**[Letter from American Rabbis to the President](http://btvshalom.org/btvshalom.org/rabbiniccabinetcampaigns.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22rabbispresident) - Launched 2/21/06**

**Text and Signers**

Dear Mr. President:

As leaders of the American Jewish community, we are deeply troubled by the recent victory of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections. Hamas's charter calls for the destruction of Israel, and Hamas has repeatedly perpetrated horrific acts of terror and violence that target innocent civilians. Yet in this challenging hour, we urge you to maintain a cautious approach to the new Palestinian government, so as to preserve the future possibility of bringing Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table, which is the only path to achieve true peace and security for both peoples.

As you formulate U.S. policy towards these ends, we urge you to keep the following points in mind:

1) According to international observers, the Palestinians conducted a free, fair, and democratic election, something that is still too rare in this region.

2) Nevertheless, for the new Hamas-led Palestinian government to achieve international recognition and standing, it must "recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace," just as you specified in your State of the Union address.

3) Despite Hamas's victory, recent polls indicate that the majority of Palestinians remains committed to a peace agreement with Israel. With this in mind, we urge constructive engagement with the new Palestinian government, in ways that bolster moderates such as President Mahmoud Abbas and sustain the ceasefire that has allowed for relative calm over the past year.

4) The immediate and short-term needs of the Palestinian people are pressing. We know that the deterioration in their plight only increases support for extremism, which, in turn, endangers Israel. Continued funding for indirect assistance to the Palestinian people via NGO's, with the appropriate conditions to ensure that it does not reach the hands of terrorists, is essential.

During this period of deep concern for the future of Israel, we call on you to maintain determination in the face of those who deny Israel's right to exist and, at the same time, to leave open the door for those Palestinians who are committed to working for a negotiated, two-state resolution of this conflict.

Signed by:

