

## MEPI: Toward Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Hod Ben-Zvi  
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**UPF Israel:** On December 1-3, 2015 another MEPI program was held at the Jerusalem Dan Hotel under the theme, “Toward Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” sponsored by UPF International.

Interfaith leaders, parliamentarians, scholars and civil society leaders from the US, Europe and Israel gathered in an effort to formulate prospects for peace.

During the first evening of the program we received a briefing on the history and current state of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. An Arab MK (member of Knesset – the Israeli parliament) and a Jewish former government minister along with political experts gave their insights on the topic.

The next day, Dec 2nd, featured two sessions at the Knesset with some 40 participants present. We were hosted by the deputy speaker of the Knesset and had 3 more parliamentarians join in, sharing their views regarding reigniting the peace process between Israel and Palestine. Along with the local and international experts, UPF’s international president, Dr. Thomas Walsh, and secretary general, Mr. Taj Hamad, chaired sessions and presented UPF’s view point. The discussions were lively and dealt with a wide scope of issues, from security arrangements to people-to-people trust building. All in all the participants gained new hope, witnessing a vibrant MK dedicated to the cause of peace.



The international delegates were invited in the afternoon for a special experience at the Jewish Elul School. They were introduced to the traditional Jewish study method of “Havruta” – a small group reading texts and analyzing them in order to enhance moral values.

On December 3rd, the conference sessions were focused on the role of religious leaders in resolving conflicts. The regional president, Mr. Umberto Angelucci, shared his insights along with several religious leaders: a Jewish rabbi, a Druze sheik and a conflict resolution scholar. His wife, Mrs. Marilyn Angelucci, chaired the first panel, featuring a leading Moslem imam, a Christian priest, a psychologist and a rabbi.

The panelists’ talks were followed by a lively discussion and comments from the 40 people in attendance.

The two days allowed the participants to network and inspire one another to redouble their efforts towards resolving the conflicts in the Middle East.

The focus of the three-day event was “Toward Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” and it was sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), as part of its ongoing Middle East Peace Initiative, first launched in 2003.

UPF Israel provided all the services for the conference such as accommodations, transportation, academic management, technical assistance and production.