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Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Elevates the Findings of the “Protecting Holy Land Christians” Report

December 10, 2025, Washington, D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes and affirms the newly released [Protecting Holy Land Christians report](#) and its urgent call to safeguard the Christian presence in the Holy Land. We stand in deep solidarity with our sisters and brothers whose testimonies fill these pages, and we bear witness to the daily realities facing Christian communities, churches, and institutions across Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem.

The report vividly documents the profound toll of the ongoing war in Gaza on the Christian community. CMEP joins church leaders across the region in calling for the sustaining of the ceasefire, full humanitarian access, and international support for rebuilding the vital ministries of Gaza’s Christian community.

In the West Bank, the report highlights escalating settler violence and encroachments that directly threaten Christian life and heritage, including recent attacks in Taybeh, the West Bank’s last remaining all-Christian town, and incursions near the Monastery of St. Gerasimos. These acts of intimidation erode safety, economic stability, and the continuity of Christian presence in the land where our faith was born. CMEP echoes the report’s call for accountability for perpetrators of settler violence and for the full protection of religious sites, properties, and communities.

The report also documents unprecedented restrictions on freedom of worship in Jerusalem. Such discriminatory restrictions violate longstanding Status Quo arrangements and constitute a direct assault on the religious rights of Palestinian Christians. CMEP calls on Israeli authorities to guarantee unhindered, dignified access to holy sites for all Christians.

We likewise raise our voice alongside the Churches in warning against policies threatening Christian institutions through unjust taxation (arnona), punitive municipal actions, and development plans such as the proposed expansion of the Jerusalem Walls National Park on the Mount of Olives. These measures undermine the historic Christian presence, compromise sacred spaces, and obstruct the ability of churches to carry out their ministries.

The Protecting Holy Land Christians report is an essential, timely testimony from the church leaders and communities who embody the Christian witness of the Holy Land. CMEP strongly supports their recommendations, including:

- Ensuring the ceasefire in Gaza is upheld and expanded, with full humanitarian aid access
- Supporting the reconstruction of church-run hospitals, schools, and social ministries
- Holding settlers accountable for attacks on Christian communities and heritage sites
- Guaranteeing freedom of worship and access to holy sites for all Christians
- Ending punitive taxation practices and safeguarding church properties
- Rejecting development plans that threaten Christian sites on the Mount of Olives and beyond

CMEP remains steadfast in elevating the voices of Holy Land Christians and advocating for their dignity, safety, and flourishing. As the report makes clear, the Christian community plays a vital role in the spiritual, social, and cultural fabric of the occupied Palestinian territories of Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

We urge governments, policymakers, and global Christian communities to heed these testimonies, support the Churches' ministries, and take meaningful action that protects the Christian presence in the Holy Land for generations to come.

You can read the full report below:

PROTECTING HOLY LAND CHRISTIANS

Issues Facing Christians in the Holy Land | December 2025

Executive Summary

- The Christian community in the Holy Land continues to face escalating violence, economic hardship, and restrictions on worship, with churches, schools, and hospitals suffering damage.
- Threats to Christian heritage - particularly in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza alongside issues of unjustified taxation - are the source of ongoing concerns that threaten the existence of the community and the churches.
- Urgent action is needed to bolster, support, and maintain the current ceasefire in Gaza, and uphold religious freedom, protect Christians as the living stones, and provide economic and diplomatic support to sustain their communities across the Holy Land.

Impact of War on Christians in Gaza and Reconstruction

The Christian community in the Holy Land continues to experience hardships, severely exacerbated by the war. The Holy Family Church in Gaza was struck in July, killing three people taking shelter there and injuring 10. Following this attack, Patriarch Theophilos III and Cardinal Pizzaballa visited the churches in solidarity with their communities in the Strip. In a May 2025 report, the UN estimated that half of all religious and cultural sites in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Several Christian sites - the Holy Family Church, Church of St Porphyrios, and Al Ahli Baptist Hospital - have been damaged since the start of the war. Less than 600 Christians continue to shelter within the two churches, which have only seen a small uptick in humanitarian support since the ceasefire. Al Ahli Baptist Hospital, which accommodated five times its capacity during the war, remains short on medical equipment and is not able to receive medicines due to restrictions on humanitarian aid entering Gaza. A Christian in Gaza reported that they have seen only a “slight improvement to daily life” since the ceasefire.

