

National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East

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Religious Leaders Urge Presidential Leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace

In response to the launching of a new Israeli Peace Initiative by former Israeli government, intelligence and security officials, leaders of twenty-five Jewish, Christian and Muslim national religious organizations wrote to President Obama saying that they believe “this initiative, the earlier Arab Peace Initiative and the Geneva Accord, taken together, offer key principles and ideas for comprehensive Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace.” (Letter and endorsers attached.)

The religious leaders observed: “The main elements of these peace initiatives reflect years of official and informal, unofficial negotiations and include creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, based on the 1967 borders with possible limited land swaps as mutually agreed; a fair negotiated resolution of the issue of refugees that does not threaten the demography of Israel; the sharing of Jerusalem by Israel and the Palestinian state with both having their capitals in the city; and Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights as part of a peace agreement with Syria.”

Citing “the current stalemate in negotiations, the threat of escalation in violence between Israelis and Palestinians, and the goal and expectation that peace can be achieved this year,” the religious leaders urged that “the United States, in coordination with the Quartet (the U.S., European Union, Russia, and U.N. Secretary General) should support these elements being addressed in negotiations on an urgent basis.”

The religious leaders encouraged President Obama to visit Jerusalem and the region soon, and they “pledged their prayers and public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership in this urgent endeavor.” The leaders believe that in providing such leadership, the President “can count on substantial support from members of churches, synagogues and mosques across the country.”

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