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HE Ambassador Zvi Heifetz
Embassy of Israel
2 Palace Green
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Dear Ambassador Heifetz

I am writing to express the very strong feelings of our membership - and the community at large - over the deteriorating treatment of religious Jews in Israel.

I last wrote to you in June 2005 about the community's alarm over the abuse of youngsters - some from Britain - who had been peacefully demonstrating their opposition to disengagement. Since then there has been the egregious and gratuitous brutality committed by police under government orders at Amona. Then there was the lamentable imprisonment of two 15-year old religious girls for 2 months in a maximum security prison for simply attending a demonstration in Chevron. Another teenaged girl from Yesha has since suffered the same fate even though actual conviction in either case would never have merited a custodial sentence, least of all in an adult prison.

Last week we had a report that Superintendent Yehiel Absalem was allowed to remain in his police post despite proven charges for brutalising a religious man who sought only to approach him to read his name tag; now a worrying habit amongst police and their commanders. This week a worshiper was arrested for blowing the shofar at the Kotel.

My executive would like to arrange a meeting with you after Sukkot to discuss this worrying situation. But in the meantime I ask you to kindly convey this message to the government in Jerusalem: "Jews in the Diaspora find this behaviour repugnant and totally inconsistent with Israel's role and ethos as a Jewish state."

My colleagues and I look forward to your response and, meantime extend best wishes to you and all your staff for the New Year and Chag Sameyach.

Yours sincerely,

Zalmi Unsrdorfer
Chairman