

## International Day of Peace Observed in Israel

Hod Ben Zvi  
September 21, 2015



Abu-Gosh, Israel—On September 21, UPF-Israel held an event at the Multi-Cultural Center in Abu-Gosh, an Arab town near Jerusalem, in observance of the UN International Day of Peace 2015. The event was organized in cooperation with Mr. Issa Jaber, mayor of Abu-Gosh; WFPW-Israel and the Multi-Cultural Center.

Approximately 35 people of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths, from Abu-Gosh; Jerusalem and even France, gathered for a friendly meeting and discussion.

This year, September 21 was one day before the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and two days before the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice), which gave everyone the opportunity to discuss the meaning of these holidays.

The challenge of forgiveness and repentance was discussed at the event. Representatives of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths spoke about the importance of forgiveness in all religions; the internal challenges people face when they want to forgive or be forgiven; and once people forgive and are liberated from their resentments, they reach a higher level of spirituality.

Attendees participated in the Forgiveness Project, a Facebook-based initiative that encouraged Jews and Muslims to dedicate 40 days, from August 18 – September 23, to forgiveness. Each day, words of forgiveness and peace from and exchanged between Jews and Muslims were shared through videos and messages posted to the project's Facebook page. The initiative inspired people to organize various events throughout the country, where the need for and the meaning of forgiveness were discussed. Several national radio programs reported on UPF's International Day of Peace's participation in the project.

Dr. Yossi Hatab, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a member of UPF's Jerusalem Interfaith Forum, spoke about the gap between the moral values all religions espouse, such as forgiveness and respect for the other, and using the name of God to harm and hurt others. Dr. Hatab said that the religions should take responsibility and acknowledge the harm they have done to people of other religions and also forgive any harm that was done to them. Forgiveness is the starting point for peace.

Prof. Eliezer Glaubach, president of UPF's Jerusalem Peace and Security Forum, considered the event in Abu-Gosh to be a historical one. He said the prophets' words about peace in all nations were being realized at the event. Prof. Glaubach also spoke about the important role Mr. Issa Jaber, as mayor of Abu-Gosh, can play in promoting peace in his town and region.