

The ‘Alexandria Declaration’

This historic agreement, to be known as the First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, was signed in Alexandria in January 2002, and marks the historic meeting together of the significant religious leaders in the region. In an unprecedented joint declaration, they pledged themselves to work together for a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It also calls on Israeli and Palestinian political leaders to implement the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations.

The faith leaders undertook to use their religious and moral authority to work for an end to violence and the resumption of the peace process. The accord also set the way for a permanent process of dialogue and initiatives to facilitate this.

The then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, chaired the conference, which received support in advance from both the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat. It was co-hosted by the Grand Imam of al-Azhar al Sharif, Dr. Mohamed Sayed Tantawy, the most senior figure in Egypt and holder of one of the most prestigious positions among Sunni Muslims worldwide.

The First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land

In the Name of God who is Almighty, Merciful and Compassionate, we, who have gathered as religious leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities, pray for true peace in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and declare our commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed that denies the right to life and dignity.

According to our faith traditions, killing innocents in the name of God is a desecration of his Holy Name, and defames religion in the world. The violence in the Holy Land is an evil which must be opposed by all people of good faith. We seek to live together as neighbours, respecting the integrity of each other’s historical and religious inheritance. We call upon all to oppose incitement, hatred and the misrepresentation of the other.

- 1. The Holy Land is Holy to all three of our faiths. Therefore, followers of the divine religions must respect its sanctity, and bloodshed must not be allowed to pollute it. The sanctity and integrity of the Holy Places must be preserved, and freedom of religious worship must be ensured for all.*
- 2. Palestinians and Israelis must respect the divinely ordained purposes of the Creator by whose grace they live in the same land that is called Holy.*
- 3. We call on the political leaders of both peoples to work for a just, secure and durable solution in the spirit of the words of the Almighty and the Prophets.*
- 4. As a first step now, we call for a religiously sanctioned cease-fire, respected and observed on all sides, and for the implementation of the Mitchell and Tenet recommendations, including the lifting of restrictions and a return to negotiations.*
- 5. We seek to help create an atmosphere where present and future generations will co-exist with mutual respect and trust in the other. We call on all to refrain from incitement and demonization, and to educate our future generations accordingly.*

6. *As religious leaders, we pledge ourselves to continue a joint quest for a just peace that leads to reconciliation in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, for the common good of all our peoples.*
7. *We announce the establishment of a permanent joint committee to carry out the recommendations of this declaration, and to engage with our respective political leadership accordingly.*

Signatories:

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey
The Sephardi Chief Rabbi Bakshi-Doron
The Deputy Foreign Minister, Rabbi Michael Melchior
Rabbi David Rosen, President of the WCRP
The Rabbi of Savyon, Rabbi David Brodman
Minister of State for the Palestinian Authority, Sheikh Tal El Sider
Representative of the Greek Patriarch, Archbishop Aristichos
The Melkite Archbishop, Archbishop Boutrous Mu'alem
Representative of the Armenian Patriarch, Archbishop Chinchinian
The Bishop of Jerusalem, the Rt. Revd. Riah Abu El Assal