

**DRAFT RESOLUTION PROPOSALS  
TO THE ZIONIST CONGRESS XXXVII**

**COMMITTEE #4: A FREE PEOPLE IN OUR LAND**



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#### 4.1. A Free People in Our Land: Position Paper

*Submitted by Eliezer Shefer, World Organization of Orthodox Communities  
and Synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora*

**Whereas** the title of the proposed theme is derived from the national anthem, **Hatikvah**,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:**

1. To charge the elected bodies (the Executive and the Presidium of the General Council) to present within **three months** a document of principles, addressing the following questions and issues:
  - a. Is it agreed that the Zionist Congress, where most of the delegates are **not** resident or citizens of Israel, should make decisions on issues whose substance a priori concerns the Government of Israel and Israeli society?
  - b. What are our expectations from Zionist Jews in the Diaspora in terms of commitment to and support for the State of Israel and the Government of Israel on issues where there are ideological differences of opinion?
  - c. What is our position on Jewish organizations in the Diaspora who declare their opposition to the sovereign and democratic Government of Israel's stated policy in the State of Israel?
  - d. Is the Zionist Congress and its elected institutions supposed to offer a forum and a platform for grappling with differences of opinion on patently theological issues?
2. The Congress empowers the elected bodies to present the document of principles for discussion and resolutions of principle to the second session of the Zionist General Council.

#### 4.2. Establishment of an Egalitarian Prayer Space at the Western Wall

*Submitted by ARZENU,  
The International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists*

**Whereas** the Western Wall, the enduring symbol of dreams and yearning of Jewish women and men for two thousand years, should likewise be the symbol of Jewish unity in Jerusalem; and

**Whereas** in recent years the Western Wall has become a flashpoint of bitter divisions between different styles of authentic Jewish worship; and

**Whereas** Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky worked diligently to establish an initial compromise wherein all Jewish worshippers would have access to the Western Wall by securing an egalitarian prayer space at Robinson's Arch; and,

**Whereas** JAFI Chairman Sharansky and Government Secretary Avichai Mandelblit have worked faithfully and extensively to create a more expansive and permanent solution adjacent to and equal in size and height to the traditional prayer spaces that currently exist at the Western Wall plaza, but their efforts have not yet yielded the results hoped for; and

**Whereas** promoting Jewish unity is essential to Israel's well-being and national security; and

**Whereas** inequality in worship at the Western Wall undermines the vision that the Wall belongs to all Jews everywhere and tarnishes the image of Israel in the eyes of millions of Jews around the world,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves that:**

It recommends to the Israeli government that it should commit to creating a third section in the Western Wall site that will equal in size, funding and visibility and that will offer a dignified

space of worship for the Conservative and Reform streams and to Women of the Wall, and be a symbol of Jewish Pluralism in Israel.

### **4.3. Conservation of Jewish Heritage Sites and Freedom of Worship within Them**

*Submitted by World Likud*

**Whereas** the Israel Government resolved some time ago on the conservation of a small proportion of sites that represent the origins of the People of Israel's heritage in *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel); and

**Whereas** the Zionist movement's historic and ethical justification throughout its history, since the Exodus from Egypt through today, is based in the origins of the People of Israel's heritage; and

**Whereas** enhancement of awareness of this heritage in Israel and the world is vital to the Zionist movement's continued existence and activity,

#### **The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves as follows:**

The Congress calls upon the Israel Government to declare itself, and to act to conserve and restore Jewish heritage sites holy to Judaism throughout *Eretz Yisrael* – such as: the Temple Mount, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Bet-Lehem, Joseph's Tomb in Shchem, the "Shalom Al Yisrael" Synagogue in Jericho, Yehoshua (Joshua) Bin-Nun's Tomb in Kifl-Hares, the Sebastia Park, and additional sites.

### **4.4. Negev Bedouin**

*Submitted by Mr. Arie Lebowitz, World Union of Meretz*

**Whereas** approximately 220,000 Bedouin citizens of the State of Israel live in the Negev today, accounting for approximately one-third of the region's population, on 2 percent of the region's land, and they are the youngest population in Israeli society, and,

**Whereas** the Negev Bedouin are by far the State of Israel's most disadvantaged community in terms of per capita income, unemployment, poverty rates, and substandard public infrastructure (e.g. schools, roads, public transportation), -- all Bedouin towns are ranked in the bottom two socio-economic rankings (in a scale of one to ten), and three are in the lowest-ranking local councils, according to the socio-economic ranking of 400 localities in Israel, and

**Whereas** Bedouin society is undergoing a process of improved education and economic development, with a growing number of Bedouin academics, business persons, civil society leaders, and especially Bedouin women, in the forefront of this societal development, there remain vast socio-economic gaps, between the Bedouin citizens of Israel in the Negev and the norms for all Israeli citizens as a whole, regardless of ethnicity, and

**Whereas** the Government of Israel established seven new Negev Bedouin towns in the 1970s and 80s, in order to accelerate the process of settling and moving Israel's Bedouin citizens from rural to urban areas, and granting a number of previously unrecognized villages official status, along with partial government services in early 2000s, and that conditions in these towns and recognized villages remain poor and only a portion of Bedouin prefer to live in them, and

**Whereas** approximately 90,000 Negev Bedouin are living in more than 30 "unrecognized" villages, some are in various stages of seeking recognition and services, but most still live in sub-standard conditions, and

**Whereas** the status of unrecognized villages remains under dispute between the State and the Negev Bedouin, stemming in part from lack of records required by Israeli property law, and

**Whereas** the Israeli government has made attempts over the years to resolve these land claims, the most recent such attempt, the Begin-Prawer Plan, aims to regulate Bedouin settlement by compensating certain Bedouin land claims, in return for relocation to existing recognized villages and townships, even though they suffer from chronic neglect, with some still lacking basic essential services including central municipal water systems, central sewage treatment, grid-connected electrical service, refuse collection, adequate roads, access to public transportation, and no approved master plans, and

**Whereas** ongoing deliberations over the Begin-Prawer Plan have raised significant controversy in both Bedouin communities in the Negev and Israeli government policy makers, and

**Whereas** there are major concerns on both sides that the plan does not effectively or fairly resolve the issues confronting both Bedouin and non-Bedouin Negev residents, set good precedent, or is a form that will be approved, and

**Whereas** alternative proposals have been made, such as one by Knesset Member Ayman Odeh, that aim to normalize the status of unrecognized villages and address the concerns not covered by the Begin-Prawer plan, and

**Whereas** the JNF/KKL is engaged in forestation and development in the Negev, following the State of Israel's National Master Plan, and is planting trees on large tracts of land in the Negev containing Bedouin villages, many with longstanding Bedouin claims of ownership, and this JNF/KKL work is requiring massive dispossession of Bedouin from lands to which they claim ownership, in order to open up space to make room for new and existing Jewish communities, and

**Whereas** it is the Israeli government that determines whether a village – Jewish, Bedouin or otherwise – is legal or illegal, and the JNF-KKL in its role as the Israeli forestation organization, executes the policy of the State of Israel and its planning institutions in all areas related to forestation, and

**Whereas** educated Bedouin young adults with strong social and political awareness are encouraging their own society to emerge from its traditional, tribally-fragmented conservatism while challenging the State of Israel, their country, to recognize their rights, and

**Whereas** the State of Israel is best served by a policy in which all citizens of the country enjoy the 'full and equal citizenship' promised by Israeli's Declaration of Independence, and

**Whereas** it is necessary to expedite genuine, productive, efforts to solve this challenge with a solution for the recognized and the unrecognized Bedouin villages of the Negev that is acceptable to all sides, and which benefits the Negev and the country as a whole,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves as follows:**

The World Zionist Organization calls on Israel's Ministry of Agriculture to revise the Begin-Prawer plan, such that alternative plans developed by civil society leaders and policy-makers are incorporated and those leaders developing alternative plans are included in revision efforts as part of engaging multiple stakeholders and representatives concerned with resolution of these claims.

The World Zionist Organization calls for a freeze on all demolition orders on houses in these Negev villages to be implemented immediately, until such an agreed-upon solution is reached.

The World Zionist Organization calls on the Government of the State of Israel to

- (1) Recognize the historical connection between the Bedouin and the Negev,

1 (2) Allocate land to the Bedouin according to the same egalitarian principles it applies to  
2 other citizens, and

3 (3) quickly implement acceptable town master plans to promote development and stability  
4 for the Negev Bedouin within Israeli society, while eliminating the pressure for illegal  
5 construction caused by lack of approved master plans that make it impossible to obtain  
6 building permits.

7 The World Zionist Organization, in its governance responsibility for the JNF-KKL, **will take**  
8 **actions** that improve, or at least, do not do irreversible damage to the status of the Bedouin  
9 communities.

10 Finally, the World Zionist Organization calls on the Israeli Government, national institutions,  
11 and relevant NGOs to expand efforts that would enable Israel's Bedouin communities to  
12 develop under their own initiatives and to expand efforts for the Israeli Bedouin and Jewish  
13 citizens to pursue a shared society in the State of Israel.

14

#### 15 4.5. The Druze Zionist Movement

16 *Submitted by the Zionist Council in Israel*

17 **Whereas** the Zionist Congress is aware of the Druze Zionist movement's extensive activities  
18 to enhance the identification of young Druze to the State of Israel and its value as a democratic  
19 Jewish state, promote IDF and National Service and strengthen the Jewish-Druze "Covenant  
20 of Life" in Israel; and

21 **Whereas** "Covenant of Life" activity has expanded and moreover, the first contingent of  
22 female recruits from the Druze community have completed National Service,

23 **The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:**

24 To support the Druze Zionist movement and its activities on a permanent basis through the  
25 Zionist Council in Israel's budget.

26

#### 27 4.6. Opposition to Hate Crimes

28 *Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

29 **Whereas** Zionism is a movement which advocates the principles of justice, equality and  
30 democracy, as detailed in the Constitution of the World Zionist Organization; and

31 **Whereas** terrorist crimes on the basis of nationalism, hate, racism and discrimination are  
32 contradictory to the human spirit, the right to human existence, and the founding principles  
33 of Judaism, and are detrimental to human rights and all of mankind; and

34 **Whereas, alongside murderous Islamic terror, there have been numerous cases of terror**  
35 **perpetrated by Jews**, which has led to the deaths and mutilation of innocent people, as well  
36 as to the impairment of rights and damage of property; and

37 **Whereas books inciting towards the killing of non-Jews are being disseminated, such as**  
38 **"Torat Hamelech" ("The King's Torah") and the like,**

39 **The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

40 1. That it condemns a hate crime perpetrated by a person of any faith or national community  
41 and will not allocate budget to any entity that is not signed on a Covenant against Hate on  
42 the basis of national origin, hatred, racism and discrimination, in the spirit of the Israeli  
43 Declaration of Independence.

44 2. Institutions that disseminate the book entitled *"Torat Hamelech"* and the like shall be  
45 unable to receive WZO support, whether directly or indirectly.

#### 4.7. Refining Israel's Existence as a Jewish and Democratic State

*Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

**Whereas** anti-democratic tendencies are developing within Israeli society and Diaspora Jewry, which trends pose an existential danger to the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state; and

**Whereas** we are witnesses to the fact that Zionism without democratic values and without affinity to universal, humanistic values acts to weaken Zionist identity and the status of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora; and

**Whereas** Zionism is a movement which advocates the principles of justice, equality and democracy, as detailed in the Constitution of the World Zionist Organization; and

**Whereas** we are witnessing anti-democratic and anti-humanist phenomena among public figures and figures in education in the State of Israel,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

1. That the World Zionist Organization shall foster and allocate budget for Advocacy initiatives and programs to combat racism in Israeli society and the Diaspora, primarily among teenagers, in order to promote education towards the universal values of justice, equality, and tolerance, alongside Jewish-Zionist values.
2. It will place Israel's **Declaration of the Independence** at the center of Jewish-Zionist education and develop a program in this spirit for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israel's independence.

#### 4.8. Civil [\[GM1\]](#) Society Organizations

*Submitted by Mr. Arie Lebowitz, World Union of Meretz*

**Whereas** Zionism is a movement that supports justice, equality and democracy as specified in the Constitution of the WZO, and

**Whereas** the Zionist movement was established as a democratic movement in its nature and conduct, thus becoming the first democratic mass movement of the Jewish people after 2,000 years of exile, and

**Whereas** the State of Israel was the first state in history that was established as a Jewish and democratic state, and

**Whereas** today there is an increase of voices from nonprofit civil society organizations that ask to be engaged in the process of shaping the state and society and not leave it solely in the hands of formal institutions, and

**Whereas** a multi-sectoral partnership, that has representation of different sections of society and includes a variety of cultures, holds the opportunity to develop and push forward the State of Israel towards equality and social justice,

**This Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

1. To recognize the importance of civil society organizations in Israel, and respect their right for freedom of action and independence;
2. To recognize the civil society organizations' contribution to the strength of democracy in Israel, including freedom of speech and assembly as key components of a democratic society;
3. To recognize the importance of creating an environment that enables, supports and is free of restrictions for civil society organizations;

4. **That this Zionist Congress orders** the Zionist Executive to hold a round table of civil society organizations that engage in fields that are relevant for the work of the World Zionist Organization;

5. **That this Zionist Congress** commits itself to prioritize engagement with non-profit civil society organizations, rather than with other bodies that aim to profit from such engagement when they provide the same service as non-profit CSOs.

