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# Statement of the Forum of Interfaith Leaders in Israel

We, religious representatives and community leaders in Israel, call on all believers and all residents of the country to bond with the true values of faith which miraculously elevate the sanctity of life and moral values, and which are the common foundation of the three Abrahamic faiths. We believe that all humans were created in the image of God, and the golden rule, “love your neighbor as yourself,” applies to all humankind, regardless of faith or creed. Violent and aggressive action by extremists who claim to act in the name of God is blasphemous, it endangers the lives of men and women created in God’s image, and is an unforgivable transgression.

**Differences between us in identity, religious beliefs and customs exist, but we inhabit this land that can embrace us all. We are obligated to treat one another with respect, to encourage tolerance and moderation, and to oppose any type of violence by groups or individuals acting against those of other faiths and lifestyles.**

**Let us extinguish the flames of hatred and ignite the fire of love; for we are brethren, one father to all of us. We must be worthy of the heritage of mercy, righteousness and justice of our common father, Abraham.**

**Saleh Aqil Khatib** Druze Religious Leader

**Shai Hershkowitz** CEO – Beit Morasha

**Nezar Khatib** Director of the Druze Department,  
Division of Ethnic Groups, Interior Ministry

**Imam Sheikh Jamal el Ubra** Imam and Muslim Leader  
in Rahat

**Odeh Muhammad Sharif** The President of the  
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the Holy Land  
Israel/Palestine

**Udi Kedem** Advisor & Member of the Interfaith Forum

**Younis Amasha** Imam and a member of the High  
Religious Druze Council in Israel

**Prof. Rabbi Yair Ray Lifshitz** Founder and CEO of  
“Beitie” – The House of Israeli-Jewish Culture

**Sheikh Mofid Abu Moch** Inspector of the “Meshulash”  
Region, Division of Ethnic Groups, Interior Ministry

**Professor Benjamin Ish-Shalom** President and Founder  
Beit Morasha

**Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Altschuler** Head of The Ludwig and  
Erica Jesselson Institute For Advanced Tora Studies

**Mordechai Cohen** Resident of Lod - Jewish and Israel  
Studies Teacher

**Salim Najami** Chairman of the Waqf Trustees, Acre

**Mr. Raji Hossien** Chairman of The Islamic Board Haifa

**Fr. Yousef Yakoub** Spokesman of the Maronite Diocese  
in the Holy Land, Head of the Maronite Church in Haifa

**David Abramowitz** Teacher in the town of Lod

**Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen** Director of Ohr Torah Stone’s Blickle Institute  
for Interfaith Dialogue

**The Rev. Canon Hatem Shehadeh** Pastor of the Anglican Church Haifa

**The Rev. Canon Samuel Fanous** Rector of Emmanuel Anglican  
Episcopal Church of Ramla, Israel

**Rabbi David Metzger** Former Secretary General of the Haifa Religious  
Council (Retired)

**Rabbi Oded Nitzani** Head of the Sedei Tsofim Community, Ma’alot

**Rabbi Yisrael Samet** Rabbi of the Garin Torani in Lod

**Dr. Khalid Abu Ras** Tariqat al-Salam al-Qadiriyya

**Ziad Abu-Moch**, Senior Director of Muslim Sector, Division of Ethnic  
Groups, Interior Ministry

The Forum of Interfaith Leaders in Israel is establishing “task forces” of senior communal religious leaders in Israel’s mixed cities. Through these task forces, the Forum is strengthening the influence of faith leaders to promote common values for their cities and communities. The program nurtures interfaith collaboration, strengthens community resilience, and works to prevent and when necessary respond to crises. The Forum is a joint initiative of Beit Morasha and the Division of Non-Jewish Affairs of the Israeli Interior Ministry.

**For more information please contact [bmj@bmj.org.il](mailto:bmj@bmj.org.il), or Tel: +972-77-456-0172**

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