

Progressive Israel Network Launched

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Partners for Progressive Israel and nine other Organizations Launch New Progressive Israel Network

Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, Habonim Dror North America, Hashomer Hatzair, The Jewish Labor Committee, J Street, The New Israel Fund, Partners for Progressive Israel, Reconstructing Judaism, and T'ruah Join Together To Support Progressive Vision For Israel

Today, ten leading organizations representing Americans who are committed to pursuing democracy, equality and peace in Israel announced the launch of the Progressive Israel Network. The new coalition will provide a strong, unified voice in support of its members' common goals: democracy and equal rights, religious freedom and pluralism, and a two-state solution that would secure a peaceful future for Israel and end the 52-year-long occupation.

The Network will weigh in on the significant challenges that face Israel and the US-Israel relationship. It will coordinate campaigns designed to mobilize the majority of American Jews who share its progressive values and goals, support the work of Israeli progressives, and urge the US government to adopt policies that further Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Network will fight against US and Israeli policies that promote annexation, entrench occupation and undermine liberal democracy in Israel.

With Israel heading into another round of contentious elections and the Trump administration advancing a dangerous so-called peace initiative in the region, the Network will cooperate closely to defend the core principles of democracy and diplomacy. The Network will also run a joint list for the upcoming elections to the 38th World Zionist Congress, because the time has come for our institutions to reflect our values.

The network's founding members are Ameinu, Americans for Peace Now, Habonim Dror North America, Hashomer Hatzair, The Jewish Labor Committee, J Street, The New Israel Fund, Partners for Progressive Israel, Reconstructing Judaism, and T'ruah. The organizations have chosen this moment to launch because of the extreme peril that far-right leaders and parties pose to the fundamental values on which the State of Israel was founded and that American Jews hold most dear.

In its Statement of Principles, the Network writes, "Our values and

commitments make us proudly progressive and proudly pro-Israel and speak for the majority of Jews around the world.” These values are deeply rooted in the spirit of the Israeli Declaration of Independence, which enshrines the Israeli government’s sacred duty to provide “complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants.”

The full Statement of Principles is below.

This group of organizations has worked together for a number of years on an ad hoc basis. Some of its joint work includes a [post-election message to President Donald Trump](#) demanding that he reject anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination; a [letter denouncing Israel’s Nation State Law](#) sent to twelve members of the Israeli opposition; a [pledge](#) for American Jews to ask Knesset members who voted for this discriminatory and undemocratic law *why* they voted for it; and a [letter to the American Jewish community](#) affirming that the racist Kahanist party does not belong in Knesset and asking other Jewish community leaders to do the same.

Founding members of the Progressive Israel Network released the following statements:

Kenneth Bob, President of Ameinu: “Ameinu is proud and excited to be a founding member of the Progressive Israel Network. As the current policies of both the Israeli and the US administrations diminish the possibility of Israel and the Palestinians reaching a mutually agreeable and durable solution to the conflict, it is vital for progressive, pro-Israel organizations to band together to amplify our voices in support of peace and co-existence. As our organizations represent the viewpoint of the majority of American Jews, it is time for our voices to be heard.”

Aviva Meyer, Acting CEO of Americans for Peace Now: “A unified American Jewish voice that stands for a progressive, democratic, peace-seeking Israel, is crucial, both for our US activists and for the Israeli supporters of our sister-organization, the Israeli peace movement Peace Now.”

Oren Zukierkorn, Secretary General of Hashomer Hatzair World Movement: “Hashomer Hatzair is proud to be adding its voice to this network of progressive communities. We are excited to work with this incredible group of partners to build a strong and courageous movement for a just peace and a bright future for Israel and all those who care for it.”

Eitan Goldstein, Director of Habonim Dror North America: “In accordance with Habonim Dror’s longstanding commitment to upbuilding the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic society at peace with its neighbors, we see the Progressive Israel Network as a significant development in making it more possible to achieve these aims. We look forward to working alongside our partners in the Network, to amplify our efforts and those of our Israeli partners, and to call upon the American Jewish public, young and old, to join us in our ongoing work to pave a better path for Israel and all of its citizens.”

Jeremy Ben-Ami, President of J Street: “At a time when the far-right agenda

of Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Trump and their backers is imperiling Israel's future and undermining its democracy, it's absolutely vital that pro-Israel progressives stand together in defense of our shared vision and values. I'm deeply excited for this new network to help coordinate and amplify the work of organizations that are promoting peace, fighting occupation and supporting our progressive Israeli partners."

