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Media Contact:

media@cmep.org

(202) 543-1222

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Launches Armenian Advisory Council at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York

October 10, 2025, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) proudly announces the launch of its [Armenian Advisory Council](#), inaugurated on September 16, 2025, at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City. The launch event, titled *“From Ararat to the World,”* brought together church leaders, ecumenical representatives, and members of the Armenian-American community for an evening of fellowship, cultural celebration, and shared commitment to justice and peace.

The Armenian Advisory Council is a new CMEP initiative dedicated to amplifying Armenian voices in support of peacebuilding, human rights, and the preservation of Armenian Christian heritage, particularly in Armenia, the Middle East, and the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem. The Council will serve as a platform for collaboration among Armenian Church leaders, diaspora communities, policymakers, and advocates to ensure that Armenian concerns remain central to global and U.S. conversations on peace and justice in the Middle East.

His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, serves as Patron of the Armenian Advisory Council. In his remarks, Archbishop Aykazian reflected on the urgent challenges facing Armenian and sister Christian communities worldwide, calling for “a united voice, magnified by friends who share our mutual concerns and influence in shaping a more just and peaceful future.”

The evening's program began with words of welcome from Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, who thanked CMEP for its long-standing partnership with the Armenian Church and emphasized the critical importance of solidarity during this time of hardship for Armenia and Armenian Christians in the Holy Land. "It is a time for us to stand together," he said, "in witness to faith and in commitment to justice."

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of CMEP, presented the vision and objectives of the Armenian Advisory Council. "Through this initiative," she said, "we seek to deepen relationships with Armenian communities and ensure their voices are represented in our advocacy for peace and human rights. The Armenian Christian community is integral to the story of the Middle East. We are committed to supporting its history, sustainability, and future presence across the region."

The Armenian Advisory Council will focus on:

- Strengthening partnerships with the Armenian Church in the U.S., Armenia, and throughout the Middle East.
- Engaging the American public through webinars, seminars, and public forums addressing Armenian concerns.
- Advancing congressional advocacy to promote:
 - The right of return for displaced populations of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).
 - The preservation of Armenian historical and religious sites worldwide.
 - The protection of the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem.
 - The safety and sustainability of Armenian communities under threat.

Members of the newly launched Armenian Advisory Council include:

- Patron: His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director
- Council Members: Dr. Garo Garibian, Haig Gulian, Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, Herman Purutyan, Sonya Nersessian, Claire Kedeshian, and Dr. Anna Seferian

The evening concluded with an elegant dinner and cultural program celebrating Armenian heritage. Guests enjoyed a display of Armenian pottery and ceramics from Balian Ceramics, Arman Darian Ceramic Art, and Georges Pottery, all based in Jerusalem, highlighting the enduring contributions of Armenian artisans to the region's culture and history.

More than 90 guests attended the launch, including clergy from across the Eastern Diocese, representatives of sister churches, and leaders from the Armenian-American and ecumenical communities. CMEP expressed deep gratitude to the Armenian Orthodox Church, His Grace Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, His Emminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros for their partnership and patronage in hosting the event.

For more information or to support the activities of the Armenian Advisory Council visit [HERE](https://cmep.salsalabs.org/prarmcouncil).



Guests Enjoying an Armenian Dinner while listening to remarks by CMEP's Communication Coordinator Christopher Huth.



Patron of the Armenian Advisory Council His Eminence Archbishop Vicken Aykazian sitting next to CMEP Executive Director Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon.



Remarks by His Grace Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan.



Guests enjoying welcoming drinks and select auction items from Jerusalem as fundraisers for the activities of the council.

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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:

Oct 9, 2025: CMEP Welcomes Ceasefire Implementation with Cautious Hope and Calls for a Permanent End to the War on Gaza

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes the implementation of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas with cautious optimism. After nearly two years of relentless warfare, widespread destruction, and devastating loss of life, we pray this agreement marks a turning point toward peace, justice, and healing for all who call the Holy Land home.

Oct 3, 2025: CMEP Condemns the Attacks Against the Sumud Gaza Flotilla

The Global Sumud Flotilla, nearly 50 ships carrying humanitarian aid for Gaza, has been violently attacked by Israeli forces in international waters, with hundreds of peaceful activists arrested. Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) condemns these illegal assaults, calls for the immediate release of all detainees and aid, and urges an end to the siege and ongoing massacres in Gaza.

Sep 30, 2025: CMEP Echoes Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem on Armenian Patriarchate Foreclosure Threat

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) affirms the call of Jerusalem's church leaders and stands in solidarity with the Armenian Patriarchate. The renewed foreclosure threat is a direct challenge to the centuries-old Status Quo that safeguards Christian communities in the Holy Land and risks undermining Jerusalem's religious diversity and heritage.

Sep 18, 2025: CMEP Statement on the Freezing of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem's Bank Accounts

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.

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.

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

Contact Us

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)

110 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 505

Washington, District of Columbia 20002

(202) 543-1222 info@cmepe.org

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