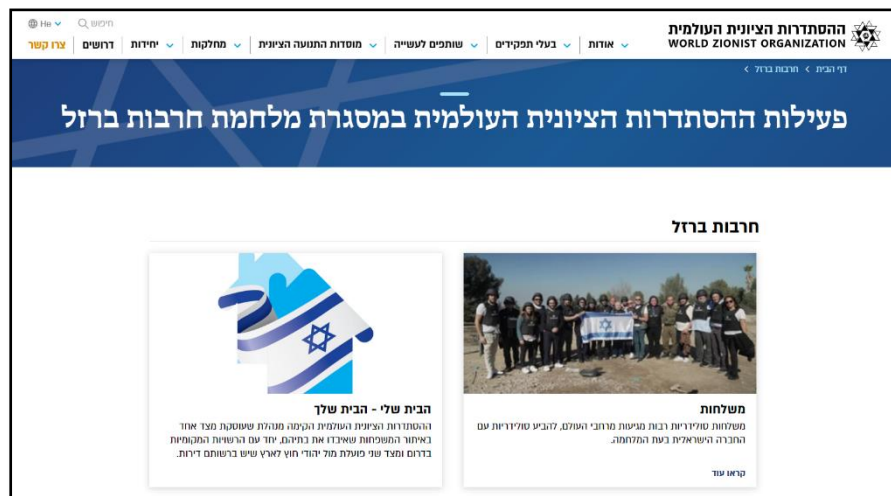




World Zionist Organization Activity Report During Iron Swords War Update for 6-12 December 2023

- ❖ **World Zionist Organization Website** – A new landing page has been created on the World Zionist Organization website to showcase all the Organization’s activity during the “Iron Swords” War. Access the website directly from this link:

[The activity of the World Zionist Organization during the Iron Sword War \(wzo.org.il\)](https://wzo.org.il)



- ❖ **Institutional and Large Donations Center** – The World Zionist Organization’s dedicated support center, the Herzl Education Center team, students from the “*Ruach Nachon*” IDF Preparatory Academy and the “*Shinua Chevrati*” (Social Delivery) Organization joined forces to mobilize an emergency clothing campaign, during which they sorted and packed contributions of new and good quality clothing for communities evacuated from their homes.





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“Illuminating Hope” – This year, B’nai B’rith World Center-Jerusalem hosted survivors of the October 7 atrocities and victims’ families for a special Hanukkah candle lighting celebration. On the first night, they welcomed Ziv Halsband, a tank commander injured while defending local communities against Hamas terrorists on the black Shabbat. On the fifth night, they hosted the family of Matan Lior, who was murdered at the Supernova music festival.



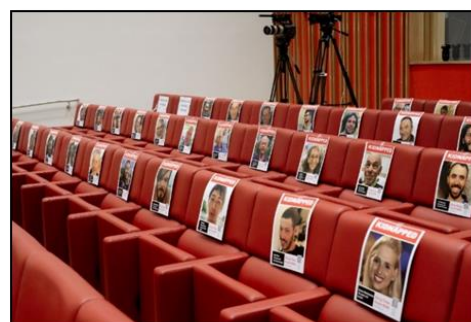
[Illuminating Hope: Lighting Chanukah Candles with Israelis - B’nai B’rith International \(bnaibrith.org\)](https://bnaibrith.org)

❖ **Session at the United Nations Organization European Office in Geneva** – On December 7, the B’nai B’rith International delegation arranged an event at the European Office of the United Nations Organization in Geneva, entitled: “The Ideology Behind October 7: Dehumanization and Hatred of Jews and Israelis.” The aim of the session was to explore the ideology and systemic incitement underpinning recurrent conflict in the Middle East, and the exporting of tensions beyond the region. Its timing was intentionally close to the 75th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).



[Israel and B’nai B’rith to Hold Geneva Event on Violent Hatred of Jews And Israelis - B’nai B’rith International \(bnaibrith.org\)](https://bnaibrith.org)

❖ **Festive Premiere Performance of “Heschel’s Passover Eve,” with donation of proceeds to the redevelopment of Israel’s South-western Gaza border region** – “Heschel’s Passover Eve” premiered in New York, the city where Heschel lived and taught for many years. The one-off performance was arranged by AZM and attended by WZO Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman, as well as the World Zionist Organization Executive’s *Shlich*a (emissary) to North America. All the proceeds have been donated towards the redevelopment of the Gaza border region, in light of the war and the current situation in Israel. Flyers with photos of the hostages were placed on all seats in the hall and the performance was followed by a panel discussion, enabling the community to connect personally and rendering the events more immediate.





