

Update on Planned Judicial Overhaul in Israel

Talking Points

Jewish Federations have supported Israel's development since before its founding and remain committed to the flourishing of all who make up its diverse society.

- The Jewish Federation system has invested billions of dollars through its non-governmental partners to support the Israeli people, build out social infrastructure, and protect society's most vulnerable. Federation dollars have never funded the Israeli government.
- The Jewish Federations of North America are collectively the largest unrestricted supporters of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the historic organization that has facilitated every wave of Aliya from the earliest days of the country to the latest Ethiopian Aliya, and helped these olim integrate into a shared, pluralistic society.
- In addition, Federations power the work of JDC - the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee - which serves all Israelis, helping break cycles of poverty among the most vulnerable, fostering inclusion and independence for the elderly and people with disabilities, and providing access to opportunity for all.
- Federation support has enabled Israel to build its civil society and social infrastructure, constructing more than 1,000 high schools, day care centers, senior citizens centers, libraries, sports facilities and regional colleges in Israel, as well as providing support for victims of terror and war to rebuild their lives.
- Jewish Federations represent North American Jewish voices to Israel's government and people, advocating for religious pluralism and minority rights, including those of women, the LGBTQ+ community, Arab Israelis, and new olim.

Israel is the Middle East's only democracy. Democracies require both majority rule and protection of minority rights through a strong system of checks and balances.

- The past few months have been among the most tumultuous in Israel's history, bringing out unprecedented levels of street protests and uncovering some of Israel's deepest societal fractures.
- These protests also demonstrate the strength of Israel's democracy. Israelis have demonstrated their freedom of expression and their tolerance for debate on the best course forward for the country and its citizens.
- The intensity of the disagreement in Israel has been painful to watch, yet the low levels of violence and the discussions seeking compromise reinforce our confidence in the resilience of Israeli democracy to overcome the challenges it faces.
- Shared democratic values have always been a central pillar of kinship between the North American Jewish community and the Israeli people, as well as the strong relationship between our governments. The vitality of Israeli democracy is crucial for the health of the North American Jewish community as well.

The best path forward is a compromise that includes broad support of Israeli civil society

- Federations welcomed the Israeli government's suspension of legislative consideration of judicial reform measures to allow for a negotiated compromise.
- We applaud President Herzog's leadership throughout this crisis and applaud all the parties for their participation in the dialogue under his auspices. We encourage all Knesset factions, coalition and opposition alike, to use this time to build a consensus that earns the broad support of Israeli civil society.
- Jewish Federations have consistently communicated the views and concerns of the North American Jewish community during this crisis, sending an open letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Opposition Leader Yair Lapid in February to promote a path of compromise, organizing an extraordinary 24-hour fly-in with 30 leaders from across the Federation system to meet with the key governmental leaders in March, and partnering with other major Jewish organizations to [respond](#) to the most recent events.
- Jewish Federation leadership has been and remains in regular communication with the highest levels of the Israeli government, sharing reactions from the North American Jewish community and urging compromise.



Action Steps for North American Jewish Community Members :

- Contribute, through your local Jewish Federation, to critical non-governmental organizations and causes which work every day on human services, education, protecting minority rights, promoting religious pluralism, and resettling Jews fleeing from harm around the globe.
- Share your voice with Israeli political leaders on social media
 - Send message to [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#).
 - Send message to [Yair Lapid](#). (write a public post on Facebook and tag @YairLapid)
 - Send message to [President Herzog](#).
 - Send message to [Diaspora Affairs Minister Chikli](#).
- Share [Jewish Federations open letter](#) on social media and with your networks
- [Join the Jewish Federations webinar](#) with Yaakov Katz, Editor in Chief of JPost on Monday 4/3 at 12:30pmEDT/9:30amPDT
- Travel to Israel as part of a community mission, to participate in the [Jewish Federation's GA](#), or as an individual in solidarity with Israel.

Additional resources:

Jewish Federation Statements:

- [Statement on Delay of Judicial Reform](#)
- [Fly-in statement](#)
- [Open letter to the government of Israel regarding proposed judicial reform](#)

Webinar recordings:

- [Government Policies on Religion and State in Israel](#)
- [How New Government Policy Affects Israel's Economy & Foreign Relations](#)
- [The Future of Religion and State in Israel](#)
- [Jewish Federations Briefing on the New Israeli Government with IDI](#)

Updates from Jewish Federations Leadership:

- [Jan 29, 2023](#)
- [Feb. 3, 2023](#)
- [Feb 13, 2023](#)



- [Feb 21, 2023 - Message Regarding Jewish Federations' Open Letter to the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader of the State of Israel](#)
- [Feb 22, 2023](#)
- [March 17, 2023](#)
- [March 27, 2023 \(Morning\)](#)
- [March 27, 2023 \(Afternoon\)](#)

Press clips:

- [Israel must compromise, says JFNA after visit to discuss judicial reform](#)
- [Jewish Americans press Israeli leaders to compromise](#)
- [Protests in Israel have the country's president warning of a possible civil war](#)
- [Israel Could 'lose Generation Of People' Over Judicial Reform: Jewish Federations CEO](#)
- [US Jewish federations delegation lobbies in Israel against Netanyahu's planned judiciary overhaul](#)
- [Jewish groups welcome judicial overhaul pause, call for dialogue](#)

Further reading:

- [Daniel Gordis: What you just witnessed was one of the greatest weeks in Israel's history](#)
- [TOI: As crisis engulfs ties with US, an opportunity emerges...if only PM would take it](#)
- [Washington Post Opinion: Netanyahu has defused a crisis. Now he should seek middle ground.](#)
- [JPost Editorial: Israel judicial reform: Time for both sides to come in good faith](#)

