



MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ

City of Northampton

210 Main Street Room 12

Northampton, MA 01060-3199

(413) 587-1249 Fax: (413) 587-1275

mayor@northamptonma.gov

STATEMENT OF MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ REGARDING THE CITY OF NORTHAMPTON AND ISRAEL

December 21, 2018

Three weeks ago, Police Chief Jody Kasper and I decided that it was in the best interests of the city that she not participate in a counterterrorism seminar in Israel sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of New England and led by the Israel National Police together with experts from their defense and intelligence communities. Unfortunately, some have interpreted the decision to withdraw from this overseas law enforcement training as a boycott of Israel by the City of Northampton despite our clear and consistent statements to the contrary.

Last week I met with members of our Jewish community from Congregation B'nai Israel in Northampton led by Rabbi Justin David. It was a positive and productive discussion that allowed me to both hear their concerns and explain the decision not to participate in the Israeli counterterrorism training. It also allowed me the opportunity to reiterate that the decision did not constitute a boycott of Israel by the City of Northampton.

Northampton has and will continue to have strong cultural, religious, academic, and business ties with Israel. Members of our community have family members in Israel and many travel to and from there regularly. Our city and local academic institutions have a history of participation in ongoing civic and educational exchanges with Israel and other nations throughout the Middle East and the world. The recent decision not to send our Police Chief to Israel for counterterrorism training does not change any of that.

For example, next month a member of the Northampton Police Department will be part of a Massachusetts delegation of governmental and non-governmental officials traveling to Israel and Jordan on a U.S. Department of State funded initiative called *Professional Fellows: Citizen Participation in Government*. Led by the Institute for Training and Development (ITD), the program focuses on citizen and government partnerships, democratic practices, human rights, and adherence to rule of law through an exchange among young professionals from ethnically and culturally diverse regions of urban and rural areas of Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, and urban and rural regions of Massachusetts, including Boston, Holyoke, Northampton and Amherst. The Northampton Police Department hosted professional fellows from Israel and Jordan this spring as part of the multi-year exchange.

I thank the many members of our Northampton community who have shared a wide range of views with me on this complex issue. I deeply appreciate the collective care and concern and look forward to continuing dialogue.