

March 9, 1988

MJC STATEMENT
ON
THE VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Milwaukee Jewish Council deplors the violence and attendant tragic injuries and loss of life that has been occurring in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. We call for the restoration of order within these areas, and we encourage all parties in the conflict to use restraint so as to prevent injuries and the loss of lives. We support the right of Israeli troops to maintain order while we condemn any use of excessive force.

We are united in our support of Israel's commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli dispute. Violence will not resolve the problems in the Middle East. Only dialogue and a willingness to negotiate directly will enable all parties to reach a lasting and just solution to the tragic conflict.

We recognize that current events are symptomatic of the political and diplomatic stalemate that characterizes the current situation. Decades of violence have bred mutual distrust and the ascendance of extremist elements.

We believe that it is imperative to find a political solution to the present impasse that includes the signing of a peace treaty which ends the 40-year state of war by the Arab countries with Israel, that recognizes Israel's right to exist within secure and defensible borders, and that satisfactorily resolves issues relating to the rights of Palestinians.

With this in mind, we welcome the new American initiative or any other initiative which will enable Israel and others who seek peaceful coexistence in the Middle East to come together for the purpose of achieving that aim. The Jewish community is united in its support and devotion to the State of Israel. While diversity is our community's strength; mutual respect, common values, and shared ideals are our bond.