



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**INFORMATION AND PRESS DEPARTMENT**

32/34 Smolenskaya-Sennaya pl., 119200, Moscow G-200; tel.: (095) 244 4119, fax: 244 4112  
e-mail: [dip@mid.ru](mailto:dip@mid.ru), web-address: [www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru)

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Speaks to Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni by Telephone**

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On January 27, a telephone conversation between Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov and Foreign Affairs Minister of Israel Tzipi Livni took place at the Israeli side's initiative.

Its focus was questions related to the outcome of the election for the Palestinian Legislative Council. The minister informed Tzipi Livni of the telephone conference of the Middle East Quartet held the day before and of the statement agreed upon in its course.

The Russian and Israeli ministers stated that the polling in the Palestinian territories had passed off in an organized way and in accordance with universally accepted standards and norms. It was emphasized that, regardless of the election results, all participants in the Palestinian electoral process must respect the principles of peaceful settlement, as set forth in the Road Map. Emphasis was also laid on the fact that the prospect of creating an independent, democratic Palestinian state imply, as was noted in the Quartet statement adopted on January 26, 2006, a renunciation of violence and terror, the disarmament of illegal armed militia groups and the acceptance of Israel's right to exist.

Sergey Lavrov noted the significance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day observed for the first time on January 27, 2006, in compliance with the UN General Assembly's resolution and of the events held in this connection in Moscow. Tzipi Livni expressed her appreciation to Russia for the efforts to preserve the historical truth about the Holocaust.

January 28, 2006