

New Hispanic Evangelical Group Shows Its Support for Israel

A group of Hispanic evangelical faith leaders has launched a new pro-Israel group aimed at combating the global rise of anti-Semitism and the efforts at the United Nations—and elsewhere—to delegitimize the nation of Israel.

The Latino Coalition for Israel is engaging Latino Christians and educating them on the biblical mandate to “support and bless Israel by teaching the Jewish roots of the gospel and God’s heart for Israel and the Jewish people.” LCI President Mario Bramnick, who has been involved in the pro-Israel movement for many years, said the new group is the realization of an expansion of ministry, vision and outreach within the movement.

“Major international Hispanic organizations and leadership have joined our board and advisory board, which include some of the most prominent Hispanic evangelical and Jewish leadership,” he said. “We will be hosting events in major cities throughout the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean and will continue to educate, engage and mobilize the Hispanic evangelical community at greater levels in support of Israel and the Jewish community. We will help establish a bridge between the Hispanic community in the United States, Latin America and the nation of Israel to form an intercessory for the nation of Israel and its people.”

One of the first efforts along those lines was the first-ever Caribbean Israeli Technology Conference & Exhibition held last month in Barbados. The event brought together more than 300 business, governmental and church leaders from seven Caribbean nations and nine Israeli technology companies to showcase

various innovative sectors, including agriculture, water scarcity, solar technology, cybersecurity and medical equipment.

The event was hosted by the Caribbean Israel Leadership Coalition, which is now an offshoot of LCI. Its president, Bishop Andre Thomas, said the aim of the conference is to create an enabling environment to do business with companies that can bring meaningful business to Barbados and by extension the region. He contended that it would also bridge the economic, diplomatic and cultural gap and alliance between the Caribbean and Israel.

“[That] was a historic event in bringing business sectors of the Caribbean nations and Israeli technology firms together for fostering of strong future Israel-Caribbean relations,” Bramnick added. “Israel’s achievement in technology is renowned, and Israel desires to share its advances with the Caribbean nations.”

Barbadian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Sealy, a keynote speaker at the event, noted that his country and Israel have had diplomatic ties for about 50 years and urged stronger ties with the Jewish state. He also reflected upon the mutual benefits of bringing together the private sectors of both nations to look at even greater cooperation.

“Apart from the skilled labor force that can be found in the region, which is a plus for the advancement of the economy and society of the region, there are very good education systems in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean,” Israeli Ambassador to Barbados Mordehai Amihai Bivas said. He added the region also has “very stable” democratic systems of government, which have served it well in the past and have guaranteed stability for the future.

LCI’s efforts are extending beyond the Western Hemisphere, too. Last week, its leaders participated in The Hague

Institute for International Co-operation, which brought together more than 30 international lawyers and experts from various countries to discuss and formulate legal position papers related to Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The timing of the event was profound; not only are anti-Israel efforts at the U.N. and the International Court of Justice at The Hague on the rise, but June also marked the 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War in which Israel gained control of East Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula.

Since the mid-1970s, international diplomacy has sought to promote an Arab-Israeli peace agreement by presuming that claimed Palestinian rights to statehood and sovereignty over all of the "occupied territories" are well-founded under international law and that competing Israeli claims with respect to these territories are groundless. More recently, U.N. Security Council Resolution 2334 condemned all Israeli settlements activities in the "occupied Palestinian territories" as a "flagrant violation" of international law.

At the January 2017 summit in Paris, a number of nations adopted a statement claiming that the two-state solution based on bringing a "full end" to the "occupation" of the territories won 50 years ago is "the only way to achieve enduring peace." Yet, the position papers of The Hague conclude that the statement by the Security Council that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the territories are illegal is both incorrect and misleading.

"It is therefore of the utmost importance to review the international legal framework applicable to the so-called 'territorial status' of East Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to explore the relevance of international law to the formulation of foreign policy," Bramnick said.

He also presented a speech titled "The New Era of Relationships under President Trump's Administration" in which

he explained how the new American president's initiatives will further strengthen the work of the pro-Israel movement in the United States.

"A combination of solid legal arguments and the unique outreach of LCI will make our work even more effective in the future," he said. {eo}