

*World Jewish Congress-Israel  
Israel Council on Foreign Relations (ICFR)  
Report on Activities for Executive Committee  
Madrid, March 2023*



In February, veteran WJC-Israel Chairman Gad Ariely was appointed director general of the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology. As such, he resigned from the chairmanship of the board and from the board itself. WJC-Israel is profoundly grateful to him for his manifold contributions to the organization on both the local and international levels and for his outstanding leadership. In a letter to Mr. Ariely, WJC President Ronald Lauder wrote: “On so many occasions, I have witnessed your remarkable ability to build bridges between Jews in the Diaspora and Israel. Your work truly embodies the age-old imperative of *‘kol yisrael arevim ze lazeh’* and it has helped to strengthen our people in so many ways. You have also given us a wonderful example of how to achieve consensus and how to overcome differences of opinion. In these divisive times, this skill is especially needed. Time and again, you have demonstrated the importance of mutual respect in finding common ground so that we can move forward together... We look forward to continuing to engage with you in your future endeavors, and we want you to know that you will always be a most welcome participant at all our events.”

### » **Community Affairs**

WJC-Israel hosted a dinner for the Lauder Fellows and international students who were in Israel for the WUJS Congress. There, they met the WJC-Israel board members and members of the WJC JD Corps, and heard remarks from Gad Ariely, former Chairman of the Board of the WJC-Israel, and Dr. Laurence Weinbaum, Director General of World Jewish Congress-Israel and the Israel Council on Foreign Relations.



*Ariely welcomes the Lauder Fellows*



The WJC-Israel and the ICFR held a breakfast with the heads of Latin American Jewish communities and diplomats from that region. The ambassadors of Chile, Ecuador, and Panama are newly posted to Israel, which presented an opportunity to inform them of our activities. Weinbaum chaired the event. Hadassa Getzstain, WJC Executive Committee Member/WJC-Israel Board Member/Member of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps, spoke about the WJC-Israel Heroes for Life program, and the information was received with great enthusiasm. The diplomats and the community leaders expressed gratitude for the invitation as did the others who attended (WJC-Israel/ICFR board members, JD Igal Schwarz, and Amb. Aharon Leshno-Yaar. Dr. Efraim Zadoff, the foremost scholar on Latin America and the Holocaust, said a few words about his important research on Latin American diplomats who acted to rescue Jews during the Shoah, which will be the topic of an article in the forthcoming issue of *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*.



*Breakfast for visiting Latin American Jewish leaders and Latin American diplomats posted in Israel*



Oranit Wiener, Deputy Director General of the World Jewish Congress-Israel, was a panelist in a discussion about Jewish organizations during the WUJS Congress in Jerusalem. Representatives from several key Jewish organizations in Israel shared the views and hopes of their respective organizations regarding the engagement of youth and future of leadership and advocacy.



*Wiener at the WUJS Congress in Jerusalem*

In Sofia, Weinbaum met with Shalom President Alek Oscar and other senior members of the community and attended a dinner hosted by the community for a visiting delegation of the Joint Distribution Committee.

### **» Combating Antisemitism**

Weinbaum delivered a presentation at a seminar on antisemitism presided over by Minister of Diaspora Affairs Amichai Chikli, in which the other presenters were representatives of various international Jewish NGOs and think tanks. Weinbaum also attended a session at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs devoted to a project aimed at combating antisemitism in MENA.



## » **Holocaust Legacy**

Once again, WJC-Israel was extensively involved in promoting the #WeRemember Campaign. Among its activities were:

- Projecting images of Holocaust survivors, taken by renowned German-Italian photographer Luigi Toscano, on the walls of Jerusalem's Old City



*"We Remember" on Jerusalem's Old City walls*

- Illuminating the skyscrapers of the Azrieli Towers in Tel Aviv with the #WeRemember slogan



*Azrieli Towers in Tel Aviv*

- Cooperating with Israel's flag carrier El Al to share Holocaust-related resources with its passengers via QR codes in connection with the #WeRemember initiative



- Arranging an interview with Efrat Sopher, Member of the WJC JD Corps, on the popular Israeli army radio station Galei Tzahal (Galatz) about antisemitism in sport, and about the #WeRemember campaign
- Arranging an interview with Amb. Colette Avital, Chairperson of the Center Organizations of Holocaust Survivors and Member of the WJC Executive Committee, on the popular Israeli radio station Kan Moreshet about the campaign and the situation of Holocaust survivors in Israel
- Arranging an interview on the Israeli television channel Now 14 with Getzstain, who spoke about the #WeRemember campaign and WJC efforts in the field of Holocaust education

In Sofia, Bulgaria, Weinbaum lectured on the phenomenon of rescue in history at a conference on “The Role of the Jurist for the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews” at the St. Kliment Ohridski University.



*St. Kliment Ohridski University*

Weinbaum participated in the annual board meeting of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Property (FODZ) as a representative of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) and the WJC.



The following articles on this topic were published in *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*:

- [“Genocide and Genocide Prevention,”](#) by Prof. Yehuda Bauer
- [“The Challenge of Holocaust Memory in Germany,”](#) by Henry Donovan

## » **Israel Engagement**

WJC-Israel and the WJC JD Corps brought together important representatives of Israeli society to discuss and promote equality in leadership in Israel. Participants explored where Israel stands today and examined ways in which the younger generation in particular can advance the cause of equality in Israeli workplaces and elsewhere. Avital shared with the audience her own experiences and discussed the presence of women in political life. The other speakers were: Ayelet Razin Bet Or, Director of the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women; Nitzan Senior Shneor, CEO of Young Women Politicians; Yoffi Tirosh, Vice Dean at the Faculty of Law, Tel Aviv University; Eli Novershtern, a venture capitalist who serves as President of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps; and Gat Megiddo, CEO of Finessa Capital. Gabriel Rosenberg, Deputy Director of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps, provided concluding remarks.



