

## Latin American Muslim and Jews Vow To Strengthen Ties During Mission to Washington

**International** 2012-04-01 12:18:46

Washington, DC - A delegation of 14 leading Muslim and Jewish leaders from five Latin American countries and two Caribbean islands ended two days of high level meetings in Washington, DC vowing to strengthen ties between their two communities.

The Mission of Latin American Muslim and Jewish Leaders to Washington, DC was hosted by The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FFEU) and the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Muslim and Jewish leaders from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay, Barbados and St. Croix were introduced to the pioneering work spearheaded by FFEU to strengthen Muslim-Jewish relations in North America and Europe. The major goal of the mission was to jumpstart the process of dialogue and cooperation between the Muslim and Jewish communities throughout Latin America.

Participants in the Mission held meetings with high level officials at the White House and State Department, met with Muslim and Jewish Congressional leaders on Capitol Hill, visited the U.S. Holocaust Museum and were hosted at the Embassies of Argentina and Brazil.

At the end of the Mission, the participants issued a joint statement affirming a commitment to build "solid Muslim-Jewish relations in our countries and communities and show our two peoples and the world that Muslims and Jews can work together fruitfully for the betterment of all, while building ties of friendship and trust." In pursuit of that goal participants in the Mission promised to endeavor to take part in the upcoming 5th Annual Weekend of Twinning to take place on the weekend of November 16-18, 2012. During that weekend, mosques and synagogues and Muslim and Jewish student, young leadership and women's groups around the world will join together with each other to hold Muslim-Jewish encounters.

FFEU President Rabbi Marc Schneier commented, "I am deeply inspired by the enthusiasm and commitment expressed by the visiting Latin American Muslim and Jewish leaders for the cause of strengthening Muslim-Jewish relations. We welcome them to our ever-growing international movement dedicated to bringing about Muslim-Jewish reconciliation and cooperation."

According to Muhammad Yusuf Hallar of Argentina, Secretary General of the Islamic Organization for Latin America and the Caribbean, "This Mission is very important for the future, because it will start a process of strengthening ties not only between participants in the Mission, but between Muslim and Jewish communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean."

Rabbi Michel Schlesinger of Sao Paulo, Brazil, commented, "Until now, dialogue between the Muslim and Jewish communities of Brazil have not reached their full potential. But after taking part in the Mission I am optimistic that we can learn from the experiences of the Jewish and Muslim communities in the United States to strengthen our own efforts to build understanding and trust.

Dr. Juan Suquillo, chair of the Board of Directors at the Islamic Center in Quito, remarked, "I am inspired by taking part in this Mission that we can do so much more in strengthening Jewish-Muslim ties. After this Mission, we understand each other and our needs much more than before."

Rabbi Daniel Goldman of Buenos Aires, Argentina, commented, "It is vital for both of our communities that we stand together to fight Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry. This must be our common cause."

During a meeting at the U.S. State Department, Hannah Rosenthal, Special Envoy To Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, told the Mission, "No words can express how important is your work to build partnerships between Muslims and Jews in Latin America and around the world."

According to Joshua DuBois, Special assistant to President Obama and Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, "As a former community organizer, President Obama understands very well the importance of building positive relations across religious lines. He sees tremendous value in the work that FFEU is doing in bringing together Muslims and Jews."

Representative Andre Carson (D-Ind), one of two Muslims in the U.S. Congress, commented, "I believe that this effort to build Muslim-Jewish understanding in Latin America and around the world is a game changer. Those of you involved are dragon slayers overcoming bigotry and hatred."

*The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, under the leadership of Rabbi Marc Schneier, president, and Russell Simmons, chairman, is a 501 (c) (3) national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting racial harmony and strengthening inter-group relations. The Foundation, founded in 1989, has offices in New York City.*

**Foto 1:**

(L-R) Rabbi Daniel Goldman of Buenos Aires; Dr. Juan Suquillo, board president, the Islamic Center of Quito, Ecuador; and Rabbi Marc Schneier, president, Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. The 14 leaders who attended high level meetings in Washington were hosted by the FFEU and the Islamic Society of North America.

Foto por Miriam Lomaskin

**Foto 2:**

On March 27, the delegation of Latin American and Caribbean Muslim and Jewish leaders visited the Argentine embassy in Washington. The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FFEU) and the Islamic Society of North America welcomed 14 leaders from 5 Latin American nations plus Barbados and the Virgin Islands to promote the process of dialogue and cooperation between their two communities.

**WHAT :** Latin American Muslim and Jews Vow To Strengthen Ties During Mission to Washington  
**WHEN :** 2012-04-01 12:18:46  
**WHERE :**

**CONTACT:**

Walter Ruby

Muslim Jewish Program Director  
The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding  
walterruby@gmail.com  
917 294 1772