



WORKING TOGETHER:
Justice Can Prevail. Peace Is
Possible.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. - August 24, 2026

CMEP Elevates the "Jerusalem Voice for Justice" Appeal For Gaza, the West Bank, and the Christian presence in their land

August 24, 2026, Washington D.C.- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) elevates and stands in solidarity with the appeal issued today by A Jerusalem Voice for Justice, "For Gaza, the West Bank, and the Christian presence in their land." We join this ecumenical Christian witness in refusing to allow the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank to become normalized or forgotten. The appeal's call for the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, an end to violence and displacement, and equality and dignity for all reflects our conviction that a just and lasting peace must include the rights and voices of Palestinians, including the historic Christian community whose presence is an integral part of the land's past, present, and future. We especially lift up the appeal's call to Churches and governments, including the United States, to act with urgency and responsibility to protect life, uphold human dignity, and support conditions that allow both Christian and Muslim Palestinian communities to remain rooted in their homeland.

You can read the entire appeal below:

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?"

(Psalm 13:1)

We, the undersigned, cannot remain silent in the face of what is happening around us, nor can we allow the daily suffering, death, displacement, and deprivation, to become something to which we grow accustomed. In the name of our Christian faith, and our belonging to our people, we address these words to our Churches, and to all people of conscience.

First: Gaza - Its tragedy must not become just another news item

What has been happening in Gaza for more than a thousand days is a human tragedy. We cannot simply learn to coexist with it as though it were normal. Behind the numbers of casualties

are faces and names, families, children, women, men, and elderly; people who have lost their homes, their loved ones, and their livelihoods, many of whom are now living amidst rubble, hunger, fear, and disease, and the absence of the most basic necessities of life. One cannot but wonder how more than two million people are still able to endure and survive in Gaza today.

This tragedy includes the collapse of healthcare and medical services. Hospitals are operating under extreme duress; healthcare workers are paying the price of this war; and the sick and wounded face enormous difficulties in obtaining medicine, and basic care.

The danger today is that we become accustomed to this tragedy. When the loss of human lives becomes merely another item in the daily news, and when destruction no longer awakens moral outrage and compassion, we face a danger that threatens not only Gaza, but our humanity.

We refuse to allow Gaza to be forgotten. We call for an end to the suffering of its people, demand the protection of civilians, guaranteed access to humanitarian assistance, and an end to killing, destruction, hunger, and fear.

We affirm that every human life is sacred and we reject all killing, violence, and revenge. Peace cannot be built upon the ruins of a people, nor can it be founded upon denying the dignity of others. There can be no peace without equality for all who live in this land.

Second: The West Bank - A danger growing every day

While attention remains focused on Gaza, the situation in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) is also deteriorating. Settlement expansion, army and settler violence, military checkpoints and closures, and the difficulty of movement, employment, access to healthcare and the holy places, are making life increasingly difficult and pushing people even deeper into despair. Checkpoints, closures, and restrictions on movement also hinder patients, ambulances, and medical personnel from reaching hospitals, while healthcare workers face growing risks. The right to healthcare is an inseparable part of the right to life and human dignity.

What is happening in Palestinian towns and villages, including Taybeh with its important Christian presence, affects us all. Muslim and Christian Palestinians belong to one people, and what threatens one threatens all. We reject every ideology or policy that denies Palestinians the right to exist in freedom and dignity in their own land and homes.

Jerusalem is becoming increasingly isolated from its Palestinian surroundings. Access to the city, even for prayer and pilgrimage to the holy places, has become extremely difficult for many.

Restrictions on movement and employment, declining economic opportunities, unemployment, and constant fear of the future are not merely temporary difficulties. They are direct factors driving families, Muslim and Christian alike, to consider emigration. Our Churches and institutions must make the defense of people's ability to remain in their land a priority. They must use their local and international connections to promote our people's rights, dignity, and ability to remain. Equality for all is an indispensable foundation for any just and lasting peace.

Third: To our Christians in Palestine - This is your land; do not lose hope

Beloved Christian Palestinian brothers and sisters, we know that life is difficult. The fears you have for your children, the difficulty in finding work, the military checkpoints and permits, the anxiety about tomorrow, and the feeling at times that doors are closing one after another are constant. We know that, for many, emigration may seem like a solution. We say to you: do not allow fear to dominate you, suggesting that you that you are strangers in your own land. Do not allow despair to cloud your future.

We, Christian Palestinians, are not relics of the past. We are not a transient community, nor merely a "minority" waiting for protection. We belong to this land and are an integral part of its people, its past, present, and future. Our presence is also a presence of faith, whose roots reach back to the first Christian community. This is the land of Christ and from this land the Gospel went forth to the world. Our continued presence is a witness to faith, hope, love, reconciliation, and justice, for us and for the world.

Beloved, remain steadfast, and do not flee. Have courage, and do not surrender. Stand firm in solidarity with our people, resisting evil and violence. As the Apostle Paul taught: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). Love is not weakness, but a power capable of confronting evil.

We reject every attempt to exploit fear and suffering in order to sow sectarian division among the members of one people. Challenges cannot be addressed by sowing division, by turning them into religious conflict, or by overlooking the broader dangers threatening the future of our people. The challenges are many, but let us learn to live together, sharing responsibility. We Palestinians, Christians and Muslims, are one people. We have lived together for centuries, and we must also build our future together, on the basis of equal citizenship, human dignity, and mutual respect. Our strength lies in our unity, and together we are stronger.

