



Churches for Middle East Peace

Tell Obama: Christians Support Bold Action for Holy Land Peace

The Obama Administration has made clear its commitment to pursuing Israeli-Palestinian peace in a series of recent meetings with key Mideast leaders and in a major speech to the Arab and Muslim world today, Thursday, June 4. In Cairo, President Obama pledged to "personally pursue" the goal of two states living in peace and security, saying it was time for all of us to work for the day when the "Holy Land of three great faiths is the place of peace that God intended it to be; when Jerusalem is a secure and lasting home for Jews and Christians and Muslims." View the full speech [here](#).

[Join major Christian leaders](#) from Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant, Orthodox and historic African American traditions who have come together at this critical moment to declare their support for bold U.S. action and to call for meaningful progress to achieve a just and lasting peace.

In a diverse ecumenical letter released today, over 50 Christian leaders commended the President's message to the people of the Middle East and strong commitment to resolving the conflict, pledging to "rally Christians nationwide around robust U.S. peacemaking efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace." View the full text of the letter [here](#).

Will you [add your name](#) to the ecumenical letter and take a stand for Holy Land peace? If the President is going to provide the kind of sustained, hands-on U.S. diplomacy necessary to help move the parties forward and finally end this conflict, he will need encouragement and support.

Now is indeed a critical moment in the long history of this conflict. Despite widespread support for a two-state solution, the window of opportunity is closing. As hope dims, the threat of violence grows and hard-line voices are strengthened. The dwindling Palestinian Christian community may soon cease to exist without an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that provides security and dignity for all.

[Let President Obama know](#) that you and Christians nationwide support

bold, immediate American leadership.

Peace between Israel and the Palestinians will require the strong and helping hand of the United States. While working to end rocket attacks against the people of southern Israel, the U.S. should also seek immediate relief for the population of Gaza by ending restrictions on humanitarian goods and opening the borders to reconstruction material, commerce and transit in a secure manner.

As the President said in his speech in Cairo, "the obligations that the parties have agreed to under the Road Map are clear. For peace to come, it is time for them - and all of us - to live up to our responsibilities." Supporters of the status quo will discourage strong U.S. leadership. Please join us in commending Obama for his important statements pressing both Israel and the Palestinians to take action for peace. It is vital that we encourage the Administration to continue to bolster Palestinian capacity to halt violence and continue to demonstrate firm dedication to a viable Palestinian state by exhibiting no tolerance for Israeli settlement activity.

[Take action today](#) and help support strong peace efforts by the Obama Administration by visiting: [MailScanner has detected a possible fraud attempt from "org2.democracyinaction.org" claiming to be www.cmep.org/boldaction](#)

Background Reading:

[Text of Ecumenical Letter with Signatories](#), June 4, 2009 (PDF)

[Transcript: President Obama's Cairo Speech](#), June 4, 2009

[Transcript: Obama's Full Interview with National Public Radio](#), June 1, 2009

Text of Letter

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

June 4, 2009

Dear Mr. President,

As American Christian leaders with a shared commitment to a just and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, we have come together at a time of great opportunity and urgency. After decades of tragic conflict, many Israelis and Palestinians despair of the possibility of peace, yet with your determined leadership we believe the promise of two viable, secure and independent states can be realized.

We commend your message to the people of the Middle East and your challenge to all of us to work for Holy Land peace as we seek to build a more positive future for the people of the region and the world. We are grateful that you have identified resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a top priority and made clear your Administration's commitment to sustained, hands-on diplomacy. As you embark on peace efforts, we ask you to provide a clear framework for an end to the conflict, help Israelis and Palestinians make the difficult decisions necessary to achieve lasting peace, and hold both parties to account when they fail to honor their commitments.

Mr. President, you have assumed office at one of the most critical moments in the long history of this conflict. While the international community and majorities of the Israeli and Palestinian people are all committed to a two state solution as the best option for achieving peace and security, the window of opportunity is rapidly closing. Continued settlement growth and expansion are rapidly diminishing any possibility for the creation of a viable Palestinian state. The targeting of Israeli civilians through ongoing rocket fire and the insistent rejection by some of Israel's right to exist reinforces the destructive status quo. These actions, along with the route of the separation barrier, movement restrictions, and continued home demolitions, serve to undermine Palestinians and Israelis alike who seek peace. As hope dims, the threat of violence grows and hardliners are strengthened.

We share a common commitment to all the people of the Holy Land-Jews, Christians and Muslims- and are particularly concerned with the plight of the Palestinian Christian community. In the birthplace of our faith, one of the world's oldest Christian communities is dwindling rapidly, and with them the possibility of a day when three thriving faith communities live in shared peace in Jerusalem. Mr. President, it is apparent that unless there is an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement Christians in the Holy Land may cease to exist as a viable community.

Now is indeed the time for immediate and bold American leadership. Fruitful

diplomacy will require U.S. engagement with a Palestinian unity government committed to peace with the state of Israel. We commend your important statements pressing both Israel and the Palestinians to live up to their obligations, and we urge your Administration to continue to bolster Palestinian capacity to halt violence and continue to demonstrate firm dedication to a viable Palestinian state by exhibiting no tolerance for Israeli settlement activity. While working to end rocket attacks against the people of southern Israel, the U.S. should also seek immediate relief for the population of Gaza—living in rubble and without basic necessities—by ending restrictions on humanitarian goods and opening the borders to reconstruction material, commerce and transit in a secure manner.

We welcome your call for people on both sides to recognize the pain and aspirations of the other. Because of this conflict many have lost the ability to see the other as human beings worthy of dignity and respect. An entire generation of Israelis and Palestinians has grown up amidst violence and hatred. We pledge to join with you to work with and support those in both societies who seek peace, justice, and security, standing beside those who hope for a better future for themselves and for the generations that follow.

The current political stalemate and declining situation on the ground demonstrate that Israelis and Palestinians cannot reach a negotiated agreement without a strong, helping hand. We urge your Administration to present proposals that go beyond the mere principle of two states and lay out a just and equitable solution that provides dignity, security and sovereignty for both peoples. Moreover, we appreciate your strong support for a comprehensive peace and we look forward to diplomatic efforts to build upon the historic Arab Peace Initiative, with its offer of recognition and normalization of relations with Israel in exchange for an end to the occupation.

There is no greater work than the Psalmist's call to "seek peace and pursue it" and no more critical time than now to finally end the conflict in the Holy Land (Ps. 34:14). We stand ready to support your bold action and are rallying Christians nationwide around robust U.S. peacemaking efforts to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. Our prayers and mutual commitment are with you in this difficult and most important task.

To view the letter with signatories, click [here](#).

To add your name to the ecumenical letter, click [here](#).

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Formed in 1984, **Churches for Middle East Peace** is a Washington-based program of the Alliance of Baptists, American Friends Service Committee, Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholic Conference of Major Superiors of Men's Institutes, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Church World Service, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Franciscan Friars OFM (English Speaking Conference, JPIC Council), Friends Committee on National Legislation, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Maryknoll Missioners, Mennonite Central Committee, Moravian Church in America, National Council of Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church (GBCS & GBGM).

Contributions to CMEP are tax deductible and can be made by check or [online](#) by secure, on-line credit card service.

Churches for Middle East Peace

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