

World Zionist Organization Activity Report During Iron Swords War **Update for 13-20 December 2023**

- ❖ **Herzl Prize Award to Hernan Feler** – As part of the Extended Executive of the World Zionist Organization Hernan Feler was awarded the prestigious Herzl Prize. Hernan is the Argentinian football commentator who has been appealing daily for the hostages' release from the platform of his radio show. On the black Shabbat of October 7, Hernan's aunt, Ofelia Roitman Feler, was abducted from Kibbutz Nir Oz and held hostage by Hamas for 53 days. Throughout the period of her arduous captivity, Feler prefaced his show with resonating reports about the atrocities, rapes, looting and inconceivable brutality perpetrated by the terrorists, and demanded the hostages' immediate release from Hamas captivity. In a vacuum devoid of advocates on behalf of the hostages, Hernan Feler's lone, intrepid voice rang out fearlessly, regardless of the potential consequences for his career. Through his actions, he has demonstrated courageous and inspirational leadership.



- ❖ **Hernan Feler's Visit to Israel** – Hernan Feler's visit was initiated by the Head of the Department for Zionist Enterprises, which hosted him in Israel. In the course of his visit, Feler spoke at a rally on for the release of the hostages and visited Hostages' Square, had an audience with the President of Israel, met with families of hostages at the home of the Argentinian Ambassador to Israel and visited Kibbutz Nir Oz, from where his aunt was abducted.





- ❖ **Solidarity and Unity Mission by the Extended Executive** – During the World Zionist Organization’s Extended Executive meetings, participants joined two fact-finding tours. The first was to southern Israel, which included visits to Kibbutz Kfar Aza, Ofakim, the “free hot meals for soldiers” voluntary project at the Gilat Junction, and closed with a visit to Hostages’ Square, where they also met families of the hostages. The second tour was to northern Israel, where the group visited Yanukh Jat village, including the Meshakem clothing and uniform factory and an encounter with bereaved Druze families. Their next stop was a tour of an Israel Air Force base and the tour concluded with a visit to the Nova memorial display at the Tel Aviv Convention Center, exhibiting a reconstruction of the Supernova Peace Festival site that incorporates authentic items collected on site following the atrocities.





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- ❖ **Hannukah Activity Programs** – The World Zionist Organization invited the general public to nominate other people, explaining why they would like to see the festival illuminate their darkness. The ten most moving were chosen, with their nominees receiving gifts of flowers and chocolates: among them were bereaved families, evacuees, reservists, and others. One particularly touching instance was that of a family with three small children evacuated from Kiryat Shemonah and now living in Jerusalem: their mother is presently in her ninth month of pregnancy, while the father is serving in a combat unit after being mobilized for emergency reserve duty. The family was joined at home for candle lighting with a Zionist flavor by a group of representatives from the WZO – headed by the World Zionist Organization Chairman. Please watch the video clip from this moving visit at: <https://www.facebook.com/WZOhebrew/videos/374104638338896>
<https://www.tiktok.com/@wzo.official/video/7312818273303760135? r=1& t=8iFnE3JiNgH>
- ❖ **“Heroes and Heroines of Light” Delegation** – During the Hannukah festival, a World Zionist Organization delegation, made up of 19 heroes and heroines from the Gaza border region and the Nova music festival, toured Jewish communities in the US, Europe and Latin America. The mission to the USA was arranged in partnership with “Mithabrim” (Connecting), a joint initiative of the Diaspora Affairs Ministry and the JCCA, involving over 20 JCCs across different Jewish communities. Members of the delegation shared their personal stories of heroism from the horrific Shabbat of October 7. The goal of the visit was to bring Israeli voices to the table in these complicated times and to enhance and strengthen bonds between Israel and Diaspora Jewish communities, along with the sense of belonging. It also enables people from the Gaza border region to put a personal face and identity to the disaster by conveying the narratives in their own voice to Jewish communities around the world, which also deepens the sense of connection and mutual support among Jews worldwide.





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- ❖ **B'nai B'rith Delegation to France** – Representatives of B'nai B'rith International and the Permanent Delegation Israel to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) in France organized an urgent event in Paris to highlight the ongoing humanitarian consequences of Hamas' October 7 atrocities in Israel. Speakers included preeminent French Jewish intellectual, Bernard-Henri Lévy, as well as family members of Israeli-Arab hostages held in Gaza, who witnessed the carnage, and a young survivor of the attack.

Read more about the event at the following link: <https://www.bnaibrith.org/event-in-paris/>



- ❖ **Teacher Shlichim (Emissaries)** – The World Zionist Organization continues to offer ongoing support to shlichim who returned to Israel after receiving emergency call-up orders while also providing response to their needs while they are on active service. Continuous, parallel support is being given to the wives of mobilized shlichim remaining in the Diaspora, who receive psycho-social support where necessary, professional counseling, assistance in various other areas, and enrichment encounters.



