

Subject: Tu BiShvat, a Celebration of Renewal and Connection to the Holy Land

Hi xx,

With the Jewish holiday of TuBishvat, known as “the New Year for the trees,” celebrated on the 15th of Shevat in the Hebrew calendar, or January 25th in the English calendar, we are reminded once again to stop and reflect on what we hope for the year ahead and we wanted to share a roundup of some the positive stories and events happening within Israel.

On behalf of the Israel Ministry of Tourism, we are looking forward to brighter and more peaceful days ahead in the near future.

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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Tu BiShvat, a Celebration of Renewal and Connection to the Holy Land:

[Chicago, 01-23-23] — While life in Israel continues to be impacted by the October 7th attacks and tourism begins to make a return, Israelis continue to look for hope despite the darkness, finding reasons to celebrate. Despite the changed tourism landscape, the Israel Ministry of Tourism shares glimpses of Israel's tenacious spirit. In the midst of challenges, we invite you to explore a story of resilience and celebration from the land of Israel, with a special emphasis on the significance for Christians.

Jewish New Year for the Trees - Tu BiShvat (January 25th, 15th of Shevat):

In the Jewish tradition, Tu BiShvat is celebrated as a day of renewal and connection to the Earth, embodying the appreciation of nature and the ties between the Jewish people and the Holy Land. This January 25th, let us join hands in celebrating the shared values of environmental stewardship, renewal, and hope as Israelis use this day for tree planting, conservation, and activities promoting a greener future.

Planting Seeds of Hope:

Organizations like [The Jewish National Fund](#) and [Holy Land Tree](#) encourage planting trees in honor of those lost on October 7th. Christians can also donate funds to plant a tree in the land of Israel and discover a resonance in the spiritual journey of renewal and connection to the land. This celebration echoes themes of stewardship, renewal, and hope that are shared across faith traditions.

Unearthing Biblical Insights:

Beyond looking forward to Israel's future, amazing historical discoveries continue to be made. In a groundbreaking discovery during an excavation by the Israel Antiquities Authority at a site in the Judean Hills. An extremely rare silver coin from the Persian period (6th–5th centuries BCE) has been uncovered by Semyon Gendler, Acting Judean District Archaeologist. The coin, intentionally broken, features a square stamp embedded on one face—a fascinating artifact bringing to light some of the earliest uses of coins in Israel. Discoveries like this continue to offer Christians a unique opportunity to connect with biblical history.

The excavation, conducted alongside infrastructure works by the Netivei Israel National Transport Infrastructure Company, also revealed a First Temple Period building showcasing early evidence of commerce through the discovery of a shekel weight. According to Dr. Robert Kool, Head of the Israel Antiquities Authority Numismatic Department, this coin was minted in a period when the use of coins had just begun.

And Eli Escusido, Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, shared insights that “through a tiny object like a coin, it becomes possible to trace human thought processes and observe that our economic habits have remained largely unchanged for thousands of years - only the technology has changed. In this context, it is interesting to consider future archaeological research in a world that has adopted electronic commerce.”

For more information and for photos and videos of the discovery, click [here](#).

Historical Artifact, The Codex Sassoon - A Testament to Shared Heritage:

Another piece of history having an impact in Israel is the Codex Sassoon, which will soon be on display at the [ANU – Museum of the Jewish People](#). Step into the pages of history with the Codex Sassoon, a precious artifact from the 10th Century BCE. The Codex Sassoon stands as a testament to Western civilization and shares a common historical thread with Christian scriptures. After being on display in London, Dallas, New York and Los Angeles, it was purchased from an auction at Sotheby's in New York City in May 2023 for \$38.1 million USD by the ANU – Museum of the Jewish People and Alfred H. Moses. This makes it the fourth-most expensive book or manuscript ever sold.

After captivating audiences globally, the Codex Sassoon eagerly awaits display at the ANU – Museum of the Jewish People, promising a profound journey through ancient texts that resonate with Christians.

Stay tuned for details on its unveiling at the ANU Museum.

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Subject: Planting Seeds of Hope in Celebration of Tu BiShvat and In Memory of Those Lost on October 7

Hi xx,

While life in Israel continues to be impacted by the October 7th attacks, and tourism begins to make a return, Israelis continue to find hope despite the darkness, finding reasons to celebrate. We know that tourism stories are much different than they were four months ago, however, the Israel Ministry of Tourism wants to continue to share the ways that Israel's tenacious spirit continues.

On behalf of the Israel Ministry of Tourism, we are looking toward the future to brighter and more peaceful days.

For Immediate Release



Tu BiShvat, a Celebration of Trees, Nature, and Connection to the Land of Israel

(JERUSALEM, January 24, 2024)- Tu BiShvat, known as “the New Year for the trees,” is celebrated on the 15th of Shevat in the Hebrew calendar--on January 25th this year in the Gregorian calendar. In the Jewish tradition, Tu BiShvat is celebrated as a day of connection to the Earth, renewal, and new growth, embodying the appreciation of nature and the ties between people and the land of Israel. Interested in Earth Day? Tu BiShvat is a holiday dating back many hundreds of years and is often celebrated quite literally with hands in the dirt and the planting of trees.

You don't have to be Jewish to celebrate TuBiShvat. Everyone can honor the earth on this special holiday of environmental stewardship and use this day for tree planting, conservation, and activities promoting a greener future.

Planting Seeds of Hope:

This year especially, many people are donating trees to honor and memorialize those lost on October 7 and in the months since. There has long been a tradition of planting trees in Israel in memory of loved

ones, in honor of special occasions (like births and anniversaries), or simply as a way of renewing the land. Several organizations like [The Jewish National Fund](#) and [Holy Land Tree](#), offer opportunities to donate trees that volunteers in Israel will plant, with a dedicated certificate being sent to the recipient of your choice. This celebration echoes themes of stewardship, renewal, and hope that are shared across faith traditions.

Historical Artifact, The Codex Sassoon - A Testament to Shared Heritage:

The earliest and most complete Hebrew Bible known to exist, Codex Sassoon will soon be on display at the [ANU – Museum of the Jewish People](#) in Tel Aviv after being on display in London, Dallas, New York, and Los Angeles. This ancient Biblical manuscript, written over 1,100 years ago, is a rare artifact of global and historical importance and offers evidence of the history and evolution of Hebrew biblical text.

Stay tuned for details on its unveiling at the ANU Museum.



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Media Contact:

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###

Subject: Israel's First Major Events Return in 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



ISRAEL'S FIRST MAJOR EVENTS RETURN IN 2024

Dead Sea Marathon, Tel Aviv Night Run, Jerusalem Marathon and Jerusalem Wintertime Festival are Among the Events Resuming on Israel's Calendar Signaling a Sense of Hope and Normalcy

Jerusalem, Israel--(February 14, 2024)—Since the morning of October 7, many if not all of Israel's big events and festivals have been put on hiatus due to the attacks in Israel and concerns for country-wide safety. For the first time in four months, with permission and oversight from the Israel Defense Force's Home Front Command, it was announced that some of Israel's large-scale, time-honored events will resume. The Jerusalem Wintertime Festival, Jerusalem Winner Marathon and Tel Aviv Night Run will commence on February 12, March 8, and April 17 respectively.

This news comes following the success of the Dead Sea Marathon held February 2 and the first event to return with more than 6,000 runners. Of those participants, Shaul Levy, 78, whose granddaughter Naama Levy was taken hostage to Gaza said "During this run, we transferred crazy energy to the hostages. Hold on a little longer, don't lose hope. We will bring you home."



(Dead Sea Marathon 2024, Credit Oren Alon)

The annual Jerusalem Wintertime Festival is a cultural event with nightly happenings that features the participation of hundreds of artists and musicians who transform the streets of Jerusalem into creative exhibition spaces for art, music, and food. This year, all events and artistic performances will reflect a quiet format to honor those lost as well as show respect for the families praying for the safe return of hostages and soldiers.

The 13th annual International Jerusalem Winner Marathon, considered by marathon runners to be the holy grail of the running circuit, will take place on the morning of March 8, also International Women's Day. While the route is known to be very challenging, the marathon is part of an esteemed list of international marathons and is considered one of the most beautiful and challenging in the world. Its uniqueness stems from a route that includes famous and beloved landmarks throughout Jerusalem, alongside breathtaking views, and include: the Israel Museum, the Supreme Court, the residence of the President of Israel, the walls of the Old City, the Armenian Quarter, the Tower of David, the Khan Theater, and the Sultan's Pool. Several race distances are offered—for both the novice and dedicated runner, as well as those with mobility challenges—with events ranging from 800 meters to 26.2-miles.

In the following month, the Tel Aviv Night Run is slated to return on April 17.

“Since the morning of October 7, it's as if we've all held our breath in prayerful anticipation,” said Eyal Carlin, Israel Ministry of Tourism's Commissioner to North America. “Every day since, we have been still prayerful for the hostages return and hopeful for peaceful times again. And simultaneously, we know we need to begin the process of restoring hope, boosting morale, and returning to the events of daily living. These events offer a place of hope that will bring people together for a common purpose – to honor those lost, by living today.”

Events are open to participants of all ages, with the thread running throughout for hope and promise. These events provide a platform for unifying community – helping to strengthen bonds, respect differences and, more importantly, discover and embrace the many commonalities among the participants and community at large.

To learn more about these events or to inquire about travel and registration, visit israel.travel.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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Subject: Israel's First Major Events Return in 2024

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ISRAEL'S FIRST MAJOR EVENTS RETURN IN 2024

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Jerusalem, Israel--(February 22, 2024)—Since the morning of October 7, many if not all of Israel's big events and festivals have been put on hiatus due to the attacks in Israel and concerns for country-wide safety. For the first time in four months, with permission and oversight from the Israel Defense Force's Home Front Command, it was announced that some of Israel's large-scale, time-honored events will resume. Jerusalem Winner Marathon and Tel Aviv Night Run will commence on March 8, and April 17 respectively.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

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Subject: Israel's Minister of Tourism Delivers Opening Speech at the National Religious Broadcasters Christian Media Convention in Nashville



ISRAEL'S MINISTER OF TOURISM DELIVERS OPENING SPEECH AT THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS CHRISTIAN MEDIA CONVENTION IN NASHVILLE ENCOURAGING SUPPORT THROUGH TOURISM

Haim Katz Assures Audience that the Safety of Tourists is Israel's Top Priority Following United Airlines' Announcement that it will Resume Service Between NYC/Newark and Tel Aviv Next Month

Jerusalem, Israel – February 23, 2024—Addressing more than 4,000 attendees at the opening ceremony of the National Religious Broadcasters Christian Media Convention (NRB) in Nashville on Wednesday, February 21, Israel's Minister of Tourism, Haim Katz, extended an invitation calling for an increase in Christian tourism to the country.

"The best way to support Israel is to visit Israel," said Katz. "The safety of tourists is our top priority, and Israel takes great care regarding the safety of tourists and citizens alike."

During his visit to the U.S., Israel's Minister of Tourism is also working to strengthen partnerships with tour operators and opinion leaders in an effort to expand Christian-based tourism to the country. Katz's agenda includes meetings with TBN, the largest Evangelical broadcast network in the U.S., along with InterNova Travel Group, which has an extensive portfolio of travel brands.

The Ministry of Tourism's safety commitment is also supported by United Airlines which recently announced that it will resume service between New York/Newark and Tel Aviv beginning March 2 after working closely with U.S. and Israel security experts and government officials to restore vital passenger and cargo service that was suspended following the October 7th attacks. Initial flights on March 2 and 4 will stop in Munich with resumption of daily nonstop service to Tel Aviv starting March 6. No flights are scheduled for March 3 or 5. Israel passed the airline's mandatory detailed safety analysis ensuring safety for all passengers, pilots, and airline crews.

"Prior to October 7th, Israel was on the brink of surpassing its pre-pandemic tourism levels," said Eyal Carlin, North American commissioner for the Israel Ministry of Tourism. "The impact of these attacks has been tremendous; however, the desire by Israel's residents to continue living in the face of this tragedy is palpable--Israelis are resilient. With the announcement of United Airlines resuming service between a major U.S. hub and Tel Aviv, we feel this is a vote of confidence for the region."