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- ❖ **Limmud Spain in Valencia** – A World Zionist Organization representative attended the Limmud Spain conference in Valencia, which brought together the Jewish community in these complicated times. This was the first instance of Limmud convening in Valencia and the conference brought together community members from across the spectrum to engage in Jewish content and acquire in-depth knowledge of the situation in Israel and the Diaspora. The visiting WZO representative, who was hosted by the community, updated participants on current events in Israel and addressed the Jewish community's concerns arising from the war, including the escalating wave of Antisemitism. His lecture covered the war, its psychological impact in Israel and the Diaspora as well as suggesting effective coping mechanisms.



- ❖ **Assistance to Visiting Missions** – The World Zionist Organization is making bullet-proof vests and protective helmets available to fact-finding missions currently visiting Israel on tours of the western Negev communities.
- ❖ **Educational Activity in Argentina** – In the course of the past week, over 200 senior figures in the Argentinian Jewish community have received a booklet produced in partnership with the International Legal Forum (ILF) in Spanish translation. The booklet comprises an FAQ with a synopsis of responses to focal issues in international political discourse, relating to the war and Israel's rights. Some examples are: What is Hamas? Does Israel have the right to self-defense under International Law? Is Israel acting disproportionately? Is Israel permitted to hit civilian targets? Does Israel have the right to cut off power, or supplies of fuel, food and water to the Gaza Strip? (and many more). The booklet may be accessed in Spanish at the following link: [PDFfiller - Spanish INTERNATIONAL LAW AND OPERATION SWORDS OF IRON FAQ.pdf](#)

- ❖ **Tik-Tok Talks** – Since October 7, in conjunction with FOA (Fight Online Antisemitism,) a series of advocacy workshops has been made available on Tik-Tok, in English and other languages. For example, a recent workshop addressed the topic of “*Showing the Israeli side and Fighting Disinformation*”, during which participants acquired skills in monitoring and reporting anti-Israel disinformation, learned how to develop compelling pro-Israel content, and the best ways of amplifying the pro-Israel narrative on social media. The workshop was delivered by Tomer Carmeli, a leading specialist in the creation of viral content. Please find the link to the list of workshops below: [Workshop schedule - FOA \(foantisemitism.org\)](#)





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❖ Activity Programs in North America

- The World Zionist Organization held an Israel Aliyah Fair in New York, which drew an attendance of 800. The program included an advocacy and diplomacy event open to all participants, led by specialists – including former IDF officers and intelligence personnel who introduced the audience to Israel’s military operation, talked about the elevated state of morale prevailing within civilian society, as well as about the heroism of people serving in the IDF, the Israel Police, Fire and Ambulance services.



❖ Activity Programs in Europe

- An online webinar was organized for the French Jewish community on the highly topical subject of “*Rehabilitation of the Israeli Economy after the War.*” The guest speaker was the renowned economist, researcher and journalist, Dr. Jacques Bendelac.
- An online encounter was arranged via Zoom for approximately 80 Jewish doctors from different areas in France on the subject of *Medicine in Israel*, with the participation of Professor Hezi Levi, CEO and Director of Barzilai Hospital, Ashkelon.

❖ Activity Programs in Latin America

- The Spanish journalist Pilar Rahola visited Brazil, where she was interviewed on TV, met with the Jewish community in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, and gave a talk at the Ari synagogue in Rio. She also held an important meeting with the Brazil Women’s Movement. Pilar is a renowned journalist in the Spanish-speaking world, particularly for her defense of human rights and she is a strong supporter of the State of Israel’s right to existence.





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- **Argentina: “Bring Them Home Now” Activities** – Large-scale activities are under way to raise public awareness to the plight of the hostages and the need for their release, and the atrocities of October 7. Protest events have included hanging billboard posters on a construction site with banners reading, *“They were taken alive, we want them back alive”*; demonstrations at different locations in Argentina, calling for the return of the hostages (Buenos Aires, Neuquén, La Plata, Salta, and other cities); multiple interviews with families of the hostages – in the mass media, on TV and in the press. Families of the hostages also met with the President of Argentina and the President-elect, the Argentinian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Argentina’s Ambassador to Israel as well as the Argentina-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Committee. In addition, a dinner was held in support of the families of the hostages, with a reception for the Jewish community in Buenos Aires and Tigre.



- **Families of the hostages’ delegation to Uruguay** – This delegation was organized by the Zionist Federation of Uruguay with the support of the World Zionist Organization. One of the significant highlights of visit was an audience with the President of Uruguay, Luis la Calle Pou. They also met with members of parliament, ministers, prominent figures from the media and press in Uruguay, and held a deeply moving encounter with the Jewish community.