- ❖ **Support for Evacuated Communities from Around the World** – Material donations and letters have been received from Jewish schools around the world, which the World Zionist Organization delivers to evacuees housed in hotel accommodation.



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- ❖ **Hanukkah in Jewish Schools Around the World** – A worldwide educational contest was arranged for the festival, designed to boost morale and offer enrichment for Jews everywhere. Over 300 photos of hanukkiyot created by students were submitted worldwide, with the best entries winning a box of Israeli goodies, which have already been sent to them.



- ❖ **Activities in North America** – A World Zionist Organization delegation led by the Head of the Department for Aliyah Promotion is currently on a Hasbara (Israel Advocacy) mission to the United States. Their schedule includes meetings with the Israel Deputy Consul General, the president of AZM, the WZO Executive's new Representative to the USA, Hillel students, members of the Z-Club, Jewish police and members of RAJE (Russian American Jewish Experience), as well as various communities in Manhattan, Staten Island and Brooklyn. They were also interviewed on Jewish radio shows and held open discussions with applicants eligible for Aliyah.



- ❖ **Bring Them Home Now Campaign in Brazil** – A number of events have been organized in Brazil on behalf of the hostages, with the participation of the Israeli Ambassador to Brazil, Mr. Daniel Zonshine, featuring an especial emphasis on solidarity with their families.



- ❖ **"Ani Nish'ar" (I'm Here to Stay) Project** – A video for social networks was produced by Denise Wasserman as part of a series where new olim from Brazil explain why they chose to remain in Israel and talk about their feelings in their country of adoption. The short film (in Portuguese) is available at the following link:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/C0w8-r3u_8x/?hl=bn



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- ❖ **Donations Center** – The World Zionist Organization Donations Center continues to supply equipment to IDF soldiers and evacuated civilians. Further to a request for advanced life-saving equipment for field medical treatment from Captain Dr. Ray Biton, these items have now been supplied to the 162 Division Medical Company, stationed inside the Gaza Strip on ground maneuvers. The Head of the Department for Social Activism and Tikkun Olam visited the section and received thanks from the soldiers in the form of a short video (in Hebrew), available at this link: <https://www.facebook.com/WZOhebrew/videos/869549047882200>

- ❖ **Covenant of Life with the Druze Community** – The Zionist Council in Israel continues its activity programs to reinforce the Covenant of Life between the Druze and Jewish communities and to strengthen the sense of belonging to the State of Israel and Zionism, within Druze society. One of these projects is a new Scholarship Program Fund, dedicated to the memory of heroic fighters from the Druze community who have fallen in defense of their country during the “Iron Swords” War. Druze students mobilized by emergency call-up who have served as reservists for over 28 days or who are still serving in the reserves are invited to apply for student stipends worth 2,500 NIS. For details of eligibility, conditions and the application process, please see this link: <https://bitly.ws/36526>



- ❖ **A Loving Druze Embrace for the Evacuees** – The Kerem El Pre-IDF Preparatory Military Academy in Daliyat al-Karmel in conjunction with the Zionist Council in Israel have together hosted groups of hundreds of evacuees from northern Israel in the major Druze localities of Daliyat al-Karmel, Julis and Kafr Kama. The Zionist Council in Israel’s mission has always worked in peacetime to deepen the peer connection and enhance mutual familiarity between the Jewish and Druze communities: in these trying times, the Covenant of Life between Israel and the Druze community acquires far greater significance. As part of Daliyat al-Karmel’s “Loving Embrace” project, evacuees enjoyed a tour of the town, visiting the market and other major sites. They also visited the Zionist Council in Israel’s “Kerem El” Academy, where they received an in-depth introduction to the Druze community, its culture and robust bond with the Jewish people. The tour included activities for children as well as pastries and culinary delicacies from Druze cuisine.





- ❖ **Embracing Israel's South-Western (Gaza) Border Region** – The Zionist Council in Israel continues to provide recreational leisure breaks for families displaced from their homes in Gaza border region communities and northern Israel. This week's programs included hands-on activities, guest speakers and workshops for children and teenagers, with a talk and workshop by Michaela Ron (the star of "Shakshuka," a teenage show) for evacuees in Herzliya and Be'er Yaakov. Creative workshops and beauty sessions were also organized for adults as well as drummer circles, illustration and caricature workshops and children's shows. A personal enrichment series was also organized in Mitzpeh Ramon for adults, including a presentation focusing on "Economic management in times of crisis."

