



TAKE ACTION!!

January 2009

SUPPORT PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND THIS NEW YEAR: SIGN AN ECUMENICAL LETTER TO PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA BEFORE JANUARY 16!

TAKE ACTION NOW! Thanks to the incredible efforts of Catholics around the country, our Church has provided more than 2,300 signatures to date to an [ecumenical letter](#) signed by Most Reverend Howard Hubbard, Bishop of Albany and Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Ken Hackett, President of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), urging President-elect Barack Obama “to make achievement of Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority” during his first year in office. But there’s still time to act in support of peace. Visit cmep.org/letter now to add your signature before January 16.

WHY IS THIS ACTION IMPORTANT NOW? As we start the New Year, we renew our hopes for the day when our sisters and brothers can live in peace in the Holy Land. As the conflict in Gaza reminds us, violence cannot bring peace; what is needed are negotiations. With the incoming Obama Administration, there is a renewed opportunity for the United States to help achieve a just and lasting peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

During his campaign, President-elect Obama promised to work for peace between Israel and the Palestinians from the beginning of his Administration. Given the global financial crisis and the many challenges facing Americans today, the President-elect will be balancing many competing priorities when he is sworn in on January 20, 2009. It is therefore critical that he hear from us now in large numbers that Holy Land peace cannot be delayed and that we fully urge his leadership in resolving this long-standing conflict.

WHAT DOES THE LETTER ASK PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA TO DO? The letter we are asking you to sign was circulated by the Churches for Middle East Peace, an ecumenical coalition of churches and faith-based organizations. The letter urges President-elect Obama to provide immediate diplomatic leadership toward the clear goal of a final status agreement establishing a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel. The opportunity for achieving a two-state solution is supported by majorities of Israelis and Palestinians as the best way to end this tragic conflict. However, the prospects for this solution are narrowing and must be seized soon.

The deadline for signatures is January 16, 2009. A version of this letter signed by national Christian leaders was sent to the Obama transition team on December 1, 2008. The final letter signed by leaders and individual church members, such as us, will be delivered to President Obama upon his inauguration. [Sign the letter now.](#)

WHAT DOES PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND HAVE TO DO WITH MY FAITH? Our Catholic faith teaches us to be peacemakers. The Catholic bishops in the United States wrote, in their 1983 pastoral letter, [The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response](#), “Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus.”

Pope Benedict XVI reiterated the Catholic Church’s commitment to peace in the Holy Land when he stated that “it is necessary to explore every possible diplomatic avenue and to remain attentive to even the faintest sign of dialogue or desire for reconciliation if long-standing conflicts are to be resolved. When all the people of the Holy Land live in peace and harmony, in two independent sovereign states side by side, the benefit for world peace will be inestimable [...]” (May 12, 2008)

WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DOING TO PROMOTE PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND? In 2005, the USCCB launched the [Catholic Campaign for Peace in the Holy Land](#) to promote understanding and support for a just resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. CRS has [worked in the Holy Land](#) for nearly 50 years, supporting peace with justice for all people, while responding to the humanitarian and sustainable development needs of Palestinians. To learn more, visit the [JPHD Middle East Web page](#) and the [CRS Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza page](#).

For more information contact

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