



Consulate General of Israel
Toronto and Western Canada

May 14, 2023

Dear friends of the Jewish Community of Greater Vancouver,

I am honored to write to you on the occasion of Israel's 75th Independence Day. On this day, we celebrate not only our incredible achievements as a nation, but also our shared history and heritage as Jews.

As we reflect on the past 75 years, we remember the momentous day when we established a sovereign Jewish state in our ancestral homeland. It is a testament to the Jewish people's determination, resilience, and strength.

On this day, Israelis do not focus on the immense challenges we face as a nation, and there are many, especially now. Instead, we marvel at Israeli technology that powers the world's computers, irrigates arid lands, and helps paraplegics walk. We are proud of our Nobel Prize laureates and European Basketball champions, and our dynamic culture that produces world-class museums and even terrific whiskey. Israel has achieved all of these despite enduring multiple wars, countless terror attacks, and a continuous and unrelenting effort to destroy it.

But what makes us most proud on this day is our vibrant - and sometimes rambunctious - democracy. As we have just seen recently on the streets of Israel, concepts like freedom, equality, and justice are not empty words. In Israel, anyone can aspire to greatness, regardless of their background. A daughter can grow up to be a fighter pilot or a Prime Minister, an Arab can sit in judgment of Israel's highest officials in our highest court, a Christian can graduate first in her class at our most prestigious university, and Muslims can worship as they please.

Your constant support for Israel has been unwavering, and it helps to strengthen Israeli resilience and enhance the bond between our nations. On this occasion, I want to give a special thank you to Ezra Shanken, CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, and Nicolas Slobinsky, Senior Director, Pacific Region, CIJA, for their exceptional dedication and commitment. Thank you for all that we have accomplished together and all that we will continue to achieve in the future.

On behalf of the people of Israel, I wish you a joyous and meaningful Yom Ha'atzmaut. May we continue to work together towards a brighter future for Israel and the Jewish people.

Sincerely,

Idit Shamir
Consul General