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UN Event



'Some of our sons tempted by Satan.'
King Abdullah Photo:
AP

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Saudi king invites Israel to New York interfaith conference

Peres, Livni consider attending interfaith dialogue conference in UN; first time Israel invited to event organized by Saudi Arabia. 'Nothing can purify Islam's reputation except for the extension of Muslims' hands to their brothers in other religions,' says King Abdullah

Itamar Eichner

Saudi King Abdullah has green-lighted [Israel's](#) participation in a meeting at the United Nations next month to discuss his initiative to promote interfaith dialogue, marking the first time the Jewish state has been invited to a conference held under the auspices of the kingdom.

Official Israeli representatives were not invited to the previous interfaith dialogue conference in Spain, but rabbis were on hand for the event.

[President Shimon Peres](#) and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni were reportedly considering attending the conference, scheduled for November 12.

Saudi Arabia's Mideast peace initiative was attached to the invitation, which was extended to 192 countries.

'World is criticizing Islam'

During a recent meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheik, Peres said Israel welcomed the Arab peace plan. "Peace has never been more possible than it is now. It would be a mistake to miss out on this opportunity," he said.

On Saturday King Abdullah, whose country bans non-Muslims from openly practicing their religion, called for religious tolerance and said such dialogue is the duty of every human being. The king also urged fellow Muslims to reach out to non-Muslims as a way to show that Islam is not a violent religion.

"I will go to America for the dialogue of followers of religions," the king said at a meeting with Information Minister Ayad Madani and newspaper editors. "The dialogue comes a time when the world is criticizing Islam."

"It is regrettable that some of our sons have been tempted by Satan or brothers of Satan," the king added, referring to Muslim militants who have carried out attacks around the world. "Nothing can purify (Islam's reputation) except for the extension of Muslims' hands to their brothers in other religions."

Associated Press contributed to the report

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