

To: Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel

Members of the Knesset

July 27, 2018

Dear Mr. Prime Minister and members of the Knesset,

Public Statement

We – writers, screenwriters, playwrights, academic scholars and members of Israel's arts and letters community – would like to express to you our utmost shock and dismay, in light of the recent laws passed by the Israeli Knesset under your leadership, first and foremost the Nation-State Law and the Surrogacy Law.

According to a law recently passed by the Knesset and entitled “Israel: The Nation State of the Jewish People”, Israel is now defined as a nation-state for Jews **only**. This is a Basic Law, with quasi-constitutional status, that explicitly allows racial and religious discrimination, rescinds the status of Arabic as an official language alongside Hebrew, does not mention democracy as the basis of the regime, and does not mention equality as a core value. As such, this Basic Law is undemocratic and runs counter to the definition of the State of Israel as a democratic state; moreover, it contradicts the Declaration of Independence, based on which Israel was founded. These are two things no Knesset has a right to do.

The Knesset also amended the Surrogacy Law, when it extended the list of people who are eligible to receive the services of a surrogate child-bearer, to include single women who have a medical condition preventing them from having a child, but excluded single men and gay couples.

Those two laws exclude Christian and Muslim Arabs (including Bedouin), Druze and Circassians, and violate the LGBTQ community's right for parenthood. They are part of a long list of actions by the various governments of the State of Israel that you have headed, from 1996 to 1999 and from 2009 to this day, and have unjustly penalized the most excluded and disadvantaged sectors in both Jewish and Israeli society, including Reform and Conservative Judaism, the Arab

(including Bedouin), Druze and Circassian minorities, the sick and elderly, Holocaust survivors and differently-abled people, single women, Ethiopian Jews and many more.

During your years in office, you and those governments have persistently eroded the foundations of our Jewish-democratic country. You have damaged the relations between Israel and United States Jewry; you have sentenced huge populations to continued poverty and hardship; and you have knowingly and purposely damaged Israel's education system, public diplomacy, culture and economy, defense and welfare.

By doing so, you have done severe harm to Israeli society. But the most severe damage has affected the values of equality and mutual responsibility, on which Israel's society is based and from which it draws its strength.

We demand that you immediately repeal the Nation-State Law, which has created a rift between Israeli society and United States Jewry; discriminates against Arabs (including Bedouin), Druze and Circassians; and damages the coexistence of Israel's Jewish majority with its minorities. Moreover, we demand your immediate response to the call for equality on behalf of the members of the LGBTQ community. It is unthinkable for the State of Israel to stand between a person and that person's natural desire to become a parent and to establish a family.

Felonies and misdemeanors properly defined as such by law fall under the jurisdiction of a court. On the other hand, sins that are infamously written into the law itself by the elected lawmakers – sins that undermine the core of the Jewish people's existence and its homeland – must be judged by intellectuals and by the court of history.

Please stop your government and coalition members from scourging minorities that create the colorful mosaic that is Israeli society and help to guarantee its existence. Do it now!

In witness whereof we have affixed our signatures (in alphabetical order):

Akad	Orna
Alkalay-Gut	Prof. Karen
Arad	Roy Chicky
Ariel	Dr. Nana
Assouline	Tamir
Atzmon	Yaniv
Azoulay-Hasfari	Hanna
Baikin-O'hayon	Tom
Bar	Alon
Barel	Navit
Barir	Idan
Baskin	Sivan
Baumgarten	Daniel
Ben-Chaim	Yair
Ben-Dor	Yocheved
Ben-Dov	Prof. Nitza
Ben-Moshe	Yakir

Ben-Yair	Sigal
Bernheimer	Avner
Brown-Elkeles	Tami
Castel-Bloom	Orly
Chen	Roy
Citron	Prof. Atay
Cohen	Eliaz
Cohen-Assif	Shlomit
Daskal	Riki
Dayan	Yael
Dovrat	Yair
Eitan	Zohar
Elharar	Regev
Elior	Prof. Rachel
Eliya-Cohen	Iris
Eliyahu	Eli
Feigenbaum	Mitchell

G. Haim	Esti
G. Peleg	Dana
Galil	Lilach
Galili	Mordechai
Gaon Rosenblum	Orna
Geffen	Adiva
Geldman	Mordechai
Ginosar	Varda
Gluzman	Prof. Michael
Goldring	Noga
Granot	Lior
Grossman	David
Grossman	Hagit
Haski	Shlomi
Hass	Amira
Hatzor	Ilan

Herzog	Omri
Hess	Dr. Tamar
Hilu	Alon
Hirschfeld	Prof. Ariel
Holzberg	Avshalom
Horowitz	Revital
Itamar	Yoav
Kahansky Eshel	Inbal
Karp Rozenfeld	Tamar
Kartun-Blum	Prof. Ruth
Katz	Yoav
Katzir	Judith
Kaynar Kissinger	Prof. Gad
Keret	Etgar
Kimchi	Avichai
Kun	Uriel

Lazar	Hadara
Lerner	Motti
Lev Adler	Anat
Liebrecht	Savyon
Medini	Yael
Meiri	Dr. Gilad
Meshulam Levy	Meirav
Milk	Loren
Milstein	Avishai
Mishol	Agi
Mishori	Dr. Efrat
Mittelpunkt	Hillel
Moskovitz-Weiss	Ela
Nagid	Dr. Chayim
Naveh	Prof. Hannah
Netzer	Ruth

Nir	Zvika
Nissim	Meital
Nitzán	Tal
Oz	Amos
Oz	Daniel
Oz	Gallia
Oz-Salzberger	Prof. Fania
Peled	Oded
Peretz-Schwartz	Galit
Perry	Prof. Menachem
Pessach	Chaim
Rattok	Prof. Lily
Ratzabi	Prof. Shalom
Regner	Agi
Rogel	Mayan
Ron	Prof. Moshe

Ronen	Dr. Diti
Rotbart	Oz
Schwartz	Prof. Yigal
Shachar	Yudit
Shalita	Rachel
Sharoor	Tzipi
Shchori	Daphna
Shchori	Idit
Sheinfeld	Ilan
Shemesh	Edna
Shir	Smadar
Shmueloff	Matti
Shpin-Gross	Varda
Someck	Ronny
Sucari	Yossi
Tevet Dayan	Maya

Tomer	Eli
Tuval	Nira
Tzelgov	Eran
Vig	Shoshana
Waxman	Yossi
Weichert	Prof. Rafi
Weisman	Dorit
Weiss	Prof. Meira
Weiss	Tali
Wolkstein	Dr. Oded
Yavin	Jonathan
Yehoshua	A.B.
Yeshurun	Halit
Yonatan	Ziv
Zeffren	Ilana
Zilberman	Dr. Dorit