



WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. - September 18, 2025

Media Contact:

media@cmep.org

(202) 543-1222

CMEP Statement on the Freezing of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem's Bank Accounts

September 18, 2025, Washington D.C.- On August 6, 2025, the Jerusalem Municipality froze the bank accounts of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This action is deeply troubling, both in its immediate impact and in its broader implications. It constitutes a direct violation of the historic Status Quo that has governed Jerusalem for centuries and threatens the ability of the Churches to provide vital spiritual, educational, charitable, and social services to their communities.

The imposition of arnona (municipal property taxes) on church institutions is not only inconsistent with the long-standing exemptions recognized under Ottoman, British, Jordanian, and Israeli governance, but also disregards international agreements that enshrine these rights. Religious institutions in Jerusalem have historically been exempt from such taxation because they serve the common good, offering education, welfare, and health services to populations of all backgrounds. For centuries, these exemptions have been recognized as part of the delicate fabric of coexistence in Jerusalem.

Unilaterally freezing church bank accounts undermines the sustainability of Christian institutions in the Holy Land, accelerates the pressure on local Christian communities to emigrate, and tears at the diverse social fabric of Jerusalem. These measures echo past attempts in 2018 to impose arnona on churches, when Christian leaders united to close the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in protest of

what they rightly called an unprecedented attack on their rights.

We urge American officials and other members of the international community to use their influence to press Israel to reverse this policy and to uphold the Status Quo arrangements that have preserved religious diversity and peace in Jerusalem for centuries. Furthermore, we call on the Government of Israel and the Jerusalem Municipality to immediately revoke this measure and unfreeze the bank accounts of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.

Protecting the rights and sustainability of Christian communities in Jerusalem is not only a matter of historical justice, but also of ensuring that the Holy City remains a shared home for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

###

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:

[Sep 15, 2025: CMEP Condemns the Jerusalem attack by Hamas and the Israeli attack on Qatar as further escalations in the ongoing Israel/Hamas War](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is appalled by the alarming escalation of violence across the Middle East over the past week in the ongoing battle between Israel and Hamas. Civilians pay the highest price. The violence must stop, and the ongoing killing must be brought to an end. The cycle of brutality continues to devastate lives, fueling greater insecurity and suffering for all.

[Sep 12, 2025: Joint Statement: "A Death Sentence" – Aid Agencies Warn of Israel's Assault on Gaza City](#)

45 Humanitarian and civil society organizations warn that Israel's assault on Gaza City amounts to a death sentence. Intensified Israeli military attacks on Gaza City and forced displacement orders for the entire city are leaving families with an impossible dilemma: flee and risk death on the road and in overcrowded displacement areas, or stay and face relentless bombardment in their shelters.

Aug 27, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace Elevates the Joint Statement by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Churches for Middle East Peace affirms the joint statement from the Greek Orthodox and Latin Patriarchates of Jerusalem as a cry from the heart of the Christian community in the Holy Land, a prophetic voice of truth spoken amid unbearable suffering. Their words remind us that what is unfolding in Gaza is not an abstraction, but the lived reality of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, including the faithful who have sought refuge within the very walls of the Church. The Patriarchates' declaration that there can be "no future based on captivity, displacement of Palestinians or revenge" is both a moral compass and a summons to the global conscience.

Aug 26, 2025 Joint Statement: The Latest Planned Israeli Military Offensive in Gaza City Must Be Halted

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joined twenty church-based organizations in calling for Israel to halt its planned military offensive in Gaza City. With famine already declared in Gaza, further military operations will only cause further suffering and death for a civilian population without anywhere else to go. As the letter reads, "this displacement will result in a modern-day death march that is clearly intended to ethnically cleanse half of the Gaza Strip and compress all of Gaza's population into a tiny sliver of territory incapable of sustaining life." The letter calls on all parties, including the United States, to use all leverage available to call upon the Israeli government to reverse its plans for a military offensive in Gaza City and to instead pursue a durable and lasting ceasefire.

Aug 25, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Statement on UN Declaration of Famine in Gaza

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) laments the famine conditions in Gaza and uplifts the UN official declaration of famine announced on Friday, August 22, 2025. This is not a natural disaster; this famine is entirely man-made. It is the direct result of the Israeli government's systematic restriction of humanitarian aid, a policy that amounts to the deliberate starvation of a civilian population. Friday's famine confirmation shows the world has failed to act.

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

Contact Us

Follow Us

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 505

Washington, District of Columbia 20002

(202) 543-1222 info@cmepe.org

[DONATE](#)

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[BLOG](#)

[EVENTS](#)

[Unsubscribe](#) or [Manage Your
Preferences](#)