#### 4.9. Democracy in Israel

*Submitted by AMEINU Delegates, USA – Etz - World Labor Zionist Union*

**Whereas** one of the foundations of Zionism, as expressed in the Jerusalem Program of the World Zionist Organization, is: “Strengthening Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state and shaping it as an exemplary society with a unique moral and spiritual character. Marked by mutual respect for the multi-faceted Jewish people, rooted in the vision of the prophets, striving for peace and contributing to the betterment of the world;” and

**Whereas** the Israeli Declaration of Independence reads in part that the State of Israel will “*be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations;*” and

**Whereas** the delegates to the Zionist Congress wish to affirm the significance and powerful relevance of the values reflected in these central texts; and

**Whereas** The Zionist Congress is a representative body of the entire Jewish people, for whom Israel represents the fulfillment of national aspirations and continuity; and

**Whereas** we view with alarm the deterioration of democracy in Israel, reflected in increasing rates of violence towards members of minority groups, attempts to stifle civic engagement by non-governmental organizations perceived as critical of the government, and in lack of respect for Jewish pluralism; and

**Whereas** this deterioration of democracy presents significant challenges to the maintenance of strong ties between Diaspora communities and the State of Israel;

#### **Be it resolved:**

That the delegates of the 37th Zionist Congress call on the duly elected government of Israel to reaffirm and reinforce the country’s democratic institutions and traditions;

#### **And be it further resolved:**

That the delegates of the 37th Zionist Congress call on the World Zionist Organization to work with the Government of Israel to establish a funded initiative to develop mechanisms that can reinforce the country’s democratic institutions and traditions;

#### **And be it further resolved:**

That the "Department for Zionist Activities in Israel" develop an educational program around the country’s democratic institutions and traditions, and implement it through the appropriate frameworks in Israel.

#### 4.10. The Separation of Religion and State

*Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

**Whereas** the State of Israel is a Jewish and democratic state, and not a state based in Halachah (Jewish religious law); and



**Whereas** the freedom of religion, conscience and the equality of rights for all citizens of Israel irrespective of religion, race or gender, as promised in Israel's Declaration of Independence, are consistent with Jewish tradition's enlightened outlook, founded in the equality of the value of Man, freedom of choice and freedom of conscience; and

**Whereas these values represent an indivisible part of the Zionist movement's outlook;** and

**Whereas** many of the State of Israel's citizens define themselves as secular or not of the Jewish religion; and

**Whereas** many Diaspora Jews perceive themselves as Jews by national community or culture, but not by religion; and

**Whereas** religious coercion and the connection between religion and state is detrimental to the routine of the lives of many citizens of Israel, as well as being detrimental to their choices on various matters, including personal status laws,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

That the heritage of Israel and Jewish Law are a source of inspiration for the creativity and our way of life, but not the source of authority or a compulsory norm in a democratic state and a world open to progress, creativity and research. The Congress will therefore support the separation of religion and state and thus the freedom of religion, which will guarantee the rights of all the citizens and inhabitants of the state, both Jewish and non-Jewish – to live their lives in accordance with their customs, their outlook and beliefs, both in the private and the public spheres.

#### **4.11. Recognition of Support for the LGBT Community**

*Submitted by ARZENU,*

*The International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists*

**Whereas** people around the world were horrified by the unprovoked murder of Shira Banki and the injury of other participants in the Jerusalem march for Pride and Tolerance; and

**Whereas** Israel's Declaration of Independence calls for all citizens to be able to live in freedom and security regardless of their religion, gender etc.; and

**Whereas** Israel desires to be seen as a beacon of LGBT rights; and

**Whereas** concern remains regarding continued attacks on LGBT and other vulnerable groups in the public arena of Israel's society,

**Therefore, the Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves that:**

1. The Zionist Congress commends the action of Education Minister, Naftali Bennett, in immediately announcing an increase support for the LGBT community. We call on Minister Bennett to ensure adequate funding for the organization "Israel Gay Youth", for the "Jerusalem Open House" and for other LGBT organizations, to secure the role of members of the LGBT community within Israeli society.
2. The Zionist Congress calls on Minister Bennett to ensure that all Israeli students (and in particular in the Orthodox school systems) take part in programing that promotes diversity, inclusion and equality for the LGBT community.