El Al Airlines, Israel's flag carrier, has offered continued service following the October 7th attacks and plans to increase airlift during the Passover holiday to meet demand for increased arrivals. In addition to an increase in air service, signature events are also resuming following the success of the Dead Sea Marathon on February 2 along with the upcoming 13th annual International Jerusalem Winner Marathon and Tel Aviv Night Run taking place March 8 and April 17 respectively. The 30th annual International Mediterranean Tourism Market will also welcome tourism professionals for a two-day summit on April 3.

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Subject: New Exhibitions at Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem Mark a Renewed Era of Culture and Healing in Israel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**New Exhibitions at Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem
Mark a Renewed Era of Culture and Healing in Israel**

The emergence of art as therapy in Israel for those impacted by October 7th Hamas attacks.

JERUSALEM (February 1, 2024) - The Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem are opening new groundbreaking exhibitions this year, signifying a hopeful resurgence of cultural engagement and healing in Israel.

The Tel Aviv Museum of Art, which reopened in November following a temporary closure due to the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas, has announced their exhibition line up for 2024 with a focus on diverse viewpoints, both Israeli and international. The museum is on the public plaza now known as Hostage Square, where the families of the missing and the public gather and express their hope for the safe return of the hostages. All museum visitors will now traverse this emotional space, which also contains many of its own art installations reflecting on the current situation.

Healing Space Initiative Launch: As part of their efforts to improve their community engagement, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art is launching the transformative "Healing Space" initiative. In collaboration with the Civil Operations Room and the Israeli Association for Creative Arts Therapies, the museum will provide art therapy for survivors of the October 7th massacre, trauma victims, children affected by the war, wounded soldiers, medical teams, and the public.

The Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem is opening a powerful contemporary art exhibition titled, *Splinter From The Storm*, on February 2, 2024, and it will run until April 30, 2024. Curated by Noa Arad Yairi, the exhibition features work by 20 artists, including Irit Abba, Judith Appleton, Noa Arad Yairi, and others. This exhibition juxtaposes contemporary art with ancient artifacts from the Museum's permanent collection, offering a unique perspective on the historical and aesthetic connections of past and present.

"Art and art therapy are known to provide amazing healing aspects to people suffering from loss and trauma. And I have heard countless stories of artists, after October 7th, feeling compelled to use art as a productive outlet for their grief so it comes as no surprise to me that these museums—these cultural institutions — are creating good from the tragedy of the October 7th attacks" said Eyal Carlin, Israel Ministry of Tourism North American Commissioner. "It is completely understandable that tourism to Israel has slowed during the months since the attacks, but these cultural attractions reopening and adding new, especially meaningful exhibits, and the significant number of visitors who are coming to

Israel to volunteer, visit family and friends, and show support is extremely heartwarming and meaningful to the people of Israel and reassuring to those watching from abroad."

About the Israel Ministry of Tourism:

The Israel Ministry of Tourism (IMOT) is Israel's national tourism agency responsible for planning and implementing marketing and promotional initiatives to position Israel as a preferred travel destination. IMOT aims to increase tourism traffic to contribute to Israel's economy, and to enhance and diversify the visiting experience. IMOT works to promote Israel's impressive assortment of historical, cultural, culinary, and religious attractions – each the perfect blend of tradition and modernity. IMOT offices in North America are located in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago and Toronto. For details on upcoming events and attractions in Israel, visit IMOT's website at israel.travel. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to receive the latest updates.

About Tel Aviv Museum of Art:

The Tel Aviv Museum of Art is a leading cultural institution dedicated to promoting artistic expression and fostering community engagement. With a diverse range of exhibitions and initiatives, the museum strives to provide a platform for dialogue, healing, and cultural enrichment. Click [here](#) for images with credit to download.

About Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem:

Since 1992, the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem has emerged as a beacon of cultural and historical understanding, transporting visitors to the heart of the biblical lands– ancient Egypt, Babylon, Canaan, Assyria, Sumer, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The museum offers a variety of special exhibitions, educational programs, cultural events, tours, and lectures, and serves as a space for professional conferences, seminars, and private events. Images and photo credits available [here](#).

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Subject: News Release: Archaeological Revelations Unveil Ancient Israel's Rich Tapestry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Archaeological Revelations Unveil Ancient Israel's Rich Tapestry: From Philistine Rituals to Second Temple Artifacts

(Chicago, IL-03/08/24) - Archaeological excavations in Israel continue to uncover remarkable insights into the region's rich and diverse history, offering glimpses into ancient civilizations and their practices. Recent discoveries, spanning from the Philistine culture to the Second Temple period, help us to understand additional details of life in ancient Israel.

At the foot of Tel Megiddo, archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority have unearthed the remains of the 1,800-year-old Roman Vith 'Ferrata' Iron Legion military base. Led by Dr. Yotam Tepper and Barak Tzin, the excavation revealed extensive architectural remains, including the Via Pretoria and a monumental public building, shedding new light on Roman military presence in the Land of Israel. This discovery marks the first time such a large Roman military base has been uncovered in the region, providing invaluable insights into ancient military strategies and infrastructure.

In central Israel, excavations at Tel es-Safi/Gath have unearthed insights into the religious practices of the Philistine culture during the Iron Age. Led by Professor Aren Maeir and Professor Ehud Weiss of Bar-Ilan University, the study delves into plant-related ritual practices at Gath, revealing the significance of various plant species in Philistine religious ceremonies. The findings challenge previous understandings of Philistine ritual practices and offer new perspectives on Philistine cultural interactions with the broader Mediterranean world.

In Jerusalem, a rare multi-compartment stone container dating back approximately 2,000 years to the Second Temple period has been revealed to the public for the first time at the Israel Museum. Discovered during excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in the City of David section of the Jerusalem Walls National Park, this unusual box provides insight into the commercial activities that once thrived alongside the Pilgrimage Road. Measuring 30 x 30 cm (11.8 x 11.8 inches) and divided into nine compartments, the box offers a glimpse into ancient commerce and daily life in Jerusalem during this period.

These discoveries enhance our understanding of ancient civilizations and their legacies. From Roman military outposts to Philistine rituals and Second Temple artifacts, each excavation deepens our

appreciation for the diverse cultural heritage of the region. As these treasures continue to be unearthed, they serve as tangible connections to the past, inviting us to explore and celebrate the rich tapestry of ancient Israel.