Arieh Lebowitz, Executive Director of the Jewish Labor Committee: "When progressive, liberal, open and democratic forces within the State of Israel are under attack, it's crucial for those of us who are struggling to defend a progressive, decent and caring society in the U.S. to support our sisters and brothers who live and work within Israel. Today, the JLC joins with our colleagues in the Progressive Israel Network in affirming that *we're all in this together*. To our counterparts within the State of Israel – and there are many – we say *'you're in there for us, and we're out here for you.'* Isn't that the essence of solidarity, especially in the troubled days?"

Daniel Sokatch, CEO of the New Israel Fund: "Progressive values – that everyone should have an equal say in a democracy, that all people deserve equality – are mainstream, majority values among those of us who care about Israel. Yet policies in the U.S. and in Israel are now being driven by narrow-minded politicians and supremacist ideologues who are fundamentally opposed to a shared and peaceful future for all Israeli and Palestinian people. I am honored to help launch the Progressive Israel Network, which will build connections between progressive supporters of Israel in a political environment that so often serves to divide us from each other and from our progressive Israeli colleagues who share our vision of a future free of occupation and with democracy and equality for all."

Paul Scham, President of Partners for Progressive Israel: "Partners for Progressive Israel is very pleased that progressive American Jewish groups are now aligning themselves in the Progressive Israel Network so as to pool our efforts for the common purposes towards which we have struggled for so long: a peaceful end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on a Palestinian state next to Israel as well as equality, civil rights, and religious pluralism for all Israel's citizens. We look forward to working with our partners in the Network towards these goals."

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, President of Reconstructing Judaism: "Beginning with Mordecai Kaplan's writings and teachings, Reconstructionists have long dedicated themselves to a Zionism of ethical nationhood and to a vision of Israel where multiple expressions of religious, cultural and civic life flourish. The increasing dominance of extremist religious and nationalist ideologies in Israeli society threaten the dream of a Jewish and democratic Israel like never before. We look forward to adding our voices to those of the other worthy organizations in this coalition."

Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Executive Director of T'ruah: "At this critical juncture it's essential that our organizations come together to bring a more powerful moral voice and the strength of our collective networks to standing up for the human rights of both Israelis and Palestinians, and to recommitting to the long path toward peace, one that ensures the self-determination of both

people. We are unified in our refusal to concede to those in our communities who are pushing a far-right agenda that entrenches occupation and threatens Israeli democracy, and that runs counter to the vision and values of the vast majority of American Jews.”

Principles of the Progressive Israel Network

- Grounded in our Jewish and democratic values, the Progressive Israel Network calls to action all those who are committed to Israel’s future as the national homeland of the Jewish people and as a democracy that lives in peace and security with its neighbors.
- We are inspired by Israel’s Declaration of Independence – establishing a state “based on freedom, justice, and peace,” that ensures “complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race, or sex.”
- We are alarmed by the threats to that vision from the increasingly extreme actions, policies, and ideology of the Israeli far-right with cover provided by its supporters in the Diaspora.
- Our commitment is to peace for Israel and its neighbors – through a two-state solution to the long and destructive conflict with the Palestinians and an end to the occupation and the expansion of settlements.
- Our commitment is to Israel’s security – understanding the many and real security threats Israel faces and that Israel does not bear sole responsibility for its conflict with the Palestinians or other regional powers.
- Our commitment is to democracy and the rule of law – believing that all citizens of Israel must be treated equally, and their civil and human rights protected.
- Our commitment is to religious pluralism – and the belief that all forms of Jewish practice deserve equal protection and recognition in the state of the Jewish people.
- Our values and our commitments make us proudly progressive and proudly pro-Israel and speak for the majority of Jews around the world.
- We call on Jews who share our values to join us as we work to shape opinion, policy and discourse.
- Together, let’s ensure that the Israel we leave to future generations best reflects the values and traditions we have inherited from those who’ve come before.

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**Progressive
Israel Network**

Ameinu • Americans for Peace Now • Habonim Dror North America • Hashomer Hatzair
J Street • Jewish Labor Committee • New Israel Fund • Partners for Progressive Israel
Reconstructing Judaism • T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights