

## **In clear message to the Government of Israel, World Zionist Congress passes unprecedented set of resolutions promoting liberalism and pluralism, opposing “judicial overhaul” and harming Law of Return**

**WZO Vice Chairman Yizhar Hess:** *“Faced with the most extreme government in Israel’s history, world Jewry has gone on record: Israel must remain a liberal, Jewish and democratic state.”*

In online voting conducted between May 21st and 23rd, the World Zionist Congress passed by significant majorities an historically-unprecedented series of resolutions promoting liberal, democratic, and pluralistic values in Israel and the Zionist Movement. Taken together, these resolutions send a clear message to the Government of Israel that the Jewish world demands Israel remain a liberal, Jewish and democratic nation-state of all the Jewish people, and stands firmly against illiberal and anti-democratic elements of its agenda, including the so-called “judicial overhaul” and proposals to undermine the Law of Return.

The democratic parliament of the Jewish people first convened by Herzl in 1897, the World Zionist Congress consists of 753 representatives from every stream, background, and political persuasion, from Jewish communities around the world. Among the resolutions passed by the Congress were resolutions opposing the government’s proposed “judicial overhaul”, opposing changes to the Law of Return, calling for the full recognition of Conservative and Reform conversions, anchoring LGBT rights in Israel and the Zionist Movement, and promoting women’s rights in the Zionist Movement.

Following a coordinated, cooperative effort by the center-left-liberal bloc, the passage of these resolutions represents the defeat of a filibuster by pro-government right-wing parties in the Zionist Congress, including the ultra-Orthodox Eretz HaKodesh party who entered the Congress for the first-time under the guidance of MK Yitzhak Pindrus. Out of fear of such a clear rebuke of the current government’s agenda by the Jewish world, the right-wing bloc unsuccessfully attempted first to prevent votes on such resolutions altogether and later, to prevent their passage through both a filibuster and litigation.

### **Vice Chairman of the World Zionist Organization and senior representative of MERCAZ, the Zionist party of the Masorti/Conservative Movement:**

“Today, the democratic voice of Jews everywhere - the World Zionist Congress - sent a clear message to Israel’s government: Israel must remain a Jewish AND democratic state that’s a welcoming home for each and every Jew. The passage of these resolutions is a victory for democracy. Not only because these resolutions represent the clear, democratic voice of world Jewry, despite the best efforts of the Likud and its right-wing allies to silence them. But because the resolutions show the Jewish world’s firm support for Herzl’s Zionist vision: of a Jewish state that is liberal, democratic, pluralistic, and a home for each and every Jew. While our work is just getting started, I am proud of my friends at the Masorti/Conservative Movement’s MERCAZ party, our Reform partners, and all our allies for their hard work to deliver this important victory for liberal and democratic values.”