To learn more about these events or to inquire about travel, visit holyland.israel.travel

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Subject: News Release: Schedule Announced for Holy Week and Easter in the Holy Land

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Experience Holy Week and Easter in the Holy Land: Schedule Announced

(Chicago, IL-03/22/24) - As Holy Week approaches, Christians around the world eagerly anticipate the sacred observances marking the death and resurrection of Jesus. For those seeking to deepen their spiritual journey, the Holy Land offers a unique opportunity for pilgrimage and reflection.

The Holy Land's Center for Information and Communication (C.I.C.T.S.) has released the schedule for Masses and services during Holy Week and Easter 2024. This comprehensive guide ensures pilgrims can participate in the rich traditions and solemn ceremonies at key sites in Jerusalem like the Garden of Gethsemane, the Garden Tomb and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

For the full schedule of Masses and services, visit: [Holy Week & Easter Schedule in the Holy Land](#)

The Easter Vigil at the Holy Sepulcher on Holy Saturday will be broadcast live on the Christian Media Center website linked [HERE](#) (without English translation)

Join us in experiencing the profound significance of Holy Week and Easter in the very places where Jesus walked, lived, and ultimately triumphed over death.

To learn more about these events or to inquire about travel, visit holyland.israel.travel

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MEDIA CONTACT:

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Subject: News Release: New Flights from U.S. to Israel Signal the Return of Tourism to the Holy Land

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**NEW FLIGHTS, DEVELOPMENTS AND RECENT REOPENINGS
SIGNAL SIGNS OF THE RETURN OF TOURISM TO ISRAEL**

Jerusalem, Israel--March 5, 2024—Tourism to Israel from the U.S. is starting to show signs of hope following the announcement from United Airlines who resumed flights from Newark (EWR) Airport to Tel Aviv over the weekend. This comes on the heels of El Al confirming its new airlift from Ft. Lauderdale (FLL) to Tel Aviv next month, adding further hope for the return of American tourists to Israel.

Israel is actively rebuilding and welcoming visitors as several attractions have made their debut, reopened or completed extensive renovations. The Israel Ministry of Tourism continues to emphasize that Israel is welcoming visitors.

“With the return of U.S. flights, we remain hopeful that tourism to Israel is showing signs of recovery,” says Eyal Carlin, North American commissioner for the Israel Ministry of Tourism. “Initially, we have seen a significant number of faith based and solidarity trips. With the return of flights from the U.S., new hotels, major attractions and the reopening of key venues, we feel optimistic this will provide tourists the reassurance they can begin to rebook and resume their travel to Israel again”.

New Developments

The brand new four-acre campus belonging to the [National Library of Israel](#), adjacent to the Knesset in Jerusalem’s National District, is a stunning complex with an iconic design housing world-class collections coupled with serene gardens and expansive space for cultural gatherings. Tomes and physical works are kept in the sunlight central atrium abutting the Main Automated Stacks where a state-of-the-art robotic system retrieves requested items. The compound features several outdoor spaces, including an amphitheater with a singular environmental art installation, “Letters of Light,” created by Israeli sculptor Micha Ullman.

A first-of-its-kind edible forest and community garden was recently unveiled in Negev to pay homage to Bedouin war victims and Vivian Silver, the late Canadian-Israeli peace activist who was slain in her home on October 7. The living memorial is under the leadership of the Wadi Atir project, whose mission includes promoting sustainable dryland agriculture while leveraging traditional Bedouin values and experiences with contemporary science and technologies. The forest and garden include many biologically diverse plants, fruit trees, vegetables and medicinal herbs.

The **Almond Hotel**, part of C-Hotels' portfolio of properties, is a new, adults-only hideaway nestled in the mountains overlooking Jerusalem and the coastal plain. Boasting 60 spacious rooms, a spa with nine treatment rooms including a Turkish hammam, a chic restaurant and a rooftop pool, the Almond Hotel has ushered in a new era of hospitality and luxury.

Those who wish to walk in the footsteps of Mary, the mother of Jesus, can do so in Zippori National Park, which sits perched atop a hill in Galilee. Aptly named **Mary's Path**, the new walkway echoes of Jesus' teachings and is more than just a trail to explore, but a spiritual journey that guides guests through historical periods starting with Jesus and Mary's time on earth and the Byzantine era to modern times. The path, designed for a comfortable 90-minute walk, features a half-dozen stations marking significant aspects of Mary's life and Christian heritage. A few of the highlights trekkers will discover include The Arches Reservoir and The Church of St. Anne.

Renovations/Re-openings

The **Tower of David** at the Jerusalem Museum opened following an extensive and decade-long renovation. Included is the preservation of the ancient citadel, the minaret restoration, the reimagined archaeological garden, a new sunken multi-level entrance pavilion and the addition of a shop, cafe and infrastructural upgrades. Other enhancements include improved accessibility within the citadel along with the unveiling of a new permanent exhibition in 10 galleries that incorporate innovative technology with interactive displays, archeological findings and ancient artifacts.

Israel's new **Tel Aviv Municipal LGBT Community Center**, home to the Tel Aviv-Yafo's gay community and the surrounding environs, has reopened after extensive renovations. Cradled within a neighborhood brimming with LGBTQ-owned and friendly businesses, the new center offers dozens of programs for all ages and identities.

To learn more about what's new in Israel or to inquire about travel, visit online at israel.travel.

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Subject: An Important Message from The Israel Ministry of Tourism



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Hi xx,

The Israel Ministry of Tourism (IMOT) is deeply saddened by the events that took place at our southern border with Gaza on Saturday, October 7.

As a result of the events, the government has declared a state of emergency.

The safety and security of our visitors is our top priority, and we are working to ensure their well-being in every way possible. IMOT, in collaboration with relevant authorities, is working to assist those who wish to depart from Israel. While US carriers have suspended flights to Israel, Ben Gurion International Airport remains open, and many flights are still departing Israel. Travelers should continue to check the status of flights and the status of Ben Gurion International Airport here: <https://www.iaa.gov.il/en/>

The Ministry of Tourism is operating a “virtual office” reachable via WhatsApp (+972 55 972 6931) or email (virtual@goisrael.gov.il).

Travelers currently in Israel can dial 104 for information or contact Home Front Command on WhatsApp or SMS on +972 52 910 4104.

