

DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LEADERS IN ISRAEL.

November 2, 2016

We, the leaders of the major religions in Israel and members of the Council of Religious Community Leaders, believe in the Creator, who rules the world with benevolence and mercy, and requires of us to live with all persons in peace and mutual respect.

Our religious heritages teach that peace and the pursuit of justice are the will of God, and we as religious leaders bear particular responsibility to be attentive to the cries of the poor and the weak among us and to act to advance a more just society.

As the leaders of the official religious communities in Israel, we have decided to embark together on an historic visit to Poland, and to the site of Auschwitz–Birkenau. This visit is meant to honor the memory of millions of Jews and other victims of the Holocaust, and to express the determination of the leaders of the religious communities in Israel to do everything in their power to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities.

We call on all world leaders to act, in their countries and through the United Nations, to act with unwavering resoluteness against anti-Semitism, hatred of the other, which once again plague contemporary society,

We declare our commitment to cooperate and to do everything in our power to carry out this important call in the Holy Land as well, to strengthen the harmony and understanding that exist in Israel among the various religious communities.

In order to establish peace and mutual respect among members of religions throughout the world and in our country, we must educate our communities and children accordingly, and prevent affront to the feelings and beliefs of others.

Here, in Auschwitz–Birkenau, the site of the most horrific crimes against humanity in history and the symbol of ultimate evil, where the murder of millions Jews and others – men, women and children – was perpetrated by Nazi Germany, we declare our commitment to the sanctity of human life. We repudiate racism, fanaticism and extremism, particularly when these are committed, allegedly in the name of religion and in so doing desecrate religion.

The Council of Religious Community Leaders in Israel calls for an end to war and a prayer for peace in keeping with the vision of the prophets: “ They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore”, Isaiah 2:4.

The Council of Religious Leaders in Israel includes the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the Muslims religious establishment, the Christian churches in the Holy Land, the Druze Religious Authority, the Ahmadiyya Muslim, Bahai and Samaritan communities.