

Letter for your Israeli Ambassador

Dear _____,

On behalf of the Jewish people fighting for religious pluralism in Israel, I am outraged that one of our leaders, Anat Hoffman, was interrogated and fingerprinted by Jerusalem police on January 5th, 2010. Police told Hoffman, Executive Director of the Israel Religious Action Center and leader of Women of the Wall, that she may be charged with a felony for violating the rules of conduct at what many consider to be Judaism's most sacred site.

Hoffman's interrogation came less than two months after the November 18th, 2009 arrest of the Women of the Wall member Nofrat Frankel for wearing a talit and holding a sefer Torah.

We will not tolerate this discrimination and abuse to continue among our own people. Women are treated as second-class citizens at a holy and historic place that has great symbolic importance for all Jews.

If this were to happen in any other country in the world, the Jewish community would be up in arms. Israel is the rare democracy today that tolerates and even endorses religious discrimination against Jews.

Make no mistake: What appears to be a growing religious crisis in Israel is as much a threat to Israel's survival as are the external threats, and perhaps more so. Israel has shown that she can protect herself from armies and terrorists. Protecting herself from religious extremism may be Israel's biggest challenge--a challenge that cannot and must not be ignored by those who care about Israel's soul.

Pass on our message to the Israeli government: the Kotel is the beating heart center for the whole of the Jewish people, and not an Ultra-Orthodox synagogue. The arrest and intimidation of women praying at the Wall must stop. The Wall must become a place where all Jews can pray and connect spiritually to Israel.

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