

Jerusalem, Tamuz 5, 5782

July 4, 2022

Prime Minister Mr. Yair Lapid

Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We once again wish you mazal tov on assuming the post of Prime Minister, but allow us to do so once again, this time as a group representing the entire Jewish world, to send our warmest greetings and congratulations to you at this critical moment.

We are writing to you today to express our concern on a very pressing matter. You may be aware that a few days ago a young boy from America was celebrating his bar mitzvah at the Kotel's Ezrat Yisrael egalitarian platform. At this uniquely important and special day for the young boy, surrounded by his friends and family who had travelled from the United States to the most holy site for the Jewish people, his bar mitzvah celebration was viciously attacked by protestors who apparently object to the manner of prayer at the site. The determined young man bravely attempted to continue with his bar mitzvah while protestors screamed curses at him, including "Christian" and "Nazi," and even tore up siddurim.

We understand that there are differences of opinion within the Knesset and even within your government about the Kotel Agreement. We know well your support for this agreement. However, this is **not** about the Kotel agreement. This is about the basic "derech eretz" of Israelis welcoming Jews from around the world who come to celebrate their most cherished smachot in the Jewish State, follow all the established rules for such an event, engage in no provocation, demonstrate nothing but "ahavat Yisrael," and are nevertheless subjected to conduct that should embarrass every Jew of every level or style of Jewish practice. No effort to unite or strengthen the ties between Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora can be remotely successful while such behavior is allowed to continue.

We respectfully feel that immediate actions should be taken to - at the very least - ensure the safety, security, and well-being of all those who come to the entire Kotel area, as well as to make certain that all worshippers are accorded the same level of respect we would expect if this were our own families - because it is our own Jewish family! The Government of Israel should accept responsibility to stop the completely unacceptable behavior that has been exhibited recently. At this stage, words of support are not enough, and concrete actions should be taken so that Jews of all streams feel at home, safe and welcome at the Kotel and in Israel.



We thank you for taking this issue so seriously and look forward to hearing what the government can do to immediately address this issue. We are prepared to work with you in any way that we can to assist in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Michael Siegal  
Chair, Jewish  
Agency Board of  
Governors

Mark Wilf  
Incoming Chair,  
Jewish Agency Board  
of Governors

Julie Platt  
Chair, Jewish Federations  
of North America

Steven Lowy  
Chair, World Board of  
Trustees, Keren  
Hayesod

Yaakov Hagoel  
Chair, WZO  
Acting Chair, Jewish  
Agency Executive

Doron Almog  
Incoming Chair,  
Jewish Agency  
Executive

Eric Fingerhut  
President & CEO, Jewish  
Federations of North  
America

Sam Grundwerg  
World Chair, Keren  
Hayesod

Cc: Mr. Omer Bar Lev, Minister of Public Security  
Dr. Nachman Shai, Minister of Diaspora Affairs  
Mr. Matan Kahana, Deputy Minister of Religious Services