



**YES WE CAN: MIDDLE EAST PEACE**  
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**Washington, DC 20009**  
**[www.yesmep.org](http://www.yesmep.org)**

January 6, 2010

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear President Obama:

Yes We Can – Middle East Peace (YesMEP) is a partnership of diverse religious and secular Americans in the Washington, DC metropolitan area who have come together to support your initiative for a just and secure peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on a two-state solution. On December 6, 2009, we held a performing arts event at the 6<sup>th</sup> & I Historic Synagogue and invited Paul Monteiro to speak on behalf of your Administration.

YesMEP has recently decided to give our wholehearted support to the McDermott/Ellison Congressional letter asking you to provide much needed humanitarian assistance and construction material to the people of Gaza. We urge, however, that appropriate steps should be taken to insure that the aid be used only for its intended purposes and that reliable third parties such as the United Nations and independent NGOs guarantee that no use of imported materials will be used for military purposes.

We also understand that the Congressional letter is supported by national organizations that we have worked closely with such as JStreet, Americans for Peace Now, American Task Force on Palestine, United Methodists and the Quakers.

It has recently been proposed that a special envoy be appointed by the Quartet to supervise rebuilding activities and help mediate the opening of the Israeli and Egyptian crossings. We believe that such a proposal should be seriously considered by the Quartet.

As long as this crisis continues and over 1.5 million Palestinians, mostly women and children, are without adequate housing, sanitation and food, it could undermine your efforts and Senator Mitchell's attempts to begin serious negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. As noted in the Congressional letter: "Most importantly, lifting these restrictions will give civilians in Gaza a tangible sense that diplomacy can be an effective tool for bettering their conditions."

Kind Regards,

Jim Vitarello,  
Chairman  
Yes We Can: Middle East Peace (YesMEP)