

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

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For Immediate Release

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**JEWISH, CHRISTIAN & MUSLIM LEADERS SUPPORT PEACE ON EVE OF
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU**

In a letter to the White House yesterday, Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI) commended President Obama's decision "making Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority from the start of his Presidency" and expressed "strong support for his appointment of George Mitchell as Special Middle East Envoy." The religious leaders, including heads of more than 25 national religious organizations, are requesting a meeting with the President, as well as with Secretary of State Clinton and Special Middle East Envoy Mitchell.

"Despite the challenges and discouraging developments, there remains a window of hope to achieve both a viable two-state solution, acceptable to majorities of Israelis and Palestinians and a final comprehensive peace between Israel and all her Arab neighbors," the religious leaders declared. "The visits to Washington of Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas provide opportunities for Israeli and Palestinian leadership to reaffirm their commitment to a two state solution and to steps both sides will need to make to achieve peace."

Working together since 2003, the religious leaders are united in support of next steps for peace, including:

- An effective, comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire covering Israel, Gaza and the West Bank;
- Reduction of Israeli checkpoints and a halt to all settlement expansion in the West Bank;
- Formation of a Palestinian government capable of representing the West Bank and Gaza, and committed to rejecting violence and negotiating a two-state solution with Israel;
- Support for benchmark principles and ideas for resolving final status issues, including border and security arrangements, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem; and
- Building on the Arab Peace Initiative, support for direct Syrian-Israeli negotiations for peace.

As the Obama Administration "presses ahead with U.S. leadership for peace" the religious leaders pledge their support and commit their offices "to calling upon Christians, Jews and Muslims in churches, synagogues and mosques across the country both to pray for peace and to urge Congress to support the President's efforts."

Attached: NILI Letter to President Obama, with List of Endorsers