Greetings to all our friends!

On Monday the Chairman of the Jewish Agency Isaac 'Bougie' Herzog will present a summary of the agency's activities to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. A convention on the control of Israeli armament sales led by MK's Hilik Bar (Zionist Union) and Tamar Zandberg (Meretz) will also be held on Monday with male and female rabbis from all denominations in attendance. The Knesset plenum will meet on Wednesday with the participation of the Prime Minister, to discuss the situation of the LGBT community, after the forty signatures of MK's needed to set this in motion were received. On Sunday the Ministerial Committee will discuss a number of bills on religion and state (more details follow).

Yesterday, a gunman opened fire at Tree of Life Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. MK Yael Cohen Paran: “To those who claim that members of the Conservative movement are not Jewish enough, here is harrowing proof of their Judaism, written this time in blood.” MK Elazar
Stern: “I call upon the Prime Minister to approve the Western Wall agreement this very morning as a statement of solidarity in these difficult times.”

On Saturday, October 27th, 2018, a gunman opened fire at Tree of Life Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, during the Shabbat morning prayer service. According to reports, the shooter barricaded himself in the synagogue after murdering eleven people and wounding several others.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud): “I am heartbroken and disturbed by the murderous attack on the synagogue in Pittsburgh. The entire people of Israel mourns with the families of the fallen. We stand with the Jewish community of Pittsburgh, and we stand with the American people against this brutal act of anti-Semitism. We all pray for the quick recovery of the wounded.”

Minister of Education and Diaspora Affairs MK Naftali Bennett (Jewish Home): “I will fly tonight to Pittsburgh, as Minister of Diaspora Affairs, in order to support our Jewish sisters and brothers in their hardest of moments. When Jews are murdered in Pittsburgh, those in Israel are in pain, for all Jews are responsible for one another. The State of Israel mourns and aches from this horrific murder. May the memory of the murdered be blessed.”

Opposition Leader MK Tzipi Livni (Zionist Union): “When we feel the pain of our brethren in Pittsburgh, we must remember that we are all one family. Jews from all streams. The shooter was not concerned by whether they were Orthodox, Reform, or Conservative, and we must open our arms to them here in Israel, as well.”

MK Yael Cohen Paran (Zionist Union): “The news of the terrible event in the United States reached me as I was participating in a conference of the Conservative movement in London. We were all horrified. It seems that this is the worst attack in the history of the Jewish community in the United States. As a member of the Masorti (Conservative) movement as as one in consistent contact with Jews outside of Israel, my heart and prayers are with the families of the murdered, the wounded,
and with the Jewish community of the United States. Tree of Life Congregation, where the massacre took place, is one of the largest Conservative synagogues in the United States. I am simply aghast and in pain. I am sorry if this is a difficult time to say this, but to those who claim that members of the Conservative movement are not Jewish enough, here is harrowing proof of their Judaism, written this time in blood.”

MK Elazar stern (Yesh Atid): “I would like to remind us all that this horrible murderer did not distinguish between Conservative, Orthodox, and Reform Jews. A Jew is a Jew is a Jew, not only in death but also in life, and we should remember this as we approach the challenges ahead of us. I call upon the Prime Minister to approve the Western Wall agreement this very morning as a statement of solidarity in these difficult times.”

Jewish Pluralism Watch / JPWatch joins in the sorrow of the Tree of Life community.

We invite you to come to the Knesset and participate in the discussion. Write us and we will assist you in coordinating your visit. Email us at: JPW@masorti.org.il
The Ministerial Committee for Legislation

The Penal Bill (Amendment - gender-based defacing of posters) 2018 - introduced by MK Yulia Malinovsky and others – continuation of discussion

This bill seeks to impose a more severe sentence of one year in prison for defacement of posters when the motivation is gender-based, as this runs counter to the fundamental egalitarian and democratic principles of the State of Israel. Read more on the JPW website

Civil Marriage in Israel Bill - introduced by MK Shelly Yachimovitch (Zionist Union) and others, 2015

This bill seeks to enable people in Israel to marry in accordance with their faith and their conscience. Read more on the JPW website