#### **4.12. The Gay Community**

*Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

**Whereas** Zionism is a movement which advocates the principles of justice, equality and democracy, as detailed in the Constitution of the World Zionist Organization; and

**Whereas**, in the State of Israel's Declaration of Independence, there exists a commitment to *"ensure complete equality of social and political rights for all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or gender"*; and

**Whereas** in the capital of Israel instances of attack and murder have been perpetrated against the GLTB community, at variance with human conscience, and in violation of the laws of the State of Israel and Jewish values; and

**Whereas** the GLTB community's right to equality was first recognized in Israel by the enactment of an amendment to the Equal Opportunities in the Workplace Act in 1994, which prohibited discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Alongside this, the 'Prohibition of Discrimination in Products, Services and Entry to Public Place Act of 2000 (5761)' broadened the scope of the prohibition to any place under private ownership providing service to the public, such as a shop, club, or business; and the Courts determined that this prohibition on discrimination outweighs any claim of inability to provide the service on religious grounds; and

**Whereas** the Israel Supreme Court ruled that the legal right to equality prohibits discrimination both on the basis of sexual orientation and sexual identity; and

**Whereas** various democratic countries, such as Ireland and the USA have promoted egalitarian legislation in relation to civil marriage,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

That it supports equal rights for the GLTB community and will enforce complete equality of their admission to Zionist entities, and will encourage their activities within the National Institutions.

#### **4.13. Klal Yisrael as a Principle Responsibility of the Israeli Government**

*Submitted by ARZENU,*

*The International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists*

**Whereas** MK David Azoulay, Minister of Religious Affairs, publicly denigrated and defamed large segments of the Jewish people worldwide with his comments regarding Reform Jews, *"I cannot allow myself to call such a person a Jew,"* and *"Reform Jews are a disaster to the nation of Israel"*; and

**Whereas** Prime Minister Netanyahu properly responded that such remarks are *"hurtful,"* and *"do not reflect the position of the government"*; and

**Whereas** the State of Israel is the homeland for all Jews everywhere, and the Declaration of Independence ensures that the State *"...will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture"*; and

**Whereas** his divisive comments call into doubt MK Azoulay's ability to administer the Religious Affairs Ministry with fairness and equitability to all Jews in Israel and will alienate a substantial number of Jews worldwide,

**Therefore, the Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

To call upon Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to

1. Reaffirm his commitment to the spirit of *Klal Yisrael* by initiating a strategic dialogue with leaders of non-Orthodox movements about their status in Israel and state recognition of their rabbis and communities.
2. Demand of all government ministers that they fully embrace collective responsibility for *Klal Yisrael*.

3. Remove from his government anyone who acts or speaks in such a way as to damage the unity of the Jewish people.
4. Immediately enter into conversations with the WZO regarding the implementation of this resolution.

#### 4.14. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

*Submitted by ARZENU,*

*The International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists*

**Whereas** the conflict between Jewish and Arab citizens over control of *Eretz Yisrael*, its land, its culture and its governance, can be traced back to events long before the establishment of the Jewish State; and

**Whereas** our founding leaders have included in the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel both a call for peace to the Arab population, even during hostile attacks, as well as a declaration that we are extending our hand for peace and amity to all the neighboring countries and their people, stating that the State of Israel is ready and willing to make its contribution to a joint effort to the advancement of the Middle East; and

**Whereas** the conflict between Jews and Arabs has been marked by, and is continuing to be marked by, competing and conflicting interpretations of historical facts, interpretations that have led to incidents large and small characterized by oppression, prejudice, hostility and even violence by one community against the other; and

**Whereas** such profoundly differing and mutually antagonistic interpretations and narratives regarding origins, legitimacy and rights are not unique to the Middle East; and

**Whereas** there are outstanding examples as to how some nations have successfully dealt with such internal conflicts with sensitivity, compassion and understanding through the establishment of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions; and

**Whereas** the dream of Zionism is exemplified by linking it to the pursuit of TZEDEK U-MISHPAT,

**Therefore, the Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves that:**

1. **The World Zionist Organization** calls for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, so as to help move beyond the deeply troubling and profoundly differing understandings of relationships between Israeli Arab and Israeli Jewish citizens, and thus facilitate efforts to forge positive and peaceful relationships among all Israeli citizens for their shared future in the State of Israel.
2. The Commission shall be made up of equal numbers of Israel's Jewish and Arab populations, appointed by the President of Israel.
3. **To call upon** the President of the State of Israel to establish the specific mandate and authority of the Commission after an appropriate period of public discussion and consultation.
4. In general, the tasks of the commission will include:
  - a. Listening to each other's narratives regarding claims to the same land and expressing sympathy for sufferings, past and present.
  - b. Recommending measures to the Government of Israel that would include means to facilitate the public admission of past injustices that both communities have visited upon the other, and designating suggested means through which past injustices can be redressed and future injustices prevented.

