



Churches for Middle East Peace

The escalating Gaza violence of these past days has been a sobering jolt from holiday celebrations. For Palestinians and Israelis, there has been no peace.

We at Churches for Middle East Peace mourn the loss of life on both sides and call now on the United States to exercise bold leadership to immediately end the violence, restore the cease-fire and lift the blockade of Gaza's borders.

The White House and Capitol Hill offices are sure to receive countless messages supporting a continuation of the Israeli military offensive. They need to hear from concerned American Christians that the U.S. must work with international partners to bring about an immediate cease-fire for the sake of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Please [take action today](#) and call for a immediate cease-fire.

Without an urgent diplomatic solution, both Palestinians and Israelis will suffer, the risk of a broader confrontation will increase, and hope for continuation of the Annapolis peace efforts will grow ever dimmer.

The Bush Administration is in its final weeks, but it has an opportunity now to take serious action on behalf of Israeli-Palestinian peace and to safeguard U.S. interests. Congress too must encourage and support American diplomatic leadership.

The CMEP coalition has sent an urgent letter today to President Bush, as well as a copy to the Obama transition team, urging prompt U.S. action to end this crisis. The CMEP leaders said:

"As people of faith, we care deeply about the welfare of both Israelis and Palestinians and deplore the violent deaths of those caught in this conflict. We reject all justifications for the unconscionable Palestinian rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza into Israel. We similarly reject the Israeli response as disproportionate and believe that it is likely to strengthen extremists and undermine moderates in the region. While we appreciate Secretary Rice's statement of December 27 calling for an immediate cease-fire, there must now be prompt action by your Administration to help bring about an end to the

violence." Read the full letter [here](#).

As we anticipate the coming new year, we must all pray and act for an urgent end to the violence in Gaza and southern Israel and a renewal of hope for peace in the Holy Land in 2009.

Take Action:

1. Call the White House comments line (202-456-1111). View talking points [here](#).
2. Send an [email to the President and your Senators and Representative](#) through CMEP's email system.
3. [Sign the ecumenical Christian letter](#) to President-elect Obama urging him to make Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority.

Background Reading:

To view statements by Jewish and Arab collegial groups as well as statements by Secretary Rice, the White House, and the UN Security Council, [click here](#). To view the CMEP letter to President Bush on the violence in Gaza and southern Israel, [click here](#).

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[Visit the CMEP website](#): Learn more about our work and how to get involved.

Formed in 1984, **Churches for Middle East Peace** is a Washington-based program of the Alliance of Baptists, American Friends Service Committee, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholic Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Institutes, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Church World Service, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Franciscan Friars OFM (English Speaking Conference, JPIC Council), Friends Committee on National Legislation, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Maryknoll Missioners, Mennonite Central Committee, Moravian Church in America, National Council of Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church (GBCS & GBGM).

Contributions to CMEP are tax deductible and can be made by check or [online](#) by secure, on-line credit card service.

Churches for Middle East Peace

Email: info@cmeop.org

Phone: 202-543-1222

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Churches for Middle East Peace | 110 Maryland Ave. NE | Suite 311 | Washington | DC | 20002

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