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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Humanitarian Organizations petition Israeli High Court as  
closure deadline approaches**

*The clock is ticking on a large part of the humanitarian response sustaining civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory.*

Thirty-seven international aid organisations have been ordered by Israeli authorities to cease operations in the occupied Palestinian territory by the end of February under revised Israeli registration rules. With efforts to force closures imminent, a group of leading humanitarian organisations have taken the unprecedented step of jointly petitioning the Israeli High Court to suspend the measures before irreparable harm is done to civilians who rely on their assistance. On 30 December 2025, the affected organisations were formally notified that their Israeli registrations would expire the following day and that they would have 60 days to wind down activities in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The notification letter stated that the decision could only be overturned if organisations completed the full registration process, with which they cannot legally or ethically comply.

Efforts to force closures could begin as early as 28 February 2026. The effect would be immediate, extending well beyond individual organisations to the wider humanitarian system. In Gaza, families remain dependent on external assistance amid continuing restrictions on aid entry and renewed strikes in densely populated areas. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, military incursions, demolitions, displacement, settlement expansion and settler violence are driving rising humanitarian needs.

Palestinian Authority registration provides the lawful basis for international NGOs to operate in Palestinian territory. Under the Fourth Geneva Convention, an occupying power must facilitate

relief for civilians under its control. Conditioning humanitarian presence on sweeping administrative demands, including the transfer of comprehensive national staff lists, alongside vague and politicised grounds for denial, risks disrupting life-saving services and eroding the obligation to ensure civilian welfare under occupation.

The demand to transfer personal data raises acute security and legal risks. It exposes national staff to potential retaliation and undermines established data protection and confidentiality safeguards. For European organisations in particular, compliance would create serious legal and contractual liabilities. More broadly, such requirements set a precedent that could chill principled humanitarian engagement in highly politicised contexts.

International NGOs have proposed practical alternatives, including independent sanctions screening and donor-audited vetting systems, that preserve both compliance and staff protection without disclosing personal data. No substantive response has been provided. Enforcement has meanwhile begun in practice, including blocked supplies and denial of visas and access for foreign staff.

Alongside UN agencies and Palestinian partners, [international NGOs](#) support or implement the delivery of more than half of all food assistance in Gaza, 60 per cent of field hospitals' operations, nearly three quarters of shelter and non-food item activities, all inpatient treatment for children suffering severe acute malnutrition and 30 per cent of emergency education services, in addition to funding over half of explosive hazard clearance.

The petition seeks an urgent Interim Injunction to suspend expiry of registrations and prevent further enforcement pending judicial review. The petitioning organisations contend that these administrative measures constitute an effort to curtail established humanitarian operations in a manner incompatible with the obligations of an occupying power under international humanitarian law.

Governments must act urgently to prevent implementation of these measures and to ensure that humanitarian relief remains principled, independent, and unhindered. If these measures take effect, aid will be impeded not because needs have eased, but because it has been rendered optional, conditional, or politicised. At a moment when civilians depend on assistance to survive, that outcome would carry immediate and irreversible human consequences.

### **Petitioners and supporting organizations**

1. All We Can
2. ActionAid Australia
3. Alianza Por La Solidaridad
4. Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA)
5. Bystanders No More
6. CADUS e.V.
7. Choose Love
8. Christian Aid
9. Churches for Middle East Peace

10. DanChurchAid
11. Danish Refugee Council
12. Diakonia, Sweden
13. Humanity & Inclusion – Handicap International
14. medico international
15. Middle East Children's Alliance
16. Movimiento por la Paz, Desarme y Libertad - MPDL
17. Muslim Aid
18. Nonviolent Peaceforce
19. Norwegian Church Aid
20. Norwegian Refugee Council
21. Oxfam
22. Pax Christi International
23. Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)
24. Pro Peace
25. Refugees International
26. Start Network
27. Tearfund
28. Terre des hommes Italy
29. Terre des hommes Lausanne (Tdh)
30. United Against Inhumanity
31. Weltfriedensdienst e.V. (WFD; World Peace Service)

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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:

**[Feb 23, 2026: Churches for Middle East Peace \(CMEP\) Announces the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as New Board Member Organization](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is pleased to announce that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) has joined as CMEP's newest member communion, further strengthening the broad ecumenical witness for peace and justice in the Middle East. The Cooperative Baptist

Fellowship is a network of churches and individuals across the United States and globally, committed to historic Baptist principles of freedom, local church autonomy, and global missions engagement. CBF advocates for justice, fosters vibrant congregational life, and equips leaders for faithful Christian witness in a complex world.

**Feb 13, 2026: [CMEP issues a statement of support for HLCC Trip to the Holy Land](#)**

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is grateful to have participated in this year's Holy Land Coordination pilgrimage and to stand alongside the bishops who have issued this powerful and timely statement. As an organization committed to amplifying the voices of those most directly impacted by conflict, we were honored to bear witness to the realities described: communities living under threat, families yearning for safety and dignity, and courageous leaders working tirelessly for justice and reconciliation.

**Feb 11, 2026: [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."

**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.

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

## Contact Us

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