- c. Recommending a program of sincere, mutual steps toward peace and reconciliation, involving a readiness on each side to accept those painful compromises necessary for the sake of living together in peace.

#### 4.15. The Settlement Enterprise

*Submitted by Members of the Ohavei Zion Faction, World Sephardic Zionist Organization*

**Whereas** the State of Israel decided on a construction freeze in Jerusalem, a decision which has been detrimental to the awareness of our right to the Land of Israel around the world, bolstering the delegitimization of the Zionist enterprise, with the outcome being a wave of Antisemitism and hatred for Israel worldwide; and

**Whereas** we are witnessing a de facto freeze also in Maaleh Adumim; and

**Whereas** not enough has been done in terms of Jewish settlement in the Galilee and the South,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII resolves:**

1. To call upon the Israel Government to annul the construction freeze immediately and increase construction in all parts of Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel.)
2. To continue building in all Jerusalem neighborhoods, to approve programs and assign budgets to build housing for young couples in Jerusalem.
3. To increase the Settlement Division's budget, so that it will be able to enhance settlement in the Negev and in the North and, similarly, to promote Aliyah to these regions.

#### 4.16. The Centrality of the Kibbutz and Moshav Movements and Agricultural Labor to the State of Israel

*Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

**Whereas** the kibbutz movement and the moshav movement played a central role in building the State of Israel and guarding its borders; and

**Whereas** Zionism's roots lie in the activities of the blue-shirted youth movement *bogrim* (alumni), kibbutz and moshav members; and

**Whereas** it is important to protect the existence of the kibbutzim as an ideological and egalitarian way of life; and

**Whereas** part of the fabric of members' lives in the kibbutzim is linked to their work in agriculture, a sphere which has helped consolidate the State of Israel's path since the establishment of the State; and

**Whereas** it is not the farmers who are responsible for the rise in food prices, but the corporations marketing the food,

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

1. To support the farmers' call and their struggle to protect their activity. The Congress calls upon the Israel Government not to degrade the conditions under which members earn their livelihood as they engage in the settlement of the land and protection of its borders. The Congress calls upon the government to find solutions to reduce the cost of living that will not be at the expense of the farmers, and not leading to bankruptcy and the removal of more people from the employment market.
2. The Congress similarly resolves to support and encourage the activities of the kibbutz and the moshav movements by means of a project co-funded with the kibbutz and moshav movements in the sphere of Immigration Absorption and the integration of *olim* into Israeli society, in general, and the agricultural sector, in particular.

The project will run over a period of a few years, reaching its high point in 2018, when the State of Israel will be 70 years old.

#### 4.17. African Refugees and Asylum Seekers

*Submitted by ARZENU,*

*The International Federation of Reform and Progressive Religious Zionists*

**Whereas** the Israeli Declaration of Independence proclaims that the State of Israel is based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the Prophets of Israel; and

**Whereas** the prophetic vision of the State of Israel is as the moral and social *Light Unto the Nations* (Isaiah 49:6); and

**Whereas** the Government of Israel bears a major responsibility for the wellbeing of Israeli residents of cities and neighborhoods, such as those in south Tel Aviv – Yafo; and

**Whereas** roughly 45,000 Africans, mostly from Sudan and Eritrea, presently reside in Israel; and

**Whereas** we recognize that, with over 5,500 asylum seekers per 1,000,000 population, Israel has had to deal with more asylum seekers than the vast majority of other democracies. We also recognize that finding an appropriate solution for all the asylum seekers in Israel requires efforts to enlist resettlement assistance from additional countries in the developed world; and

**Whereas** the tide of African immigration was effectively stemmed when a barrier between Israel and Egypt was completed in 2013; and

**Whereas** the State of Israel is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention), which it has also ratified, a Convention drafted in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the Second World War; and

