

## Local Rabbis Join Call for Shared Jerusalem

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A half dozen local rabbis are among 300 American rabbis who have signed a statement calling for Jerusalem to be shared by the Palestinian and Israeli people.

Jerome Segal, the president of the Jewish Peace Lobby and a research scholar at the University of Maryland's Center for International and Security Studies, spearheaded the effort.

Pointing out that "most Israelis do not view the current municipal boundaries as sacrosanct," the statement says, "Many would favor a redefined city that was smaller but more thoroughly Jewish in its population." The statement also suggested "two distinct municipal areas, Al-Quds and Yerushalayim, that would overlap on the Old City."

The statement, issued last week, came after a year of outreach to 1,200 Reform, Reconstructionist, and Conservative rabbis. Segal said no Orthodox rabbis were asked to sign the statement. "On the peace process in general the number [of Orthodox rabbis who] support the peace process is many fewer," explained Segal.

Rabbi Gerald Serotta, on sabbatical as director of the George Washington University Hillel Foundation, backs shared sovereignty "provided there is open access" to everyone throughout the whole city.

"Peace is more important than any piece of Jerusalem," maintained Serotta, a rabbinic scholar for the Reform movement's Religious Action Center in the District.

Rabbi Gary Fink of Oseh Shalom in Laurel believes two Jerusalems need to be taken into account: the sacred Jerusalem "at the heart of Judaism and the Jewish people" that is not negotiable and the municipal territory. "The specific municipal boundaries most important to the Palestinian people may be very different from the specific boundaries most important to the Jewish people," he said.

Rabbi Reeve Brenner of the Bethesda Jewish Congregation said the statement simply affirms the reality that Jerusalem already is divided and shared.

Rabbi Jack Moline of Alexandria's Agudas Achim Congregation chose not to sign the statement; the congregation's religious school principal, Rabbi Tracy Guren-Klers, who was unavailable for comment, did sign.

"Though I applaud the sentiment, the question of autonomy and territory is very delicate and needs to be negotiated without any pressure on either side that may not be in the interests of both sides," Moline said.

Other local rabbis signing the statement were Rosalind Gold of Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation in Reston and Michael Kramer of Temple Solel in Bowie.