



**WORKING TOGETHER:**  
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is  
Possible.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **A Time for Peace**

Today the human family is ensnared in armed conflicts that engender despair, anxiety, and the unending slaughter of innocents.

We are a group of religious leaders from the United States and Iran. With profound sympathy for all victims of war and oppression, we together implore our governmental leaders and those of other countries to take concrete steps towards reconciliation before even greater catastrophes befall us.

Now is the time for religious leaders everywhere to take meaningful, constructive steps toward lasting peace and to extinguish the flames of enmity and hatred. Mutual trust must be forged between nations and faith communities, grounded in our sacred texts that call us to extend good will even in the hardest circumstances.

Genuine peace means more than the cessation of hostilities. It entails cooperation across differences to address injustice, poverty and hunger, environmental degradation, and threats to public health.

To realize true peace which blesses all parties to conflict, religious leaders must call those wielding political power to oppose all aggression and tyranny, to acknowledge the rights of others, and to uphold universal human rights. Religious leaders with moral authority, sustained by their communities, must courageously stand for human dignity and nonviolent means of resolving conflicts.

The Golden Rule--do unto others as you would have them do unto you--is a cornerstone of our shared heritage and comes from God speaking directly to Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. If action to transform violent conflicts is not taken now, the horrors of war and

devastation will spread and engulf thousands, if not millions, of innocent lives. We can not allow that to happen.

We stand ready to partner with governments, other faith communities, and civil society organizations to prepare the ground for genuine peace and cooperation, allowing hope to overcome cynicism and despair. And we pray that such a concerted effort, across national and communal borders, will bear fruit, so that our children and grandchildren can share an increasingly interdependent world in which all inhabitants flourish in lasting peace and security.

## Initial Signatories

### **Professor Dr. Gholamreza Aavani**

Professor Emeritus, Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran; Member of the Iranian Academy of Sciences (Iran)

### **Dr. Reza Davari Ardakani**

Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Tehran; Member of the Iranian Academy of Sciences and former President of the Academy from 1998 to 2023 (Iran)

### **Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon**

Executive Director, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) (U.S.A.)

### **The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane D.D.**

Eighth Episcopal Bishop of Washington, DC, Ret. (U.S.A.)

### **Ayatollah Mohaghegh Damad**

Dean, Department of Islamic Studies; The Academy of Sciences of Iran; Honorary President, Religions for Peace (Iran)

### **Rabbi Amy Eilberg**

Peace and Justice Activist; Author; Educator (U.S.A.)

### **Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb**

Director, Shomeret Shalom Ordination Program; Visual and Performing Artist (U.S.A.)

### **Ann Graber Hershberger**

Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) (U.S.A.)

### **Professor Rasul Jafarian**

Department of History at the University of Tehran; Director, Central Library of the University of Tehran; Permanent Member, Iranian Academy of Sciences (Iran)

### **Imam Dr. M.Mehdi Kazmi**

Executive Director, Auliya Council. Mahopac, New York (U.S.A.)

### **Dr. John Paul Lederach**

Senior Fellow, Humanity United; Professor Emeritus of International Peacebuilding, Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame (U.S.A.)

**Dr. Bridget Moix**

General Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers) (U.S.A.)

**Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie**

President and General Secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (U.S.A.)

**Seyyed Mohammad-Kazem Mousavi-Bojnourdi**

Prominent Iranian Historian and Theologian; Founder and Director, Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia (Iran)

**Hojatoleslam Seyyed Abolhassan Navab**

President of the University of Religions and Denominations, Qom (Iran)

**Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf**

Founder and President of Cordoba House, New York (U.S.A.)

**Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef**

USAF-Retired; President, Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque (U.S.A.)

**Rabbi Amy Joy Small**

Retired Congregational Rabbi; Community Leader; Educator; Former Board Chair of Religions for Peace USA (U.S.A.)

**Professor Jim Wallis**

Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair, McCourt School of Public Policy, and Director, Center on Faith and Justice, Georgetown University (USA)

**Most Reverend John C. Wester**

Catholic Archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico (U.S.A.)

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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 17, 2026: A Statement From The Patriarchs And Heads Of The Churches In Jerusalem On Unity And Representation Of The Christian Communities In The Holy Land](#)**

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.

**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.

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

## Contact Us

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