



## World Zionist Organization Activity Report During Iron Swords War Update for 15 January 2024 to 5 February 2024

- ❖ **“My Home is Your Home”** – When the World Zionist Organization identified the need to locate temporary accommodation for families from Israel’s northern and southern regions who had become refugees in their own country overnight, it responded to the challenge through the creation of the “My Home is Your Home” project. The initiative has successfully provided secure accommodation for many families in homes donated by Israelis and Jews from the Diaspora. As the term of the project drew to a close, a ceremony was arranged to acknowledge all those families who had opened their hearts and homes to the evacuees and to thank the project partners – the World Zionist Organization team, the Amigur Company and ‘Open Doors.’ Naturally, an important vote of thanks was also given to the families themselves for their patience, determination and hope.



- ❖ **Illuminated Displays on the National Institutions Building Façade**

- To mark the first birthday of Kfir Bibas, still held in Hamas captivity, the National Institutions building in Jerusalem was illuminated in orange, in the hope for his swift and safe return home.
- To mark International Holocaust Memorial Day, a visual display was projected across the entire façade of the National Institutions building, commemorating the six million victims of the Holocaust and reminding all of us to remember them forever and never forget! View the display at this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/WZOhebrew/videos/1376019246393450>





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❖ **“Home Front Valor” Award Ceremony** – The venue for this moving and carefully crafted award ceremony that recognized 16 honorees as Home Front heroes took place at the new Israel National Library building in Jerusalem, with the honorees receiving medals and prizes. The project was created by the World Zionist Organization’s very own Zionist Council in Israel to honor men, women and organizations whose extraordinary wartime activities lay emphasis on the spirit of volunteerism and social action in Israeli civil society and were deemed worthy of commendation. The adjudicating panel was headed by Israel Prize laureate, Ms. Miriam Peretz, and included Eshkol Regional Council Chair, Mr. Gadi Yarkoni, social activist, Ms. Adi Altshuler, World Zionist Organization Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gil Segal, and Ms. Osnat Barda. Among the honorees were: Public Diplomacy activist, Yosef Haddad; journalist and media figure, Tamir Steinman; the singer, Omer Adam, who won the award for his impromptu emergency ops center to cover taxi expenses for mobilized and serving soldiers; the “Ha’Achim” restaurant for their immense contribution; the national emergency babysitting ops center that assisted thousands of families of reserve soldiers; the Forum of the Families of Hostages for their contribution to national resilience; an additional ten people and projects also received this distinction in recognition of their significant contribution. The event was hosted by Guy Zu-Aretz and included a performance by the ‘Nonna’ children’s band with a guest appearance by Arkadi Duchin. The event was also livestreamed on social media.

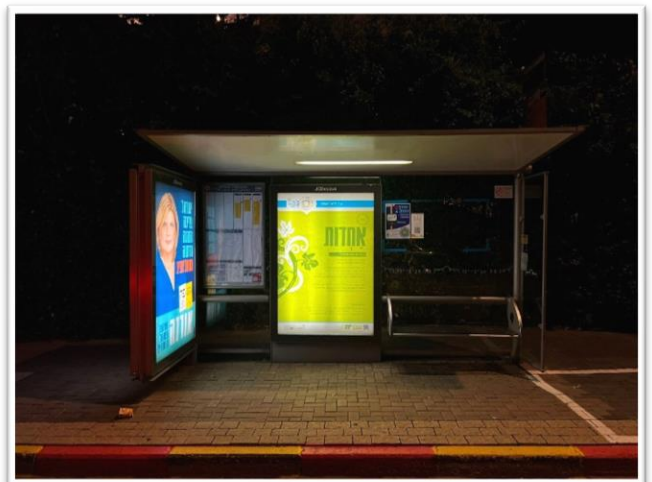






❖ **“Hebrew – Our Connecting Language”** – Hebrew Language Week was observed at the National Institutions Building with a special exhibition, entitled *“Hebrew – Our Connecting Language,”* initiated by the Zionist Council in Israel in conjunction with the Academy of the Hebrew Language. About 20 men and women whose lives were turned upside-down chose one word that articulates for them the significance and context of this period. Among the panelists were: Dany Cushmaro, Yosef Haddad, Captain A., the mother of one of the hostages, Haim Jelin, and other people of note. The words they chose form the subject of twenty poster designs, reflecting their strong personal emotions and those prevailing at a national and societal level. Together, they form a unique, compelling mosaic with the power to depict current reality. *The words chosen were as follows:* cowshed, distanced, faith, family, friendship, home, homeland, identity, Israeli-ness, life, light, love, partnership, resourcefulness, *shlichut* (sense of mission), spirit, unity, well (*be’er*), and yearning (*kisufim*).

