

Supreme Court Justice: Jerusalem Ruling 'Mad Hatter-Worthy Leap'

Palestinian Authority leaders praised Monday's Supreme Court ruling disallowing Americans born in Jerusalem to list Israel as the country of birth on their passports, saying it clarified that "Jerusalem is occupied territory."

"It is a clear message to the Israeli government that its decisions and measures in occupying and annexing Jerusalem are illegal and void and that it should immediately stop these measures because it's a clear violation of the international law," P.A. chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said.

President Barack Obama also welcomed the decision as affirming his power to set the nation's foreign policy, while demonstrating his neutrality in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

"We welcome the Supreme Court's decision yesterday in *Zivotovsky v. Kerry*, which reaffirms the long-established authority of the president to recognize foreign states, their governments, and their territorial boundaries," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said in a statement.

State Department spokesman Jeff Rathke said, "This decision today helps ensure that our position on the neutrality of Jerusalem remains clear."

Major American Jewish organizations were disappointed, but not really surprised.

Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham H. Foxman called it "sad and unfortunate that Israel, as a sovereign nation, is the only country in the world whose capital comes

under such scrutiny and has to defend its right to determine where its capital city exists.”

“It’s time for the executive branch to face the reality: Jerusalem is the capital of Israel,” Foxman said.

The Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations dismissed the administration’s logic.

“We do not believe that Jerusalem-born American citizens having Israel on their passport would impinge on future negotiations or compromise the role of the United States,” Stephen Greenberg and Malcolm Hoenlein, chairman and executive vice chairman, respectively, of the organization said in a joint statement.

Zionist Organization of America President Morton Klein said Monday’s ruling would give credence to erroneous claims of “Judaizing” Jerusalem and encourage “Israel-bashers to deny the Jewish connection to Jerusalem and Israel’s right to any part of the city.”

In a 2009 interview with *Newsmax*, Klein predicted that Obama would be the most hostile president to Israel on record. He based his conclusions on the president’s June 2009 speech in Cairo and many of his foreign policy appointees.

Meanwhile, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, born in Jerusalem in 1939, welcomed U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey to “Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Israel.”

“I am a seventh generation Jerusalemite, and even though I was born nine years before the State of Israel was established, I was born in Jerusalem, and I am Israeli,” Rivlin said.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat challenged Obama to take a public stand on what’s “already been known for generations: that Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel, and Israel is the home of the Jewish people ... and the heart and soul of the

Jewish nation.”

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, one of three dissenting justices outvoted by the others, called the logic behind the ruling “a leap worthy of the Mad Hatter.”

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