

In December 2006, 34 national Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders urged the United States to make peace in the Middle East an urgent top priority. If you support this appeal, please contact your Senators and Representatives. Excerpts follow, full text at www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/interreligious.htm.

Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: From Crisis to Hope

As Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, our shared Abrahamic faith compels us to work together for peace with justice for Israelis, Palestinians and all peoples in the Middle East. As Americans, we believe our nation has an inescapable responsibility and an indispensable role to provide creative, determined leadership for building a just peace for all in the Middle East.

The United States must make Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace an urgent priority. Achieving peace will have positive reverberations in the region and worldwide.

The crisis in and near Gaza and the war in Lebanon and northern Israel remind us that the status quo is unstable and untenable. 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 six page consensus statement by 34 national religious leaders addresses key elements in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict and **calls on the United States to:***

- 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, and the 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 initiative, e.g. the Geneva Accord and the People's Voice:
- 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.

As religious leaders we commit ourselves to working with the Administration and the Congress to support active, fair and firm U.S. leadership to help Israelis, Palestinians and Arab states achieve a just peace. With God's help, we are confident that crisis can give way to hope for all God's children in the Middle East.

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