A special exhibit based on a series of Hebrew words relating to the current situation selected by a panel was displayed at the National Institutions building. The same exhibit has been on display at train stations around Israel and at bus stations and bus stops in Tel Aviv.





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- ❖ **Meeting with Educators from Diaspora Jewish Community Centers** – The post-October 7 reality demands a change in the educational approach to Jewish identity and sense of collective pride. A professional dialogue on the subject of the challenges currently facing Jewish education in the context of worldwide escalating Antisemitism (i.e. in terms of incidents and public discourse) took place at an encounter with a visiting delegation of senior figures in Diaspora Jewish education from around the world. The delegation was a joint initiative by the World Zionist Organization, the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism, the Pincus Fund, the Koret Center and United.



- ❖ **The Knesset Aliyah, Integration and Diaspora Committee** – The World Zionist Organization, the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and the Jewish Agency for Israel presented a report to the Committee on Antisemitism around the world in 2023, which is now a war declared against the entirety of the Jewish people, rather than solely against the State of Israel. The report's findings dictate the need for conceptual change in strategy and approach: it is vital to issue a wake-up call to the entire world, ensure compulsory education about the lessons from the Holocaust, legislate against Antisemitism and its proponents, guarantee proper enforcement of law, and provide security for Jewish institutions.



- ❖ **Tree Planting Ceremony on Behalf of the Hostages** – A tree-planting ceremony on behalf of the hostages ceremony took place on Kibbutz Ruhama during the week of the Tu B'Shvat, the festival symbolizing the strength of our eternally planted roots in the soil of Israel, 112 days after the horrific atrocities perpetrated by Hamas and the brutal abduction of hundreds of innocent civilians into the Gaza Strip. The Chairman of the World Zionist Organization participated in this poignant, heart-rending ceremony, which included a program of prayers for the wellbeing and safe return of the hostages, our unity as a people, and victory in our present war of survival.







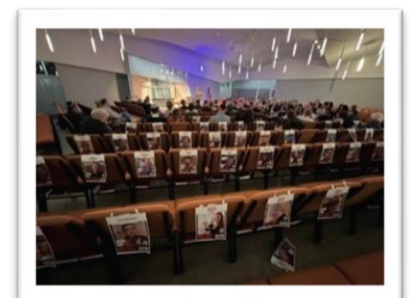
- ❖ **One-day Seminars on Zionism and Israeli-Diaspora Relations in Wartime** – Last month, the World Zionist Organization held seminars training days for the following mechinot (military preparatory academies): Tabor-Nof Galil; Bet Yisrael; Meitzar; Ruach Nachon; Tabor-Ramat Hashofet. The seminar program focused on the change that occurs in Israel-Diaspora relations, Zionism and Jewish Peoplehood in wartime. Students also heard a lecture by the World Zionist Organization Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman; engaged in a workshop on Jewish Peoplehood; followed a guided tour at the Herzl Museum; and took part in a hands-on encounter with an olah chadashah (new immigrant), who talked of her own and her community’s experiences of Antisemitism during this period as well as about the emotions and feelings of Diaspora Jewry since the outbreak of war. The group from the Meitzar Preparatory Academy met with the Head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora, who spoke on Israel-Diaspora relations after the war.



- ❖ **Solidarity Missions Welcomed at the National Institutions Building** – This month, Israel Solidarity missions, visiting to show their support for Israel and engage in voluntary service, were welcomed at the National Institutions building. Amid their intensive and packed schedules, combining voluntary work and tours of the Gaza border region, the groups were able to appreciate some down time there. They received a guided tour of the premises and an introduction to the building’s fascinating history as well as insights into the Zionist movement in present time.



- ❖ **US Première Tour for “Heschel’s Passover Eve”** – The production of “Heschel’s Passover Eve” went on tour of three southern US states during the period around Martin Luther King Day, playing in Miami, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; and Louisville, Kentucky. Every performance was followed by a panel discussion about particularism and universalism in Heschel’s philosophy and how to analyze the present-day reality, particularly since October 7, in terms of Heschel’s far-sighted vision as a theologian, humanist and Zionist.





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**The Yael Foundation** – On the 100<sup>th</sup> day since the outbreak of the “Iron Swords” War, a *Mezzuzah* was affixed to mark the opening of the Yael Foundation’s new office premises. The foundation’s mission is to enable every Jewish child in the Diaspora to receive a high quality Jewish education that is result-oriented and sustainable, while continuing to build a bridge and connections between the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry. The event was attended by distinguished guests: the Israel Minister of Religious Services, the Minister of Education and the Minister for Diaspora Affairs.



- ❖ **“Oz” – The Nir Oz Spirit Emblem – Now also on Uniforms** – An initiative within was, launched a special line of self-adhesive fabric tags for IDF soldier tactical uniforms. The design comprises an Israeli flag, inscribed with the legend “Not travel-weary but, rather, laying down the way,” the motto adopted by Kibbutz Nir Oz almost since the day of its foundation in late 1955. Since the horrendous events of October 7, when dozens of kibbutz residents were murdered and taken hostage, the kibbutz has raised the Israeli flag anew framed in its own emblem and motto, in a resonating call of hope and pride. To date, approximately 1,000 IDF soldiers have received these tags.



- ❖ **International Holocaust Memorial Day** – During a program to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day, the Chairman of the World Zionist Organization attend an event with Holocaust survivors and former hostages released from Hamas captivity. The event was organized by Ms. Leah Schneider and the Herzliya municipality.







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- ❖ **International Holocaust Memorial Day Event at the UN Offices, Geneva** – A moving ceremony was held to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day at the UNO offices in Geneva. The event was hosted by H.E. The German Ambassador and H.E. The Israel Ambassador in Geneva, together with the Center for Jewish Impact and The vice chairman of the World Zionist Organization, Gil Segal and was attended by diplomats, ambassadors, Human Rights representatives and other distinguished guests. The program was dedicated to the subject of Special Education during the Holocaust period, with a spotlight on the issue of special needs children in those years, which was not one of broad public discourse in that period. The program included a première screening at the UN of the film, “The Children of Sally Bein,” produced by the World Zionist Organization, followed by a panel discussion on the topic of inclusive education – then and now.

Link to the related report (in Hebrew) about the film "The Children of Sally Bein" -

<https://www.israelhayom.co.il/judaism/judaism-news/article/15186252>



- ❖ **Retreat for Leading Israeli TikTok Content Developers** – To mark International Holocaust Memorial Day and connect the young generation to Shoah Commemoration, a first-ever Retreat was held in conjunction with Zikaron BaSalon [Bringing Testimony Home - lit.: ‘Remembrance in your Living Room’] together with TikTok-Israel, bringing together a select group of the 30 foremost content developers in Israel. This unique seminar will allow us to create meaningful content on a platform that has become the young generation’s favorite ‘watering hole,’ and leverage it to disseminate vital messages about preserving the memory of the Shoah, ensuring that testimony continues to be handed down to future generations and enabling us to build a better society.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/C2nNil8I1xN/?igsh=azF4N3R2bWh3bzVn>





❖ **Cycling Clubs Project** – A joint project by the World Zionist Organization with the “Bartali - Youth in Movement” Foundation has established three community cycling clubs for children and teenagers evacuated from the western Negev kibbutz communities after the October 7 atrocities, in order to help create temporary stability during displacement and provide a response to their needs. The project provides an educational cycling program that integrates trained therapists into groups of cyclists on an ongoing basis. It is significantly enhanced by the community’s strong commitment to the initiative – in fact, they have adopted the cycling club as part of their shared narrative of developing resilience through enjoyable and challenging activity. To date, cycling clubs have been created for the communities of Beeri, Erez and Nachal Oz.



❖ **Leisure, Cultural and Enrichment Programs for People with Special Needs** – The project in partnership with the Israel Association of Community Centers continues to develop leisure and enrichment activities for evacuees with special needs, presently residing in the different hotels, who had not previously been included in programming provisions; the framework covers all age groups and disability categories.



❖ **‘A Wider Bridge’ Solidarity Mission** – The World Zionist Organization welcomed a solidarity mission from the US as part of a program to strengthen ties with Jewish community members in the Diaspora and to have their back, at a time when they are faced daily with challenges in their discourse with colleagues and partner organizations due to the crisis and their support for Israel. The group had a discussion with Avi Dabush from Kibbutz Nirim, who addressed the massacre of October 7 and how kibbutz survivors living in evacuation relate to their experiences. He also spoke about his own perception of Israel’s future and the urgency of bringing the hostages home swiftly and safely.