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- ❖ **Recreational Activities for Children: “Dispel the Darkness”** – To celebrate Hanukkah, the Zionist Council in Israel developed craft workshops for evacuee children, with colorful Hanukkah candle-making and helping the children make their own *hannukiyot*, bearing the legend “*We will win through together.*” The activities ran in a number of locations currently hosting displaced residents, providing children with recreational fun. The programming also conveyed an educational message, which is particularly important at Hanukkah in light of current, complicated circumstances – namely, that in times of darkness we remain imbued with hope that there will be light up ahead.



- ❖ **Evacuees Meet Herzl** – The Zionist Council in Israel, in conjunction with the Herzl Center, responded eagerly to the idea of making it possible for evacuees to enjoy refresher days-out, through hands-on tours designed for families. Evacuees from Kiryat Shemonah and Metullah, who were relocated to Jerusalem hotels during the early days of the conflict, were treated to an experiential tour of the Herzl Museum and Mt. Herzl Park, where they had an opportunity to hear and meet the visionary of the State of Israel, Binyamin Zeev (Theodor) Herzl.



- ❖ **Hanukkah with the Druze Community** – As part of its activities in Druze society, the Zionist Council in Israel participated in a very moving Hanukkah candle lighting together with the “*Mehaim Lehaim*” (From Life to Life) non-profit association, which helps the elderly and *Shoah* survivors by providing free produce, food and equipment. The association also sustains a unique connection with the Druze community and Druze families in need. The candle lighting ceremony was dedicated to the memory of two Druze heroes and casualties of this war, Lt. Col. Alim Sa’ad and Lt. Col. Salman Habka, of blessed memory, who both hailed from the village of Januh-Jat in Western Galilee. Sa’ad’s family was present at the ceremony and gave a deeply moving address.





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- ❖ **Embracing Israel's South-West Gaza Border Region** – The Zionist Council in Israel's continues to organize refresher leisure and fun activities for families displaced from their homes and communities in the Gaza border region and northern Israel. This week, programming included drummer circles, creative and caricature workshops. An inflatable jamboree Hanukkah happening was also organized at Kibbutz Sapir for evacuees from the Eshkol Region as well as a huge outdoor Hanukkah fair in Yeruham with stands and a juggling show. Adults were treated to macrame workshops, a show by comedian Yossi Vider and an experiential tour of Kfar Tabor.



- ❖ **WZO and JAFI Employees' Association helps IDF Soldiers** – The World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency for Israel Employees' Association has distributed packages of winter detail to personnel on emergency military call-up duty, as well as to their families or children presently serving on compulsory military service.



- ❖ **The Heroes of October 7 – Hanukkah Stories** – This is a digital publication for English, French, Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Jewish communities, comprising stories in translation about the heroes of the “Iron Swords” War, that have appeared in Jewish news media, Federations and communities in the Diaspora. Its purpose is to spotlight accounts of immense courage in the war during the Hanukkah festival period and to connect Diaspora communities to Israel through values of heroism and renewal. The project is the outcome of a collaboration between the World Zionist Organization and a private initiative by four mothers who decided to tell these stories at an age-appropriate level for children aged 9 upwards. The English flyer and nine selected stories can be downloaded from this link:



[Giborim stories eng \(1\) - updated.pdf](#)



Dear friends,

The first night of Hanukkah marks two months exactly since the horrible massacre of October 7th and a rise of antisemitism like we have not seen since the Holocaust. However, amidst the tragedy a light has also been sparked. Never before has there been such unity amongst our people. At the Diaspora Department of the World Zionist Organization, we are constantly striving to connect Jews all over the world to Israel, connect Israel to Diaspora communities and strengthen the ties that bind us. Today we proclaim to the world that we are one nation, one family and we stand to face the darkness that was brought upon us as one.

As I continue to serve Israel in reserve duty, let's use this holiday of light to dispel the darkness, spread light and be an 'Or lagoyim' - a light unto the nations. Thank you for your support and your connection to Israel.

Please share your candle lighting activities, your hero stories, and acts of kindness through the QR code of our digital album. Hanukkah Sameach!

Nerya Meir

Nerya Meir,
Head of Diaspora department, WZO
Major (res.) in Paratroopers brigade



Join our WZO digital album of light!



Scan the QR and share a picture or video of you explaining what how you filled out your Hanukkah. We would love to hear about the heroes you learned about through this project, an act of kindness you and your family did, or how you are celebrating this Hanukkah of light!