1. Rabbi Scott Aaron (Chicago, IL)
2. Rabbi Thomas Alpert (Brookline, MA)
3. Rabbi Rebecca Alpert (Philadelphia, PA)
4. Rabbi Renni Altman (Great Neck, NY)
5. Rabbi Camille Angel (San Francisco, CA)
6. Rabbi Sharon Anisfeld (Newton, MA)
7. Rabbi David Ariel-Joel (Louisville, KY)
8. Rabbi Stephen Arnold (South Easton, MA)
9. Rabbi Melanie Aron (Los Gatos, CA)
10. Rabbi Tsurah August (Seattle, WA)
11. Rabbi Chava Bahle (Suttons Bay, MI)
12. Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon (Huntsville, AL)
13. Rabbi Lewis Barth (Los Angeles, CA)
14. Rabbi Eliot Baskin (Denver, CO)
15. Rabbi David Bauer (Amherst, MA)
16. Rabbi Renee Bauer (Minneapolis, MN)
17. Rabbi Pamela Baugh (Daly City, CA)
18. Rabbi Leonard Beerman (Los Angeles, CA)
19. Rabbi Martin Beifield (Richmond, VA)
20. Rabbi Bernhard Beliak (Los Angeles, CA)
21. Rabbi Allen Bennett (San Francisco, CA)
22. Rabbi James Bennett (St. Louis, MO)
23. Rabbi Philip Bentley (Hendersonville, NC)
24. Rabbi Marjorie Berman (Philadelphia, PA)
25. Rabbi Phyllis Berman (Philadelphia, PA)
26. Rabbi Leila Berner (Annandale, VA)
27. Rabbi Linda Bertenthal (Encino, CA)
28. Rabbi Jonathan Biatch (Madison, WI)
29. Rabbi Binyamin Biber (Washington, DC)
30. Rabbi Amy Bigman (St Louis, MO)
31. Rabbi Barry Block (San Antonio, TX)
32. Rabbi Erwin Bloom (Davie, FL)
33. Rabbi Herman Blumberg (Wayland, MA)
34. Rabbi Rena Blumenthal (Poughkeepsie, NY)
35. Rabbi Sandy Bogin (Mamaroneck, NY)
36. Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton (Baltimore, MD)
37. Rabbi Stephen Booth-Nadav (Denver, CO)
38. Rabbi Jill Borodin (Seattle, WA)
39. Rabbi Neal Borovitz (River Edge, NJ)
40. Rabbi Sigal Brier (Newtown, PA)
41. Rabbi Herbert Brockman (Hamden, CT)
42. Rabbi Lynn Brody (Beverly Hills, CA)
43. Rabbi Caryn Broitman (Vineyard Haven, MA)
44. Rabbi Deborah Bronstein (Boulder, CO)
45. Rabbi Herbert Bronstein (Glencoe, IL)
46. Rabbi Lester Bronstein (White Plains, NY)
47. Rabbi Jonathan Brumberg-Kraus (Norton, MA)
48. Rabbi Marcus Burstein (Falls Church, VA)
49. Rabbi Debra Cantor (Newington, CT)
50. Rabbi Ari Cartun (Palo Alto, CA)
51. Rabbi Adam Chalom (Highland Park, IL)
52. Rabbi Joshua Chasan (Burlington, VT)
53. Rabbi Micah Citrin (Los Altos Hills, CA)
54. Rabbi Jeffrey Clopper (S. Huntington, NY)
55. Rabbi Jonathan Cohen (Greenbelt, MD)
56. Rabbi Daniel Cohen (South Orange, NJ)
57. Rabbi Ayelet Cohen (New York, NY)
58. Rabbi Henry Cohen (Wynnewood, PA)
59. Rabbi Michael Cohen (Manchester Center, VT)
60. Rabbi Hillel Cohn (San Bernardino, CA)
61. Rabbi Neil Comess-Daniels (Santa Monica, CA)
62. Rabbi David Cooper (Piedmont, CA)
63. Rabbi Fredi Cooper (Elkins Park, PA)
64. Rabbi Sigma Coran (Cincinnati, OH)
65. Rabbi Laurie Coskey (San Diego, CA)
66. Rabbi Meryl Crean (Elkins Park, PA)
67. Rabbi Matt Cutler (Schenectady, NY)
68. Rabbi Justin David (Northampton, MA)
69. Rabbi Benjamin David (Roslyn Heights, NY)
70. Rabbi Geoffrey Dennis (Flower Mound, TX)
71. Rabbi Lavey Derby (Mill Valley, CA)
72. Rabbi Marc Disick (Stamford, CT)
73. Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb (Bethesda, MD)
74. Rabbi Joel Dobin, D.D. (Walnut Creek, CA)
75. Rabbi Robert Dobrusin (Ann Arbor, MI)
76. Rabbi Art Donsky (Allison Park, PA)
77. Rabbi Elliot Dorff (Los Angeles, CA)
78. Rabbi William Dreskin (White Plains, NY)
