



JOINT DECLARATION

FOR PEACE & RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM FAITH LEADERS IN IRELAND

DECEMBER 2016



Sixteen of the Faith Leaders and Religious who signed the Declaration

Left to Right: Fr. Timothy Bartlett - Secretary General for the World Meeting of Families, Dr. Susan Hood - Librarian and Archivist of the RCB Library, Mr Siraj Zaidi - Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre of Ireland, Revd. Gary Mason – Founder/Director Rethinking Conflict, Revd. Damien McNeice – Master of Ceremonies for Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Sheikh Dr. Umar Al-Qadri – Ameer/Head Imam - Al-Mustafa Islamic Educational & Cultural Centre Ireland, Revd. Dr. William Olhausen – Rector, St. Matthias and Theological Advisor to the Archbishop of Dublin, The Most Revd. Archbishop Michael Jackson – Archbishop of Dublin, Church of Ireland, Revd. Bill Mullally – President – Methodist Church in Ireland, The Most Revd. Archbishop Suheil Dawani – Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Rabbi Zalman Lent – Communal Rabbi for Irish Jewish Community, Revd. John Parkin – Methodist, Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, Dr. Ali Al-Saleh – Imam, Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre of Ireland, Dr. Paul Manook – Chairman, Parish Council Armenian Church in Ireland, Revd. Ken Rue – Chair, Diocesan Council for Mission – Church of Ireland, Rt. Revd. Dr. Alan Harper – Armagh Educational & Community Village Project.



Joint Declaration for Peace & Respect for the dignity of human life in the Middle East from Faith Leaders in Ireland

As representatives of the three Abrahamic Faiths in Ireland, we share grief and pain at the death and suffering currently taking place in the Middle East, impacting dreadfully upon civilian populations. The loss of human life and the serious wounds and injuries inflicted on innocent people both physical and psychological, require the cessation of hostilities for the wellbeing and safety of all communities involved. We collectively pray for an end to all the violence and loss of life and for peace throughout the region.

It is both the aspiration and the right of all people to live in freedom and security without fear. People of all faiths are equally entitled to enjoy such things and yet each sees the other as denying that right to the other with a consequent spiral of violence. Our prayer and plea is for this spiral to be broken

and safety and security to be restored to all with a new beginning established through a commitment to parity of esteem in both politics and society.

In Ireland, we know something of what it is to have incompatible narratives of history, and the pain and suffering caused when the road of violence is taken instead of the road to peace. We speak today in the relative security of the recently-achieved political peace settlement in Ireland, which has paved the way for new possibilities in the resolution of our conflict, for new understandings and relationships to develop, and for real hope of a lasting peace on our island home. We pray that the lessons we have painfully learned from our own conflict may help in some small way to reduce the level of discord and suffering elsewhere in the world.

Today together we send our collective message of hope for peace to our brothers and sisters across the Middle East who yearn to live in freedom and peace. We join with them and all people of faith in the region: Jewish, Christian and Muslim, seeking a just and durable peace, rooted in reconciling love for all the people of the land that is called "holy" by each of the Abrahamic faiths.

Furthermore, as Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders in Ireland, we, without further delay, commit ourselves to engage in a process of deepening understanding of one another in the promotion of peace, and to use our positions of leadership to work together to advance the sacred values of respect for the dignity of every human life and protection of all human beings.

Where even one life is lost, one home destroyed, one child injured or left parentless, the whole of humanity is diminished and injured. In reaching out to one another today as representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths in Ireland we wish also to encourage respect for the life, dignity and freedom of all human beings, regardless of religion, nationality or gender.

Through respectful relationships, differences can be addressed through dialogue rather than through violence. The interests of one community can only be served by also respecting and valuing the humanity and interests of other communities. We are all created in the image of one eternal, all powerful and loving Creator of the universe. Only through sustained dialogue together can we build a society that is committed to peace.

**5th December 2016
At The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation**

Signatories to the Declaration