Recommendation: Hold relevant actors to account to ensure the currently reached ceasefire is bolstered, supported and maintained, with an adequate flow of aid reaching local people. Explore opportunities to offer economic support for rebuilding church-run hospitals, schools, and charities and access for Heads of Churches to Gaza. Furthermore, constructively engage the Churches as a partner in the interfaith dialogue put forward in Point 18 of President Trump’s Peace Plan.

Settler Advances on Christian Communities and Heritage in the West Bank

In July 2025, Israeli settlers ignited a fire near a Christian cemetery and centuries-old Church of St George in Taybeh, the last remaining all-Christian town in the West Bank. This reflects a growing and intensifying trend impacting the community. Settlers have rendered some olive groves inaccessible and damaged crops, seeking to cripple the local economy of Christians. Following similar actions in Taybeh, Israeli settlers have begun encroaching on the Monastery of St Gerasimos near Jericho. These systematic attacks are growing more prevalent throughout the West Bank and increasing pressure on the Christian community in the Holy Land.

Recommendation: Liaise with Israeli counterparts in calling for these settlers to be held accountable by the Israeli authorities and ensure the protection of religious heritage for Christians under their authority.

Freedom of Religion and Access to Holy Sites

This year, violence and strict restrictions around the Old City and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were unprecedented during the Holy Light celebration. Centuries-old processions were interrupted and attacked by radical Israelis in and around the Old City during the Holy Week. Christian rituals and traditions were not respected, and less than 2,000 Christians were permitted to reach the Holy Sepulchre following another year of

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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:

[Dec 9, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Calls for Respect of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and Recognition of its Independence from Government Interference](#)

In light of the Church’s historic and ongoing role, CMEP urges full respect for the Armenian Apostolic Church’s independence and internal governance vis-à-vis the Armenian State. Matters concerning the election of the Catholicos of All Armenians or the discipline of clergy should remain within the Church’s own canonical processes, free from external interference and secular political influences and interventions.

[Nov 17, 2025: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) upon the Release of Kairos Palestine 2](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) acknowledges the release of Kairos Palestine 2 as a profound theological testimony written in the rubble of Gaza, in the dust of demolished homes, in the tears of mothers, and in the refugee camps of Palestine. It is a theology of the cross, born of suffering, endurance, and deep faith, yet also a theology of hope: faith and love from the heart of suffering. As we receive this new Kairos Document, we do so with humility and sobriety. We hear the pain, the longing for liberation, and the steadfast conviction that justice and peace are aligned with God’s purposes for the holy land. We also recognize that Kairos Palestine 2 challenges all of us, especially churches and Christians in the West, to confront unjust systems that deny human liberty and freedom.

[Nov 12, 2025: Joint Statement by U.S. Organizations concerning the potential inclusion of Azerbaijan in the planned International Security Force for Gaza](#)

We, the below-listed U.S. nongovernmental organizations are deeply concerned by media reports that the International Security Force (ISF) planned for Gaza under President Trump’s 20-Point Plan may include a military contingent from Azerbaijan, and urge the United States and other partners to reject such a presence. International third party security or peacekeeping forces can be an important element of post-conflict stabilization, but as the performance of certain militaries operating under the MONUSCO mission in Congo and the MINUSTAH mission in Haiti demonstrate, it is vital that such forces bring both impartiality and a track record of respect for human rights.

[Nov 4, 2025: 2025 Multi-Faith Global Letter](#)

We, leaders representing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, come together united by the profound belief that all human beings are created in the image of God. In this conviction, we affirm the inherent dignity, equality, and worth of every person, regardless of religion, nationality, or ethnicity. This belief calls us to speak with urgency, compassion, and moral clarity in response to the ongoing devastation in Gaza and the broader Middle East.

[Nov 4, 2025: CMEP’s Cover Letter to the 2025 Multi-Faith Global Letter](#)

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Leaders Demand Intervention, Accountability, an End to the Atrocities in Gaza and the West Bank, and an End to All Violence.

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

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