

UPF Palisi, Samoa: Samoan Faith Leaders Hold Prayer for Peace in Middle East

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Palisi, Samoa - In a moving demonstration of solidarity and a call for peace, UPF-Samoa and the International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) organized a "Pacific Peoples Prayer for Peace: Candlelight Vigil for Israel and Palestine" on December 14, 2023. The event, held at the Government Prayer House in Palisi, brought together individuals from diverse religious backgrounds, united by a common wish for peace in the conflict-ridden regions of Israel and Gaza.

Against the backdrop of profound trauma caused by the conflict, religious leaders and advocates from Christianity, Islam, Bahai and other faiths convened to share their perspectives on achieving lasting peace. Emphasizing that peace starts from within, speakers reflected on the devastating impact of the loss of innocent lives, urging a collective commitment to renounce violence and actions that perpetuate hate and revenge.

The event commenced with participants penning messages of hope and condolence for the victims in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. A symbolic "water ceremony" performed by faith leaders emphasized the harmony of religions, acknowledging both their uniqueness and common destiny. Two young people recited powerful poems - one from a young war victim who shared a painful experience, and the other written by Rev. Sun Myung Moon at the age of 15, underscoring the importance of forgiveness and love,

even in the face of adversity.

The climax of the evening was a candlelight prayer vigil, with attendees from different faiths praying in unison, seeking divine guidance during these challenging times. Lani Alo's haunting song, "Tua I Manu," resonated in the air as the president of IAYSP-Oceania led the attendees in prayer, creating a poignant atmosphere of hope and unity.



Gratitude was extended to all attendees and religious leaders, including those who were unable to be present but sent messages of support. The meeting concluded on an optimistic note, with UPF President Maugana'i Seti Suafa expressing hope that, with the help of God, faith leaders can offer a glimmer of hope for an end to violence and suffering.

The founders of UPF, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, highlighted the crucial role of faith leaders in promoting global peace during a United Nations forum in 2000. In October 2023, UPF International released an official statement, reinforcing the call for leaders of every faith to work towards a world free from violence and suffering.