

## Interfaith Statement on Israel and Hizbollah

While war raged in the Middle East between Israel and Hizbollah, Rabbi Neil and Majid Yasin, the Director and Imam of the Bournemouth Islamic Centre were working on a draft document together. As the ceasefire came into being, the document was sent to other faith leaders in the local community to sign.

Within three days, leaders from 40 different communities had put their name to the document. In an interview for the Daily Echo's Faith Matters page (August 26th), Rabbi Neil said that "the Bible often refers to things in forties - forty days and nights of rain in Noah's flood, forty days of Moses on Mount Sinai, forty years of wandering in the desert and it is very moving for me that forty different communities came forward in a short space of time to put their names to this document."

The article appeared in the Bournemouth Advertiser, as well as the Daily Echo, reaching a potential audience of thousands, especially considering the prominent position of the article, to which Rabbi Neil commented "I never thought I would ever be a page three pin-up!"

The article ([http://www.thisisdorset.net/display.var.884869.0.faiths\\_united\\_over\\_middle\\_east\\_peace.php](http://www.thisisdorset.net/display.var.884869.0.faiths_united_over_middle_east_peace.php)) reads as follows: Faiths united over Middle East peace By Julie Magee

- CALL FOR TOLERANCE: Rabbi Neil Amswych with the statement issued jointly with Majid Yasin

RELIGIOUS leaders across Dorset and Hampshire have backed a groundbreaking new initiative by Bournemouth's Jewish and Muslim communities calling for "tolerance, compassion and a humane vision".

Rabbi Neil Amswych from Bournemouth Reform Synagogue and Majid Yasin, director of Bournemouth Islamic Centre, have released a joint statement urging local residents to support efforts to secure lasting peace in the Middle East.

The statement has been signed by 40 other religious leaders across Dorset and Hampshire, including Canon Jim Richardson, team rector for Bournemouth town centre and Bournemouth University chaplain, the Rev Dr David Hart.

The Archdeacon of Sherborne, Ven Paul Taylor, and Bournemouth nightclubs chaplain Jon Oliver have also supported the initiative along with Martin Manley from the Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church. continued...

Rabbi Neil stressed that all those who had signed the statement "believe all human beings are created equally and that all life is sacred".

He added: "We call on all parties in the Middle East to maintain the current ceasefire which came into effect on Monday morning since stability in the area can be best achieved through diplomatic and not military means.

"With this in mind the United Nations should immediately send a peacekeeping force into southern Lebanon and take all necessary measures to prevent further loss of life on either side of the Lebanese-Israeli border."

The religious representatives urged residents in Dorset and Hampshire "regardless of faith, to press local and national government representatives to ensure a balanced and just ceasefire, allowing neighbours to co-exist without fear of attack".

The statement concludes: "While lasting stability in the region will be difficult for all parties involved, we urge tolerance, compassion and a humane vision by all."

The signatories:

Rabbi Neil Amswych, Rabbi of Bournemouth Reform Synagogue

M Yasin, Director and Imam of Bournemouth Islamic Centre and Central Mosque

Rev Dr David Hart, Bournemouth University Chaplain

Rev Jonathan Martin, Poole Civic Chaplain

Rev Stuart Miller, Bournemouth and Poole College Chaplain

Canon Jim Richardson, team rector Bournemouth town centre parish

Ian Knight, Skinner Street URC Poole church secretary

John Crowe, PCC Secretary, All Saints' Church, Branksome Park

Rev Simon Evans, vicar of Ensbury Park & Chaplain to Bournemouth police

Rev Canon Dr Christopher Rutledge, vicar Talbot Village, Bournemouth

Rev Mark Warner, Minister BUGB

Rev Ian Thomas, team leader IBEX: The Churches Working with the Economy - Central South Coast

Joe Salmon, secretary Poole Christian Aid Martin Manley, training officer, Wessex Synod of the United Reformed Church

Rev Mike Oates, vicar St Paul's, Canford Heath, Poole

The Venerable Paul Taylor, Archdeacon of Sherborne

R Hemmingfield, Head of Training, Life for the World Trust

Rev Roger Bayldon, assistant curate St Mark's Church, Talbot Village Mary Chipping, District Lay Preaching Commissioner, Dorset District URC

Rev Penny Trimmer, Assistant Curate St Mark's Church, Talbot Village

Howard Oldfield, Pastor of Poole Vineyard Church

Rev Martin Ambler, Minister at Richmond Hill St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Bournemouth

Rev Colin Marsh, URC Minister, Blandford, Mere and Shaftesbury

Rev Robert Peters, vicar of St Paul's, Throop and Anglican Area Dean of Bournemouth

James Cairns, chairman Christian Aid Resource Committee, Poole

Damian Gevertz, Chairperson of South Hampshire Reform Jewish Community

Rev Declan McConville, chaplain Poole hospital

Rev David Vincent, Immanuel United Reformed Church, Southbourne

Rev J Clive Sutcliffe, President of Dorset District United Reformed Churches

Rev Brenda Stephenson, Minister United Church, Dorchester

Rev K S Timbrell, Chaplain to Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust Rev

Dr Bob McKinley, Superintendent Minister of the Methodist Churches in Bournemouth

Rev Bob Vernon, St James the Greater Church, Bournemouth

Kewal Singh, Secretary Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Southampton

Mr Paddy Bartholomew, Reader, Purbeck Jack Horwood, SGI-UK, Dorset and Channel Islands HQ

Jon Oliver, Chaplain to Bournemouth nightclubs Pastor

Bill Rice, The King's Church, Poole

Brian Lassman, President Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation

Rev Tim Selwood, co-ordinator of Three Faiths Forum in Hampshire and Dorset

Susan Barry, area co-ordinator for Christian Aid

Janet Warren/Jack Cummings, co-clerks for Bournemouth Quakers