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❖ **'Weserve' Participants Connect Jewish Communities in the United States with Israel** –

The World Zionist Organization's Weserve project is a dedicated program for IDF soldiers from the Diaspora serving within the Machal framework, where young people volunteer for military service in the IDF and then return home to the United States. The program creates a community setting for these volunteers when they become Israel's

'ambassadors' after their experiences in Israel and helps them leverage their close knowledge of their own communities. Program Director addressed teenagers in northern California engaged in "Geshet LeYisrael" (Bridge to Israel), another World Zionist Organization program, offering in-depth study of Israeli history, politics, and public diplomacy in preparation for high school and college in northern California, where they will inevitably need to contend with elevated levels of Antisemitism. He also shared firsthand accounts of his term of IDF service, speaking about the IDF fighting spirit and the various challenges faced by IDF soldiers today, in combat situations in wartime. In Arizona, the regional "Weserve" coordinator spoke for 20 minutes to leading women influencers in Arizona about his own experiences in the IDF and encouraged their continued connection with Israel at this challenging time.



❖ **Shabbat Retreat for 70 French Olim** – This project, created in conjunction with the CNEF foundation, organized a national Shabbaton for approximately 70 young, French-speaking olim, including a number of recently discharged IDF reservists.

Participants traveled around Israel on Friday morning to meet up at the Mt. Gilboa Observation Point, from where they began a tour of the Nahal Hasi area, Nir David and Bet Shean, where they spent Shabbat. The program included festive Sabbath meals with zemirot (festive Sabbath songs), Torah insights and group crystallization activities as well as a workshop on how young olim can relate to and connect with young Diaspora Jewish in wartime.



❖ **Student Delegations to Israel** – The World Zionist Organization has been partnering in the organization of student delegations to Israel and delivering program content as well as providing alternative opportunities for them. These students, who have all experienced Antisemitism on their home campuses, have made the choice to visit Israel via a solidarity mission, in order to gain a hands-on experience for themselves of wartime life in Israel. The first mission was a group of 40 students, organized in conjunction with the "Tikvah Fund" and the "Shalem Institute".

The second delegation was organized in conjunction with the "Israel Ambassador" Program (IAP).





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❖ **Ami-Chai Military Preparatory Academy Students**

**Commemorate “Operation Dugo”** – Every year, on January 18, many Israelis eat falafel in memory of Shoah survivor David (Dugo) Leitner z”l who would always eat falafel on the day commemorating the date he was sent on Death March from Auschwitz, to mark his survival as a victory of life. Students at the Zionist Council in Israel’s Ami-Chai Military Preparatory Academy decided to mark this commemorative event and this year’s “Operation Dugo” was dedicated as a salute to IDF combat soldiers.



❖ **Teacher Shlichim** – This week, a special evening event was organized to thank and welcome back to Israel all the outgoing World Zionist Organization teacher shlichim, who completed their significant terms of service in the Diaspora. The shlichim also had an opportunity to discuss and process their shlichut experiences and the return home, after several years, to a complex reality in Israel.



❖ **Antisemitism Report 2023** – The Report on the State of Antisemitism in 2023 was published on January 26. The product of a tripartite collaboration between the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Ministry for the Diaspora, it presents data collated and analyzed by a professional team about thousands of antisemitic incidents that have occurred worldwide over the course of the past year. The report indicates an overall rise of 235%, by comparison with the previous year, with a six-fold increase in antisemitic incidents during the last quarter of 2023. There was also a rise of 264% in the levels of online antisemitic discourse, including a disturbing rise of 1,200% in the number of posts advocating violence against Jews and Israelis. In terms of the situation in the USA, there has been a 700% rise in the level of reported antisemitic incidents on college campuses, posing a serious threat to the health and safety of Jewish students. In addition to the overview of the data already mentioned, several major antisemitic incidents for 2023 were singled out for tighter focus. Below is the link to the report (in Hebrew): [דוח אנטישמיות - סיכום שנת 2023.pdf \(wzo.org.il\)](https://www.wzo.org.il/antise/2023.pdf)





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- ❖ **Conference on Antisemitism and Israel Hatred in the West, in the Context of the War in Gaza** – The conference, attended by renowned experts in the fields of Islam, terrorism and Antisemitism was held at a venue in Herzliya. Racheli Baratz Rix presented World Zionist Organization activity programs related to combating Antisemitism, and reviewed levels of Antisemitism worldwide, with a particular emphasis on Antisemitism on campus around the USA as well as the new challenges arising from the upsurge in Antisemitism in general. The day concluded with an event to “Operation Dugo,” when all the participants were invited to eat falafel in remembrance of Shoah survivor David (Dugo) Leitner ז”ל, who marked the day by eating falafel to symbolize the victory of life.



