



Peace Activist Quotes

J Street U calls on the Obama administration to actively engage in efforts to build a lasting peace in Israel and Palestine. We know this is important but don't take our word for it! What do the Israeli and Palestinian peace activists say they need from the international community?

On International Involvement ...

Daniel Seidemann, *Ir Amim* - "I would say that there are three important international audiences: Washington, Washington, Washington. At the moment. Of course, I'm exaggerating. I think that much of what happens is decided in Washington, and decided in a very narrow way in Washington. [...I think the US can be most constructive] number one, by re-engaging, because there has been disengagement, which I think has had a very adverse effect: "Let 'em bleed." And by prioritizing, asking what is of utmost importance, and focusing on that. Stopping terror is clearly one of them, generating a genuinely democratic process is clearly one of them, and here I agree with Bush Administration. But also, preventing Israeli actions that will predispose the outcome of final status, that will perhaps destroy the two state solution. Those things are happening, and there's no American engagement."

Helmi Kittani, *Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development* - "Today, in my opinion, the Americans have the biggest influence on the nature of things. But I think that all the international bodies must get involved, the United Nations, Europe, also the Arab countries that believe in peace because that will contribute to the building of the atmosphere, to the building of the economy and to ensure that this peace will be a lasting one... And countries like the US, Europe and Egypt can help the State of Israel to integrate and help the State of Palestine to exist and build its institutions and its economy and, in the future, build with Israel a strong economy that will allow them to export to the entire world."

Shlomi Daskal, *The People's Voice: Realistic Religious Zionism* - "The EU can exert its influence; the United States could change a lot here. There's a lecturer at Ben-Gurion University who says that it's simple: Israel's policies are formed by external pressures. Everything is influenced, even legislation in the Knesset."

George Sa'adeh, *Bereaved Families Forum* - "On the international level we hope that the sponsors of peace, primarily the US and the EU, will work honestly and fairly in order to reach an equal settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians."

Meir Margalit, *Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions* - "I don't believe we can reach a peace agreement on our own at present. We lack both the will and the capacity to do so. I believe we've arrived at a point in history where we can't dislodge ourselves from this situation without the intervention of an international actor or actors - it could be the Quartet if they wanted. The withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is proof of that. We would never go through with it without the massive pressure that the US is applying."

On International Support ...

Gideon Bromberg, EcoPeace/Friends of the Earth Middle East - "I think that every dollar that has been allocated to this region--and we're talking about billions of dollars a year--should identify a peace dividend, and they don't. The whole concept of "how is a given activity going to help create peace" is not sufficiently thought through."

Wafa Sour, The School for Peace - "Today countries around the world donate money to fund our peace organizations. There are times when I want to tell them to stop, and instead to use their money to build factories that will provide Palestinians with jobs. How can I expect a man to be good to his wife when he does not have a job and cannot feed his children? How is he supposed to be able to live? A starving nation will not be capable of achieving anything. We need to build schools and educate our people. First and foremost, however, our people need food to eat, because it is only then that they will be able to think about other things."

Dr. Ron Pundak, Peres Center for Peace - "I would like to see the international players become more involved in trying to advance our ability to use our own tools. All our activities are based on donations. NGOs like ours-- non-political, non-governmental organizations-- don't get one dime from the Israeli government, and we are dependent on assistance coming from other governments, or foundations, or individual donors."

Yehuda Stolov, Interfaith Encounter Association - "People from outside can contribute positive things, but their contribution should be encouraging the sides to meet and solve the problems together. That can be a lot of work ... When people come to show solidarity with a side it's very nice for that side in the immediate sense of encouragement and support. It might even help that side, but it doesn't contribute to advancing peace in the region."

Tzvika Shahak, Bereaved Families Forum - "[I want international audiences to know] the truth. The fact that the majority wants peace, on both sides, and must be assisted; that's what I want -- and for them to donate the funds that are necessary for this. I believe that economic welfare and democracy on the Palestinian side will speed up the process."

The above quotes are courtesy of Just Vision, "a nonprofit organization that informs local and international audiences about under-documented Palestinian and Israeli joint civilian efforts to resolve the conflict nonviolently."