IMOT will provide updates on travel to and around Israel as new information is available.

Helpful Links

- Israel Ministry of Tourism https://www.gov.il/en/departments/ministry_of_tourism/govil-landing-page
- Ben Gurion Airport <https://www.iaa.gov.il/en/>
- Israel US Embassy <https://il.usembassy.gov/>

Media Contacts

Ellen Shapiro, EllenS@goisrael.gov.il

Laura Cyrille, VisitIsrael@aboutdci.com

Subject: Chanukah and Charitable Donations from Israeli Businesses Bringing Much-Needed Light

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WITH THE ADVENT OF CHRISTMAS UPON US, CHRISTIANS EMBRACE HOLIDAY TRADITIONS WHILE SUPPORTING ISRAELI BUSINESSES WHO ARE DONATING PROCEEDS DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS

Jerusalem, Israel— (December 1, 2023)—During the advent of Christmas, the four weeks leading up to Christmas where communities remember and celebrate the arrival of Jesus, Christians are also uniting to show their support for Israel during the holiday season.

The holiday season is being ushered in this year with more significant meaning as Christians lend their time and support to Israel by volunteering and spending their money with businesses, both in Israel and at home, that are making charitable contributions to not only help financially but also to boost morale among the troops and residents, as well as aiding survivors and displaced families.

Those wanting to help can show their support by making purchases from small businesses and companies who are committed to donating a percentage of their profits to the ongoing needs in Israel. It's a win-win—consumers support businesses in Israel proceeds go to support those who need it most. Among the businesses who have pledged to do so include:

- Christians United for Israel – Receive a custom, Israeli-made tree ornament with a monetary donation in any amount. One hundred percent of the proceeds go directly to Israelis on the front lines.
- Mar Jarz – These single-size glass jars contain favorite cake flavors layered with frosting. Purchase jars for Israeli soldiers with profits donated to support both soldiers and displaced families.
- Shlomit Ofir – Place an order from Shlomit Ofir's "Israel at Heart" jewelry line, and the Tel Aviv-based jewelry maker will donate 20% from all purchases.
- El Al Airlines – The official airline of Israel is offering credit vouchers for purchases on future flights and will donate 10% of the total purchase price to the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF), the Shores Fund (formerly known as Kumzitz) or other organizations supporting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and residents who were displaced from their homes. A minimum purchase of \$1000 also includes a postcard and commemorative pin and/or frequent flier benefits.
- Hasod – Supporting small businesses all around Israel, Hasod packages up fantastic products from coffee and chocolate to candles and wine, in beautiful gift boxes that can be shipped within Israel and abroad. 20% of proceeds are donated.

"With the holiday season upon us, what a beautiful way to show your support for Israel while also supporting Israeli businesses," said Eyal Carlin, Israel's tourism commissioner to North America. "Many industries have been hard hit—from those depending on tourism to others like our farmers and wine

producers, whose staff have been called up for military service. They also need our support during these challenging times.”

The Israel Ministry of Tourism is continuously dedicated to the safety and security of visitors and is endlessly grateful for those who are doing their part in Israel and around the world in support of the country. The Ministry looks forward to brighter days and welcoming tourists to Israel.

###

About the Israel Ministry of Tourism:

The Israel Ministry of Tourism (IMOT) is Israel’s national tourism agency responsible for planning and implementing marketing and promotional initiatives to position Israel as a preferred travel destination. IMOT aims to increase tourism traffic to contribute to Israel’s economy, and to enhance and diversify the visiting experience. IMOT works to promote Israel’s impressive assortment of historical, cultural, culinary and religious attractions – each the perfect blend of tradition and modernity. IMOT offices in North America are located in New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago and Toronto.

For details on upcoming events and attractions in Israel, visit IMOT’s website at israel.travel. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to receive the latest updates.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Gabi Sandler

Development Counsellors International (DCI)

T 289.221.9933

gabi.sandler@aboutdci.com

Subject: Chanukah and Charitable Donations from Israeli Businesses Bringing Much-Needed Light

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**AS CHANUKAH NEARS, BELOVED TRADITIONS ALONG WITH
CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BUSINESSES ACROSS ISRAEL SHINE BRIGHT**

Jerusalem, Israel— (November 28, 2023)—Chanukah, which begins at sundown on December 7, comes early this year. And not a moment too soon. The holiday of Chanukah is one of resilience, strength, faith, and light—and just like the Maccabees, these characteristics are exactly those that the people of Israel—Jews and non-Jews alike—are exhibiting right now.

For Israelis, Chanukah is being ushered in this year with more significant meaning. People are volunteering, businesses both in Israel and in the US are making charitable contributions to not only help financially but also to boost morale among the troops and residents, as well as aiding survivors and displaced families.

Those wanting to help can show their support by making purchases from small businesses and companies who are committed to donating a percentage of their profits to the ongoing needs in Israel. It's a win-win—consumers support businesses in Israel proceeds go to support those who need it most. Among the businesses who have pledged to do so include:

- Mar Jarz – These single-size glass jars contain favorite cake flavors layered with frosting. Purchase jars for Israeli soldiers with profits donated to support both soldiers and displaced families.
- Sip for Solidarity –The Israeli Wine Producers Association (IWPA), a trade organization promoting Israeli wineries, will donate 10% of every case shipped from now through December 31, 2023, to Israeli relief efforts. Purchases can be made @israeliwine or royalwine.com. Note: any wine purchased on royalwine.com will include the 10% donation.
- Shlomit Ofir – Place an order from Shlomit Ofir's "Israel at Heart" jewelry line, and the Tel Aviv-based jewelry maker will donate 20% from all purchases.
- El Al Airlines – The official airline of Israel is offering credit vouchers for purchases on future flights and will donate 10% of the total purchase price to the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF), the Shores Fund (formerly known as Kumzitz) or other organizations supporting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and residents who were

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“With the holiday season upon us, what a beautiful way to show your support for Israel while also supporting Israeli businesses,” said Eyal Carlin, Israel’s tourism commissioner to North America. “Many industries have been hard hit—from those depending on tourism to others like our farmers and wine producers, whose staff have been called up for military service. They also need our support during these challenging times.”