- ❖ **Naamat Conference, Canada** – The Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience addressed Naamat Women in the Toronto region about Antisemitism around the world today, in light of the 800% increase in the number of antisemitic incidents in Canada, by comparison with the same period last year.
- ❖ **International Holocaust Memorial Day, Poland** – The program included a professional conference on combating Antisemitism, attended by European leaders; a delegation organized by the EJA also visited Auschwitz. The Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience represented the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel and laid a wreath on behalf of the World Zionist Organization at the official ceremony, in the presence of former Israel President Mr. Reuven (Ruby) Rivlin. This year, the delegation’s focal theme was the issue of combating Antisemitism and included Elon Musk, owner of the X platform, journalist Ben Shapiro, Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem, and other figures. European leaders addressed how to leverage more efficient methods of combating the present phenomenon of rapidly escalating Antisemitism.



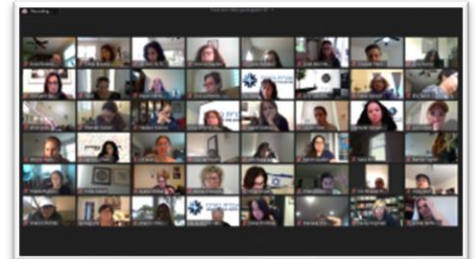


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❖ **Conference on Combating Antisemitism, Berlin** – Last weekend, the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience participated in the proceedings of the three-day Berlin conference, organized by the ICE. The conference goal was to attract young Israelis to learn about technical innovations and new initiatives, while gaining insights into combating Antisemitism in European communities. Dozens of young Israelis registered from all over Europe and attended, to be able to acquire tools to combat escalating Antisemitism, which have reached unprecedented levels across the continent. At the conference, the Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience presented the dimensions of Antisemitism around the world and addressed its escalation by thousands of percent since October 7.



❖ **Hitkadmut (Progress)** – An online virtual conference was organized by the World Zionist Organization for hundreds of teachers and leaders in service in educational institutions throughout North America. The conference aimed to promote and reinforce the profession of Hebrew language study in North America and build a learning community for education professionals engaged in this field and their partners, across all the age groups. The program included a session dedicated to a presentation about Antisemitism today by the Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience, with a survey of current data. The session also provided relevant tools and information with potential to render messages about October 7 and other issues accessible to children and school-age students. The conference was attended by dozens of male and female participants.



❖ **Mobilization Conference – Combating Antisemitism** – On January 31, the emergency conference on combating Antisemitism convened, bringing together hundreds of participants from across Israel, including youth movement alumni, educators, renowned senior figures in the field from around the world, and others. The conference was attended in person by the Chairman of the World Zionist Organization and other members of the Zionist Executive. The Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism and Enhancing Resilience presented research data on current levels and the scope of Antisemitism, together with trends extrapolated for 2023, and addressed current challenges presenting at the outset of 2024. The conference included round table sessions moderated by senior figures from social action organizations, addressing social action initiatives in relation to combating Antisemitism.







### ❖ Activity Programs in France and Belgium

- Several Aliyah Promotion events have been held, in response to recent growing interest in Aliyah to Israel expressed by French Jews: An online session was held with Patricia Habbo, formerly Aliyah Promotion coordinator at the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, who also founded the project for Aliyah project leaders in local government authorities. She addressed psychological preparation for transition to life in Israel with potential Aliyah candidates. This session was attended by 70 participants. An in-person event was arranged in Villeurbanne with Freddo Pachter, Netanya coordinator of Project “Lech-Lecha, which offers a framework for group Aliyah initiatives – both for families and individuals. The project (currently) targets Aliyah to three specific locations in Israel: Netanya, Tel Menashe and Alon Shvut. The meeting attracted an attendance of 100.
- Historian Dr. David Shapira delivered two frontal lectures on the theme of the current situation in Israel and the upsurge of Antisemitism worldwide: one in the Paris suburb of Fontenay-sous-Bois, with an attendance of 50, and the second at the Yavne school in Marseilles, where he spoke to 100 students in grades 11 and 12.
- This month, a formal opening ceremony was held at the Centre AJPI in Marseille for a special new Hebrew Ulpan, designated for members of the Jewish community planning their Aliyah to Israel as a group in the near future.
- The Ulpan emergency project continues, with students writing letters to soldiers in Hebrew, while students already living in Israel talk about their voluntary activities to support Israel’s farming industry. Documentary records are uploaded to social media on a regular basis.



### ❖ Activity Programs in Great Britain

- Festive launch ceremonies were held to mark the opening of three new ulpan classes in the United Kingdom: an online Hebrew Ulpan for members of the national FZY movement; a beginners’ Ulpan in the Edgware neighborhood; and an Ulpan for 10th graders at a London Jewish high school for girls.
- Tu B’Shvat celebrations were held at Jewish Sunday schools in the London area.
- Hebrew as a Spoken Language Festival events were held in 40 schools around Britain.



### ❖ Activity Programs in North America

- A women's club was opened in New York (in conjunction with the PerformArt Youth Musical Theater.)
- A special project was launched for security in the community (in conjunction with NYPD.)
- Broadcasts of Aliyah promotion programming continue via the Freedom FM 104.7 NYC radio channel.
- Four meetings (online or in-person) have been held under the umbrella of the Zionist Youth Aliyah program – in Miami, Boston and Brooklyn, NY.
- **Unity Shabbat** – The World Zionist Organization continues to organize Kabbalat Shabbat programs in the Diaspora with an Israeli flavor, a project launched at the start of the war. An Israeli Kabbalat Shabbat took place recently at the JCC in Toronto, Canada and tickets were completely sold out, drawing 150 participants of all ages, both old and new residents. The Kabbalat Shabbat program included prayers and music in an egalitarian Israeli style, followed by a communal Shabbat dinner.
- **Activity in Canada** – The development of contacts and connections by the Head of the Department for Irgun with the Jewish and Israeli community in Vancouver, has borne fruit. This week, in conjunction with the Canadian Zionist Federation, a successful speaker event was organized for the local Jewish community with Professor Dan Arieli, who spoke to a packed hall of 300.



### ❖ Activity Programs in South America

- World Zionist Organization ulpan students continue to intensify pro-Israel activities and rallies on behalf the hostages and recent victims of terrorism.
- A new film in the “I’m Staying Here” project has been produced and uploaded to social media: it features presentations by olim and former Hebrew language students at World Zionist Organization ulpanim from different countries, who explain to their friends in their respective countries of origin why they have decided to remain in Israel, despite the present situation.
- In Rio de Janeiro, a solidarity ceremony was held to mark the first birthday of baby Kfir Bibas, who was abducted by terrorists from Kibbutz Nir Oz and is one of the hostages still being held in the Gaza Strip.
- **Campaign activities on behalf of the hostages, organized in São Paulo** - At the Noam youth movement camp, 136 candles were lit to raise awareness about the 136 hostages still held captive in Gaza. Women from the local Jewish community held a solidarity march on behalf of the hostages.



❖ **'Regresa' (Return) – Performance by Latin American Artists of New Song in Spanish, Appealing for the Release of Hostages from Gaza** – Regresa is an original song with moving lyrics, designed to

raise awareness about the barbaric cruelty perpetrated by the terrorists on October 7 against innocent civilians and the abduction of the hostages, in a world that remains silent about the brutal atrocities and the plight of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. This special project forms a new element of the campaign for the release of the hostages and solidarity with their families, and in coordination with the Forum's Latin American desk as well as the support of the Zionist Council of Mexico and World Zionist Organization in Argentina, the World Zionist Organization and engaged with famous Spanish-speaking singers to produce this unique recording. The musical director is Ari Litvak; with Ariadna Faerstein as artistic director and Nathan Grynberg as production assistant. The video and song recording is available on YouTube at this link: ["Regresa" \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_7vIW48hag&t=64s)

❖ **October 7 Survivors' Delegations**

- Further to continued interest and demand, additional survivor delegations have been organized to enable them to tell their story and give "firsthand testimony." One of the more recent ones was a two-person delegation to the "NEVATIM" conference in Germany, comprising Sharon Anna Yaakobi of Sderot and Yael Ben Simon, a survivor of the Nova music festival.



