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**UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH
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INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

February 7, 2006 / 9 Shevat 5766

Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert
Prime Minister's Office
Jerusalem Israel
VIA FACSIMILE: 02-670-5475

Dear Acting Prime Minister Olmert:

We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the United States' largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization representing nearly one thousand synagogues in North America as well as an Israel Center in Jerusalem that services the thousands of American olim that now call Israel home.

Our support for the State of Israel is as strong today as ever. Yet, we are compelled to write to you today to express our deep dismay regarding the violent scene that was broadcast around the world from Amona last week. We cringed as we viewed the images of members of the elite Yassam unit, tasked with carrying out the rule of law, enter a house and proceed to mercilessly beat fellow citizens who were merely sitting on the floor exercising their right to civil disobedience. We never thought we would see such a dark day in the State of Israel where Israeli citizens are trampled by the horses of their own police force.

While we reject the actions of the those protesters who resorted to violent tactics such as throwing stones, bricks, glass and paint at soldiers, we firmly believe that professional law enforcement units charged with carrying out difficult missions must remain calm, respond in a measured manner, and act with sensitivity in the performance of their duties. And we condemn in the strongest terms those police officers who violently attacked protesters who had not lifted a hand against any law enforcement official.

We join President Katsav and others in calling for the government to establish an independent commission of inquiry to determine why the police brutality that took place in Amona was employed and to draw lessons from it so that such violent conduct by law enforcement personnel will never again occur.

We ask you to strongly condemn and punish those Israeli government representatives found responsible for ordering and executing the brutalities and gross violations of human and democratic rights that the world witnessed last week.

And we urge you to send a clear message to Israelis, pained Jewish brethren in the Diaspora, and all people of good will worldwide that the use of excessive force by members of Israel's security forces – including all units of the Israel Defense Forces, Israel Police, Israel Border Police and any other security organ that may be involved should similar operations be necessary in the future – will never again be tolerated.

Whereas the Gaza disengagement was carried out with admirable discipline and heroic restraint, the security forces executed the Amona mission with brutality and palpable hate. Thus, while security forces evacuated thousands of people from twenty one communities in Gaza and four in the northern Shomron with little injury, the demolition of nine houses in Amona was marked by violence that resulted in hundreds injured – many severely – and Jewish blood unnecessarily spilled. We hope the actions of the security forces do not represent a profound policy shift of your government whereby security forces involved in any future similar operations, should they be undertaken, are encouraged to attack protesters without restraint in order to suppress and intimidate those seeking to exercise their right to lawful protest.

Jews worldwide have always taken great pride in the moral and humane manner with which Israeli security forces have executed their duties even in the most daunting of circumstances. We hope that you will promptly address our concerns and work diligently to help heal the rifts in Israel and restore everyone's faith in the government and the security forces of the State.

We continue to pray that G-d grant great wisdom, courage and fortitude to you and all other leaders of the State of Israel in this challenging time to heal the wounds of our people and bring a genuine and lasting peace for all the people of Israel.

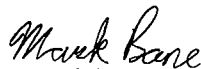
Respectfully,



Rabbi Tzvi H. Weinreb
Executive Vice President



Stephen J. Savitsky
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CC: Ambassador Daniel Ayalon
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