



Prime Minister Yair Lapid  
The Prime Minister's Office  
Public Enquiries Department  
Kiryat Ben Gurion, Building C  
Jerusalem 91950  
Israel

July 11, 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Australian Progressive and Masorti movements, we write to warmly welcome you to the position of Prime Minister of Israel. When you last addressed the Progressive Movement, you demonstrated a deep and meaningful understanding of the principles, values, and beliefs of our movement. You have also had a long and very positive relationship with the Masorti movement.

It is with this in mind that we now seek your understanding and support for our grave concern in relation to the unwarranted and vicious attack on Progressive and Masorti Jews at the Kotel last week by a mob of Ultra-Orthodox boys and men, who again disrupted the Rosh Chodesh prayer service of the Women of the Wall.

This was followed by an attack at the Egalitarian Plaza on those celebrating B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies in what only can be described as violent, disrespectful, and disgusting behaviour. The screaming, spitting cursing, and violation of Torah scrolls, ripping them to shreds is something unheard of in any Jewish community of standing in our time.

The openly expressed hatred by any stream of Judaism toward another is certainly not that which Jews expect or accept in our Jewish Homeland or anywhere. In fact, we have been very shocked by these continuing and recent events.

As someone we know as having expressed support for the Kotel agreement, so that all streams of Judaism in Israel can pray with safety and security at our most sacred place, we now ask you for your action and support in bringing this situation under control. Without in any way wanting to dictate, we do have several specific requests for you to consider providing freedom of worship in Israel.

It is our belief that the Israeli police could or should be instructed to take action to stop and/or prevent violence against any person or group at the Northern Plaza and Ezrat Israel. We believe it should be normal practice for those behaving in a violent or disruptive way toward others in these areas of the Kotel to be removed and where appropriate face criminal proceedings.



We know you have publicly spoken out against any obstacles to egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall and support your strong stance for there to be a continued opposition to a mechitzah being erected in this space. We also support open accessibility to the Kotel as one of the most sacred religious sites for the Jewish people, whether they are Israeli or from the Diaspora and whether they be Progressive, Reform, Liberal, Masorti, Orthodox or Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

While it is appreciated that for the Kotel agreement to be implemented, it would involve a vote by the Knesset, we implore you as Prime Minister to detail a policy on this important issue.

We would hope that a future Israeli Government would work toward including representatives of our movements as part of a steering committee to guide policies and standards applying to the egalitarian prayer space of the Kotel.

Dear Prime Minister, on behalf of the Australian Progressive and Masorti movements, we wish you every success in the coming election. We hope and pray that you can ensure Israel is a democratic, pluralist society supporting equality for all as expressed in the 1948 Declaration of Independence.

With kind regards,

David Knoll AM and Brian Samuel OAM  
Co-Presidents, Union for Progressive Judaism

Helen Shardey OAM  
President of the Australian Reform/Progressive Zionist Association  
Vice-President, Union for Progressive Judaism

Eric Lundberg  
President, Mercaz-Masorti Australasia