

Cooperation among Jewish and Arab Local Councils

Hod Ben Zvi
August 16, 2015



Abu-Gosh, Israel—The Jerusalem Peace and Security Forum met at the Multicultural Center in the Arab town Abu-Gosh on August 16, 2015 to discuss “Good Neighborliness in the Judean Hills-Cooperation Among Jewish and Arab Local Councils near Jerusalem.”

Prof. Eliezer Glaubach, president of the Jerusalem Peace and Security Forum and a political specialist, opened the session with warm greetings to the hosts. He highlighted that the town of Abu-Gosh is intercultural and inter-faith. Prof. Glaubach noted that all human beings are one family under one God, and said that unity can be achieved among all peoples and between all religions when the uniqueness of each person and each religion is respected. Prof. Glaubach also said that the all peoples and religions were created by God, and therefore, we should cherish and show regard to them.



Mr. Issa Jaber, mayor of Abu-Ghosh, and head of its local council, said that peace—on the individual, family, and village levels, and among neighbors—is the key to achieving world peace.

“Human beings need each other, and people themselves are the actual peace builders,” he said. “Through sincerely caring for one another, mutually supporting one another, and getting to know one another with honest intentions, peace is built.” Mr. Jaber considers education for tolerance as well as education for

respecting the other highly important in society. He also said that educators and religious leaders who believe in the values of peace should boldly encourage and advocate for these values in the public sphere, although it is not always easy to do so, because they can face opposition. Nevertheless, they should be brave enough to follow the way of peace.

Mr. Jaber concluded his presentation by talking about the importance of security as a foundation for peace. He is working with local police and mayors to create a secure environment in the area by not tolerating violence, crimes, or vandalism of any kind.



Mr. Yoram Shimon, mayor of the town Mevaseret-Zion spoke about how Mevaseret-Zion and Abu-Gosh have cooperated to organize activities, such as sports events and workshops. These types of shared activities are the cornerstones of true brotherhood and peace.

Mrs. Anna Ben-Mordechai, commander and chief superintendent of the community police, which is responsible for eleven settlements, spoke about the uniqueness of the region; it is made up of diverse and multicultural communities of Muslim-Arabs, Orthodox-Jews, monks, nuns, and others. The community police station teaches Jewish policemen Arabic classes so that the policemen can engage with communities where Arabic is spoken. Mrs. Ben-Mordechai explained that the police are planning initiatives that will empower women and help develop the local economy, which will reduce crime.

Prof. Glaubach concluded the discussion by saying: how the leaders and populations of Abu-Ghosh and Mevaseret Zion have cooperated is a model for how all communities in the nation can coexist with each other.

