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DISSEMINATION BY THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, LLC

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The Livingston Group (TLG) represents the Commissariat of the Holy Land for the USA, an extension of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, which cares for the Christian people and the Christian holy places throughout Israel.

Amidst a time of extraordinary challenges and uncertainty in Israel, several municipalities have initiated legal proceedings against the Custody and other Christian Churches in Israel for millions in alleged municipal taxes. These proceedings are contrary to historical and contemporary agreements that afford the Christian Churches a special legal and tax status.

This status allows the Christian Churches to invest in services that benefit society – churches, eldercare, hospitals, schools, etc. – and that supplement the work of the state. The absence of exemptions and imposition of past taxes would be financially debilitating to the Christian Churches, compromising these social services and harming the Christian and other populations that rely on them.

Most recently, the municipalities have begun freezing their accounts and withholding annual school funds in order to force the Christian Churches to pay the municipal taxes.

While the pressure of municipal taxes is not new, this escalation represents an unprecedented, coordinated attack on the Christian presence in the Holy Land. The Christian Churches have appealed to Prime Minister Netanyahu to intervene as before and suspend the legal proceedings, and to re-establish a special committee to identify a sustainable resolution.

Given the urgency, there is interest in sending a bipartisan letter to State on the issue of municipal taxes and the enduring Christian presence in Israel. We would appreciate you signing on to the letter.

It is important for the US Government and Government of Israel, as committed partners, to engage on issues of mutual and global concern such as this.

We are available to discuss this issue with you and introduce you to the Commissary of the Holy Land for the US, at your earliest convenience.

Thank you, for your consideration.

THE LIVINGSTON GROUP PROVIDES REPRESENTATION FOR THE COMMISSARIAT OF THE HOLY LAND FOR THE USA, A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.