

**Jewish Agency Executive
Zoom Meeting
June 30, 2025**

Members: Doron Almog, Chair; Harvey Blitz, Shoshana Dweck; Gael Grunewald; Yaakov Hagoel; Yizhar Hess; Lori Klinghoffer; David Korenfeld; Bruce Leboff; Mark Levenson; Steven Lowy; Dror Morag; Julie Platt; Yaron Shavit; Jane Sherman; Bruce Sholk; Mark Wilf.

Ex-Officio: David Brown; Sam Grundwerg.

Honorary Members: Johanna Arbib; Betsy Gidwitz; Mark Leibler; Daniel Liwerant; Richie Pearlstone; Michael Siegal.

Associate Members: Yaakov Aharoni; Eric Fingerhut; Adam Minsky; Josh Schwarcz; Yehuda Setton; Reuben Shalom.

Secretary of the Executive: Josh Schwarcz.

Invitees: Rachel Abecassis; Diana Anderson; Sandy Antignas; Moshe Ashirie; Nitzan Barak; Richard Bernstein; Michael Cape; Rebecca Caspi; Matan Dansker; Yehuda Feinberg; Shay Felber; Jeff Finkelstein; Eric Goldstein; Andy Groveman; Evan Hochberg; Shira Hutt; Steve Ingber; Scott Kaufman; Tzur Keren; Beth-Kieffer Leonard; Ruthi Mor-Paz; Danyelle Neuman; Erika Rudin-Luria; Inbar Ruimy; Jeff Schoenfeld; Yehuda Setton; Keith Shapiro; Aviva Shetreet; Moshe Shiff; Steven Shulman; David Silvers; Sondra Sokal; Jacob Solomon; Steven Stav; Inbar Tur-Shalom; Edna Weinstock-Gabay.

Minutes

1. Opening Remarks and Briefing of Jewish Agency's Activities during *Rising Lion*, Maj. Gen. (Res.) Doron Almog
2. Film of JAFI's Activities during *Rising Lion*
3. Approval of Minutes from March 3 meeting, Josh Schwarcz
4. Presentation of JAFI's Strategy and Organizational Structure, Yehuda Setton
5. A Thousand Homes in the Western Negev Project, David Silvers / Moshe Ashirie
6. Reports from our Partners:
 - WZO, Yaakov Hagoel
 - JFNA, Julie Platt
 - KH, Bruce Leboff
7. Resource Development Update, Beth Kieffer Leonard
8. Budget Update, Bruce Sholk
9. Miscellaneous

Opening Remarks

Doron Almog opened by stressing that these are challenging times, where we can see the Importance of our organization being adaptable and deeply attuned to the needs on the ground. He stressed the importance of us being present and reachable. At the same time, there is great attention to the South and the North, and the struggle to bring the hostages. Doron updated that a letter was sent to local council heads expressing our solidarity and commitment to continue our efforts. Aliyah has been and will continue to be a core value. As for the war with Iran – Chairman Almog said that we are preparing relevant infrastructure for communities in need and the team is working to redefine key issues that we face.

Doron Almog highlighted some recent efforts: The departure of 1,800 Shlichim to summer camps, in an unprecedented operation; Operation Rising Lion fund— created to support those who suffered the most severe losses and were left without homes; The launch of a new grant fund for children ages 4-16 to support resilience; Amigour has received requests from several municipalities to manage the entire renovation process of affected homes.

He concluded his remarks by thanking Julie Platt who is completing a three-year term as Chair of the Board of JFNA. He stressed that Julie is a role model and a source of inspiration and expressed gratitude for the vital role she played in the Jewish community in North America.

Film of JAFI's Activities during Rising Lion

A short film was screened to show Jewish Agency activities during Rising Lion.

Approval of Minutes

Josh Schwarcz presented the minutes of March 3 meeting for approval

The minutes were unanimously approved by the Executive.

Presentation of JAFI's Strategy and Organizational Structure

Yehuda Setton presented the strategic plan that reflects a deep process and intensive work of aligning our operating model to support a future growth. He reminded everyone that in March the BOG approved a revised mission that puts the collective at the forefront of everything we do. Yehuda presented the unprecedented challenges the Jewish people is facing in the past few years but stressed that we have the infrastructure and we now how to act together.

He detailed the five key current challenges: externally - building Israel; deepening disconnects within the Jewish people rising global antisemitism; multiple players in the ecosystem and internally – increasing organizational efficiency and excellence. This is the time, he said, to recognize our work under one shared language of enhancing collective action and belonging. He explained the importance of strengthening the sense of belonging and peoplehood and the ways to do so. As for the need to enhance collective action – Yehuda said that we must prioritize strengthening Israel and fostering mutual responsibility for the Jewish people worldwide.

Yehuda stressed that belonging and collective action creates continuous circle that fits itself. This holistic organizational language and strategy is critically important for all our areas of activity and accordingly, he explained how the new structure will utilize our infrastructure in all fields and then presented it.

The Executive unanimously approved the revised organizational structure.

A Thousand Homes in the Western Negev Project

David Silvers began by stating that there is much to be done in terms of rehabilitation across the country after such a long period of conflict. In this context, he presented a joint community project for towns in the Gaza envelope of the Jewish Agency, the Israeli government and "Tekuma". The project is designed to rapidly expand participating Kibbutzim and Moshavim in the Gaza envelope with a total of a thousand new affordable residencies and related infrastructure that will allow these town to grow their populations. This will strengthen the communities and enhance regional development and security. hopefully, it will also stimulate a follow-up investment from the Government and the private sector.

