



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Washington, D.C. - January 17, 2026**

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### **A STATEMENT FROM THE PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM ON UNITY AND REPRESENTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE HOLY LAND**

January 17, 2026

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in the Holy Land affirm before the faithful and before the world that the flock of Christ in this land is entrusted to the Apostolic Churches, which have borne their sacred ministry across centuries with steadfast devotion. Recent activities undertaken by local individuals who advance damaging ideologies, such as Christian Zionism, mislead the public, sow confusion, and harm the unity of our flock. These undertakings have found favor among certain political actors in Israel and beyond who seek to push a political agenda which may harm the Christian presence in the Holy Land and the wider Middle East.

Holy Scripture teaches us that “we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Romans 12:5). To claim authority outside the communion of the Church is to wound the unity of the faithful and burden the pastoral mission entrusted to the historic churches in the very land where our Lord lived, taught, suffered, and rose from the dead.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches further note with concern that these individuals have been welcomed at official levels both locally and internationally. Such actions constitute interference in the internal life of the churches and disregard the pastoral responsibility vested in the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem reiterate that they alone represent the Churches and their flock in matters pertaining to Christian religious, communal, and pastoral life in the Holy Land.

May the Lord, who is the Shepherd and Guardian of souls, grant wisdom for the protection of His people and the safeguarding of His witness in this sacred land.

**—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem**

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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.*

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Recent CMEP Statements and Press Releases:

**Jan 5, 2026: [Churches for Middle East Peace joins 53 International NGOs in warning that Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace join international humanitarian organizations in warning that Israel's recent registration measures threaten to shut down life-saving aid operations across Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. If allowed to proceed, these measures would force dozens of INGOs to cease operations, cutting off food, healthcare, shelter, and nutrition assistance to millions of civilians facing extreme need. Humanitarian access is not political or optional; it is a legal obligation under international humanitarian law that must be protected.

**Dec 18, 2025: [Public Statement: CMEP Supports the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches' Appeal for Children with Cancer in Gaza](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) elevates and stands in solidarity with the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem in their statement of Support for the Work of Augusta Victoria Hospital in Treating Children with Cancer from Gaza. We echo their urgent humanitarian appeal to the relevant Israeli authorities to grant permits allowing children in Gaza diagnosed with leukemia to travel to Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives for life-saving, specialized treatment that is unavailable in Gaza. These are young and vulnerable patients whose survival depends on timely access to care. Delays in treatment for childhood cancer can mean the difference between life and death.

**Dec 17, 2025: [Press Release: UNRWA USA Leads 104 Organizations Urging Trump Administration to Include UNRWA in Gaza's Recovery](#)**

UNRWA USA National Committee (UNRWA USA) led a national coalition of 104 civil society organizations, including Churches for Middle East Peace, to urge the Trump Administration to include the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in its plans for Gaza's recovery. In a joint letter to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, refugee, human rights, and humanitarian organizations called on the Trump Administration "to re-open lines of communication with UNRWA and allow the Agency to continue fulfilling its mandate in accordance with international humanitarian principles, until a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees is secured."

**December 15, 2025: [Public Statement: CMEP Condemns the Terrorist Attack at Bondi Beach](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins the Council of Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem in strongly condemning the horrific terrorist attack at Bondi Beach in Australia, which targeted the Jewish community on the first night of Hanukkah. We echo their unequivocal rejection of this violence and stand in deep solidarity with the Jewish community in Australia and across the world.

**Dec 12, 2025: [Press Release: Humanitarian Snapshot 13 Reveals Dire Post-Ceasefire Conditions in Gaza and the West Bank](#)**

Humanitarian Snapshot 13 exposes the grim realities facing Palestinians in the wake of the recent ceasefire deal. Drawing on testimonies from 45 NGOs and signed by more than two dozen leading aid and humanitarian organizations, the report documents ongoing Israeli obstruction of life-saving assistance, the deepening hardship on already-devastated communities, and the continued pattern of Israeli airstrikes despite the ceasefire framework. It also chronicles a sharp escalation of violence by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank, underscoring the widening crisis across the occupied territories. This snapshot offers an urgent, evidence-based call for action to protect civilians, ensure unfettered humanitarian access, and confront the structural violence driving this humanitarian emergency.

**December 10, 2025: [Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Elevates the Findings of the "Protecting Holy Land Christians" Report](#)**

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.

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

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