

denver & the west

## Jerusalem mayor's speech divides DU groups

By Joey Bunch  
*The Denver Post*  
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The divide over Jerusalem was as clear as the busy street that divided protesters in Denver Tuesday night, as about two dozen people gathered on each side of Iliff Avenue.

The left side of the street rallied against what they called a purge of Palestinians in the holy city, as its mayor prepared to give a speech nearby inside the University of Denver's concert hall.

The right side waved signs pledging to "Stand with Israel" against Palestine.

Thomas Declerck, a graduate students in human rights, crossed over from the Palestinian side to talk to opponents. The Israeli supporters gathered around.

"Every terrorist action in the last 20 years has been in the name of Allah," Jennifer Schрут, a

Denver mother of the three, told him.

The Palestinian families being driven from their homes and harassed by authorities could hardly be described as terrorists, he said.

He was in Jerusalem last year, he said.

"My eyes speak louder than anything else," he said of the human rights conditions there.

He and other students opposed the university's decision to give Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat an uncontested speech, which they saw as improperly taking sides.

The Colorado Palestine Community Network sent an e-mail Tuesday urging protestors to gather at the Gates Concert Hall.

"Nir Barkat is leading a campaign to ethnically cleanse Jerusalem of its Palestinian residents by declining building permits for Palestinians and launching a campaign of house demolitions that has displaced more than 150 people this year alone," the pro-Palestinian group stated in its e-mail.

DU's announcement of the speech characterized Barkat much differently.

"Barkat has inspired thousands of Jerusalemites with his vision to turn Israel's poorest city into one rich in culture, youth, education, lasting economic development, and tourism, as well as his message of respect and pluralism for all

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residents of Jerusalem."

The university's announcement also stated Barkat "has joined together the left and right, the secular and the religious, in order to move Jerusalem forward, allowing him to spend the entirety of his time working on the needs of Jerusalem, rather than the politics."

The announcement urged "support for Mayor Barkat's vision" as it "continues to spread throughout Jerusalem, Israel, and communities throughout the world."

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