**Whereas** many of the Africans in Israel today view themselves as refugees as defined in the 1951 Convention, with several thousands of them having made formal Refugee Status Determination requests to the Israeli Ministry of Interior; and

**Whereas** Sudanese and Eritreans live in many towns and cities around Israel, with large communities of these people having developed in several cities, the largest in the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv –Yafo,

**Therefore, the Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby** calls upon the Government of the State of Israel:

1. To treat African refugees and asylum seekers with the respect and rights due to them according to the Declaration of Independence, the Basic Laws of the State of Israel and the Refugee Convention, and in the spirit of the Torah which mandates that “*You too must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,*” (Deuteronomy 10:19).
2. To take heed of the rulings of the Israeli Supreme Court in three separate cases brought before it, in which the Court quashed and/or highly criticized legislation passed by the Knesset at the government's behest, legislation which authorized the establishment of detention facilities in the Negev desert with the sole purpose of incarcerating Sudanese and Eritrean persons presently residing in Israel.
3. To process expeditiously and in accordance with accepted international standards the thousands of Refugee Status Determination requests it has already received.
4. To refrain from taking any further actions meant to encourage and/or coerce Sudanese and Eritreans persons presently residing in Israel to leave Israel and be sent to countries in which they will face mortal dangers or in which they will not be afforded protection

under the law and/or bona fide opportunities to prove their status as refugees or asylum seekers.

5. To creatively divert substantial financial resources presently being spent on incarcerating Sudanese and Eritreans, to projects and initiatives aimed at providing both Israelis and asylum seekers appropriate employment opportunities, academic, vocational and other training, thus enabling all of them to live in dignity and with respect.

#### **4.18. Migration Policy in Israel**

*Submitted by the World Meretz Union Faction*

**Whereas** the State of Israel is one of the only democratic states that does not have a clear and comprehensive policy on migration but, rather, the Law of Return for Jews alone, around which there has been continued dispute in relation to its definitions; and

**Whereas** there are hundreds of thousands of residents in Israel lacking regulated status; and

**Whereas** there are olim, visitors, tourists, temporary and not so temporary workers, asylum seekers and home-seekers who arrive at the shores of the State of Israel; and

**Whereas** the State of Israel is a state that absorbs Aliyah and integrates good people from all round the world; and

**Whereas** at present Israel does lacks a definitive policy on foreign workers, lacks an equitable policy on family reunion, and there is no enforcement of Israel's signed and declared policy in relation to asylum seekers; and

**Whereas** visitors of all kinds, from all over the world, come to Israel out of interest; and

**Whereas** Israel has a vested interest in attracting people to regulate their status; and

**Whereas** a democratic state is in need of a clear policy and transparent criteria to integrate new citizens; and

**Whereas** a number of different proposals exist, including a detailed one by Professor Shlomo Aviner, Professor Aumann, Professor Rubinstein, Professor Ruth Gavison, and others,

**The Zionist Congress XVII hereby resolves:**

To establish a committee of experts to propose a comprehensive immigration policy for Israel that will regulate its relations with groups and individuals interested in establishing themselves within it, who wish to know the procedure for the admission of temporary residents, residents who are employment seekers, and Jewish and non-Jewish people interested in naturalization and linking themselves to the destiny of the State of Israel.

#### **4.19. Asylum Seekers and Refugees Seeking Protection in Israel**

*Submitted by Arie Lebowitz, World Union of Meretz*

**Whereas** throughout history, Jewish people have been expelled or ostracized by various local authorities and sought asylum from anti-Semitism numerous times, after its establishment in 1948, Israel became home not only for the inhabitants of the State, but also for all Jewish people everywhere, and;

**Whereas** the Israel's Declaration of Independence asserts that "*State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews and the ingathering of exiles from all countries of their dispersion*" and its 1950 Law of Return codified this mission to gather Jews from around the world by granting them the right to settle in Israel and gain automatic citizenship, and;

**Whereas** Israel is a Jewish state with the law of return allows Jews who come to Israel, whether because of persecution or otherwise, to be immigrants - *olim chadashim*, and;

**Whereas** at least three asylum seekers who resided in Israel, but were subsequently deported to a third country were taken and executed by Islamic State militants in Libya, and;

**Whereas** over 130 students from Israeli pre-military academies have sent a letter to the Prime Minister, calling on him to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and put an end to Israel's policy of deporting Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers, and;

**Whereas** the Israeli government recently announced its intention to begin indefinitely detaining Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers who refuse to leave to unnamed third countries, and;

