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RPC file

ANC Youth's Israeli stance 'disappoints'

Citizen Reporter

JEWISH community leaders in South Africa have expressed "disappointment" over statements made by the ANC's Youth League (Ancyl), a delegation of which is on a fact-finding mission to Israel.

The national chairman of the South African Board of Deputies, Mr Mervyn Smith, and the chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, Mr Abe Abrahamson, described remarks made by Ancyl spokesman, Mr Parks Mankahlana, as "harsh and one-sided".

"No recognition is given to Israel for being the only democracy in the Middle East and that Israel was actively pursuing peace.

"The sentiments expressed

are negative and do not recognise the complexities of the current Middle East situation" the two leaders said in a joint statement.

The national director of the SAJBD, Mr Seymour Kopelowitz, said the Ancyl visit to Israel was as the initiative of the South African Union of Jewish Students and had the full support of the SAJBD.

It was hoped that, in spite of difficulties, dialogue between the two youth groups would continue.

A report from Tel Aviv quoted Mr Mankahlana as saying Ancyl would not support a visit by Mr Nelson Mandela to Israel at the invitation of the Israeli Government, but would not rule out a visit at the invitation of Palestinian communities in Israel.

He also criticised Israel's refusal to speak to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and cited alleged human rights violations against Israel.

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