



## **Jewish Community Relations Council**

of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda, and Contra Costa Counties  
121 Steuart St, Suite 301, San Francisco, CA 94105 Phone: (415) 957-1551 Fax: (415) 979-0981

### **Media Announcement**

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Contact: Yitzhak Santis

*Director, JCRC Middle East Project*

Cell: (650) 743-2684

Office: (415) 977-7413

[ysantis@jcrc.org](mailto:ysantis@jcrc.org)

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

#### **A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON:**

#### **The Palestinian Elections & their Impact on Israel, the Region and the Prospects for Peace**

#### ***Spokespersons available for on-the-record comment and analysis***

#### **Today Palestinians went to the polls to elect a new Legislative Council...**

- The terrorist group Hamas, as expected, won a large percentage of the vote, some 39% to rival Fatah's 46%. What might this mean for the prospects for peace in the region?
- What impact will the Palestinian elections have on Israeli elections set for March 28<sup>th</sup>?

#### **Statement from the JCRC:**

"JCRC supports and welcomes the development of democracy and democratic institutions in Palestinian society. The emergence of a truly democratic Palestinian polity would be good news for the chances of a permanent peace between Israel and a future Palestinian state. However, unless accompanied by the establishment of an independent judiciary, a free press, and respect for the rule of law, elections can be used by extremist non-democratic movements to enhance their influence.

"Though Fatah won the most seats, it does not hold a majority in the Palestinian Legislature. Hamas' enhancement is very disturbing and could be very destructive for the prospects of peace. 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 alike. Hamas remains dedicated to Israel's destruction and its replacement by a theocratic Islamic state.

"Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank last summer was a bold and courageous step. The Palestinian Authority, which assumed total control of those areas evacuated by Israel, failed to demonstrate that it had the capacity to institute the rule of law and respond to the needs of the Palestinian people. Its failure to do so laid the groundwork for Hamas' electoral success."

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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.