The participating towns must invest a small amount of capital in order to participate. The only funding from JAFI will be in the form of donations. Mr. Silvers detailed the funding and cost structure of the project and the uses of the donation's funds. Mr. Silvers presented the proposed resolution to approve the project that has been approved by the Assets & Liabilities Committee and by the B&F Committee. A steering committee will oversight the project and JAFI's activities.

Mark Wilf commented that raising almost \$40 million for this important project is inspiring because it will help not only with rehabilitation per se, but with rehabilitation in which the voice of the kibbutzim and moshavim is significant and is actually part of the process determining how their future will look like. Doron Almog added that many of the Gaza envelope residents did not yet return to their homes since Oct. 7 and they cannot return to their homes where the catastrophe happened so the necessity of rebuilding is huge, and this is really a healing project. Yehuda Setton thanked our partners, and specifically Keren Hayesod for bringing two major donors to this project.

The proposed resolution Gaza Envelope Residential Community Expansion Project was approved by the Executive.

Reports from our Partners

World Zionist Organization

Yaakov Hagoel noted that the JAFI's work in responding to needs is very moving and important. He said that the World Zionist Organization is very busy with the upcoming World Zionist Congress and the elections for it. He noted that some 400,000 Jews from around the world

have already participated in the elections, an unprecedented number. He spoke about a number of important projects, such as housing Israelis who lost their homes in the "Rising Lion" war in apartments owned by Jews who do not live in the country permanently.

JFNA

Julie Platt reported that the communities are supporting with love and determination and always will and spoke about the emergency fund that was reopened in light of the war with Iran. Within a week, we provided about \$10 million to various organizations and we responded quickly and efficiently because of our close partnership with the Jewish Agency. She detailed the amounts given to the Jewish Agency, to the Rising Lion Fund, to food packages for Amigour residents and funds for beneficiaries in programs for children.

She said that the work of the Jewish Agency has a far-reaching impact and thanked the Jewish Agency and its shlichim who, with JAFI's assistance, came to the summer camps despite all the difficulties, in order to enrich the world of our children. She also spoke about the fight against manifestations of hatred and anti-Semitism and the campaign to ensure the safety of Jewish institutions. She concluded by thanking the agency and its professional staff for their work and dedication.

Eric Fingerhut thanked Lori Klinghoffer, outgoing Chair of UIA, and welcomed Sandy Antignas, who will be replacing her in this position. He also thanked Pam Saltzman, who is retiring after 40 years in a vital role as UIA's Chief Financial Officer.

Keren Hayesod

Bruce Leboff began with a prayer for the safety of the soldiers and the return of the hostages. He noted the importance of our strength, our sovereignty and our right to defend ourselves. He thanked Julie Platt, who is ending her term as chair of JFNA, and thanked her for her cooperation and leadership. He also congratulated Ariella Rohringer, who has completed her term as chair of UIA Canada and congratulated Michael Cape, who is replacing her in the position.

He reported that the difficulty in raising funds is great and Keren Hayesod is trying to meet the goals in the ongoing emergency campaign and reported that Keren Hayesod is constantly monitoring the needs and is donating \$1.2 million to the agency for a start and \$500,000 will be given to support the victims of the war in Iran through the Fund for Victims of Terror. Keren Hayesod, Bruce reported, will also support hospitals damaged in the war and is working to map needs on the ground and assist in various projects including the construction of the Western Negev, and the Ibim Center.

He thanked Keren Hayesod donors and professional staff for their commitment and hard work and thanked JAFI and its staff for their cooperation and leadership.

Resource Development Update

Beth Kieffer Leonard spoke about the importance of concentrating resource development efforts under the CDO, Danyelle Neuman. She reported on the fundraising to date of the designated amount - exceptional numbers at a very high percentage. She noted that we have reached our goal in several important areas - Shlichut, Masa and Youth Futures and thanked the WZO, JNF and additional private donors for their cooperation and generosity.

Regarding the special projects - approximately 820 Israelis participated in summer camps in the US and we owe a huge thank you to the federations, the Mandel Foundation and several major donors from North America. She emphasized that the issue of shlichut expansion is of utmost importance, as is the housing project that the Executive had discussed earlier.

She thanked the partner organizations for the significant emergency fundraising following the war with Iran. She also detailed challenging programs such as Ibim, sheltering, JReady, and shlichut outside of North America, noting that we continue to work on fundraising for these projects.

Budget Update, Bruce Sholk

Bruce Sholk presented to the Executive the proposed changes to the budget, most of which are technical, and we will probably be able to present a balanced budget this year.

The changes are an increase of \$1.5 million in funds that will come from the federations and will finance activities in the FSU; a change in the distribution of the impact of inflation that will be distributed to all the various budget items; approximately \$1 million in expenses related to the war that were not prepared for and for which internal sources will be found; changes in payments for services.

He also presented the budget for special projects, some of which were approved in November 2024. He thanked the leadership and staff for their hard work and support.

The Executive unanimously approved the budget resolution.

Miscellaneous

Doron Almog and Mark Wilf concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their support, friendship and leadership.

Minutes: Aviva Shetreet