**Out of the still-smoldering embers in Haifa, a glimmer of hope**

Investigators point to arson as having sparked many of the fires that tragically ravaged Haifa and other parts of northern Israel last week. But the heroic response of firefighters from around the world, notably including the Palestinian Authority, has sparked something altogether different, yet holding the potential to spread just as rapidly: renewed hope in the possibility of neighborly kindness in a region that too often runs short of it.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’ decision to send eight fire trucks and dozens of first responders to battle the blaze, followed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s telephone call to extend his gratitude, demonstrates the importance of rising above the conflicts that often set Israelis and Palestinians apart, in favor of what unites them — their common humanity.

That Israelis and Palestinians should glimpse a spark of hope out of the still-smoldering embers of forest fires may be ironic, but amid the destruction can be found the seeds to peace for those willing to plant and harvest them. Someday, hopefully soon, when, in times not only of crisis but of relative calm as well, all the region’s people recognize each other’s basic humanity as individuals, peace will finally be within the grasp of Israelis and Palestinians alike. That day cannot arrive soon enough.