*Equality in Leadership event*



The ICFR held its annual meeting at which four new members were inducted into its board: Dr. Efrat Sopher, Chair of the Board of Advisors at the Ezri Center for Iran and Gulf States Research/Member of WJC Executive Committee; Ms. Carice Witte, founder of SIGNAL (Sino-Israel Global Network & Academic Leadership); Mr. Andrew Nagorski, award-winning journalist and former vice president and director of public policy for the EastWest Institute; and Prof. Gisela Dachs, a lecturer at the DAAD Center for German Studies and at the European Forum at the Hebrew University. ICFR board member Prof. Dina Porat presented a eulogy in memory of Justice Gabriel Bach, a veteran board member who passed away in 2022. After matters of business were conducted, Ms. Witte delivered a lecture on “The China Challenge,” which was followed by Q&A.

The ICFR organized a symposium in Jerusalem for media students from the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in Budapest. The delegation, consisting of some 20 members, was accompanied by Boris Kálnoky, head of the MCC Media School (former journalist with *Die Welt*), and Julius Strauss, veteran foreign correspondent (formerly of *The Daily Telegraph*). Dr. Jonathan Spyer (journalist, author, Middle East analyst, and longtime ICFR board member) and Lazar Berman (diplomatic correspondent for *The Times of Israel*) discussed the political context of the region and their personal experiences as journalists. Q & A session followed. Shumacher delivered greetings.



*Symposium for media students from the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) in Budapest*



The ICFR held an event in cooperation with the Moshe Dayan Center and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Israel Office, “The Abraham Accords: A View from Bahrain featuring” Dr. Mohamed Abdulsalam, Head of Sharia GFH Financial Group; and Ms. Ahdeya Ahmed, former Chair of the Bahraini Journalists Association. Introductory remarks were provided by ICFR President Dan Meridor. The event was moderated by Dr. Nir Boms, ICFR Board Member/Member of the WJC JD Corps, and among those who attended was ICFR Board Member Professor Irwin Cotler. Though the discussion was held off the record, generally the two guests spoke about how important it is for Bahrainis and Israelis to have positive contact. Both guests suggested several ways to foster this kind of relationship.

Weinbaum took part in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Global Coalition for Israel (GC4I) events and the MFA's European Jewish Leadership Conference on behalf of WJC-Israel.

The following articles on this topic were published in *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*:

- [“Legal Framing and Lawfare in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict,”](#) by Prof. Steven E. Zipperstein
- [“Facing an Uncertain Future: Post-Election Israel,”](#) by Prof. Chuck Freilich
- [“Who Says American Jews are Detaching from Israel, and Why?”](#) by Prof. Chaim I. Waxman



## » **General Diplomatic Activity**

Weinbaum and Yvette Shumacher, Deputy Director General of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations, met with Ms. Adele Li, Chargé d’Affaires at the Singapore Embassy, to introduce the work of the WJC and ICFR to her, and with Armenian H.E. Arman Akopian, Ambassador of Armenia to Israel, for the same purpose.

Ariely and Weinbaum were hosted for breakfast by H.E. Erik Ullenhag, Swedish Ambassador in Israel, and Second Secretary/Head of Promotion, Communication and Consular Affairs Ludvig Foghammar to discuss Israel and world Jewry.

Weinbaum attended the farewell reception for H.E. Reta Alemu Nega, outgoing Ethiopian Ambassador to Israel, and the national day events of Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland (with Shumacher), and Kosovo.

In Sofia, Weinbaum met with acting Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Milkov on the present geopolitical situation, current challenges facing Bulgaria, and relations with world Jewry and the State of Israel; with Israeli ambassador to Bulgaria Yoram Elron; and with former Foreign Minister Solomon Passy.



*Weinbaum in Sofia meeting with Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nikolay Milkov*



The following articles on this topic were published in *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*:

- [“The Russo–Ukrainian War: ‘Explanations Come to an End Somewhere,’”](#) by Amb. Charles Crawford
- [“The Saudi Arabia of Mohammed Bin Salman: Adapting to the Changing World and Preserving the Monarchy,”](#) by Dr. Samuel Willner

### » **ICFR Young Diplomats Forum**

*The ICFR Young Diplomats Forum brings together young (under 40 years of age) foreign diplomats posted in Israel with their Israeli counterparts.*

The ICFR held the 2023 kickoff event of its Young Diplomats Forum at the Battae Ethiopian-Israeli Heritage Center. The subject of the event was “gastrodiplomacy,” the use of food in diplomacy. Dana Erlich, director of coordination, MFA Director General’s Bureau, gave a talk about how she and Israeli diplomats leverage Israeli cuisine in their diplomatic activities. Gabriel Mayer-Heft, ICFR Associate Fellow, was the respondent. One of the founders of the center delivered a spirited presentation on the cultural context of the food that was served. The event was attended by a capacity audience of diplomats from some 15 countries on five continents, and Weinbaum and Shumacher presented greetings.



*ICFR Young Diplomats Forum 2023 kickoff event on gastrodiplomacy at the Battae Ethiopian Israeli Heritage Center*