

# Churches for Middle East Peace



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Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service  
Committee

Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of North America

Armenian Orthodox Church

Catholic Conference of Major  
Superiors of Men's Institutes

Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
Common Global Ministries Board

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

National Council of Churches

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Reformed Church in America

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ  
Common Global Ministries Board

United Methodist Church  
General Board of Church and Society  
General Board of Global Ministries:  
Women's Division

August 11, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State

Dear Secretary Rice,

I write on behalf of Churches for Middle East Peace, a coalition of 21 Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches and church-related organizations. It is with great distress that we read this morning that the United States is considering speeding up the delivery of M-26 artillery rockets to Israel. These are the very same munitions that were found to have killed Lebanese civilians in 1982, prompting the US to maintain a moratorium on sending them to Israel for some time – a moratorium which unfortunately was lifted.

We are grateful to those in the State Department who have raised concerns about this possible course of action. We again say, as we did in our letter to you of July 24, that adding additional arms to this conflict will only serve to inflame the violence. Moreover, sending cluster munitions, which are known to cause severe civilian casualties, undermines US statements expressing concern about the loss of civilian lives, whether in Israel or Lebanon. It will also make more difficult your efforts to find a diplomatic solution through the United Nations Security Council, which is so urgently needed. It appears that when we and many others around the world have urged the President to actively engage in efforts to diminish the violence, the United States is doing just the opposite.

We are all painfully aware of the need to defeat terrorism as we all saw so dramatically yesterday in London. To do so, however, we must take those actions that will support those who would join us in fighting terrorism, not make their and our jobs even more difficult by being party to greater violence. Delivery of cluster bombs to Israel now would only serve to further weaken relations with Arab moderates.

We reiterate our July 21 appeal to the President for an immediate ceasefire, an intensive diplomatic initiative for the cessation of hostilities and the pursuit of a comprehensive Middle East peace, including a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Sincerely,

Corinne Whitlatch  
Executive Director

Maureen Shea  
Chair of the Board