

ZE10093002 - 2010-09-30

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-30523?l=english>

US RELIGIOUS LEADERS SUPPORT PEACE EFFORTS

Express Hope for Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPT. 30, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Religious leaders representing Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities are expressing their support for peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, New York, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington, were among the leaders who presented a statement of support.

The religious leaders visited the White House and State Department and met Wednesday with National Security Advisor General James Jones and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on behalf of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East.

In those meetings, the leaders presented a statement that noted, "With the support and engagement of the United States, earlier this month, direct negotiations resumed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority with the goal of reaching agreement within one year."

"It is imperative that the peace talks continue," it added.

"Our faith traditions teach that every person is created by the one God and deserving of respect," the religious leaders affirmed. "This common religious heritage finds expression in our common commitment to peace with justice for all."

"It will be difficult to achieve, but peace is possible," they acknowledged.

They continued, "As religious leaders in the United States, we have prayed for peace, made public statements, met with public officials, and stood in solidarity with religious leaders in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and throughout the region."

Signs of hope

"Despite tragic violence and discouraging developments, there are signs of hope," the statement affirmed.

It continued: "Majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians still support a two-state solution. Arab states have declared their commitment to peace in the Arab Peace Initiative. There are U.S. diplomatic efforts to restart Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations for peace."

"As we said two years ago," the leaders stated, "there is a real danger that cynicism will replace hope and that people will give up on peace."

"With the resumption of direct negotiations, clarity is demanded," they asserted. "So let us be clear. As religious leaders, we remain firmly committed to a two-state solution to the conflict as the only viable way forward."

"We believe that concerted, sustained U.S. leadership for peace is essential," the religious leaders affirmed. "And we know that time is not on the side of peace, that delay is not an option."

The statement affirmed: "We refuse, now and always, to give into cynicism or despair. We are people of hope."

"We call upon the members of our religious communities to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to support active, fair, and firm U.S. leadership to advance comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

"The time for peace is now."

--- --- ---

On the Net:

Full text of statement: <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2010/10-172.shtml>