

ח' בתמוז תשפ"ב
July 7th 2022

To: Prime Minister Yair Lapid

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on entering the important role of Prime Minister of the State of Israel. You've earned this opportunity and we have high hopes that you will distinguish yourself as a strong, effective and wise leader at home and on the world stage.

You have long been a friend of our movements and have believed in making Israel the State where all Jews feel at home. As for the Western Wall, you have time and again voiced support for implementing the Kotel Agreement since you believe that the Wall belongs to all Jews – Orthodox, Reform and Masorti/Conservative.

Last week, on Rosh Chodesh Tamuz, a mob of Ultra-Orthodox boys and men violently disrupted the prayer of Women of the Wall, as they have been doing for many months. They then went to the Egalitarian Plaza and harassed, cursed, whistled and screamed at the participants of Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies which took place at Ezrat Israel at that time. Masorti/Conservative Siddurim were ripped to shreds. Some of the ceremonies were of Reform and Masorti/Conservative boys and girls who came from the U.S. to celebrate this special moment at the holiest site of the Jewish people. Imagine how they felt in the face of such blatant hatred. And this week Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, the United States Special Envoy on antisemitism, expressed deep concern that such violence could occur anywhere, but especially in the Jewish State.

Mr. Prime minister, we turn to you because this situation cannot go on. We represent millions of Jews who cannot tolerate such behaviour, who are tired of being treated as second class citizens at the Wall. A negotiated solution, the Kotel Compromise, has existed for many years, waiting for a cabinet vote for implementation.

We are aware of the complex political situation. But we believe this time presents an opportunity for Tikkun. It is time to begin a new era, which will start to repair the grave injustice which has been occurring on a daily basis at the Wall towards liberal Jews.

We deeply appreciate your strong words condemning the violence at the wall. But we ask you now to turn those words into action.

We ask that you:

- **Give unequivocal instructions to the police to not allow violence** - neither at the northern plaza nor at Ezrat Israel – and take immediate action against those who harass and disrupt the prayer, including removing them from the Wall at once and initiating criminal proceedings against them.
- Make sure that Ezrat Israel will remain an egalitarian plaza, **where a *mechitzah* is not allowed.**
- Ensure that the **Wall will be physically accessible from Ezrat Israel** – since for the past 4 years the access to the wall itself has been blocked.
- Work toward **including representatives of our movements, as well as Women of the Wall, in the steering committee** which is in charge of Ezrat Israel.

All these steps can be taken tomorrow. We know there are many challenges for the Prime Minister of Israel. But this is one challenge which should be and can be addressed immediately.

In the face of the horrible acts which have been committed at the Wall one cannot stay silent. We believe you have attained this position for just such a crisis. לעת כזאת הגעת למלכות.

We call upon you to act.

Bivracha,



Rabbi Rick Jacobs



Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal