

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV receives his first Palestinian and Israeli Peace Leaders, affirms support for civil society

Vatican receives peace entrepreneurs Maoz Inon and Aziz Abu Sarah, marks first formal welcome by Pope of representatives from Israeli-Palestinian peace movement

VATICAN CITY, ITALY, May 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, May 30, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV received Israeli and Palestinian peace entrepreneurs Maoz Inon and Aziz Abu Sarah for an official audience at the Vatican as part of the Jubilee celebrations. This marks the first time representatives from the Israeli-Palestinian peace movement have been formally welcomed by the Pope – a moment of profound historical significance, gratitude, and responsibility.



Pope Leo XIV Meets Peacebuilders Aziz Abu Sarah and Maoz Inon; photo courtesy of Vatican Media

"We are humbled to represent a growing movement of Israelis and Palestinians who believe peace is not only possible – it is inevitable," said Inon and Abu Sarah.

"We are deeply grateful for the moral leadership of His Holiness and for his support of an immediate end to the war, a deal to release hostages and prisoners and the building of a just and lasting peace rooted in reconciliation, equality, and security for both peoples."

The invitation was accompanied by a moving letter from Bishop Domenico Pompili, recognizing Maoz and Aziz as "those who are committed to peace and justice in every area of their life."

The letter recalled the late Pope Francis's embrace of both peacebuilders during Arena di Pace in Verona on May 18, 2024, when Pope Francis signed onto a campaign to see the G7 leaders integrate the work of civil society peacebuilders like Maoz and Aziz into Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy, saying:

“They had the courage to embrace each other — and this is not only a testimony of wanting peace, but is a concept of the future.”

Bishop Pompili continued:

“Pope Leo XIV invites you as part of the Jubilee of all those Pope Francis called ‘social poets’ — people who, in difficult, harsh, and even violent realities, open breaches of hope.”

This visit renews and strengthens the Vatican’s support, first expressed publicly at Arena di Pace 2024, that led to the G7 Leaders’ adoption of new policy language at last year’s G7 leaders’ summit that underscores civil society’s central role in resolving the conflict:

“We affirm our commitment to working together —and with other international partners—to closely coordinate and institutionalize our support for civil society peacebuilding efforts, ensuring that such efforts are part of a larger strategy to build the foundation necessary for a negotiated and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace.” - Communique G7, 2024, Apulia, Italy

In recognition of the work of the two peace entrepreneurs, Pope Leo XIV stated during his speech: “How can we forget the courageous embrace between Maoz Inon, an Israeli whose parents were killed by Hamas, and Aziz Abu Sarah, a Palestinian whose brother was killed by the Israeli army. They are now friends and work with one another. That gesture remains as a testimony and sign of hope. We thank them for being here today.”

Underscoring the vital role of civil society in peacebuilding—an emphasis his predecessor Pope Francis had already made ahead of last year’s G7 summit—the Pope also said: “Peace takes shape from the ground up, beginning with places, communities and local institutions, and by listening to what they have to tell us. In this way, we come to realize that peace is possible when disagreements and the conflicts they entail are not set aside, but acknowledged, understood and surmounted. That is why your work (...) is especially valuable. (...) If you want peace, prepare institutions of peace. Increasingly we realize that this cannot simply involve political institutions, whether national or international, but requires all institutions – educational, economic and social.”

These powerful statements from His Holiness reinforce the [policy shift](#) that Pope Francis, together with more than 50 UK and European Parliamentarians, over 350 NGOs, and peacebuilders Maoz and Aziz, helped to advance last year. They offer renewed momentum for this agenda to be reaffirmed and expanded at the upcoming G7 Leaders Summit, ensuring that the Vatican’s legacy of support for grassroots peacebuilding continues to grow in both reach and impact.

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