



כ' בניסן תשפ"ג
April 11, 2023

MK Yair Lapid
Head of the Opposition
Knesset
Jerusalem
Israel

Dear MK Lapid,

We are writing to you to express our grave concern over your comments at the meeting with members of the Jewish Federations in New York.

As an organization devoted to strengthening the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jewry, we see these comments as sowing discord and delegitimizing not just the current Israeli government, but Israel itself in the eyes of the world, both Jewish and not.

In the vibrant democracy that is Israel, political debate is not only welcome, but critical, yet it must be carried out with responsibility. In your role as the Head of the Opposition, you are both entitled and required to critique the government. However, that does not extend to undermining the government outside the borders of Israel, calling on Diaspora Jews to counter the government, and driving a wedge between Israel and Jews around the world.

In your remarks, you accused the current government of being “the most extremist in history ... causing damage to security, economy, social cohesion, and relations with Diaspora Jewry.” It would be an understatement to say that the issues facing Israel today are controversial and, at the very least, large swaths of the Israeli population support the government’s actions and view them as the fruition of election promises. Therefore, it is disingenuous of you to accuse the government of undermining Israeli democracy and calling on American Jews to get up in arms to protect Israel from its own leadership.

While we can argue about the prudence and wisdom of the current government’s policies and performance, rhetoric characterizing the government as “extremist” and “undemocratic” jeopardizes the relationship between Israel and world Jews.



More importantly, when such statements move into mainstream media, they delegitimize Israel itself, and by extension pose real danger to the safety of Diaspora communities. When you go back to Israel, we in the Diaspora will face the potential consequences of even more antisemitism, powered by your words.

Israel is precious to every single one of us. We are proud of its vibrant democracy and amazing growth. We ask you that going forward you refrain from damaging, inflammatory rhetoric against Israel and its government during meetings in the Diaspora.

Sincerely,

Shlomo Werdiger
Co-chairman

Dr. Irving Lebovics
Co-chairman