

Date: Thursday, 17-May-2007
Location: Aqaba
City: Aqaba
Country: Jordan

Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II Peace Group Meeting

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim;

Thank you all. I'm truly honored to join you this afternoon. I would also like to say a special word of appreciation to Dr. Abdel Salam Majali for organizing this meeting.

My friends,

Yours is one gathering where I don't need to talk about the urgency of achieving a lasting, comprehensive, and just peace. I think you know the tremendous opportunity we now have, as well as the dangers implied by this week's events in Gaza.

But I do want to say a few words about your important role at this historic moment.

2007 is a decision point. The Arab countries are unified behind the Arab Peace Initiative. There is new international will to solve the crisis. The process is commanding new attention from leadership on both sides. The issues are back on the front page, instead of just the opinion columns.

The challenge now is to move the process forward, to build momentum to achieve real results - and most importantly to do so now, while the opportunity is there. If we let events drift, we will be looking at years of more violence and destruction before another such opportunity opens. We need to act with courage, vision, and determination.

The very best force for that is the people throughout our societies, who want and need peace. We know that opinion polls testify again and again that people on both sides want a negotiated settlement; they want an end to crisis and destruction, they want the opportunities and benefits of peace. You are needed, to give all these people a voice, and spread their message worldwide.

The peace constituency needs to engage every father, every mother, who has ever feared for their child. It must empower every generation, especially our youth, to reclaim their future from the divisions and violence of the past... and from the violence that is unfolding today.

Your leadership is also needed to help people create a new and believable vision for our region. Too many people know what it is to feel anger, sorrow, and grievance. Help them remember the solidarity of successful peace - the hope; the empowerment; the sense of new opportunity.

And, finally, your leadership is needed to get started on creating that reality right now. I am very concerned - as all of you are - about the violence in Gaza. It must stop for the sake of the Palestinian people, and for the sake of Palestine.

Thirteen years ago, my father King Hussein called for "no more death, no more misery, no more suspicion, no more fear, no more uncertainty of what each day might bring."

We aren't there yet, but we can be. And history shows that people like you will make the difference. Non-violent, popular action has driven transformations across the world. It demolished the Wall dividing Europe and ended segregation in the United States.

I know that with your help, we, too, can help stop the violence and achieve a new and more just era. And this land can emerge from the season of crisis.

I urge you to take the lead.

Thank you very much.