



Letter to President Obama Regarding UN Resolution on Israel and Settlements

February 3, 2011 – 29 Shvat 5771

The Honorable Barack H. Obama

Dear Mr. President:

The organizations listed below that represent the over 1 million members affiliating with the Conservative Movement in Judaism in the United States, urge your administration and its representatives at the United Nations to veto any resolution introduced with the sole purpose to condemn the State of Israel over the issue of settlement activity in the disputed territories east of the 1948 “Green Line” (the ceasefire line) that were captured by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War.

As UN resolutions 242 and 338 note, it is Israel’s responsibility to withdraw from territories (*not* the territories) taken in 1967. Already the Israeli government has changed policies to limit all building to established communities in the disputed territories and not to initiative building in new areas. However, the depth and extent of withdrawal from the disputed territories to make room for a Palestinian state, is up to the two parties – Israel and the Palestinian representatives – to determine through direct bilateral negotiations. We believe that; we know your administration and those preceding your presidency agree.

As a religious Jewish community, Conservative Jews support Israel as the Jewish state and answer for the legitimate national aspirations of the Jewish people. We look forward to the day when a Palestinian state will be established to answer the legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people. We recognize that just as our father Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, their descendants – the Jews and the Palestinians – both have a claim on their ancestor’s patrimony.

The Palestinian initiative at the United Nations aims to circumvent the obligation for direct bilateral negotiations with Israel. It continues President Abbas’ policy to avoid, rather than engage with, Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu froze such settlement activity for a number of months last year in a good faith effort to restart the peace negotiations. Sadly, the Palestinian Authority decided not to re-engage and continues not to re-engage. American support for a UN condemnation of Israel at this time would only reward the Palestinians for their refusal to negotiate directly with Israel and would do nothing to promote the peace process or move that process forward.

Respectfully yours,

Cantors Assembly – *Hazzan David Propis, President & Hazzan Stephen J. Stein, Executive Vice President*

Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs – *Mark L. Berlin, President & Rabbi Charles Simon, Executive Director*

Jewish Educators Assembly – *Hedda S. Morton, President & Edward Edelstein, Executive Director*

MERCAZ Olami – *Dr. Stephen S. Wolnek, President & Rabbi Tzvi Graetz, Executive Director*

MERCAZ USA – *Janet Tobin, President & Rabbi Robert R. Golub, Executive Director*

North American Association of Synagogue Executives (NAASE) – *Gilbert Kleiner, President & Harry Hauser, Executive Director*

Rabbinical Assembly – *Rabbi Gilah Dror, President & Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, Executive Vice President*

Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies – *Saul Sanders, Chairman & Rabbi David Golinkin, President*

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – *Richard Skolnik, President & Rabbi Steven Wernick, CEO and Executive Vice President*

Women’s League for Conservative Judaism – *Rita Wertlieb, President & Sarrae G. Crane, Executive Director*