79. Rabbi Malka Drucker (Santa Fe, NM)
80. Rabbi Laurence Edwards (Chicago, IL)
81. Rabbi Denise Eger (West Hollywood, CA)
82. Rabbi Amy Eilberg (Mendota Heights, MN)
83. Rabbi Stephen Einstein (Fountain Valley, CA)
84. Rabbi Bruce Elder (Glencoe, IL)
85. Rabbi Gary Ellison (Salem, OR)
86. Rabbi Barat Ellman (Brooklyn, NY)
87. Rabbi Greg Epstein (Cambridge, MA)
88. Rabbi Rachel Esserman (Endwell, NY)
89. Rabbi Andrew Ettin (Pfafftown, NC)
90. Rabbi Ted Falcon (Seattle, WA)
91. Rabbi Michael Feinberg (New York, NY)
92. Rabbi Morley Feinstein (Los Angeles, CA)
93. Rabbi Edward Feld (Northampton, MA)
94. Rabbi Jen Feldman (Chapel Hill, NC)
95. Rabbi Adam Feldman (Princeton, NJ)
96. Rabbi Marla Feldman (New York, NY)
97. Rabbi Michael Feshbach (Chevy Chase, MD)
98. Rabbi Michael Fessler (Washington Township, NJ)
99. Rabbi Brian Field (Denver, CO)
100. Rabbi Tirzah Firestone (Boulder, CO)
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103. Rabbi Randy Fleisher (St. Louis, MO)
104. Rabbi Jeffrey Foust (Waltham, MA)
105. Rabbi Russell Fox (Oklahoma City, OK)
106. Rabbi John Franken (St. Louis, MO)
107. Rabbi Alan Freedman (Austin, TX)
108. Rabbi Ariel Friedlander (Port Washington, NY)
109. Rabbi John Friedman (Durham, NC)
110. Rabbi Dayle Friedman (Philadelphia, PA)
111. Rabbi Thomas Friedmann (Columbus, GA)
112. Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer (Wyncote, PA)
113. Rabbi Serena Fujita (Lewisburg, PA)
114. Rabbi Hillel Gamoran (Seattle, WA)
115. Rabbi Laura Geller (Beverly Hills, CA)
116. Rabbi Everett Gendler (Great Barrington, MA)
117. Rabbi Stuart Gershon (Summit, NJ)
118. Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg (Ann Arbor, MI)
119. Rabbi George Gittleman (Santa Rosa, CA)
120. Rabbi Mark Glickman (Bainbridge Island, WA)
121. Rabbi Robert Gluck (Albany, NY)
122. Rabbi Shai Gluskin (Philadelphia, PA)
123. Rabbi Ben-Zion Gold (Boston, MA)
124. Rabbi Shefa Gold (Jemez Springs, NM)
125. Rabbi Andrew Gold (Las Vegas, NM)
126. Rabbi Laura Gold (New York, NY)
127. Rabbi Rosalind Gold (Reston, VA)
128. Rabbi Michael Goldberg (Oakland, CA)
129. Rabbi Dan Goldblatt (Danville, CA)
130. Rabbi Irwin Goldenberg (York, PA)
131. Rabbi Rachel Goldenberg (Dallas, TX)
132. Rabbi Eva Goldfinger (Valley Glenn, CA)
133. Rabbi Jordan Goldson (Scottsdale, AZ)
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135. Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser (North Adams, MA)
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137. Rabbi David Gordis (Newton, MA)
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139. Rabbi Debora Gordon (Troy, NY)
140. Rabbi Leonard Gordon (Philadelphia, PA)
141. Rabbi Mel Gottlieb (Los Angeles, CA)
142. Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb (Ojai, CA)
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144. Rabbi Lina Grazier-Zerbarini (New Haven, CT)
145. Rabbi C. Michelle Greenberg (Northfield, IL)
146. Rabbi Julie Greenberg (Philadelphia, PA)
147. Rabbi David Greenspoon (Pittsfield, MA)
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150. Rabbi Peter Grumbacher (Wilmington, DE)
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158. Rabbi Garson Herzfeld (Brooklyn, NY)
159. Rabbi Jay Heyman (San Francisco, CA)
160. Rabbi Moshe Heyn (Cincinnati, OH)
161. Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield (Portland, OR)
162. Rabbi Erin Hirsh (Philadelphia, PA)
163. Rabbi Linda Holtzman (Philadelphia, PA)
164. Rabbi Michael Holzman (Philadelphia, PA)
165. Rabbi Mark Hurvitz (Poway, CA)
166. Rabbi Yitzhak Husbands-Hankin (Eugene, OR)
167. Rabbi Shaya Isenberg (Gainesville, FL)
168. Rabbi Steven Jacobs (Woodland Hills, CA)
169. Rabbi Jill Jacobs (New York, NY)
170. Rabbi Burt Jacobson (Piedmont, CA)
171. Rabbi Devorah Jacobson (Longmeadow, MA)
172. Rabbi Jennifer Jaech (Croton-on-Hudson, NY)
173. Rabbi Norman Janis (Cambridge, MA)
174. Rabbi Beth Janus (Soquel, CA)
175. Rabbi Amita Jarmon (Rockland, ME)
176. Rabbi Reena Judd (Hamden, CT)
177. Rabbi Raachel Jurovics (Raleigh, NC)
178. Rabbi Bruce Kadden (Tacoma, WA)
179. Rabbi Yoel Kahn (San Francisco, CA)
180. Rabbi Mark Kaiserman (Livingston, NJ)
181. Rabbi Raphael Kanter (New Bedford, MA)
182. Rabbi Harley Karz-Wagman (Everett, WA)
183. Rabbi Peter Kasdan (Longboat Key, FL)
184. Rabbi Hillel Katzir (Auburn, ME)
185. Rabbi Alvan Kaunfer (Providence, RI)
186. Rabbi David Kay (Orlando, FL)
187. Rabbi Stuart Kelman (Berkeley, CA)
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189. Rabbi Jonathan Klein (Los Angeles, CA)
190. Rabbi Lori Klein (Santa Cruz, CA)
191. Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum (New York, NY)
192. Rabbi Marc Kline (Lexington, KY)
193. Rabbi Tracy Klirs (Great Neck, NY)
194. Rabbi Myriam Klotz (Bala Cynwyd, PA)
195. Rabbi Peter Knobel (Evanston, IL)
196. Rabbi Alison Kobey (Rochester, NY)
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198. Rabbi Tamara Kolton (Farmington Hills, MI)
199. Rabbi Neil Kominsky (Lowell, MA)
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201. Rabbi Ira Korinow (Haverhill, MA)
202. Rabbi Chava Koster (New York, NY)
203. Rabbi Douglas Krantz (Armonk, NY)
204. Rabbi Matthew Kraus (Cincinnati, OH, OH)
205. Rabbi Allen Krause (Mission Viejo, CA)
206. Rabbi Jeff Kurtz-Lendner (Mandeville, LA)
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208. Rabbi Lynne Landsberg (Washington, DC)
209. Rabbi Karen Landy (Brookline, MA)
210. Rabbi Alan LaPayover (Penn Valley, PA)
211. Rabbi Michael Latz (Seattle, WA)
212. Rabbi Allan Lehmann (Waltham, MA)
213. Rabbi Benjamin Leinow (Escondido, CA)
214. Rabbi David Leipziger Teva (Middletown, CT)
215. Rabbi Shoshana Leis (Bronx, NY)
216. Rabbi Peter Levi (Phoenix, AZ)
217. Rabbi Mark Levin (Overland Park, KS)
218. Rabbi Joshua Levine-Grater (Pasadena, CA)
219. Rabbi David Levinsky (Los Altos, CA)
220. Rabbi Richard Levy (Los Angeles, CA)
221. Rabbi Robert Levy (Ann Arbor, MI)
222. Rabbi Yael Levy (Philadelphia, PA)
223. Rabbi Sue Levy (Webster, TX)
224. Rabbi Alan Lew (San Francisco, CA)
225. Rabbi Sheldon Lewis (Palo Alto, CA)
226. Rabbi Michael Lezak (San Rafael, CA)
227. Rabbi Mordechai Liebling (Philadelphia, PA)
228. Rabbi Yossi Liebowitz (Spartanburg, SC)
229. Rabbi Rebecca Lillian (Miami, FL)
230. Rabbi Kennard Lipman (Napa, CA)
231. Rabbi Ellen Lippmann (Brooklyn, NY)
232. Rabbi Andrea London (Evanston, IL)
233. Rabbi Michael Lotker (Camarillo, CA)
234. Rabbi Alan Lovins (New Haven, CT)
235. Rabbi Akiba Lubow (Cranford, NJ)
236. Rabbi Alicia Magal (Chicago, IL)
237. Rabbi Shaul Magid (Bloomington, IN)
