



Advocacy Update

Sent August 3, 2011

Israel: Important News

The really hot news from Israel this week covered the tens of thousands of demonstrators going out to the streets of Tel Aviv and other Israeli communities on Saturday night to call for affordable housing, fair prices for food and gas, and, indeed, to call for social justice. This massive nationwide protest followed almost three weeks of smaller protests in the form of setting up tent cities in communities around Israel.

For information and insight on the protests from the perspective of leaders of the Reform/Progressive Movement in Israel, read their reports, which follow:

- Resa Davids, a WRJ board member, and Rabbi Stanley Davids, a former president of ARZA, have prepared, “More a Blog than a Michtav” (Michtav can be loosely translated as “letter”), a comprehensive and passionate historical and regional context for their analysis of the protests. Though deeply serious, it is laced with wry humor.
- Rabbi Meir Azari of Beit Daniel in Israel, focuses on Tel Aviv and some of the individuals from his congregation participating in the protests. He closes with “Let us all hope and pray that the society that will be built will be, as Herzl wrote, an *Altneuland*.” (Altneuland is the title of a utopian novel by Herzl, which is translated as Old New Land.)
- Anat Hoffman, director of the Israel Religious Action Center, and Rabbi Gilad Kariv, director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism devoted this week’s issue of *The Pluralist* to a [discussion of the protests from a social policy perspective](#).

“More Blog Than a Michtag” refers to the “Knesset’s recent willingness to . . . put in place drastic limitations on the free speech of individuals and organizations believed to be ‘dangerous’ to the state.” To learn more about the bill dealing with boycotts and boycotters and the response of URJ, ARZA, and IMPJ leaders indicating disagreement with it, read their [joint press release](#) on the URJ website.

Israel: Important Action

We have just received two important action items from ARZA on which you may well want to take action.

- Gilad Shalit’s 25th Birthday is August 28th. After August 8th, people will be finalizing and delivering all of the messages to Gilad via the United Nations. The messages will be delivered, on paper, by his birthday.

Sign the ARZA petition “Urging the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to return to Direct Negotiations.” You can also download the printable version to collect signatures in your community and send them to ARZA, at 633 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10017.

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home