



Supporting Israel



Holocaust Martyr's and Heroes' Remembrance Day ceremony at Martyrs' Forest "Scroll of Fire" Plaza in Jerusalem

Our World Center in Jerusalem keeps us well connected to events and leaders in Israel. From the top echelons of the Knesset, the World Center has the contacts needed for this work.

Our World Center in Israel continues to put on world class programming. We held the 13th consecutive Holocaust commemoration ceremony on Holocaust Martyr's and Heroes' Remembrance Day in April. This is the only event dedicated to honoring Jews who rescued fellow Jews during the Holocaust. With about 1,000 people attending this year, this program fills a unique gap in Holocaust remembrance. This year's event memorialized Rabbi Moshe Shimon Pessach (1869-1955), an outstanding rabbinic and communal figure who served for 63 years as rabbi of Volos, and, later in life as chief rabbi of Greece. Pessach initiated and orchestrated his community's



Rabbi Moshe Shimon Pessach

rescue during the German occupation, efforts that led to the survival of 74 percent of the Volos Jews.

As our link with Israel, the World Center closely monitors how Israel sees the Diaspora. This year, we were honored to have Alan Dershowitz as our keynote speaker when we presented our annual award for journalism recognizing excellence in reporting on the Diaspora. This award is viewed by Israeli media as an important acknowledgment of their work; the competition is fierce.

A new and very exciting program this year allowed Israel to come to the United States. The World Center arranged live internet tours of important sites in Israel. Participants in B'nai B'rith senior housing, as well as B'nai B'rith leaders took out their laptops and iPads to take a live tour of such places as the Old City of Jerusalem, Mount Herzl national cemetery and Mount Zion. "Israel from your living room" was a great success.

In June, World Center leadership traveled to the Druze village of Yanuh-Jat in the upper Galilee to present the first distribution of this year's B'nai B'rith Edith "Pat" Wolfson Endowment's annual donation to Israeli orphans to Laren Sayif. Sayif is the infant daughter of Israeli police officer Sgt. Zidan Sayif, who was killed in November 2014 as he confronted two Palestinian terrorists who were engaged in a gruesome attack on the Kehilat B'nai Torah synagogue. Four rabbis were murdered in the attack, leaving 24 children without fathers, and eight other worshipers were wounded, four of them seriously. Sayif and another officer managed to kill the two terrorists, but Sayif was killed in the exchange of fire. A second distribution from the fund will be made to the five children of Rabbi Aryeh Kupinsky, one of the four victims in the attack.

The B'nai B'rith Israel Emergency Fund was also used to make some of the allocations.

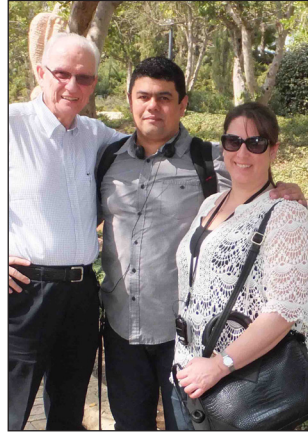
The annual donation has been presented over the past 11 years by the World Center to children who have lost one or two parents to Palestinian terrorism or war.



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Ariel Britos with the Sodre National Youth Orchestra in Israel



B'nai B'rith's Eduardo with Sodre National Youth Orchestra Conductor Ariel Britos in Israel

In October, the World Center hosted the latest winner of B'nai B'rith Uruguay's "Fraternidad Award," the noted conductor Maestro Ariel Britos, founder of the System of Youth and Children Orchestras of Uruguay and conductor of the Sodre Youth Orchestra. The intensive visit includes professional encounters in Israel's top music schools, centers and orchestras and extensive touring across the country. This outreach brings Israel to life to cultural leaders who would not ordinarily have a chance to visit the Jewish State.

Jerusalem Day-Canada

B'nai B'rith Canada celebrated its first Jerusalem Day or Yom Yerushalayim across the country with events in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg. Jerusalem Day is an Israeli holiday commemorating the reunification of Jerusalem and the ability for Jews to once again pray at the Kotel.

Defending Israel's Security

B'nai B'rith is a staunch advocate for Israel in Washington, D.C. and in foreign capitals. We have actively supported a series of legislative initiatives on Capitol Hill condemning anti-Israel hatred; backing Israel's right to defend itself; and opposing Iran's nuclear weapons program and sponsorship of terrorism. In direct meetings and official letters, we have called on nations around the world to remain vigilant against Iran's nuclear ambitions, as the need to monitor the regime's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action becomes increasingly apparent.



Building Understanding About Israel

B'nai B'rith organized and led a delegation of members of the European Parliament on a week-long study tour of Israel. The aim was to expose emerging political leaders in Europe to Israeli society and public policy, in an effort to foster greater understanding of the Jewish state among influential Europeans. The mission included meetings with Israeli government and military officials and other prominent figures, as well as visits to sites of historical and cultural importance.



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Combating Anti-Semitism



It has been deeply unsettling to see anti-Semitism growing around the world. Through regular exchanges with the U.S. State Department and foreign governments, along with our cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Organization of American States, we fight to ensure anti-Semitism is spotlighted and recognized as a significant issue. B'nai B'rith participated this year in international conferences on anti-Semitism in Belgium, Poland and Israel. In Brussels, the organization played a key role in the formation of a European Parliament working group on anti-Semitism. In Washington, D.C. B'nai B'rith advocated for S. Res. 87, a U.S. Senate resolution condemning anti-Semitism in Europe and encouraging greater cooperation with governments and international organizations to combat the problem.