- Another encounter was with the participants from the 19-strong "Heroes and Heroines of Light" delegation. Please see the links below for the video (Hebrew) and the Ynet report.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_7vIW48hag&t=64s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_7vIW48hag&t=64s)

YNET - <https://www.ynet.co.il/judaism/article/hyzmj18yt>

- A delegation of four musicians from Sderot and southern Israel has left for the United States. Its members are: Linor Ein Gedi, Mira Semandoyev, Roten Levi Meir and Daniel Waiss, who came together to form the "Shufuni" band. The band's tour will include 20 performances and they will also appear at two major conferences, in conjunction with the "Mithabrim" (Connecting) project.



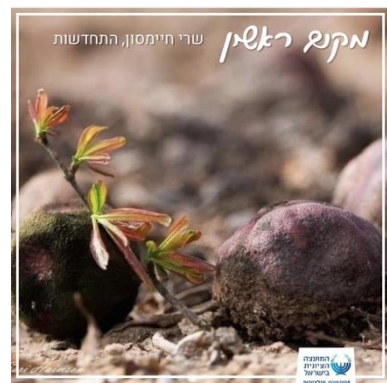
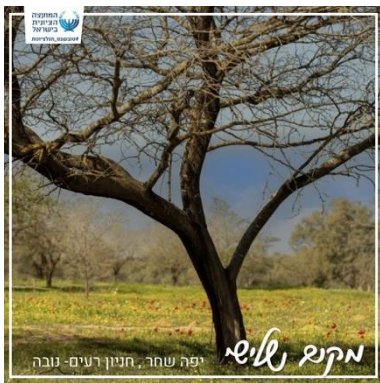
❖ **Batei Midrash**

- In New York, a number of in-person and online Batei Midrash sessions were organized, generating productive debates that have broadened participants' horizons; hevruta and other meetings are also ongoing.
- "Accessible study – Judaism as a Culture" – Batei Midrash in Europe arranged a series of online meetings around topics relating to Judaism as a culture.
- "My heart lies in the East, but I am at the far ends of the West" – the Israeli Bet Midrash in Manhattan, NY, has been engaging on issues of identity, home, and other topics.



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- ❖ **Tu B'Shvat** – An online Tu B'Shvat *Seder* was held in Spanish, centering on the call for the immediate release and return of the hostages. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llyVLRQIbGY>
- ❖ **Tu B'Shvat – Festival of Zionism: Photographic Contest Winners** – To make Tu B'Shvat more meaningful, the Zionist Council in Israel focused on emphasizing the festival's symbolic spirit of renewal, recovery and regrowth via a photographic contest with a difference. The public were invited to take photos of Nature, landscapes and trees that express renewal, rebirth and growth: dozens of participants took photos and uploaded them with the Hebrew tag [#טובשבת\\_חג לציונות](#) ([#Tu B'Shvat\\_Festival of Zionism](#).) The panel judging the contest selected three winning photos noted for their degree of expressiveness; among the judges was professional photographer Zohar Shpak, a young resident of Kfar Aza. Winners received vouchers for goods at "Anushop," a unique and original online outlet whose creators live and struggle with mental health issues. All profits from sales go to empowerment of the artists and producers and enable them to earn their living with dignity.



- ❖ **Tu B'Shvat Programs Around Israel** – The Zionist Council in Israel partnered with KKL-JNF in celebrating Tu B'Shvat in various locations around Israel, at festive Tu B'Shvat sedarim.







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- ❖ **One Million Bells** – Through this special World Zionist Organization campaign to mark 100 days since the October 7 massacres, an appeal was launched to institutions, organizations and the general public to join a worldwide bell-ringing event. The target is to ring one million bells around the world in remembrance of the October 7 victims – the murdered, the wounded, their families and their loved ones – and leverage a public appeal for the immediate release of all the hostages, men, women and children, still held captive by Hamas in Gaza. It is also a call to build a world without terrorism, Antisemitism, fanaticism and racism. Dozens of events and cooperative programs took place across Israel at this time, to mark the passage of 100 days since the black Shabbat. These include one event at Hostages’ Square, another at the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, and a series of events at hotels and universities across Israel.



<https://www.facebook.com/CombatingAntisemitism/videos/188341591036480>

Project website: [1,000,000 Bells \(1000000bells.org\)](http://1,000,000Bells.com)

- ❖ **“Kibbutz Nirim – Touring Zionism on the Way Home”** – The members of Kibbutz Nirim, who were evacuated to Eilat following the black Shabbat of October 7, will be joining a discovery tour through the Eilat mountains before moving to their temporary accommodation at an urban kibbutz in Beersheba. As part of this World Zionist Organization project, kibbutz members will tour additional sites over the coming months and will also be invited to a day of Zionist programming at Mt. Herzl. The first outing in the series will be an integral part of the kibbutz members’ rehabilitation process since their evacuation. The tours in this series form part of a framework designed to help the kibbutznikim conserve a sense of community, through insuring continuity for their long-standing tradition of group outings, which serve to strengthen communal resilience. The program will help rebuild community cohesion and their shared identity around Zionist values; it comes at a juncture, when they are contending both with displacement from their kibbutz homes and an extremely challenging phase of transition.



❖ **“Window on the South”** – This project was developed by the Central Zionist Archives to pay tribute to the founders of settlement throughout the western Negev, and to acknowledge their contribution to the rebirth of Israel and its viability as a state. Over the past two months, CZA archivists have been conducting an extensive mapping of the documentation stored in the historical repositories of the Zionist movement’s institutions concerning fifty communities located along the length of the border with the Gaza Strip, comprising kibbutzim, moshavim and towns. To date, the team has have located approximately 6,000 photographs, 3,000 maps and 1,600 folders containing tens of thousands of documents that record the endeavors and activities of different departments within the Zionist movement relating to settlement in this region. One particularly significant collection of records was uncovered in the Contract Division at the Jewish Agency’s Division for Asset Management; another was at the Jewish Agency’s former Department for Rural Settlement. Records were also found in the former Youth Aliyah Department collection and the Central Office of Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (KKL-JNF.) Keren Hayesod’s photographic collections also yielded a wealth of documentary records of modern-day settlement in south-west Israel. All these documents, photographs, maps and posters reveal a compelling picture of the pioneers’ spirit, courage, commitment, credo and sheer determination, as they made the desert bloom and transformed the western Negev into a prosperous, advanced region.

The staff of the Education Unit at the Archives is currently curating and publishing articles about the story of settlement in the western Negev through these recently revealed records in its online newsletter, “Mei’eit Le’eit” (“From When to Pen”). These are accessible to the public in Hebrew on the Central Zionist Archives’ [“Window on the South”](#) column on the CZA website and on social media. Please use the following link for some of the articles published to date (In Hebrew) : [On the early days at Kibbutz Nachal Oz, excerpted from “Bamachaneh Gadna” \(Army newspaper – Youth Brigade issue\): ‘The Foundation of the Kibbutz - Seven Years On’; ‘Setting the Cornerstone for Kibbutz Nachbir – later renamed Alumim’; ‘Kibbutz Mefalsim – A First Year,’ from a local newspaper; selected photographs from the early days of various moshavim in the western Negev](#)







- ❖ **“Embracing Israel’s Border Regions”** – The Zionist Council in Israel continues to provide helpful leisure and break activities for families evacuated from their homes and communities in Israel’s south-western border region and northern Israel. This week, the slew of activities organized included: lectures for adults and seniors on a range of topics; a compelling talk for evacuees in Beer Yaakov, by guest speaker Tal Bashan; an informative lecture on current affairs, by Yair Cherki of Israel Channel 12 News. Another week of varied children’s and youth activities took place at many of the hotels. One feature activity was an encounter with the female star of “*Shakshuka*” - a children’s show on “Kan-Education” (public broadcasting) TV.



- ❖ **B’nai Brith International Activity**

- As part of the program of the annual WUJS (World Union of Jewish Students) Congress held in Prague, B’nai B’rith International facilitated an encounter with Arik Nani and Bar Chinitz, two survivors of the Nova festival massacre, where over 360 young people were murdered on October 7. The 150 Jewish students from over 30 countries and six continents at the Congress were deeply impacted by the survivors’ accounts of their harrowing experiences.
- B’nai B’rith International filed a brief to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, presenting arguments in response to the charges of genocide, filed by South Africa against Israel, “on the basis that a ruling in favor of South Africa would allow Hamas to continue its attack on the State of Israel. Hamas is responsible both for the genocide of Jewish people on October 7 and for the subsequent suffering of the residents of the Gaza Strip.”





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- B'nai B'rith International held an Israel solidarity concert in Frankfurt. All benefits from the event were donated to Natal-Israel's Trauma and Resilience Center. The concert also offered members of the Jewish community an opportunity to express their identification with the State of Israel. Among those attending were local Jewish community leaders and the Chief Rabbi of Frankfurt. Guest of honor was the Ukraine Consul General, Vadim Kostiuik.

