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 Isreal/Palestine
Udi Kedem  Advisor & Member of the Interfaith Forum
Younis Amsa  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 Modif 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 Altshuler  Head of The Ladwig 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
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, or Tel: +972-77-456-0172

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