



Dozens of Israeli Leaders Call to Strengthen Israel's Relationship with US Jewry

Ruderman Family Foundation Campaign Urges Increased Solidarity During COVID-19 Crisis

A Nobel Laureate, beauty queen, celebrity chef and Paralympic medalist have joined over 100 influential Israelis in highlighting the importance of Israel's relationship with Diaspora Jewry and the American Jewish community in particular. The call comes at a time when Jewish communities are facing unprecedented challenges resulting from the COVID-19 crisis.

According to [the Declaration](#), which was initiated by the Ruderman Family Foundation, the signatories proclaim their "commitment to strengthening the relationship, understanding and sense of shared responsibility between Israel, the American Jewish community, and all world Jewry."

Among those who signed the Declaration: Eran Zehavi, Almog Cohen, and Itay Shechter from Israel's national soccer team; Israel Prize winners Miriam Peretz and Maj.-Gen. (res.) Doron Almog; singer Ester Rada; actors Guri Alfi and Moran Atias; business leaders Jonathan Medved, Maxine Fassberg and Avner Stepak; 2013's Miss Israel, Titi Aynaw; as well as presidents of universities, heads of social organizations and Members of Knesset across the political spectrum. These influential figures stated their dedication "to work[ing] for unity and a strong relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora, to fulfil the social and cultural goals of the Jewish People – for its sake, and for the benefit of the entire world."

While the decision to push the campaign at this time was influenced by the Coronavirus' impact on Israel and the Jewish community, the initiative was born after an event hosted by President Reuven Rivlin and the Ruderman Family Foundation last February which was dedicated to broadening the discourse between Israel and the American Jewish community.

"We must expand the scope of this conversation and make it relevant to everyone," Shira Ruderman, Director of the Ruderman Family Foundation said during the event. President Rivlin added that Israel's relationship with the Jewish world "exists in all fields of life: literature and philosophy, in science and research, in Tikkun Olam, in business and philanthropy."

Echoing that sentiment was former MK and Professor Manuel Trajtenberg who said, "Every Israeli needs to know his country is not only an entity for those living in it, but a place for the entire Jewish People."

Former Vice President of the Intel Cooperation, Maxine Fassberg, also stated that the "partnership between the State of Israel and world Jewry confirms the mutual responsibility for ensuring the endurance of communities in Israel and abroad."

Moran Samuel, a world champion and Paralympic medalist explained why she supported the initiative: "We are one People. Our connection to the American Jewish community is fundamental." Olympic medalist Arik Zeevi agreed, adding, that when he wore his uniform



emblazoned with the Star of David at major competitions, he felt he was not "only representing Israel, but all the Jews of the world."

"For too long conversations between Israel and the Diaspora, especially the American Jewish community, have been confined to a relatively small group," Shira Ruderman said. "This has led many in the public to think the relationship is narrow, esoteric, and even negligible. The fact that actors, business leaders, athletes, and university presidents decided to endorse this message is a much-needed change. To make this topic relevant, we must bring new people into the discussion, diversify the topics on the agenda and highlight what unites us, not what divides us."