'Dispel the darkness!' spreading the Hanukkah light through heroism

THE HEROES OF OCTOBER 7th

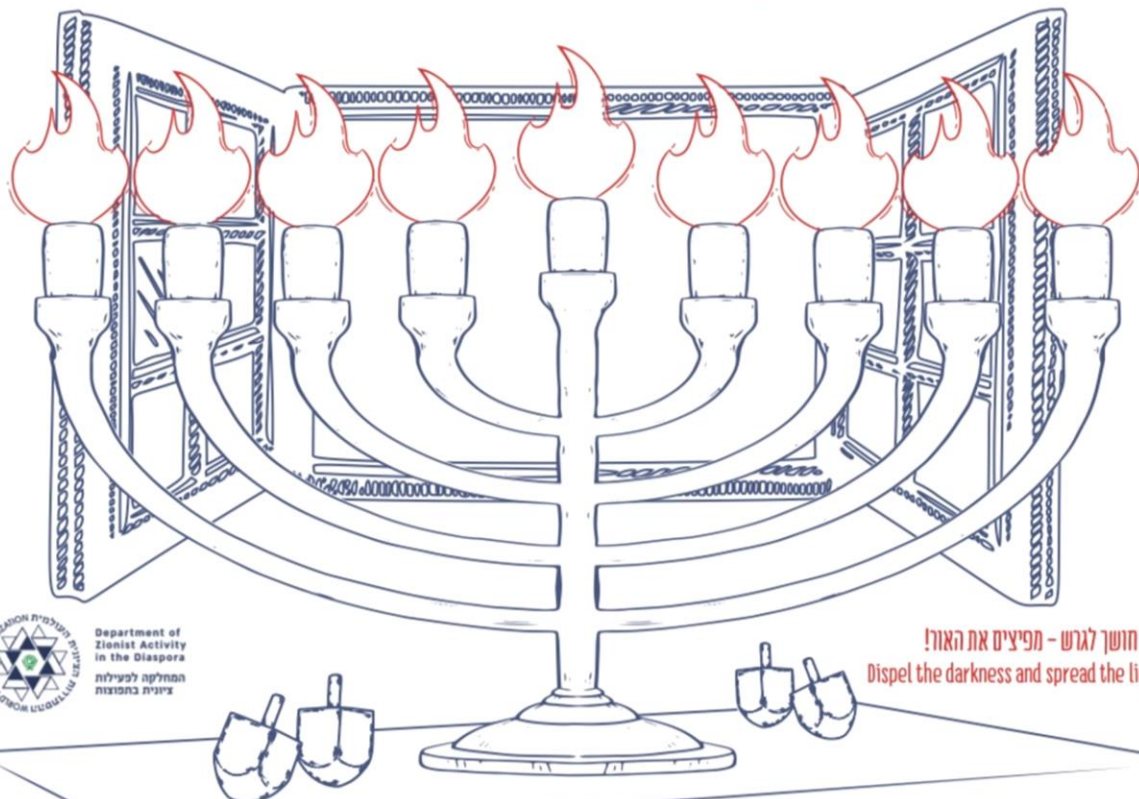
In honor of Hanukkah, we have partnered with an Israeli initiative: "Heroes of October 7th", which highlights some of the brave heroes of the war - both soldiers and civilians - telling their stories in an accessible and age-appropriate manner for kids. By reading these stories, we dispel the darkness of the past two months and highlight the bravery and light of our people.



The QR code leads to a PDF with nine stories we chose from the project that we thought would be most fit for ages 9 and above. We recommend printing the stories out for easier reading. We invite you to read one story as you light each Hanukkah candle. Please make sure that parents or educators read and choose the stories first to determine that the stories are suitable for your kids and family.

Hanukkah Sameach!

Fill out the flames each day with a hero you learned about/ kind act you did on that day



Department of
Zionist Activity
in the Diaspora
התחלקו את האור
תזכורת חגיגה

באנו חושך לגרש - מפיצים את האור!
Dispel the darkness and spread the light!



❖ **“My Home is Your Home” – A Tiny Light: One Story for example** – Jews in Israel and the Diaspora continue their engagement with this project through offers to host evacuee families in their Israeli apartments. We bring one of these moving stories below:

She is: A former woman hostage kidnapped from Kibbutz Nir Oz, recently released from Hamas activity. She is a young *olah* from Mexico and alone in Israel: her request was that her mother, sister and best friend be brought to Israel to support her through the months of her rehabilitation.

He is: A prosperous American Jew who heard about her plight and agreed to offer them the use of his luxury apartment. A small light illuminating the darkness in difficult times.

Happy Hanukkah!