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Gabi Sandler

Development Counsellors International (DCI)

T 289.221.9933

gabi.sandler@aboutdci.com

Subject: Over 200 Thousand Participants Take Part in March for Israel in Washington D.C.

Hi xx,

On October 7th, Israel was attacked by Hamas in what will forever be a day that affected not only Israelis but the entire world. Equally concerning is the world-wide rise in antisemitism being directed at Jewish communities around the world—communities that are still reeling and grieving what happened in Israel just over a month ago.

Thankfully, solidarity events, marches and demonstrations in support of Israel have also been taking place and beautiful acts of kindness, generosity and love are being exhibited in support of Israel on a daily basis.

Please see the press release below my signature from the Israel Ministry of Tourism, who participated in today's March for Israel in Washington D.C. along with Israelis, Jewish communities from in and around the D.C. area and supporters.

If I can be of any assistance in securing interviews or additional photos from the Ministry's participation in today's event, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best,
Gabi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Over 200 Thousand Participants Take Part in March for Israel in Washington D.C.



Photo Credit: The Israel Ministry of Tourism

Washington D.C. – November 14, 2023 –Over 200 thousand people joined [The March for Israel in Washington D.C.](#) on Tuesday at the National Mall, which was coordinated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. The event was organized to “March for Israel; March to free hostages; March against antisemitism,” as written on the event’s webpage. Representation from The Israel Ministry of Tourism (IMOT) was among those in attendance.

Since the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas, antisemitism and hate crimes against Jewish communities have continued to rise in the U.S. and around the world. But despite the challenges, Israelis, Jewish communities, Christian organizations and supporters have come together over the last five weeks to show support for Israel and the diaspora and the continued call for the release of the over 240 hostages, who were taken in the attack.

The March is one of many examples of support for Israel, with a recent spike in voluntourism over the last five weeks. Last week, Christian farmers from Utah and Montana arrived in Israel to help harvest crops on farms not only near the Gaza border but also throughout the country, as thousands of Israelis were called up to the reserves and many international farm workers left the country in the wake of the attacks.

The Jewish National Fund-USA will begin their first of many five-day volunteer missions in December, where participants can help in a variety of areas including farming, working with displaced families and assisting with logistics at an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) base. Taglit Birthright is offering two-week volunteer trips for food rescue and packing and delivering goods to IDF bases. The trip includes airport transfers, health insurance and accommodation in Tel Aviv with safe rooms. Christian organization Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries is now accepting applications for its Hope & Healing trip in the first week of December, which will include a variety of service opportunities, such as packaging and serving hot meals to families in bomb shelters, pack groceries for the wives and children of soldiers currently serving in the IDF and hosting and caring for displaced families.

And local Israeli businesses like Citrus & Salt, a cooking class company, who has paused their classes to provide 500 daily meals to soldiers and misplaced families, and Adopt-A-Safta (which translates to “grandmother” in Hebrew), a local organization, is accepting volunteers from around the world to bring Shabbat meals and necessities to the elderly population of Tel Aviv, many of whom are Holocaust survivors.

“Support for Israel is taking many forms, and support that incorporates travel is a very effective way of doing so,” says Tourism Commissioner to North America for Israel, Eyal Carlin. “We are moved and encouraged by in-person travel initiatives that establish support for the people and the state of Israel as their focal point, and in turn – we encourage exploring the options of joining or supporting such initiatives.”

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Media Contact:

Gabi Sandler | Development Counsellors International
T. 289.221.9933 or gabi.sandler@aboutdci.com

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###

Media Contact:

Gabi Sandler | Development Counsellors International

T. 289.221.9933 or gabi.sandler@aboutdci.com

Subject: Israel's Tourism Industry Mobilizes on the Ground to Provide Hotel Stays for Refugees, Airlift for Evacuees and More

Hi xx,

On October 7, the world awoke to deadly attacks by Hamas on Israel where more than 1,400 people were killed, many more suffered injuries, and more than two hundred others were taken (and still are) hostage. While this has been an incredibly painful and challenging time for the people of Israel, the country as well as its tourism industry, have united to provide support to those who are grieving the loss of loved ones and/or were displaced.

Below is a press release detailing what the Israel Ministry of Tourism, along with the country's many tourism stakeholders, are doing to bring aid and comfort to its people.

If I can provide more information or arrange for an interview to discuss the efforts the tourism industry is initiating on the ground, please feel free to reach out.

Kindest regards,
Gabi

**Israel's Tourism Industry Mobilizes on the Ground to Provide
Hotel Stays for Refugees, Airlift for Evacuees and More**

Jerusalem—November 3, 2023—During the first half of 2023, tourism from the U.S. to Israel had increased by 12% over the same previously record-breaking period in 2019 signaling that the country was enjoying significant growth following the end of the pandemic. Prior to October 7, reservations for fall and winter were robust providing a sense of optimism for Israel's tourism industry.

While this is an incredibly difficult time for the people of Israel, in the four weeks since the attacks by Hamas, in true Israeli spirit tens of thousands of civilian volunteers have come together to assist in providing comfort and aid to those who have been displaced or suffered the loss of loved ones.

"On October 7, the lives of Israeli citizens were changed forever," said Eyal Carlin, Israel's tourism commissioner to North America. "In the nearly four weeks since that horrific day, the tourism community has united like never before to provide comfort to those who are grieving or have loved ones missing, while looking ahead to a time when we can again safely welcome travelers back to our amazing country."

The Israel Ministry of Tourism, along with other tourism industry leaders, have launched several initiatives to help bring support and comfort to its people during this ongoing conflict, including:

- The Israel Ministry of Tourism, in partnership with the Israel Hotels Association and in cooperation with the National Emergency Management Authority, is providing housing

in hotels and youth hostels for all those who have been displaced or evacuated. The ministry has already sourced tens of thousands of guest rooms and includes all meals.

- The Israel Association of Travel Agencies and Consultants has been working continuously to ensure the safe return of Israelis on rescue flights, helping with flight solutions for reservists and assisting citizens to find their way back to Israel in the wake of flight cancellations. The association has also advocated for fair flight cancellation policies for the benefit of passengers as well as keeping abreast of flight cancellations, schedule changes and rescue flights in real time.
- The Jerusalem Development Authority (Jerusalem's tourism arm) has joined the national effort by organizing activities for evacuees staying in Jerusalem hotels.
- Tel Aviv Global has also joined the national effort by:
 - Opening a 24/7 situation room to provide solutions for evacuee families, sourcing guest rooms and more.
 - Providing essential information related to the city for tourists, visitors and residents alike.
 - Cooperating with the local tourism industry, technology innovators and others willing to create initiatives and programs to benefit the evacuees.
 - Sharing positive stories with the international community and media about civilian initiatives and mutual support.
- The Transport Companies Organization's involvement includes assistance in evacuating residents from Gaza as well as other areas of concern and providing buses for organized tours for evacuees.
- KKL-JNF's emergency financial assistance for the benefit of communities living under fire is estimated at approximately NIS 40 million. These initiatives for the benefit of the national effort include, among others:
 - Ongoing assistance in evacuation to guest houses in the center of the country, extended stay for those already evacuated and the implementation of educational and recreational activities.
 - Purchasing temporary concrete shelters, security equipment, generators and computer equipment for the local emergency teams in the communities up to 7 kilometers from the border.
 - The volunteering and special needs department of KKL-JNF initiated a series of activities in apartments and sheltered housing for people with special needs who are unable to leave their homes. These include the distribution of experiential kits and board games created by KKL-JNF and encouraging dialogue to provide hope in times of uncertainty. All activities are carefully created to suit the unique requirements and abilities of the special needs communities. It is hoped that the activities can be expanded beyond the current facilities in Jerusalem and Kfar Saba.

- JNF USA has raised \$27.5 million to date to support on the ground efforts on everything from housing and mental health trauma services to food and clothing.

- Israel Airports Authority
 - Ben Gurion Airport has been operating continuously. The airport is open for departures and arrivals providing service to all airlines - Israeli and international - while ensuring security and safety. Israeli airline
 - *Israir* has festooned its aircrafts' exteriors with yellow ribbons and is offering one-way fares between Ramon and Ben Gurion airports for families visiting loved ones evacuated to hotels in Eilat. It is also providing one-way fares to evacuees of the Gaza periphery staying in Eilat wanting to travel to the country's center along with medical teams enroute to assist evacuee families.

- Israir Airlines has flown some 50,000 passengers, launched rescue flights from various destinations in order to bring home Israeli citizens, reservists and security personnel stranded abroad. Israir has also flown families to speaking engagements overseas to draw attention to their plight and flown cargo flights carrying much-needed equipment.
 - On its regular daily flights to Eilat, Israir offers tickets for evacuees at just NIS 69.
 - Israir continues to fly to several Israeli destinations such as Larnaca, Athens, Baku, Tbilisi, Batumi and Varna.
 - Israir has supported artists, municipalities and medical personnel.
 - The service center, based in Sderot, operates day and night to answer all inquiries.
 - Every boarding card carries the words "Am Yisrael Hai" (the people of Israel live)

- Israel Tour Guides Association has opened a situation room to create connections between voluntary organizations and members of the association to provide a response to the many requests received from the field in areas such as:
 - Civilian (agricultural activities, transport)
 - Evacuees (transport, equipment, food, clothing, accommodation etc.)
 - Security and rescue forces (equipment for reservists, transport, food etc.)
 - Activities included transport of combat equipment, medical equipment, donations and even public diplomacy in various languages (video editing and distribution)

- The Israel Nature and Parks Authority is assisting in various ways:
 - Offering free tours for evacuees staying in the Dead Sea area to nature reserves and sites such as Ein Bokek, Ein Gedi and Masada. These tours, which are organized in cooperation with the Tourism Ministry, the Ministry of the Negev, Galilee and National Resilience and the Or movement, include transport, guiding, refreshments, security and free entry to the sites. More tours are

planned in the region and around the country. (Photos of the tours, courtesy Israel Nature and Parks Authority, below).

- Rescuing protected wild animals from the communities near the Gaza strip
- Transferring dozens of birds of prey from a breeding center in the south to better protected areas such as zoos
- Ensuring the safety of wild animals with rangers in nature conservation enforcement areas
- Offering online environmental education to children whose elementary schools are closed for security reasons.
- About half of the INPA sites remain open, with free admission for evacuees.
- Free activities with the educational team for children evacuated to the Eilat region in Hai Bar Yotveta (plans in place to widen these activities to other areas)
- The INPA website, which has changed the colors of its logo to the national flag, offers a wide range of activities and content for children and families unable to leave home.
- Transfer of mattresses and equipment to the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) from night camping lots that are no longer in operation (for example, Hurshat Tal)

Israel's tourism industry will continue to make contributions by assisting citizens and soldiers wherever possible and whenever needed. Numerous organizations have set up funds to assist those who have been displaced.

###

Media Contact:

Gabi Sandler | Development Counsellors International
T.289.221.9933 or gabi.sandler@aboutdci.com

Subject: NEWS RELEASE: Live Streaming of Christmas Eve Mass From The Holy Land

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**THE HISTORIC BASILICA OF THE ANNUNCIATION HOSTS LIVE STREAMING
OF CHRISTMAS EVE MASS FROM THE HOLY LAND**

*Located in Nazareth, Where Jesus Lived as a Boy, the Basilica Begins its Live Streaming
of Christmas Eve Mass at 12:30pm Eastern Standard Time*

Nazareth—December 19, 2023—The Basilica of the Annunciation, located in Jesus’s hometown of Nazareth, will mark the birth of Jesus during its annual Christmas Eve Mass on December 24 starting at 12:30 p.m. eastern standard time. Presided over by Br. Francesco Patton, the service will bring together worshipers and observers from across the globe on one of the holiest days of the year and at the conclusion of the advent. The live stream can be found [here](#).

“People are looking to connect with one another,” said Eyal Carlin, Israel’s tourism commissioner to North America. “While due to the current and tragic war the crowd will be smaller this year, Catholics and Protestants, as well as observers, can still feel the spirit of the season from wherever they are.”

During these challenging times, people can unite to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, the largest Catholic church in the Middle East, plays a key role in the teachings of Christianity as it is the site where the angel Gabriel descended from heaven and delivered the invitation to the Virgin Mary to bear god’s son.

