

**National Interreligious Leadership Initiative  
for Peace in the Middle East**

**Website: [www.nili-mideastpeace.org](http://www.nili-mideastpeace.org)**

**E-Mail: [usicpme@aol.com](mailto:usicpme@aol.com)**

July 26, 2013

Secretary of State John Kerry  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write as members of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI), including present and past heads of national denominations and faith organizations. We support the President's commitment to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority of U.S. policy. Recognizing, as you do, that the passage of time makes achieving a viable two-state solution increasingly difficult, we have voiced strong support for your determined initiative for peace.

We warmly welcome your announcement on July 19 that agreement has been reached "that establishes the basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis." Looking forward, we appreciate that over the years there has been intermittent progress toward resolving final status issues in both unofficial talks and formal negotiations. While these talks and negotiations have yet to yield a blueprint for peace, they have identified ideas for addressing key issues that must be resolved in a manner acceptable to both sides.

As Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, we are committed to mobilizing broad public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for peace. We offer our prayers for your efforts and we are prepared through the national organizations we represent to activate members of synagogues, churches and mosques across the country to support bold American leadership.

We know the path to peace is complex and challenging, but peace is possible. We pledge our support and request a meeting with you to discuss specific ways we can help.

**List of Endorsers follows.**

**Christian Leaders:**

Bishop Richard E. Pates, D.D., Chairman, USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace  
Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington  
Bishop Denis J. Madden, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore  
Archbishop Vicken Aykasian, Director, Ecumenical Affairs, Armenian Orthodox Church in America  
Fr. Mark Arey, Director, Office of Ecumenical Affairs, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Kathryn Mary Lohre, President, National Council of Churches of Christ USA  
Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate, Episcopal Church  
Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Reverend Geoffrey Black, General Minister & President, United Church of Christ  
Reverend Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister, President, Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)  
Bishop Mary Ann Swenson, Council of Bishops, United Methodist Church  
Richard Stearns, President, World Vision US  
Reverend Leighton Ford, President, Leighton Ford Ministries, Board Member, World Vision US  
David Neff, Former Editorial Vice-President, Christianity Today

**Jewish Leaders:**

Rabbi Richard J. Jacobs, President, Union of Reform Judaism  
Rabbi Richard A. Block, President, Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism  
Rabbi Elliot Dorff, Ph.D. Rector and Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, American Jewish University  
Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky, Professor, Jewish Theological Seminary of America  
Rabbi Peter Knobel, Past President, Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Rabbi Amy Small, Past President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association  
Rabbi Alvin M. Sugarman, Rabbi Emeritus, The Temple, Atlanta, Georgia

**Muslim Leaders:**

Imam Mohammed Magid, President, Islamic Society of North America  
Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Syeed, National Director, Islamic Society of North America  
Naeem Baig, President, Islamic Circle of North America  
Imam Yahya Hendi, Muslim Chaplain, Georgetown University  
Dawud Assad, President Emeritus, Council of Mosques, USA  
Eide Alawan, Interfaith Office for Outreach, Islamic Center of America, Dearborn, Michigan  
Iftekhhar A. Hai, Founding Director, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance

Organizations for Identification Only

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July 26, 2013

The Honorable Robert Menedez  
Chair, Foreign Relations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Menedez,

We write as members of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI), including present and past heads of national denominations and faith organizations. We support the President's commitment to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority of U.S. Policy. Recognizing that the passage of time makes achieving a viable two-state solution increasingly difficult, we strongly support Secretary of State Kerry's determined initiative for peace.

We warmly welcome Secretary Kerry's announcement on July 19 that agreement has been reached "that establishes the basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis." Looking forward, we appreciate that over the years there has been intermittent progress toward resolving final status issues in both unofficial talks and formal negotiations. While none of these talks and negotiations have yet to yield a blueprint for peace, taken together, they have identified ideas for addressing key issues that must be resolved in a manner acceptable to both sides. We hope you will support Secretary Kerry's continuing urgent efforts for peace.

As Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, we are committed to mobilizing broad public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for peace. We offer our prayers for Secretary Kerry's efforts and we are prepared through the national organizations we represent to activate members of synagogues, churches and mosques across the country to support bold American leadership.

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July 26, 2013

The Honorable Bob Corker  
Ranking Member, Foreign Relations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Corker,

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July 26, 2013

The Honorable Ed Royce  
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Royce,

We write as members of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI), including present and past heads of national denominations and faith organizations. We support the President's commitment to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority of U.S. Policy. Recognizing that the passage of time makes achieving a viable two-state solution increasingly difficult, we strongly support Secretary of State Kerry's determined initiative for peace.

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July 26, 2013

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel  
Ranking Member, Foreign Affairs Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Engel,

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