



# British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights

Supporting the work of Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel and the West Bank

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue,  
28 St John's Wood Road,  
London NW8 7HA

July 7<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear Ambassador,

We write as rabbis and rabbinic students from across the different denominations of British Jewry – members of the British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights, the rabbinic voice for social justice and economic rights in Israel and the West Bank – in order to urge the Israeli government to abandon the plans unilaterally to annex part of the West Bank in the next few weeks.

Many of us have lifelong and personal connections with Israel, through family, through extended residency in the country, through our deep attachment to the land which is so integral to our history and identity as Jews. We are proud to be Jewish, of the ethical teachings of the prophets and the compassion of our rabbinic tradition; proud of Israel's early courageous history and its current achievements.

What makes this creeping annexation of land that should belong to a Palestinian State so unutterably painful is the travesty that is made of our Jewish teachings. If Israel is a Jewish state, then this makes hypocrites of us all. If Judaism teaches us not to oppress, not to disenfranchise, not to stand idly by the blood of our neighbour, then where do we all stand?

And where do we stand in relation to Israel's Declaration of Independence? The State of Israel that was created was to be 'based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace'. These plans deny those foundational principles of the Declaration.

David Ben-Gurion stated: 'The State of Israel will prove itself not by material wealth, not by military might or technical achievement, but by its moral character and human values.'

The proposed annexation demonstrates an abuse of power and unwillingness to work to bring Palestinians to the table in order to forge a peace plan for all the communities involved.

We urge you to abandon these plans, this imposition of power and control over the Palestinians.

The moral integrity of the Jewish people is at stake. History will judge us and ask us: have we been faithful to the prophetic teachings of justice, compassion and peace? Or have we

created a mockery of our Jewish tradition and of the founders of the State, by standing on the wrong side of Jewish teachings and our history?

It is because we are deeply attached to Israel as a Jewish State and because we care not only about the physical survival of the Jewish people, but also our moral survival as a people of integrity that we write to you to say: tear up your plans for annexation and write a new chapter in the history of our people, based on a vision of justice and mercy, a vision that shall be fulfilled for the good of all people – Israel's citizens and her neighbours the Palestinian people.

Yours sincerely,

Rabbis Sylvia Rothschild and Alexandra Wright  
*Co-Chairs of the British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights*  
and

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism

Rabbi Adam Frankenberg

Rabbi Janet Darley

Student Rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber

Student Rabbi Daisy Bogod

Student Rabbi M. Yehudit Loreggian

Rabbi Irit Shillor

Rabbi Jeffrey Newman, Emeritus Rabbi Finchley Reform Synagogue

Rabbi Danny Rich JP Senior Rabbi, Liberal Judaism 2005-2020

Rabbi Colin Eimer, Emeritus, Sha'arei Tzedek North London Reform Synagogue

Rabbi Paul Freedman, Senior Rabbi, Radlett Reform Synagogue

Rabbi Roberta Harris-Eckstein, ELJC (Eastbourne Liberal Jewish Community)

Rabbi Professor Marc Saperstein, Leo Baeck College, London

Rabbi Amnon Daniel Smith

Rabbi Naomi Goldman

Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet

Rabbi Dr Barbara Borts

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah, Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue

Rabbi Fabian Sborovsky

Rabbi Gershon Sillins

Rabbi Pete Tobias, The Liberal Synagogue Elstree

Rabbi Anna Posner

Rabbi Dr Elliott Karstadt

Rabbi Howard Cooper

Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi

Rabbi Richard Jacobi

Rabbi Ariel J Friedlander

Rabbi Amanda Golby

Rabbi Steven Katz

Rabbi Douglas Charing

Rabbi Rachel Benjamin

Rabbi Nathan Godleman

Rabbi Dr. Jackie Tabick

Rabbi Charley Baginsky

Rabbi Sandra Kviat.

Rabbi Roni Tabick

Rabbi Mark L Solomon Edinburgh & Leicester Liberal Jewish Communities, and Rosh Beit Din of Liberal Judaism

Rabbi Igor Zinkov