

Chief rabbis condemn attack on Israeli mosque

by [Michele Chabin](#) in the [November 1, 2011](#) issue

Israel's chief rabbis are among the Jews in Israel and abroad who have strongly condemned an arson attack on a mosque in northern Israel. The rabbis made a solidarity visit to the Israeli Arab village of Tuba-Zangariyye, near Galilee, on October 3, soon after vandals torched the mosque.

The U.S. State Department condemned the arsonists' "hateful sectarian actions," calling them "dangerous and provocative." The arson is believed to be the work of Jewish extremists, although no one has been arrested.

Tensions between Jews and Arabs have escalated in recent weeks as Palestinian leaders appealed to the United Nations for recognition of an independent Palestinian state.

Israeli extremists torched a couple of mosques in the West Bank; a fatal car crash that killed a settler and his infant son is being blamed on stone-throwing Palestinians. The names of the accident victims were scrawled on the burned mosque.

Accompanied by Israeli President Shimon Peres and Muslim and Druze leaders, chief rabbis Shlomo Amar and Yona Metzger used unusually strong language to denounce the arson. "We must cry out against this deed, it is a desecration of God," Amar said. "All leaders should speak against this act of terror and hate."

In the U.S., the Anti-Defamation League expressed "shock" and "outrage" at the arson and said there have already been too many "wake-up calls" about "the violence and hatred among fringe groups of Israeli Jewish

extremists." Israelis, the ADL said, must make it clear that violence "is never acceptable" and must "continue to reinforce this core value of Israeli society." —RNS