

AN INTERFAITH DECLARATION FOR PEACE

We, members and leaders of the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities in Greater Boston - all having deep and symbolic ties to the land and peoples of the Middle East - are anguished by the events unfolding in Israel and Gaza. Recognizing the legitimate needs of all peoples, including all those living in the Middle East, for dignity, peace, safety and security -- regardless of religion, race, or national origin -- we issue this joint statement with the hope and belief that our interfaith voices will be heard clearly, above the din of war.

As guiding principles,

- We acknowledge the long, complex, and painful history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- We acknowledge the wide range of deeply-held beliefs, and intensely-felt narratives on all sides
- We acknowledge that all sides are capable of assigning blame to others, and asserting justification for their cause
- We observe that violence by any side begets more violence, hatred, and retaliation
- We deplore any invocation of religion as a justification for violence against others, or the deprivation of the rights of others
- We decry any use of inflammatory rhetoric that demonizes the other and is intended, or is likely, to promote hatred and disrespect
- We believe the conflict can be resolved only through a political and diplomatic solution and not a military one.

In the face of many competing narratives, we recognize that the overriding common need of the peoples of the region is the prompt implementation of a just and lasting peace. Toward that end, and particularly in response to the current hostilities,

- We call upon the United States and the international community immediately to intercede to help reestablish a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, toward the goal of a permanent cessation of hostilities

- We call upon Hamas immediately to end all rocket attacks on Israel, and upon Israel immediately to end its military campaign in Gaza
- We call for an immediate end to all strikes on civilian centers and citizens, both Israeli and Palestinian
- We call for lifting of the blockade on Gaza as to all non-military goods, for an immediate and significant increase in humanitarian aid to address the needs of the people of Gaza, and for all parties involved to join in taking responsibility to address those human needs
- We call on all parties involved in the conflict to work sincerely and vigorously toward a just and lasting peace that addresses and promotes the national aspirations of both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples
- We call on President-elect Obama to make clear that as President he will urgently assert US leadership to achieve a comprehensive diplomatic resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflicts

Through this joint statement we affirm our commitment to engage with one another, even, and especially, during times of great stress. We also affirm our common humanity and our common belief - as Jews, Muslims and Christians - that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must cease, that there is no military or violent solution, that all human life is valued, and that all parties must cooperate to make the peace - a just and lasting peace desperately needed and deserved by all the peoples of the region.

Signed:

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