

Date: June 2, 26 / י"ז בסיון ה'תשפ"ו

His Excellency Mr. Stefaan Thijs

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Israel

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Your Excellency,

Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding Religious Freedom and the Rise of Antisemitism

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits.

I am writing to you in my capacity as a community leader and member of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Committee for Interreligious Dialogue. It is with a deep sense of urgency regarding the safety, continuity, and fundamental rights of the Jewish community in Belgium and across Europe that I reach out to you today.

For over 80 years, the sacred practice of circumcision (*Brit Milah*) has been observed in Belgium completely free of any governmental restriction, intervention, or legal barrier. This long-standing status quo has allowed the Jewish community to thrive as an integral, loyal, and peaceful part of Belgian society, fully trusting in the nation's historic commitment to freedom of religion and conscience.

Recently, however, we have witnessed a sudden and deeply concerning shift, with mounting legislative and societal pressures aimed at restricting this cornerstone of Jewish faith and identity. Given that there has been no change in the underlying law, nor any medical or objective justification for this sudden opposition, this sudden persecution is both baffling and deeply alarming.

Regrettably, it is impossible to view this sudden targeting of a core religious practice as an isolated event. Instead, it must be understood for what it truly is: a dangerous byproduct of the broader, toxic wave of antisemitism currently sweeping across Europe, which has unfortunately not spared Belgium. When traditional religious practices that have been respected for generations are suddenly called into question, it serves as a painful indicator of a rising tide of prejudice that threatens the entire fabric of civil society.

We highly value Belgium's historical dedication to human rights, and it is in this spirit of mutual respect that I urge you to use your good offices, your voice, and your diplomatic leadership to stand firmly against these restrictive pressures. Defending the continued, unrestricted freedom of *Brit Milah* is not only essential for the future of Belgian Jewry, but it is also a vital defense of the universal principle of religious liberty itself.

Thank you for your time, your close attention to this pressing matter, and your continued dedication to upholding the values of freedom and tolerance. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you further at your convenience and I trust you will communicate these pressing concerns to the highest levels of your administration.

With my highest regards and blessings,

Rabbi Eliezer Simcha Weisz



Member of the Chief Rabbinate Committee of Interreligious Dialogue

