WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CMEP Statement: Churches for Middle East Peace Calls for the Safeguarding of Healthcare Facilities Following Attacks on Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City

August 19, 2025, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) stands in solidarity with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem following the horrific Israeli airstrike on Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City on August 18, which took the lives of seven people and further devastated an already collapsing health system. Prior to the strike, an "armed local outlaw band" entered the hospital, setting fire to the morgue and staff prayer room and opening fire inside the facility, forcing doctors, nurses, and patients to flee. Such actions desecrate a sacred space of healing, endanger the most vulnerable, and strip Gaza's people of their last remaining places of refuge.

This attack is part of a disturbing pattern of violence against medical facilities in Gaza, which the United Nations has recently described as an Israeli policy of "medicide." The systematic targeting and destruction of hospitals and clinics is not only a violation of international law but also an unconscionable assault on human dignity, leaving thousands without access to the lifesaving care they so desperately need.

We join the Diocese of Jerusalem in condemning this act and urgently call on all parties to the conflict, including both Israeli forces and local armed groups in Gaza, to ensure that hospitals remain safe, demilitarized sanctuaries for civilians. The continued targeting of medical facilities erodes the last spaces of refuge for Gaza's population, compounding the humanitarian catastrophe

and further endangering innocent lives. The international community must act decisively to uphold the sanctity of healthcare and protect all those seeking safety and treatment within hospital walls.

You can find the full statement by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem below:

The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East
The Diocese of Jerusalem

الْكَنِيسَة الْأَسْقُفِيَّة
في الْقُدْس وَالشَرْق الْأَوْسَط
مُطْرانِيَة الْقُدْس

STATEMENT ON YESTERDAY'S MULTIPLE ATTACKS ON AL-AHLI ARAB HOSPITAL

August 18, 2025

Yesterday morning, Sunday, August 17th at 12:15 am, armed members of a local outlaw band entered the grounds of our Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City, demanding the treatment of one of their wounded gunmen. The medical staff readily complied and treated him promptly and with full respect, as they do with all their patients. Despite this, after doctors discharged him in good health, members of the band proceeded to set on fire the hospital morgue and staff prayer room, meanwhile blocking the hospital entrance to prevent firefighters from entering to extinguish the blaze.

As a result, the fire came dangerously close to tents currently serving as the hospital's emergency department, forcing terrified doctors and nurses to quickly evacuate their equally alarmed patients. Although the outlaws' leader subsequently arrived and intervened so that the fire could be extinguished, the two aforementioned sections of the hospital were left severely damaged.

Once members of this first band all departed and the staff settled-in to resume normal operations, a second group of outlaws stormed into the hospital campus. Its members then began shooting into the air and shouting wildly for the next two hours. This attracted the attention of an IDF drone. Without its operator giving due warning to the staff, the drone fired suddenly into the hospital compound, killing seven and severely wounding five.

As the owner and manager of this, the oldest and only Christian hospital in Gaza, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem condemns these multiple attacks and calls upon all parties to cease from making this sacred place of healing into a battleground, contrary to Articles 18 and 19 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, we implore the Occupying Power to fulfill its duty of protecting ours and other medical facilities in Gaza, as mandated under Article 56 of that same treaty.

We would like to thank the heads of the local clans and tribes who, later in the day, paid solidarity visits to the hospital, condemning the above acts. As a similar display of solidarity, we invite Christians and all people of goodwill around the world to pray and advocate on behalf of the courageous staff of our hospital—and, indeed, those of all such institutions in the combat zone—that they may continue, without further assaults or disruptions, Christ's compassionate healing ministry in the very homeland in which our Lord himself served during His earthly life.

May God have mercy on us all.

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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:

Aug 14, 2025: Joint Statement: Gaza: Israel threatens to ban major aid organizations as starvation deepens
Together with more than 100 organizations, CMEP is calling for an end to Israel's weaponization of aid. Despite claims by Israeli authorities that there is no limit on humanitarian aid entering Gaza, most major international NGOs have been unable to deliver a single truck of lifesaving supplies since 2 March.

Aug 12, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace Opposes the Israeli Plan to Occupy Gaza City
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) strongly condemns reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is advancing plans for a full military takeover of Gaza City. Such an operation would deepen an already unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, devastate what remains of civilian life in northern Gaza, and place the remaining hostages in grave danger.

Jul 29, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace Condemns the Second Israeli Settler Attack on the Christian Palestinian Town of Taybeh in a Month
CMEP strongly condemns the renewed settler attack on the Christian village of Taybeh in the occupied West Bank on July 28, 2025, just three weeks after the July 7 arson attempt near the Church of Saint George. We affirm and elevate the powerful statement from the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches of Jerusalem and the Forum of Holy Land Christians, who have once again sounded the alarm about the ongoing campaign of settler violence, this time involving masked men torching cars and defacing property with hateful graffiti. These repeated assaults are not isolated

incidents but part of a systematic effort to terrorize the last all-Christian town in the West Bank and drive Palestinian Christians from their ancestral homeland.

[Jul 23, 2025: Joint Statement: As Mass Starvation Spreads Across Gaza, Our Colleagues and Those We Serve Are Wasting Away](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins more than 100 humanitarian and human rights organizations in sounding the alarm over the catastrophic starvation crisis in Gaza. This joint statement urges governments to take immediate and decisive action to end Israel's aid siege, open all land crossings, restore the full flow of humanitarian aid, and demand an immediate and permanent ceasefire. CMEP condemns the killings of Gazans seeking aid, of which the death toll now reaches 875. Immediate access to life-saving aid is imperative as children, the elderly, and the most vulnerable suffer from disease, malnutrition, and starvation. The ongoing, deliberate starvation of civilians amounts to an international war crime and elicits global moral outrage. This must end now.

[July 17, 2025: CMEP Condemns Attack on Gaza's Holy Family Catholic Church, Calls for Immediate Ceasefire and Protection of All Civilians and Religious Sites](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) denounces in the strongest possible terms the Israeli military attack today on the Holy Family Catholic Church in Gaza City, the only Catholic church in Gaza. The strike killed at least three civilians and caused extensive damage to the parish complex, which has been sheltering approximately 700 displaced civilians, mostly children, since the beginning of the war. This most recent attack marks the sixth assault on churches in Gaza since October 2023. Each of these attacks is in clear violation of international law, as humanitarian refuges and holy sites are both protected, and an attack on human dignity and freedom of worship.

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

Contact Us

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