

Nationwide Rabbinic Protest Letter Against the Portland City Council's Recent Vote to Divest

We, the undersigned, sign our names to publicly express our hurt and outrage at the City of Portland for their one-sided action against the State of Israel. While we all love the State of Israel, this letter is not about our support for Israel, but rather to inform Maine's largest city of the damage and the suffering they have caused to the American Jewish community. Portland's decision to align with the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, only fuels the current surge of antisemitism that has overwhelmed our country. FBI statistics have repeatedly shown that more than one in two religious hate crimes are perpetrated against ethnic and religious Jews. Hatred rises where BDS is present. Religious persecution is caused by the demonization and the delegitimization of minorities, often resulting in the targeting of the Jewish community.

Given the absence of agenda items addressing the 120 other active conflicts around the world—such as the Russia-Ukraine war or the civil war in Sudan, where even more tragic innocent lives have been lost—it is very disheartening to see Portland focusing its criticism solely on the one Jewish state, a country grappling with the painful complexities of war and of defense against Iran's proxies. Every conflict, every civilian casualty, deserves attention and compassion. Rather than embracing a Jewish community still reeling from the shock of the heinous October 7th massacre and the aftershocks of record-high global antisemitic incidents, the Portland City Council has decided to set a double standard that inspires and encourages antisemitism across the United States.

Whereas, the City of Portland has departed from its natural order by taking sides in a horrific and bloody international conflict, be it advised that we hereby call upon our congregants and constituencies to avoid doing business with any municipality that codifies Jew-hatred into their by-laws by placing yet another yellow star on a Jewish entity. The council resolution may also run afoul of anti-discrimination legislation and executive orders passed by 38 states, thereby risking termination of the ongoing contracts it has with them.

Therefore, be it advised that we, the undersigned, call upon local leaders, who are in agreement with our position- such as the Portland Chamber of Commerce, Visit Portland, and Mayor Mark Dion - to sit down with the council members to explain why their deviation from normative practice to single out the Middle East's only pluralistic, liberal republic has resulted in causing trauma and potentially incited violence towards a frequently marginalized faith community.

We ask our memberships and all people of good conscience, who support the democratic racially-diverse leading ally of America in the Middle East, to avoid patronizing and financially contributing to the City of Portland until such repeal of the bigoted divestment takes effect. With apologies to all fair-minded Portlanders, we hope and pray these actions help restore your city to a more equitable tolerance for all peoples.

#reversetheportlandboycott (reversetheportlandboycott@gmail.com)

