



Israel, Palestinians & Mid-East

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Declaration of the Spain Summit for Religious Peace in the Middle East

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations sponsored a Summit of Religious Leaders for Peace in the Middle East, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain in Alicante, Spain on November 15-16, 2016. The summit brought together more than twenty religious leaders of the most senior influential religious figures from the Middle East, particularly from the Palestinian territories and Israel, to engage in interreligious dialogue in support of tolerance and mutual respect and to voice their rejection of extremist ideologies. At the end of their two-day meetings, the religious leaders agreed on the Declaration of Spain Summit for Religious Peace in the Middle East in which they emphasized their responsibility as religious leaders representing the three faiths to promote mutual respect among their people and a life of peaceful co-existence based on justice and safety. They called on the cessation of incitement and misrepresentation and distortion of the image of the other. The text of this statement follows.

In the name of God

We, people of the Holy Land and leaders of its religious communities are gathered to take upon ourselves to relentlessly seek peace in the Land. We emphasize that our two peoples are responsible for their common fate, that the three religions are responsible for creating peaceful existence, and that we, as religious leaders are responsible for promoting a life of mutual respect based upon justice and safety, in the spirit of the word of God as conveyed by His prophets.

We live in the Holy Land by the grace of God, and wish to subject ourselves to His will. We recognize the holiness of the Land for all three religions.

All three religions value the principle of the sanctity of life, and we call for its practice in daily life in our Land. The violence that is conducted, supposedly in the name of God, is a desecration of His name, a crime against those who are created in His image, and a debasement of faith. The proper means of solving conflict and disagreement is by negotiation and deliberation only.

We vehemently call for the cessation of incitement, misrepresentation and distortion of the image of the other and of the neighbor. We commit ourselves to educate future generations to uphold mutual respect. Drawing upon the religious traditions, and our understanding of what is best for our communities and peoples, we call for a solution that recognizes the right of the two peoples to exist with dignity.

We hope that peace between us will resonate and send ripples throughout the world for the good of all the nations.

Religious leaders bear a special responsibility to contribute to the desired peace. We urge the Israeli and Palestinian political leadership to work toward a solution. However, this does not recuse us from our accountability before God and the communities of believers to advance peace, pray for it and tirelessly strive for its achievement.

We declare the establishment of a standing committee that will work to implement the principles of this document. We take upon ourselves to work together with persistence, gather additional religious leaders, and guide younger generations in that spirit. We shall work together to voice a religious

message for peace in the Holy Land for the good of all its people, and all shall gather in unity and with a sincere heart to perform the will of God.