

**National Interreligious Leadership Initiative
for Peace in the Middle East
Website: www.nili-mideastpeace.org**

July 19, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, DC 20270

Dear Mr. President,

We write as members of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI). Acknowledging the multiple international conflicts and crises that need to be addressed, we are encouraged by your stated intention to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Based on our experiences and our relationship with the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, we believe peace is possible. We look forward to an appropriate time for meeting with you to discuss how we can help support such efforts, as leaders of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities and institutions in this country.

We are pleased that you have made efforts to meet early in your term with both Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Abbas. Your recent trip to the Middle East and to Rome raised hopes in renewed initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We also note the meetings of your Special Representative, Jason Greenblatt, in the region and reports from Israelis and Palestinians on his ability to listen carefully to concerns of both peoples. We hope it may be possible in the near future for a small delegation of NILI leaders to meet with Mr. Greenblatt.

As a matter of principle, we agree that the United States should be prepared to support the solution the two parties negotiate and accept, and we also understand the American national security concerns regarding the region. Based on the legitimate, long-standing aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians for national self-determination and security, we believe a two-state solution still represents the most realistic way to meet essential interests of both peoples and to resolve the conflict. While there are those among both the Israelis and the Palestinians who argue that one state is preferable, we point to the fact that, despite deep distrust on both sides, recent polls show that the majority of peoples still yearn for two states. You can help make that dream a reality. Pursuing either side's version of a one-state solution would likely lead to more years of violent conflict.

The basic parameters of a framework for a two-state solution are widely known. Combined with a broader regional framework such as the Arab Peace Initiative, the incentives for all sides to make the historic decision for a two-state peace agreement are monumental.

While there is no simple solution for all the current conflicts and turmoil in the Middle East, we believe achieving a just peace between Israel and the Palestinians would have substantial positive effects for both peoples, the region, the United States' own interests, and our world. We pledge support for U.S. efforts to achieve this goal.

List of Endorsers follows:

Letter to President Donald Trump

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List of Endorsers

Christian Leaders:

Bishop Oscar Cantú, Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington
The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate, Episcopal Church
The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Archbishop Vicken Aykasian, Director, Ecumenical Affairs, Armenian Orthodox Church in America
Very Rev. Nathanael Symeonides, Director, Inter-Orthodox & Ecumenical Relations, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Jim Winkler, President/General Secretary, National Council of Churches of Christ USA
Bishop Bruce R. Ough, President, Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church
Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reverend Dr. John Dorhauer, General Minister & President, United Church of Christ
Reverend Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister & President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland, A Church Distributed
Reverend Leighton Ford, President, Leighton Ford Ministries, Board Member, World Vision US
David Neff, Editorial Vice-President (Retired), Christianity Today
John M. Buchanan, Former Editor and Publisher, Christian Century

Jewish Leaders:

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President, Union of Reform Judaism
Rabbi David E. Stern, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Rabbi Steven A. Fox, Chief Executive Officer, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director Emeritus, Religion Action Center of Reform Judaism
Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Ph.D. Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, American Jewish University
Rabbi Seth Goldstein, President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, Executive Director, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Deborah Waxman, President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
Rabbi Amy Small, Past President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Rabbi Peter Knobel, Past President, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Rabbi Paul Menitoff, Executive Vice President Emeritus, Central Conference of American Rabbis

Muslim Leaders:

Azhar Azeez, President, Islamic Society of North America
Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, National Director, Islamic Society of North America
Imam Mohammed Magid, Past President, Islamic Society of North America
Naeem Baig, Former President, Islamic Circle of North America
Dawud Assad, President Emeritus, Council of Mosques, USA
Iftekhar A. Hai, Founding Director, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance

*Organizations Listed for Identification Only