



Jewish Community Relations Council

of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties
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Media Announcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE:

JEWISH COMMUNITY RESPONDS TO HAMAS VICTORY IN PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS

Spokespersons available for on-the-record comment and analysis

(San Francisco) January 26, 2006 Michael Futterman, President of the Jewish Community Relations Council, issued the following statement today in response to the news that the radical Islamic terrorist organization Hamas won a large majority of seats in elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

This is a sad day for peace. Hamas' victory is a devastating development and signals a serious crisis in the quest to achieve peace in the Middle East. Hamas' radical Islamist ideology calls for killing Jews, destroying the State of Israel and replacing it with a radical Muslim theocracy. This was echoed in recent days leading up to the elections.

Hamas is classified by the U.S. as a terrorist organization and has staged 58 suicide bombings against Israeli civilian targets in the past five years, killing hundreds of Jews, Christians and Muslims.

We support democracy, a better life for the Palestinian people, and a peace process that produces security and independence both for Israel and the Palestinians. This goal is now in jeopardy.

We acknowledge that much of the vote for Hamas was a protest against the ruling Fatah, which has been criticized for corruption, and inept and inefficient governance. We had hoped that the Palestinian people would choose candidates expressing a commitment to non-violence and a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace. Instead, they have opted for a radical terrorist organization to lead them. We are profoundly disappointed with this choice.

This development also underscores Israel's need to continue protecting the security of its citizens. .

We urge the international community to condemn this setback to peace, and to refuse to deal with Hamas or a Hamas-led government, unless and until the organization formally and verifiably renounces the use of terror and rejects its charter calling for Israel's destruction. We welcome the U.S. commitment to reject any negotiations with Hamas until Hamas undertakes these steps.

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The Jewish Community Relations Council is the central public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, representing more than 80 synagogues and Jewish organizations in the Bay Area on public affairs issues.