



Source name	Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Winnipeg Free Press	Winnipeg Free Press
Source type	• p. A4
Press • Newspapers	• 394 words
Periodicity	
Daily	
Geographical coverage	
Provincial	
Origin	
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	

# Khan would embrace local peacemaker role

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MANITOBA'S first Muslim MLA says he's "happy and proud" to work toward local peace, a day after tempers flared at opposing rallies outside the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Winnipeg police intervened Sunday in a confrontation involving Jewish and Palestinian community members and supporters, during which an Israeli flag was reportedly stomped on.

"I think everyone wants peace, everyone wants to move forward together as a community here in Manitoba," Tory MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte) told reporters after his swearing-in ceremony at the legislature Monday.

"We're all in this together. We can affect what happens here in Manitoba, so if I can take part in that discussion, I'm happy to do that."

On Sunday, Ron East, founder of the Israeli Canadian Council, said Khan had reached out to him, offering to help facilitate conversations between the opposing groups.

Ramsey Zeid, president of the Canadian Palestinian Association of Manitoba, said Sunday he was willing to meet with

Khan and East.

On Monday, Khan said no formal request had been made and he's not a mediator, but he knows both sides and has had conversations with leadership.

"I would be willing to sit down with them ... and seeing where we can go from there," Khan said. "As an elected official, I'm happy and proud to do that - to work towards Manitobans coming together."

Khan, who retained his southwest Winnipeg seat Oct. 3, after first securing it in a March 2022 byelection, has support in the PC caucus.

"I don't know that he's going to be able to settle a battle that's raged for thousands of years, but his ability to bring a little bit of calm locally, I think that's beneficial," said former government house leader Kelvin Goertzen.

"There are bridges, sometimes, that are difficult to span. We have to be sure that we're not burning bridges down in society.

"People have very different views and there's very emotional views when it comes to Palestine and Israel. They need to demonstrate those respectfully and

peacefully in a democratic society."

The Israel-Hamas war began Oct. 7 when members of the militant group that controls Gaza attacked Israeli settlements, events and military sites, killing 1,200 people.

Israel's counter-attacks have since killed more than 5,000 people, according to reports linked to authorities in Gaza.

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