

The Rabbis of the Moetzah (the Progressive Rabbinic Council of Australia, Asia and New Zealand) and the leadership of the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ) join those who are shocked and horrified by the revelations about the deceit and ignorance displayed by rabbis within the Chabad Yeshivahs and communities in Australia.

The abhorrence to these statements is compounded by the attempts of these senior leaders to use Jewish tradition and Jewish Law as an excuse for them to cover up child sexual abuse; to protect the perpetrators; and to vilify the victims and their families

This abuse of Jewish law in order to create a code of silence and to protect evildoers is a damning condemnation of the people involved. While the number of people who have perpetrated the crimes may be small, the pervasive and deliberate conspiracy to attack the victims and their families is clearly spread widely through some sections of the Chabad community.

The Moetzah and the UPJ call upon all Jewish congregations and organisations to take responsibility for past events and to commit themselves to prevent future ones. Each person and organisation must obey civil and criminal law and also act in accordance with Jewish ethics. Those responsible for the criminal acts must be brought to justice and those who sought to protect them should be removed from positions of authority and prevented from working with children and young people.

Although the Progressive stream of Judaism shares the same values as other Jewish groups, we believe that the behaviour of these individuals places in question their real understanding, and commitment to, the essential principles of Judaism.

The Moetzah and the UPJ offer full support to the victims and offer to help them in seeking to ease their pain and sorrow.

Stephen Freeman
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Rabbi Adi Cohen
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