

# Churches for Middle East Peace



110 Maryland Avenue NE, #311 • Washington, D.C. 20002 • (202)543-1222 • Fax: (202)543-5025 • info@cmep.org • www.cmep.org

October 10, 2007

Ambassador Richard Jones  
United States Embassy to Israel  
Tel Aviv, Israel

Dear Ambassador Jones,

Churches for Middle East Peace is alarmed by news reports that Israel has ordered confiscation of land from four Arab villages between East Jerusalem and the Jewish settlement of Ma'aleh Adumin. This project undermines U.S. diplomatic efforts to reinvigorate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and restore hope that the conflict can be resolved with a viable contiguous Palestinian state established alongside Israel. We urge you to impress upon Israel that this project must halt.

The long-held policy of the United States that the status of Jerusalem must be determined by a negotiated agreement and that neither party should take actions that would prejudice the outcome of negotiations must be strongly and consistently asserted by U.S. officials.

While the stated purpose of this land confiscation is for the construction of a modern road to Jericho for Palestinians, it is widely understood that this would set the stage for settlement expansion in the E-1 area. United States objections to the E-1 plan of building 3,500 apartments and an industrial park has thus far prevented Israel from building on this parcel of land (other than the empty police station). We urge the United States to maintain their objection to Israeli use of the E-1 land and to assure Palestinians that this vacant land will remain open and available for development by East Jerusalem's Palestinian population as part of the future state of Palestine.

We are heartened by your diligent work towards a peaceful resolution of this conflict through diplomacy and commend the Administration for convening an international meeting this fall in Annapolis for that purpose. We join you in prayers for the day when the people of Israel and Palestine live as neighbors, both secure and thriving.

Sincerely,

Maureen Shea  
Chair of the Board

Corinne Whitlatch  
Executive Director

Maureen Shea, Chair  
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Anna Rhee, Program Consultant  
Julie Schumacher Cohen, Legislative  
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