

The Rabbinical Assembly

Dear Colleagues,

As the new government in Israel is seated and starts to put out policies and proposed legislation, we want to make clear what you can expect from our Rabbinical Assembly. We will continue to express our unqualified support of Zionism and the Jewish State as these concepts are core to our values and religious beliefs and are unequivocal.

However, we may find there will be times when it will be necessary to issue harsh critique of government policies that go against our core values or oppose religious freedom and pluralism. The current coalition has already indicated its intent to make changes that affect the democratic and pluralistic nature of Israel as defined in its declaration of independence. As a result, we anticipate there will be times when we will respond in accordance with our positions and principles that have been developed via our resolutions process. As a global organization whose main office is in North America, we also develop our statements and positions in close consultation with our partners in the Masorti movement (Masorti Israel and Masorti Olami) and the Israel Region of Our RA.

Our goal is to advocate from a leadership position reflecting our global membership of 1,600 colleagues, and the 1.5 million people who identify with our movement, as well as provide ideas, language, and Torah for our colleagues to use in our own communities.

Here are some of the core issues that we shall not hesitate to express our opinions:

Religious Pluralism Is Our Core Issue

We insist that Israel's current government affirm their commitment to maintaining the following well-established precedents acted upon by previous governments. These include:

- Recognizing Conservative/Masorti conversions both from outside Israel for Aliyah under the Law of Return, and from inside Israel.
- Affirming the right to pray in egalitarian minyanim at the kotel/Azarat Yisrael and protecting those engaged in egalitarian tefilah from auditory and/or physical disturbances.
- Providing consistent, substantive funding for our Masorti congregations, youth movement and bureau of religious services.

Humanity and Human Rights

We proudly stand for the rights of all and champion democratic principles. We will call out racism and other forms of bigotry when we see it. We affirm the human rights and dignity of Palestinian residents of Israel, non-Jewish citizens of Israel and all those living under Israeli control.

How We'll Act

We work in multiple modalities – these include public statements and advocacy, behind the scenes conversations including via coalitions, and through our colleagues and communities.

This also means that for a variety of reasons, including a strategic approach, we may not have a public statement in real time on every issue that arises. This does not mean we're not working on the issue, or that somehow we approve of a particular policy.

We Are Optimistic and Also Vigilant

Despite our ongoing and unconditional strong support for the State of Israel, the rhetoric and initial proposals coming from this new government are of concern due to the unusual and extraordinary potential to weaken democracy and religious pluralism. Our need to publicly oppose Israeli government policies in ways that are unprecedented is of concern to us and is not a step we embrace easily. We will be in close consultation with our partners and members.

We are always aware that our role is to represent the consensus of our diverse membership, and to provide resources to our colleagues. These circumstances are new for us and we welcome member feedback (positive or with concerns) at any time around our message and resources that are needed. If you're interested in getting involved, please fill out this form and as the work becomes clear, we will reach out.

ה' עוז לעמו יתן, ה' יברך את עמו בשלום

With appreciation for your membership,

Harold Kravitz, President

Jay Kornsgold, Vice President

Amy Levin, President, Israel Region

Jacob Blumethal, CEO

Ashira Konigsburg, COO