To decision-makers and rulers we say, in the words of the Psalm: "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth" (Psalm 2:10). We call upon all that wield political and military influence, foremost among them the United States, to assume their responsibility, working to stop the killing, displacement, and destruction. Decades of policies of war in our region have contributed to the displacement of millions, among them large numbers of Christians. Fear God, act wisely, and work for the lives of our children and yours, for a future in which death and displacement are not the destiny of the peoples of this region.

We hope that the coming elections in Israel and in Palestine will bring new forms of governance, founded upon justice and fairness, contributing to creating a new reality leading to equality, and a just and definitive peace in our land and throughout the region.

We call upon our Churches and Christian institutions to prioritize helping our people remain steadfast by supporting employment opportunities, education, housing, young people, and families, and by clearly defending their rights and freedoms locally and internationally. We call upon our Church leaders to achieve greater unity, coordination, and transparency, and to ensure that meetings with international officials become genuine opportunities to raise the concerns of our people and defend them, so that the faithful may feel that the Church does not merely speak about them, but stands with them in their suffering and defends their right to remain in their land.

At the same time, we call upon our Christian people not to expect everything from institutions and leaders. Our continued presence is a shared responsibility. We are called to support one another, to invest in our land and our society, in our young people and families, and not to surrender to a mentality of fear and despair. None of us can carry this responsibility alone. We must work together. Our strength lies in working together, and together we are stronger. We are not naive regarding the magnitude of the dangers, nor do we wish to obscure reality. We see it in all its harshness, and we know that the road ahead is difficult. But faith does not mean denying reality; it means refusing to allow hatred, death, and despair to have the final word. To you, we say:

Be witnesses to the truth.

Be peacemakers, workers for justice, and promoters of equality.

Hold fast to your land, your faith, and your hope.

Do not allow fear to rob you of your future.

This land is not only the land in which our forefathers lived; it is also the land in which we want our children to live.

Signatories:

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah (emeritus)

Lutheran Bishop of the Holy Land Munib Younan (emeritus)

Greek Orthodox Archbishop Attallah Hanna

Mr. Yusef Daher Ms. Sawsan Bitar Mr. Samuel Munayer

Ms. Dina Nasser Mr. John Munayer Ms. Sandra Khoury

Rev. David Neuhaus SJ Rev. Frans Bouwen MAfr Rev. Firas Abdrabbo

Mr. Rafi Ghattas Rev. Alessandro Barchi Mr. Sami El-Yousef

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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:

Aug 11, 2026: [CMEP Expresses Support for the Armenian Apostolic Church](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) affirms the vital role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the spiritual, cultural, and historical life of the Armenian people and in the wider Christian family. We are deeply concerned about undue interference in the internal affairs of the Church and urge respect for its independence and sacred mission.

Jul 14, 2026: [Churches for Middle East Peace Welcomes The Rev. Dr. Stephen Murray as Chief Development Officer](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is pleased to announce that The Rev. Dr. Stephen Murray has joined the organization as its new Chief Development Officer. Rev. Dr. Murray brings decades of leadership in philanthropy, theological education, ministry, and ecumenical engagement. He joins CMEP from Georgetown University, where he served as Senior Director of Development for Family Philanthropy and taught in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. Throughout his career, he has held leadership positions at institutions including Ecumenical Theological Seminary, the Congregational Library and Archives, Barrytown College, Harvard University, and Yale University, while also serving congregations across several Christian traditions.

Jul 7, 2026: [Religious Leader Overcomes Personal Setbacks to Complete IRONMAN Competitions in Support of Peace in the Middle East](#)

After over a year of determination, setbacks, and perseverance, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon's journey to complete a full IRONMAN has become a powerful testament to the hope that peace is possible. Inspired by CMEP's mission and fueled by a commitment to justice in the Middle East, Rev. Dr. Mae has continued training despite significant health challenges that forced her to postpone her original goal. As she prepares to compete in the Ohio Half IRONMAN in July 2026 and the full IRONMAN Maryland in September 2026, every mile she completes raises awareness and support for CMEP's work to advocate, educate, and elevate voices for peace. Join Mae on the final stretch of this remarkable journey and help turn perseverance into lasting change.

Jun 18, 2026: [CMEP Welcomes U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding and Calls for Comprehensive Regional Peace](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) welcomes the recently announced Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran as a possible first step toward a broader and more durable peace in the Middle East. For far too long, the peoples of the region have borne the devastating consequences of war, military escalation, displacement, and political instability. This agreement must mark the beginning of a comprehensive diplomatic process that will halt violence across the region and create the conditions necessary for a just and lasting peace.

Jun 15, 2026: [Churches for Middle East Peace Elevates the Statement of the Lutheran Church and Expresses Concern Over the Arrest of Four Palestinian University Students](#)

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) joins Bishop Dr. Imad Haddad and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in expressing deep concern over the

arbitrary arrest of four Palestinian female university students in the occupied West Bank, including Joulan Abu Awwad, Sama Safi, Laila Khalil, and ELCJHL youth Natalie Abu Diya.

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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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