



Media release

The Union for Progressive Judaism, Australian Reform Zionist Association and the Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors welcome the decision of the Israel Supreme Court on 1 March 2021, which now recognises that there is more than one way to become Jewish in Israel.

Fifteen years in the making, the Supreme Court in Israel ruled that citizenship can be granted under the Law of Return to Jewish people who have converted through the Progressive (Reform) and Masorti (Conservative) movements in Israel.

Back in 1988, the Court had ruled that Jewish people who had converted through the Progressive, Masorti, Reconstructionist and Renewal movements had to be recognised for the purposes of Aliyah and citizenship if they converted outside the State of Israel.

The new ruling extends that right to those who converted within the State of Israel.

The Ultra-Orthodox parties, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud Party, regrettably have indicated that they will work to overturn the ruling, even as the decision only affects the right to citizenship under the Law of Return and does not go any further. It does not take away any of the Orthodox establishment's power over religious matters within Israel.

The Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism of course welcomed the Supreme Court decision as one which protects the rights of those who genuinely choose to join the Jewish people. Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Centre, commented that: "The Supreme Court stood in solidarity with the men and women who chose to be Jewish, and ruled again that the State of Israel is a homeland for all Jews, and that the ultra-Orthodox monopoly may not control conversion. We are full of hope that this ruling will put an end to the power struggles over what it means to be Jewish and will promise freedom and equality in the conversion process, which fulfills Israel's Declaration of Independence and values."

UPJ Co-Presidents Brian Samuel and David Knoll said: "We are pleased that for Israel, as for the Diaspora, the Supreme Court has accepted that there is more than one way to be Jewish."

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