

25 July 2023

JDI Statement on the Passing of Key Judicial Overhaul Law

The Jewish Democratic Initiative (JDI) joins millions of Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora in condemning the seismic ideological shift driven by the government of the State of Israel's ruling coalition.

The current ruling coalition is determined to radically alter the makeup and meaning of the State of Israel as it represents itself to both Jewish Israelis and the Jewish world internationally. The State of Israel that is emerging from their legislative agenda dismantles and undermines the values espoused by the 1948 Declaration of Independence. What is evolving is a settler State where citizens' rights are curtailed by an authoritarian regime legally privileging a minority whose values closely resemble those of the Nationalist government which ruled South Africa from 1948-1994.

As Jewish South Africans, where our civil rights are protected by a constitution, we are horrified at the deliberate dismantling of Israeli democracy. As a community who closely identifies with Israel – **we raise our voice in opposition to the commandeering of democratic ideals by fundamentalist Jewish supremacists.** If our values encompass tolerance, pluralism, religious freedom and civil rights do we continue to succumb to a cognitive dissonance and not apply these core principles where Israel is concerned?

Our firm belief is that democracy cannot exist under Occupation. In this moment of adversity, our hope as JDI is for the Israeli protest movement to evolve, shifting focus away from an ethno-centric Jewish supremacy towards embracing genuine democratic values and principles of equality under the law.

Our hope for the Jewish People in this time of crisis, is to move away from the current atmosphere of 'Sin'at Chinam' - baseless hatred - towards 'Ahavat Chinam' - baseless love for our fellow Jew and human being - no matter their political ideology.

JDI calls on our SA Jewish Community to make our voices heard in support of those in Israel-Palestine who envisage a future of peace, of shared community within a state where respect for the rule of law guaranteeing equality for all is the minimum basic standard.