

**Office of Shimon Peres**

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**The Ninth President Shimon Peres delivered a video greeting to wish a Happy New Year to world leaders.**

**Peres responded to Kim Jong Un’s video message this morning and to the news of the renewal of relations between the United States and Cuba.**

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year, to each and every one of you. We are departing from a very dramatic year during which we suffered from great evils but also enjoyed great achievements. We are entering a year full of expectation and hope. It looks to me that the year to come is already full with wishes to make this world of peace, a world of equality and a world of tolerance, where values are more important than material achievements.

I can see some surprising developments, if the leader of North Korea calls to meet the leaders of South Korea, then it’s a welcome call. If the beautiful Cuba and the United States of America are renewing their good relations, it’s a moment of promise. And even here in the Middle East, while there is still bloodshed and suffering, I can see a desire to depart from it and make the Middle East great again, like it has been and like it should be. A holy place, a place of peace. A year in which we bring an end to terror and begin cooperating. Despite all the pessimism, I assure you that most of the people understand that pessimism leads nowhere. We can pray and we have the right to. We can move forward, we have the capacity to do so. And it seems that more and more leaders understand that to be a leader is to lead to a better world, to justice, equality and hope. Let’s pray together. Let’s understand that to be different is not a negative. Let’s understand that to go together and bring peace is a possibility that must not be postponed. I particularly want to wish a Happy New Year to Pope Francis, who is a Pope of hope and peace, for all the Christians but not only for the Christians, for all us. God bless you. Happy New Year to all of you.