238. Rabbi Joseph Mahoney (Muncie, IN)
239. Rabbi Tamar Malino (Poway, CA)
240. Rabbi Harry Manhoff (Castro Valley, CA)
241. Rabbi Paula Marcus (Aptos, CA)
242. Rabbi Bonnie Margulis (Madison, WI)
243. Rabbi Jeffrey Marker (Brooklyn, NY)
244. Rabbi Susan Marks (Sarasota, FL)
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247. Rabbi J. Rolando Matalon (New York, NY)
248. Rabbi Gary Mazo (Martsons Mills, MA)
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250. Rabbi Amy Memis-Foler (Chicago, IL)
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252. Rabbi Sarah Meytin (Gaithersburg, MD)
253. Rabbi Stanley Miles (Louisville, KY)
254. Rabbi Bennett Miller (New Brunswick, NJ)
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257. Rabbi Katie Mizrahi (New York, NY)
258. Rabbi Stephen Moch (Tarpon Springs, FL)
259. Rabbi Reuben Modek (Nyack, NY)
260. Rabbi Ben Morrow (Santa Fe, NM)
261. Rabbi Daniel Moskovitz (Tarzana, CA)
262. Rabbi Linda Motzkin (Saratoga Springs, NY)
263. Rabbi Leonard Muroff (Lakewood, CA)
264. Rabbi Michael Namath (Potomac, MD)
265. Rabbi Steven Pik Nathan (Philadelphia, PA)
266. Rabbi Sheryl Nosan (Orangevale, CA)
267. Rabbi Jonathan Omer-man (Berkley, CA)
268. Rabbi Sheldon Pennes (Montebello, CA)
269. Rabbi Barbara Penzner (West Roxbury, MA)
270. Rabbi William Plevan (Princeton, NJ)
271. Rabbi Gary Pokras (Doylestown, PA)
272. Rabbi Mark Popovsky (New York, NY)
273. Rabbi Amber Powers (Philadelphia, PA)
274. Rabbi Sanford Ragins (Los Angeles, CA)
275. Rabbi Lawrence Raphael (San Francisco, CA)
276. Rabbi Victor Reinstein (Jamaica Plain, MA)
277. Rabbi Philip Rice (Seattle, WA)
278. Rabbi Leah Richman (Pottsville, PA)
279. Rabbi Yael Ridberg (New York, NY)
280. Rabbi Rochelle Robins (San Diego, CA)
281. Rabbi Michael Robinson (Sebastopol, CA)
282. Rabbi Norman Roman (West Bloomfield, MI)
283. Rabbi Yael Romer (Kingston, NY)
284. Rabbi Or Rose (Boston, MA)
285. Rabbi Brant Rosen (Evanston, IL)
286. Rabbi James Rosenberg (Barrington, RI)
287. Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld (Buffalo, NY)
288. Rabbi David Rosenn (New York, NY)
289. Rabbi Jennie Rosenn (New York, NY)
290. Rabbi John Rosove (Los Angeles, CA)
291. Rabbi Jeff Roth (New Paltz, NY)
292. Rabbi Eliseo Rozenwasser (Penn Valley, PA)
293. Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein (Saratoga Springs, NY)
294. Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips (Brooklyn, NY)
295. Rabbi David Sandmel (Chicago, IL)
296. Rabbi Marc Saperstein (Washington, DC)
297. Rabbi Scott Saulson (Atlanta, GA)
298. Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller (San Francisco, CA)
299. Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (Boulder, CO)
300. Rabbi Judith Schindler (Charlotte, NC)
301. Rabbi Chaim Schneider (Santa Cruz, CA)
302. Rabbi Rachel Schoenfeld (Baltimore, MD)
303. Rabbi Rebecca Schorr (Irvine, CA)
304. Rabbi Marvin Schwab (Santa Fe, NM)
305. Rabbi Barry Schwartz (Cherry Hill, NJ)
306. Rabbi Amy Schwartzman (Falls Church, VA)
307. Rabbi Sid Schwarz (Rockville, MD)
308. Rabbi Peter Schweitzer (New York, NY)
309. Rabbi Adrienne Scott (Houston, TX)
310. Rabbi Ron Segal (Atlanta, GA)  Rabbi Steve Segar (University Heights, OH)
311. Rabbi Judith Seid (Pleasanton, CA)
312. Rabbi Jerry Seidler (Amherst, NY)
313. Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller (Los Angeles, CA)
314. Rabbi Gerold Serotta (Chevy Chase, MD)
315. Rabbi Drorah Setel (Buffalo, NY)
316. Rabbi Susan Shankman (Washington, DC)
317. Rabbi Richard Shapiro (Palm Desert, CA)
318. Rabbi Noach Shapiro (Montclair, NJ)
319. Rabbi Daniel Shevitz (Venice, CA)
320. Rabbi David Shneyer (Rockville, MD)
321. Rabbi Suzanne Singer (Oakland, CA)
322. Rabbi Merle Singer (Boca Raton, FL)
323. Rabbi Beth Singer (Seattle, WA)
324. Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman (Larchmont, NY)
325. Rabbi Andrew Sklarz (Abington, PA)
326. Rabbi Scott Slarskey (San Francisco, CA)
327. Rabbi Jonathan Slater (Hastings-on-Hudson, NY)
328. Rabbi Amy Small (Chatham, NJ)
329. Rabbi Felicia Sol (New York, NY)
330. Rabbi Eric Solomon (Raleigh, NC)
331. Rabbi Jennifer Solomon (Raleigh, NC)
332. Rabbi Marc Soloway (Boulder, CO)
333. Rabbi David Sperling (New York, NY)
334. Rabbi Aaron Spiegel (Indianapolis, IN)
335. Rabbi Toba Spitzer (West Newton, MA)
336. Rabbi Samuel Stahl (San Antonio, TX)
337. Rabbi Arthur Starr (St Thomas, VI)
338. Rabbi Jacob Staub (Philadelphia, PA)
339. Rabbi Bonnie Steinberg (New York, NY)
340. Rabbi Arthur Steinberg (Portsmouth, VA)
341. Rabbi David Steinberg (Burlington, VT)
342. Rabbi Gershon Steinberg-Caudill (San Francisco, CA)
343. Rabbi George Stern (Philadelphia, PA)
344. Rabbi Michael Stevens (Munster, IN)
345. Rabbi Michael Strassfeld (New York, NY)
346. Rabbi Andrew Straus (Tempe, AZ)
347. Rabbi David Straus (Wynnewood, PA)
348. Rabbi Yaffa-Shira Sultan (San Diego, CA)
349. Rabbi Jeff Sultar (Philadelphia, PA)
350. Rabbi Alana Suskin (Washington, DC)
351. Rabbi Robert Tabak (Melrose Park, PA)
352. Rabbi Susan Talve (St. Louis, MO)
353. Rabbi Joshua Taub (St. Louis, MO)
354. Rabbi Elliott Tepperman (Montclair, NJ)
355. Rabbi Jon-Jay Tilsen (New Haven, CT)
356. Rabbi Lawrence Troster (Teaneck, NJ)
357. Rabbi Theodore Tsuruoka (Great Neck, NY)
358. Rabbi Jan Uhrbach (East Hampton, NY)
359. Rabbi Jason Van Leeuwen (Los Angeles, CA)
360. Rabbi Burton Visotzky (New York, NY)
361. Rabbi Andrew Vogel (Brookline, MA)
362. Rabbi Heidi Waldmann (Plattsburgh, NY)
363. Rabbi Brian Walt (West Tisbury, MA)
364. Rabbi Bruce Warshal (Hillsboro Beach, FL)
365. Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Philadelphia, PA)
366. Rabbi Mira Wasserman (Bloomington, IN)
367. Rabbi Alana Wasserman (Cherry Hill, NJ)
368. Rabbi Donald Weber (Marlboro, NJ)
369. Rabbi Elyse Wechterman (Attleboro, MA)
370. Rabbi Sheila Weinberg (Amherst, MA)
371. Rabbi Scott Weiner (New York, NY)
372. Rabbi Zari Weiss (Seattle, WA)
373. Rabbi David Whiman (Syosset, NY)
374. Rabbi Scott White (Kansas City, MO)
375. Rabbi Aryeh Wineman (Troy, NY)
376. Rabbi Avi Winokur (Philadelphia, PA)
377. Rabbi Stephen Wise (Boca Raton, FL)
378. Rabbi Jeffrey Wohlberg (Washington, DC)
379. Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf (Chicago, IL)
380. Rabbi Joseph Wolf (Portland, OR)
381. Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan (San Francisco, CA)
382. Rabbi Bridget Wynne (San Francisco, CA)
383. Rabbi Shawn Zevit (Philadelphia, PA)
384. Rabbi Michael Ziegler (Berkeley, CA)
385. Rabbi Mark Zimmerman (Atlanta, GA)
386. Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman (Madison, WI)

