



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2019

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JCRC Statement in Response to Potential Inclusion of Otzma Yehudit in Israeli Government

San Francisco, CA – The Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties (JCRC) is deeply concerned about reports of an agreement between the Bayit Yehudi or “Jewish Home” and the Otzma Yehudit or “Jewish Power” parties to run on a joint list in the April Knesset (Israeli Parliament) elections. Otzma Yehudit is the ideological successor of the Kach party, which was founded by Meir Kahane, who espoused racist, extremist and violent views. Kach was designated a terrorist organization under Israeli, American and European law. Furthermore, it was banned from the Knesset for inciting violence, and ultimately outlawed from Israel altogether. Statements from party leaders and the party platform make it clear that Otzma Yehudit continues to hold these reprehensible views.

Since 2007, the Bay Area Jewish community has been on record in support of “a two-state solution to end the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, in which the parties peacefully coexist with fully normalized diplomatic relations, in mutual cooperation that promotes the economic development and social welfare of their respective citizens.” Furthermore, in 2018, at the culmination of a nine-month education and deliberation process that engaged the wide swath of the Jewish community, the JCRC Assembly – comprised of 80 community members representing the rich diversity of the Bay Area Jewish community – issued a consensus policy statement on the delegitimization of Israel. In it, JCRC stated strong support of Israel, deep commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and opposition to the increasing attacks on the legitimacy of Israel. At the same time, we expressed our opposition to anti-Palestinian and anti-Muslim rhetoric and attempts to delegitimize the rights of Palestinians to self-identification and national self-determination, and stated our belief that negotiations and civil discourse are paramount.

The potential inclusion of Otzma Yehudit in the Israeli government is wholly inconsistent with the values of the Bay Area Jewish community. We also believe that Otzma Yehudit’s views are contradictory to the values expressed in Israel’s declaration of statehood. Bringing actors with these extremist views into the governing coalition could significantly undermine Israel’s democratic and Jewish character. We are communicating the JCRC’s concerns to the representatives of the government of Israel.

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