Elie Abadie, M.D. Turnberry Synagogue, Aventura, FL
 Matthew Abelson RabbisUNITED, StandWithUs
 Jeffrey Abraham Cong. B'nai Amoona, St. Louis, MO
 Yosef Alt Golf Manor Synagogue Cincinnati, OH
 Moshe Arking, Brooklyn, NY
 Dovid S. Asher Keneseth Beth Israel, Richmond, VA
 Kenneth Auman Young Israel Talmud Torah of Flatbush, NY
 Shalom Axelrod Young Israel of Woodmere, NY
 Ronald Barry Sephardic Institute Brooklyn, NY
 Yosef Bart Brith Sholom Beth Israel, Charleston, SC
 Joseph Beyda Yeshivah of Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY
 Avi Billet Anshei Chesed Congregation Boynton Beach, FL
 Donald Bixon Beth Israel Congregation Miami Beach, FL
 Binyamin Blau Green Road Synagogue, Beachwood, Ohio
 Asher Brander LINK Kollel & Synagogue - Los Angeles, CA
 Tuvia Brander Young Israel of West Hartford CT
 Aaron Braun Northbrook Community Synagogue, IL
 Bucsko Chaim TORCH, Houston, TX
 Tanchum Cohen Beth Abraham Bergenfield, NJ
 David S. Shawel Dallas Kosher, TX
 David Yosef Aish Hatorah of Greater St. Louis, Missouri
 Jeremy Donath Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn, NJ
 Mark Dratch Rabbinical Council of America, New York, NY
 Pini Dunner Beverly Hills Synagogue, Beverly Hills, CA
 Bentzi Epstein TORCH Dallas, TX
 Shlomo Farhi Edmond J Safra Synagogue of New York, NY
 Ari Federgrun BIOZ Philadelphia, PA
 Daniel Z. Feldman Cong. Ohr Saadyam, Teaneck, NJ
 Roy Y. Feldman Cong. Kehilath Jeshurun, New York, NY
 David Fine Barkai Center, Modiin, Israel
 Shaya Fox Dallas Area Torah Association, Dallas, Texas
 Jacob Frankiel JLife Chicago, IL
 Barry Gelman The Denver Kehillah, Denver CO
 Shanaan Gelman Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, Chicago, IL
 Yitzi Genack Shaare Torah, Pittsburgh, PA
 Aaron Glatt Young Israel of Woodmere, NY
 Efrem Goldberg Boca Raton Synagogue, Florida
 Zev Goldberg Bais Medrash of Bergenfield, NJ
 Ezra Goldschmiedt Cong. Sha'arei Torah, Cincinnati, OH
 Avrohom Gordimer, New York, NY
 Noam Gross Partners Detroit, Detroit, Michigan
 Yonah Gross Cong. Beth Hamedrosh, Philadelphia, PA
 Moshe Grussgott Kehilath Israel, Overland Park, KS
 Moses Haber Mekor Hayim Center, Brooklyn, NY
 Ben Herman Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, CA
 Shlomo Hochberg Young Israel of Jamaica Estates New York, NY
 Avi Honigsfeld DATA of Richardson, Richardson, Texas
 Jerold Isenberg Mizrachi - RZ of Chicago, Illinois
 Wes Kalmar Anshe Sfard, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 Benjamin Kelsen B'M Shlomo Elimelech, Teaneck, NJ
 Judah Kerbel Queens Jewish Center, Forest Hills, NY
 Avi Kilimnick Friends of Ruach Hanegev, Rochester, NY
 Yaakov Kirschbaum SMCI, Columbus, Ohio
 Daniel Korobkin Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto, CA
 Shlomo Krasner Cong. Schomre Israel, Poughkeepsie, NY
 Eliezer Langer Cong. Schomre Israel, Poughkeepsie, NY
 Raphael Leban The Jewish Experience, Denver CO
 Gad Levy L'Chaim Center of the North Shore, NY
 Yamin Levy Iranian Jewish Center Great Neck, NY
 Asher Lopatin Kehillat Etz Chayim, Oak Park, Michigan
 Akiva Males Young Israel of Memphis, Memphis, TN
 Chaim Marder Hebrew Institute of White Plains, NY
 Leonard Matanky KINS of West Rogers Park, Chicago, IL
 Dan Miller Bensalem Jewish Outreach Center, PA
 Jonathan Muskat Young Israel of Oceanside, NY
 Menachem Penner RCA, New York, NY
 Pinchas Landis JAI, Cleveland, Ohio
 Chai Posner Beth Tefilah, Baltimore, MD
 Chaim Poupko Cong. Ahavath Torah, Englewood, NJ
 Elchanan Poupko, New Haven, CT
 Ariel Rackovsky Congregation Shaare Tefilla, Dallas, TX
 Shaul Robinson Lincoln Square Synagogue, New York, NY
 Zvi Romm Yeshiva University, New York, NY
 Gidon Rothstein, Bronx, NY
 Jak Rubin Olami, Dallas, TX
 Evan Rubin Keneseth Israel Torah Center, Sacramento, CA
 Benjamin Samuels Cong. Shaarei Tefillah, Newton, MA
 Yosef Shapiro Atlanta Jewish Xperience, GA
 Zischa Shaps JET OTTAWA, Ottawa, Ontario
 Moshe Shulman Young Israel of St Louis, St Louis, MO
 Susan Silberberg ZRC, Bloomington, IN
 Tzvi Sinensky Lower, Merion, PA
 Sholom Skolnik Kesser Israel Portland, OR
 Ze'ev Smason Rabbi Emeritus, NHBZ, St. Louis, MO
 Joseph Soffer Beth Torah Congregation, Brooklyn NY
 Ari Spiegler Beachwood Kehilla, Beachwood, OH
 Marc Spivak Congregation Ohr Torah, West Orange, NJ
 Yitzchak Sprung United Orthodox Synagogue, Houston, TX
 Michael Stanger Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation NY
 Adam Starr Congregation Ohr HaTorah, Atlanta, GA
 Chaim Steinmetz Kehilath Jeshurun, New York, NY
 Michael Taubes Cong. Zichron Mordechai, Teaneck, NJ
 David Hillel Tawil Yeshivah, Ocean, NJ
 Isaac Tawil Kol Israel Congregation, Brooklyn, NY
 Etan Tokayer Kingsway Jewish Center, Brooklyn, NY
 Yaakov Trump Young Israel of Lawrence, Cedarhurst, NY
 Yaakov Wasser Emer. Young Israel of East Brunswick, NJ
 Jay Weinstein Rabbinical Council of America, New York, NY
 Elie Weinstock Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach, NY
 Yosef Weinstock Young Israel of Hollywood, FL
 Elie Weissman Young Israel of Plainview, NY
 Cantor Alison Wissot Temple Judea, Tarzana CA
 Aryeh Wolbe TORCH, Houston, TX
 Yisroel Ciner Beth Jacob, Irvine, CA
 NASANYA ZAKON, DATA of Plano, TX
 Doug Zelden Congregation Or Menorah, Chicago, IL