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**Press Release**

**Nearly 400 Rabbis Urge President to Preserve Prospects for Peace:** **'Constructively Engage Moderate Palestinians and Continue Humanitarian Aid'**

WASHINGTON – March 6, 2006 – Nearly four hundred rabbis from across the country and the denominational spectrum of American Judaism sent a letter Friday to President Bush, urging him to "maintain a cautious approach to the new Palestinian government, so as to preserve the future possibility of bringing Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiating table, which is the only path to achieve true peace and security for both peoples."

The letter, whose lead signers include prominent national pulpit, academic and organizational rabbis such as Paul Menitoff (Former Executive Vice President, Central Conference of American Rabbis), Rabbi Elliot Dorff (Rector, Professor, University of Judaism), Amy Small (Immediate Past President, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and Rabbi, Congregation Beth Hatikvah in Chatham, NJ), urges the President to pursue policies of constructive engagement of moderate Palestinians and sustained humanitarian aid.

The full text of the letter and a complete list of signers follow. They can also be found at <http://rabbisletter.btvshalom.org>.

While the letter does not address specific legislation, it comes at a time when Congress is considering imposing severe sanctions and restrictions on the Palestinian Authority in response to Hamas' recent victory in the Palestinian elections. If enacted, these restrictions would remain in place indefinitely regardless of the make-up of the Palestinian legislature in the future, thereby tying the United States�f hands as a broker of future negotiations.

"These rabbis from across the country and the spectrum of American Judaism have united to promote the constructive engagement of moderate Palestinians and continued humanitarian aid as the best response to Hamas' electoral victory," says Rabbi John Friedman of Durham, North Carolina, who chairs the Rabbinic Cabinet of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, which organized the letter. "The letter challenges the perception that American Jews uniformly believe that the best way to protect Israel's security interests and combat Hamas' extremism is through the complete isolation of the Palestinian government."

"It is critical that the United States find ways to constructively engage Palestinians, such as President Abbas, who seek peace with Israel, " adds Rabbi Amy Small. "Treating all Palestinians as though they are members of Hamas plays into the hands of the extremists and marginalizes the moderates," she says.

The Rabbis specifically address the need for sustained humanitarian aid, as a tangible means to try to mitigate the radicalization of the Palestinian population: "The immediate and short-term needs of the Palestinian people are pressing. We know that the deterioration in their plight only increases support for extremism, which, in turn, endangers Israel."

"To remove humanitarian aid from the Palestinian civilians who so desperately need it is morally wrong and politically unwise. It is abundantly clear that the dire conditions of the Palestinian population are responsible for Hamas' victory in the first place," says signatory Rabbi Rolando Matalon, Senior Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Jeshrun of New York City. "It is possible to ensure that humanitarian funds do not reach the hands of those who engage in terror," he adds.

**Media**

[**Rabbis Press Bush on Palestinians**](http://btvshalom.org/btvshalom.org/pressrelease/20060306.shtml). *JTA*. March 6, 2006.

Nearly 400 rabbis signed a letter to President Bush urging him to maintain indirect assistance to the Palestinians and “constructive engagement” with the Palestinian government.

The letter comes as Congress considers bills that would severely restrict aid to the Palestinians in the wake of the Jan. 25 victory of Hamas, a terrorist group, in Palestinian Authority legislative elections.

“Despite Hamas’ victory, recent polls indicate that the majority of Palestinians remains committed to a peace agreement with Israel,” the letter says. “With this in mind, we urge constructive engagement with the new Palestinian government, in ways that bolster moderates such as President Mahmoud Abbas and sustain the cease-fire that has allowed for relative calm over the past year.”

Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, a left-wing grass-roots group, organized the letter, which has garnered signatures from Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist rabbis.

[**Rabbinic Advice for Bush**](http://btvshalom.org/btvshalom.org/pressrelease/20060215.shtml). Washington. *Jewish Week*. February 15, 2006

A number of well-known American rabbis have signed on to a Brit Tzedek v'Shalom letter urging President George W. Bush to demand that the new Hamas-led Palestinian government disarm and recognize Israel, while also using "constructive engagement" with that new government "in ways that bolster moderates ... and sustain the ceasefire."

"We call on you to maintain determination in the face of those who deny Israel's right to exist and, at the same time ... leave open the door for those Palestinians who are committed to working for a negotiated, two-state resolution of this conflict," states the letter, which has so far been signed by 15 rabbis from various denominations.

They include former Central Conference of American Rabbis executive vice president Paul Menitoff, Hebrew Union College dean Lewis Barth, University of Judaism rector Elliot Dorff, J. Rolando Matalon of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York City, and former Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association president Brant Rosen.