

Iran delegation withdraw during Peres speech

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Iranian President Ahmadinejad

Egypt's Al-Azhar Grand Sheikh Dr. Mohamed Sayed Tantawi and Egyptian Religious Endowments Minister Dr. Mahmoud Hamdi Zaqzouq have participated with Israeli President Shimon Peres and a delegation of the Jewish State in an international conference on religious dialogue that has started yesterday in the Kazakhstan capital of Astana

The Iranian delegation walked out of the conference room when Shimon Peres was giving his speech. Its members refused to go back, saying: "We have come here to listen to religious leaders, while Peres is not a man of religion."

Iranian delegation was not aware of the level of Israeli representation in the conference until last Monday, and that they were not informed that Peres would give a speech, according to Israeli Jerusalem Post

Al-Azhar Grand Sheikh and Minister of Religious Endowments have participated in the session where Peres gave his speech. They did not leave the room, said the sources at the conference.

Zaqzouq delivered a speech at a meeting of the conference in which he called on the religious leaders to assume their enormous responsibilities in the face of common dangers that threaten the whole world, including the weapons of mass destruction.

He said that "the religious leaders have the biggest burden of bringing about a rapprochement between the peoples of the world by explaining to them that all religions carry the same message of peace and goodness for all humanity, adding that Islam fully respects the right to perform religious rites and rejects blind bigotry and stupid racism."

Al-Azhar Grand Sheikh had been heavily criticized for shaking hands with Shimon Peres in a religious dialogue conference in the United States last year, causing him nerves problems that he had to be treated from at Wadi Al-Nil Hospital.

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