

AN INTERFAITH DECLARATION FOR PEACE

We, members and leaders of the Silicon Valley interfaith community, are anguished by the events that have unfolded in Israel and Gaza. While some of us—guided by faith and conscience—may in other venues express stronger statements of sympathy either for Israel or Gaza, we share a commitment to engage with one another, even, and especially, during times of great stress. We also affirm our common humanity and our common belief that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must cease, that there is no violent solution to that conflict, that all human life is valued, and that all parties must cooperate to achieve a just and lasting peace on behalf of God’s children who reside in the land we call holy.

Because we recognize the legitimate needs of all people for dignity, peace, safety, and security, we join with religious leaders around the United States in issuing this joint statement, hoping and believing 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 mourn the loss of innocent lives in Gaza and in Israel;
- We deplore any invocation of religion as a justification for violence, for the deprivation of people's dignity, or for the denial of human rights;
- We decry any use of inflammatory rhetoric that demonizes others, fostering hatred and disrespect; and
- We believe that just solutions to the conflict are better served by political and diplomatic means.

Guided by these principles, we recognize the urgent need for the prompt implementation of a just and lasting peace. Toward that end,

- We call upon the United States and the international community to intercede with the goal of helping to establish a permanent cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hamas;
- We call for an immediate and significant increase in humanitarian aid to address the needs of the people of Gaza, and we call upon all parties involved to join in taking responsibility to address those human needs;
- We call upon 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 upon President-elect Obama to make it clear that, as President, he will assert US leadership to achieve a comprehensive diplomatic resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Signed: [Institutions are listed for identification only.]

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(Islamic Networks Group)

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(Catholic Bishop of San Jose)

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(Congregation Shir Hadash)

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Pastor Ben Daniel
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Pat Mitchell
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Rev. Alan Jones
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