

As I promised in my last letter to you at Passover, I want to keep you up-to-date on our work at the Embassy of Canada to Israel. It is hard to believe how quickly time has passed since Passover, and the New Year is already upon us. While Rosh Hashanah is a time to celebrate the year to come, I also see it as an opportunity to look back on our busy spring and summer season.

We are working very hard to deepen and broaden our relationship with Israel. In my past letter to you, I mentioned that we were preparing for a visit of Premier Philippe Couillard of Québec, the first ever official visit of a Premier of Québec to Israel. The Premier arrived in May, accompanied by a delegation of more than 125 business, government and community leaders. The visit was a tremendous success for Québec and Canada, resulting in numerous outcomes, including a cyber security cooperation agreement between Hydro-Québec and the Israel Electric Corporation, the largest supplier of electricity in the country. A large delegation of Québec and Ontario companies also participated in BioMed, Israel's most important event in the life sciences sector. During his time in Israel, the Premier met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Minister of Economy Eli Cohen. At these meetings, the Premier had the opportunity to highlight Québec and Canada's leading role in the field of Artificial Intelligence.

Indeed, it has been a particularly high-profile few months for Québec in Israel including the fabulous Montreal Mega Mission in May of this year. I also was extremely pleased to see both Air Canada and Air Transat launch non-stop summer seasonal flights between Montreal and Tel Aviv, directly linking the two cities for the first time in many years. Bombardier Transportation announced the sale of more double-deck rail coaches to Israel Railways, totalling 462 coaches. Israel Railways also welcomed the arrival of the first of 62 Bombardier electric locomotives, further deepening the Israel Railways/Bombardier partnership.

This summer, the Embassy team hosted the Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Ralph Goodale. It was an action-packed visit that included a meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu and a meeting with Israel's Minister of Public Security, the Honourable Gilad Erdan. For the past 9 years, Canada and Israel have held annual expert meetings in the areas of counter-terrorism, critical infrastructure protection, emergency preparedness, law enforcement cooperation, border security, and terrorist financing. Minister Goodale announced significant funding for a new programme at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation to empower young peace advocates in Middle East and experienced a moving and informative visit to Yad Vashem. We look forward to several more ministerial visits this coming year.

During our Canada Day party in July, we celebrated Canada's 150th with our friends here in Israel. For this event, the Embassy created its own hashtag #Canada150IL which topped the list of most active hashtags in the Middle East that night. *The Jerusalem Post* described it as being a new type of event. We hope that you received the summer edition of "Our Family Album," our Embassy's photo newsletter, sent out every three months. If so, you had a chance to see our photos from this event, and if not, please let us know and we will make sure that you are on our distribution list for the

next album. Likewise, if you did not receive my previous letter at Passover, please let me know so I can send you a copy.

As you know, the 20th Maccabiah Games took place in July. Canadian athletes made us proud, taking home 50 medals. Embassy staff attended the opening ceremony and had the chance to cheer on our athletes. Among the winners at this summer's games was MP Anthony Housefather who won 5 medals in swimming. Gold medals went to Canadian track and field athlete Sasha Gollish, masters swimmer Ami Trauber, open category triathlete Kayla Segal, the Open beach volleyball team, as well as masters athletes Elise Levinoff for the 50 m and 100m freestyle and Brahm Faber for tennis singles 80+.

My final thought, on a sadder note, is that September marks one year since the passing of former Israeli President Shimon Peres, his yahrzeit, z"l. His legacy was honoured by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Canadian delegation to the State Funeral, including former Prime Ministers Harper and Chrétien, former Minister Stéphane Dion, Senator Linda Frum, and former Leader of the Opposition Rona Ambrose. During his State Visit in November, Governor General Johnston met President Peres' son, Chemi Peres, and laid a wreath on behalf of all Canadians at the Mount Herzl gravesite. Top on my reading list now is the newly released autobiography of Shimon Peres, *No Room for Small Dreams: Courage, Imagination, And the Making of Modern Israel*. I know you will want to add it to your reading list as well. Of my many favourite Peres quotations, I think the following is appropriate for today: "If you have never failed, you probably never dared to shape an exciting tomorrow for yourself." Israel, with inspiration from President Peres and so many other Israeli leaders, has certainly shaped an exciting tomorrow.

As Ambassador of Canada to Israel and on behalf of all of us here, I want to wish you and your family a happy and healthy New Year.

Chag Sameah to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leah Lyons".