**Whereas** the response of Israel's Transportation Minister to 950 asylum seekers drowning in the sea on their way to Italy, was to praise the government for preventing migrants from entering the country, and;

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

The World Zionist Organization calls on the Government of Israel to change its policy towards asylum seekers and refugees seeking protection in Israel, so as to adhere under international law, and particularly the refugee convention which states that: *"No Contracting State shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened..."*; and further

The World Zionist Organization calls on the Government to close the Holot detention center in the Negev, and to allow them to contribute to the Israeli economy and society until their status is appropriately adjudicated, rather than forcing them to be housed in the Negev at significant government expense or pressuring them to relocate to an unfamiliar and unsafe third countries; and further

The World Zionist Organization calls on the Government to cease the inhumane and degrading treatment in the Holot center and allow asylum seekers released in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Court this summer more freedom of movement; and further

The World Zionist Organization calls on the appropriate governmental agency to grant each individual asylum applicant on a timely basis the individualized factual hearing on the merits, in accordance with international law and particularly the refugee convention guidelines that all other free and democratic societies offer; and further

The World Zionist Organization calls on the Government to adopt policy that achieves dignity, respect and justice for refugees and asylum-seekers, Israeli citizens and many residents of south Tel Aviv alike, by strengthening infrastructure of the South Tel-Aviv neighborhoods where many asylum seekers reside and ensuring proper resources are allocated to provide services both to Israeli citizens and to asylum seekers; and further

**The Zionist Congress XXXVII** calls on the WZO to create a task force and allocate a budget for that, in order for the WZO can play a meaningful role in the implementation of Jewish Zionist values, in this specific challenge confronting Israeli society and help the refugees in their basic life needs and legal advice for the process of applying for asylum.

#### **4.20. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide as an Expression of the Zionist Ideal**

*Submitted by MERCAZ Olami and Masorti Olami  
and The World Confederation of United Zionists*

**Whereas** since its inception the Zionist movement has striven to create a moral society of the highest caliber and serve as an ethical standard bearer within the family of nations, and

1 **Whereas**, in the words of Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl, the Zionist enterprise is dedicated to the ideal  
2 that through the establishment of the Jewish state "*the world will be liberated by our freedom,*  
3 *enriched by our wealth, and magnified by our greatness,*" and

4 **Whereas** fulfillment of this ideal requires that the Zionist movement speak out publicly on  
5 issues of moral and ethical significance, and

6 **Whereas** the Jewish people as a whole and the Zionist movement in particular possess a  
7 particular sensitivity to the phenomenon of genocide and an inherent responsibility to raise  
8 public awareness and do all within their power to prevent it, and

9 **Whereas** the heinous crimes perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian  
10 people have been recognized as constituting genocide by more than 25 countries around the  
11 world as well as the United Nations, the European Parliament, the International Association  
12 of Genocide Scholars, and a host of international organizations, and

13 **Whereas**, the year 2015 marks the centenary of the Armenian genocide, and

14 **Whereas** Armenia continues to struggle for international recognition of the genocide it  
15 suffered, and

16 **Whereas** recognition and remembrance of acts of genocide are integral to the struggle to  
17 prevent its recurrence,

18 **The Zionist Congress XXXVII hereby resolves:**

19 That the World Zionist Organization, in fulfillment of the Zionist ideal:

- 20 1. Recognizes that the slaughter and forced deportation of Armenians executed by the  
21 Ottoman Empire between 1915-1923 constitute genocide,
- 22 2. Pays tribute to the memory and suffering of the 1,500,000 victims murdered by actions of  
23 the Ottoman Empire during this period,
- 24 3. Calls upon the Turkish Republic to acknowledge responsibility for the crimes committed  
25 against the Armenian people a century ago and to pay homage to the victims, and
- 26 4. Encourages the governments of Armenia and Turkey to normalize relations between their  
27 two countries, and to initiate a process of reconciliation between the Armenian and  
28 Turkish peoples.

29 **Be it further resolved** that the WZO calls upon the Government of Israel to similarly recognize  
30 the Armenian genocide, and proposes that the Zionist Executive work to arrange a meeting  
31 with the appropriate legislative and executive governmental leadership in Israel, in order to  
32 bring this about.

33 **Be it further resolved** that a delegation of WZO representatives meet with representatives of  
34 Armenia, in order to deliver this message of solidarity in person and in order to develop ties  
35 between the Jewish and Armenian people, particularly in consideration of the large Armenian  
36 Diaspora residing in Jerusalem.