and urges all parties, including the U.S., to ensure it holds and leads to long-term de-escalation. The U.S. attack on Iranian nuclear facilities was unlawful and reckless, bringing the region dangerously close to another devastating war. As we step back from the brink, the U.S. must now prioritize a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and renewed focus on ending the ongoing atrocities against the Palestinian people.

[June 23, 2025: CMEP Calls for Protection of Syria's Christian Communities following a suicide attack on the Church of the Prophet Elias in Damascus in Damascus](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) mourns the devastating suicide bombing that took place at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias in Damascus, Syria, on June 23, 2025. CMEP

stands in deep solidarity with Syria's Christian community and calls for the international community and the Syrian government to safeguard the rights and protections of all minorities in Syria.

[Jun 13, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Condemns Israeli Strikes Against Iran and Urges De-escalation of Regional Aggression](#)

CMEP condemns in the strongest possible terms Israel's recent attacks on Iran, including reported strikes near nuclear facilities and within civilian areas. These reckless and unlawful actions risk the lives of hundreds of millions of people across the Middle East and escalate the threat of a catastrophic regional war. We also call on Iran to cease its counterattacks against Israel. Military solutions are not the answer and will only cause more death, destruction, and harm. Such escalations not only cause civilian deaths but further destabilize the entire peace and security of the region.

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

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