



## Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations

November 8, 2000: Approved by the Executive Committee

November 15, 2000: Approved by the Board of Directors

### **Statement on Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and Violence**

The recent violence in Israel and the Palestinian Authority territories has sparked an alarming escalation in virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence around the globe. From synagogue desecration in France, to a British Jew stabbed while riding the bus, a Chicago rabbi shot at in his car, a sukkah set ablaze in St. Paul, Minnesota, to the burning of an Israeli flag on the steps of a local Milwaukee synagogue and anti-Israel graffiti on a communal institution's sukkah, Jews and Jewish institutions have come under violent attacks.

These incidents are occurring in a context of two troubling developments: vile anti-Jewish incitement from a number of Arab and Muslim religious leaders in many countries, and, here in America, disturbing statements and actions during some of the pro-Palestinian rallies being held in several cities.

Recently in Britain, a demonstration led by a Muslim cleric featured such statements as "Down, down, USA, USA, you will pay, Osama is on his way," and "the final hour will not come until the Muslims kill the Jews." In America, some pro-Palestinian rallies have been characterized with such troubling acts as burning the Israeli flag, equating Jews, Judaism and Israel to Nazism, and most chillingly, chants of "Death to the Jews".

We condemn both the anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence occurring in relations to events in the Middle East.

The violence in the Middle East has stirred up emotions across the globe. Even though Jews, Arabs and Muslims seek to demonstrate their political sentiments in a number of ways, including by holding public rallies, it is incumbent upon religious and political leaders to set a tone of peace and to denounce hate-filled rhetoric and actions and to marginalize those in their ranks responsible for such divisive steps.

Peace between Israel and her neighbors, and global Jewish-Muslim intergroup civility and cooperation cannot be built amidst such a hostile environment. The Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations will persevere both in its support for Middle East peace and Jewish-Muslim understanding here in America.

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