



## **Sample Press Release**

### **(City)'s Jewish, Christian and Muslim Leaders Join Together to Urge the Administration and Congress to Make Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace a Top Priority**

#### **Local Religious Leaders Join Unprecedented Nationwide Interreligious Initiative for Peace**

#### **Initiative for Peace Aims to Accomplish the Vision of a Negotiated Two-State Solution and Comprehensive Arab-Israeli Peace**

(DATE) Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders today publicly joined an urgent appeal to the United States government to make Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations a top priority of U.S. policy. This unique, local interreligious effort is part of an unprecedented nationwide initiative led by more than 35 eminent Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders of national organizations. Together they are working to advocate the moral and political imperative for active, determined U.S. leadership for peace in the Middle East.

The religious leaders believe that U.S. leadership is essential to renewing progress toward the goal of a viable, independent and democratic Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel with peace and security for both peoples. Since its inception the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East has issued numerous appeals to the President and the Secretary of State urging strong U.S. leadership. Local religious leaders in U.S. cities throughout the country have endorsed these appeals to the Administration. In December 2006 the national leaders released a consensus statement, "Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: From Crisis to Hope."

Local endorsers of this initiative, including (LIST LOCAL ENDORSERS), are communicating and encouraging their congregations to communicate with Senators \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and with their Representatives to urge active bi-partisan support for the message of this interreligious effort.

The initiative's newest statement, "Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: From Crisis to Hope," states that America has an inescapable responsibility and an indispensable role to provide creative, determined leadership for building a just peace for all in the Middle East. Achieving Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace will have positive reverberations in the region and around the world.

The leaders also state that military action will not resolve the conflict. The only authentic way forward is a negotiated settlement built on difficult, but realistic, compromises and security arrangements with international guarantees. The path to peace requires a rejection of violence and an embrace of dialogue. Such a path could lead to a future of two states, Israel and Palestine,

living side by side in peace with security and dignity for both peoples and to a future of stability in the region with Israel living in peace and security with its Arab neighbors.

The Appeal also offers specific suggestions for U.S. involvement, including:

- Exercise persistent, determined leadership at the highest levels to secure a comprehensive and just resolution of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 1397.
- Work, in coordination with the Quartet (U.S., European Union, Russia, United Nations), to create conditions that bring about serious negotiations for a two-state solution following the lines of the Roadmap and earlier civil society initiatives;
- Support full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1701 and 1559 in relation to Lebanon; and
- Undertake diplomatic efforts to restart Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations for peace.

The religious leaders believe the Geneva Accord and other model peace agreements negotiated by prominent Israelis and Palestinians are very important because they help to demonstrate that peace is possible. They offer realistic, compromise solutions to even the toughest issues, including borders, refugees and Jerusalem.

Launched in December 2003, the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative unites some of the most prominent American religious leaders in support of active, determined U.S. leadership in pursuit of peace. The delegation members believe that both the deepest values of their religious traditions and the urgency of the situation necessitate strong, united interreligious action immediately to mobilize their communities across the country to support U.S. leadership for peace.

The religious leaders believe that "the land that was the birthplace of all three Abrahamic religions can once again become a source of hope, justice and reconciliation for the whole world. Jerusalem can be the city of peace and U.S. leadership is urgently needed to help make it happen."

Attachments:

Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: From Crisis to Hope (Document 4)

List of National Leaders (Document 3)



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