

Dalai Lama says he's happy to meet Hamas

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(Reuters) The Dalai Lama said he would be happy to meet members of the militant group Hamas but acknowledged it may be too soon for Israel to talk to the Palestinian election winner. Starting his fourth visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, the Dalai Lama urged Israelis and Palestinians to abandon violence and be prepared to resume a dialogue after Hamas's landslide victory in the 25 January parliamentary election. *"The time has come to think, to try to find a solution through dialogue based on mutual respect"*, He was invited by a local Israeli-Tibetan friendship league, and also plans to meet with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem during his five-day visit. Alongside his calls for peace, the Dalai Lama said it was *"too early to say"* whether Israel should agree to talk to Hamas, which is expected to head the next Palestinian government. *"I think first, wait and see"*, the Dalai Lama said, adding that he thought Israel should respect the results of the Palestinian election. He also urged Hamas to eschew violence.

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Website: www.tibetinfonet.net
Phone: +44 (0) 20 300 206 33
Fax: +49 (0) 2238 9494466
Email: tin@tibetinfonet.net