The first church was established on these hallowed grounds around the year 427 during Byzantine times. The current church was designed by Italian architect Giovanni Muzio and established in 1969. The two-story building’s lower level is where the remains of the previous churches are preserved and a stone wall, hailing from the 12-century Crusader-era, remains intact.

Earlier this month, the church hosted the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, an event that is significant in Nazareth and throughout Galilee. A New Year’s Eve Mass will also stream live at 10:00 a.m. local time allowing virtual attendees to not only reflect on the past year but look to the year ahead.

###

Media Contact:

Elizabeth Borsting | Development Counsellors International

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Subject: NEWS RELEASE: Israel Ranks Among Conde Nast Traveler's 20 Best Countries in the World

Hi xx,

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**THE READERS HAVE SPOKEN!
ISRAEL RANKS AMONG CONDE NAST TRAVELER'S 20 BEST COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD
EARNING A 2023 READERS' CHOICE AWARD**

*Israel Earns the #8 Spot on the Coveted List, While Tel Aviv Ranks #3
as the Year's Most Googled Traveled Cities and Islands*

Jerusalem—December 15, 2023—The past two months have been challenging for Israel, but good news has arrived with the announcement of Conde Nast Traveler's annual Readers' Choice Awards, which ranked Israel as the eighth Best Country in the World. In addition, Tel Aviv was the third most Googled city in 2023.

Celebrating its 36th iteration, the Readers' Choice Awards is likened to the Oscars of travel where readers serve as the "academy" nominating their favorite countries around the world. This year, more than 500,000 people participated in the magazine's Readers' Choice Awards survey.

"This news is such a hopeful sign," said Eyal Carlin, tourism commissioner to North America for the Israel Ministry of Tourism. "Being recognized by the readers of Conde Nast Traveler as one of the best countries in the world is heartening. This news is sure to boost the morale and spirit of our many travel partners and stakeholders across the county as well as the people of Israel."

This year, Israel marked its 75th anniversary and has been attracting travelers near and far with its breadth of history, attractions, future developments and unearthed past. A 2,000-year-old synagogue in the city of Migdal was uncovered by a team of archaeologists, Tel Aviv had hosted one of the largest Pride celebrations since COVID, tourists were enjoying Jerusalem's emerging dining scene while others were discovering its unique wine country flourishing in the Negev Desert.

"We've been working closely with our travel advisers," added Carlin. "Encouraging them to work with their clients to postpone travel to Israel, not cancel it. We are thankful to the readers of Conde Nast Traveler for having faith in us and we are looking forward to welcoming travelers back to Israel when the time is right."

###

Media Contact:

Elizabeth Borsting + Development Counsellors International
T. 562.387.8804 or elizabeth.borsting@aboutdci.com

Subject: Voluntourism to Israel from the U.S. continues to rise two months following October 7th

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

VOLUNTOURISM FROM THE U.S. TO ISRAEL STEADILY INCREASING WITH HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES FROM FARM WORK TO PACKING MEALS AND SUPPLIES

Jerusalem—December 15, 2023—In the wake of the October 7th attacks, several organizations are coordinating humanitarian trips and unity missions to Israel to provide hands-on assistance to the country and its people. Voluntourism, a term coined for volunteer tourism, especially agritourism (agriculture tourism), is increasing as the urgent need for help continues and in response, organizations offer opportunities on the ground, from helping farmers with their harvests to packing care kits for injured civilians and soldiers in the hospital.

According to the Jerusalem Post, Israel's farming communities have lost approximately \$500 million in income since the October 7 attacks. More than 300,000 Israeli reservists, many employed by small farms and wineries to work the land, have been called up for duty leaving farmers without a workforce to tend the fields potentially creating a massive shortage in the Israeli food chain supply. Israel's wine industry is facing a similar crisis with many young winemakers now serving in the military. Local winemakers are assisting their neighbors and colleagues, but opportunities to help with the fermentation, handling of stainless-steel tanks and pumps, and bottling are needed.

Several U.S.-based organizations and international tour companies are coordinating unity missions to Israel, including:

- The Jewish National Fund has several trips planned for December and into the new year. JNF often includes a volunteer component on their tours and right now that is the sole focus. On these solidarity volunteer trips, participants should be prepared to roll up their sleeves and work wherever needed--from picking fruit on farms that are short staffed due to the war, to packing meals.
- The founder of Pomegranate Travel, Hannah Blustin, will lead a unity tour with insider access to Israel in mid-January with volunteer opportunities as well as visits with displaced communities and families of fallen soldiers.
- Taglit-Birthright Israel, known for organizing Jewish birthright trips for young adults, has shifted its focus to engage volunteers by taking part in food rescue operations, including sorting, packing and distributing goods for civil and military personnel, which can help prevent shortages in the Israeli market.
- Volunteers for Israel (VFI), an American organization that organizes civilian volunteer opportunities to work on an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) base. Volunteers help with everything from packing medical supplies to packing meal kits for soldiers.

“Since Israel was attacked, I have been wanting to help in a meaningful way. Until I heard about the volunteer opportunity with JNF, I was concerned that if I went to Israel to try to volunteer, I would be more of a hindrance than a help. When I heard about the JNF volunteer mission trips, I signed up for the very first one,” said Courtney Mizel, a volunteer from California. “One of the days I spent working on a

farm, pulling weeds from around green onion plants! It's physically intense but every minute is so meaningful--this trip certainly isn't about vacation or sightseeing! But I have felt so connected to the *land* of Israel."

In addition to organizations offering volunteer opportunities to Israel, global companies, such as TAL Aviation Group who sent a group of employees to pick pomegranates, have enlisted staff to help on the ground as well and countless Israel-based companies are joining in, both during work and after hours, to contribute filling in on the labor shortages.

"While leisure travel has been paused for now, voluntourism to Israel is gaining momentum with people of all ages and faiths," said Eyal Carlin, Israel's tourism commissioner to North America. "These purpose-driven unity missions are helping to keep Israel's farming communities, as well as other industries, productive. Since October 7, the country's workforce has been depleted. We are grateful to the many men, women and youth who have traveled to Israel to volunteer their time and talents."

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Editor's Note: If you'd like to interview a volunteer who has recently returned from a humanitarian trip to Israel, please contact Elizabeth Borsting at 562.387.8804 or elizabeth.borsting@aboutdci.com

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