Civil Union Bill - introduced by Tzipi Livni, 2018

The proposed bill would create a civil alternative to religious marriage for couples who cannot or do not wish to marry under religious law, which would enable them to establish a family unit with the same rights as those of married couples, without affecting the standing of religious marriage and divorce. The "civil union" for all intents and purposes will be a legal marriage. Read more on the JPW website

Transferring Embryos between Lesbian Partners – introduced by MK Michal Biran and others, 2018

MK Michal Biran's bill seeks to allow lesbian couples to transfer one or more fertilized eggs from one partner to the other and to determine that both partners are accorded the status of mother. Read more
Population Registry Law (Amendment – registering an additional parent), 2017 – introduced by MK Merav Michaeli and others

MK Merav Michaeli's (Zionist Union) bill seeks to enable a partner who is not the biological parent of a child to register as one of the parents directly after the birth, so that children conceived from sperm donations will have the same rights as naturally-conceived children. [Read more on the JPW website](https://messages.responder.co.il/3490191/288244783/c3fddac147e891f0dc6f35f0d3292572/?)

Agreements to Carry a Fetus (Approval of Agreement and the Status of the Infant) (Amendment – defining intended parents and implementing the agreement abroad) 2017 – introduced by MK Itzik Shmuli

MK Itzik Shmuli's (Zionist Union) bill seeks to expand eligibility for surrogacy in a non-discriminatory and equitable way, to widen the circle of surrogate mothers, to regulate access to surrogacy abroad through the exclusive mediation of agencies approved by the Ministers of Health and Justice, and the establishment of an advisory committee to counsel ministers in the selection of these agencies. [Read more on the JPW website](https://messages.responder.co.il/3490191/288244783/c3fddac147e891f0dc6f35f0d3292572/?)

THE KNESSET COMMITTEES

Monday, October 29, 2018

At 9:30

Committee for Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs

Chairman of the Jewish Agency Isaac Herzog will present a summary of the activities of the agency and its plans for the future.

[View the JPW's Knesset schedule (in Hebrew)](https://messages.responder.co.il/3490191/288244783/c3fddac147e891f0dc6f35f0d3292572/?)

UPDATES FROM THE SUMMER RECESS

A selection of comments, bills, votes and committee discussions from the summer recess:

- **The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee** met to discuss issues
relating to the Jewishness of children born from sperm donations. **MK Michal Rozin**, in response to a news item that had appeared on an internet news channel of a rabbi in the Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court who had refused a marriage license to the son of a lesbian couple citing his unwillingness to offer any assistance to "new families," said: "One senses that there are no clear criteria and that decisions unrelated to the halacha and to the authority of the Rabbinate are being arbitrarily taken." Read more

Ten new members of the Chief Rabbinate Council swore allegiance to the State of Israel at the President’s Residence. Addressing the new members, **Minister of the Interior Arye Dery** said: "Your job is to stand guard, to express your opinions, and this will give us the strength to fight in the Knesset and in the government for the things that are important." Read more

**SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF JFNA**

Last week the annual gathering of the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America took place in Tel Aviv with the Prime Minister and the President in attendance as well as other MK's and ministers.

Regarding the Western Wall agreement the Prime Minister said: "I worked for two years on a compromise that would refurbish the place where people have been praying for the past twenty years and make it accessible to all. **I brought recommendations to the government with explanatory notes that implied indirect recognition of the Conservative and Reform streams and these were immediately challenged by the ultra-Orthodox stream.** Instead of cancelling the agreement – I said that we would simply suspend it. **I believe that the work on the plaza will be completed so that it will be accessible to all.** Israel is the home of all the Jews."
The Prime Minister added that his principal concern is for Diaspora Jewry, saying: "I am more concerned about Diaspora Jewry's loss of identity than about the issues of conversion or the Wall. Israel is and will remain the home of all the Jews and I don't care if they are Orthodox, Reform, secular or even non-believers. **Israel is the home of all the Jews. Period.**"

MK Yuli Edelstein (Likud), Speaker of the Knesset, addressing the participants of the conference, said: "We are one family, and I am proud of that. **I have said many times in the past and I will say it again – we must make greater efforts to implement the Kotel Wall Agreement which would make our holiest sites a symbol of true Jewish unity.** I hope that your experience here will inspire and energize you to invest in our common future." Read more on the JPW website
Rav Messer, email marketing and landing pages