

**For Immediate Release**

January 13, 2010

Contact: Jason Edelstein, Rabinowitz/Dorf Communications  
(202) 265-3000

**Conservative Jewish Leadership  
On Supporting Freedom of Religious Practice in Israel**

NEW YORK, NY - The recent detention and fingerprinting of Anat Hoffman, director of the Israel Religious Action Center, civil and consumer rights advocate, founding member of Women of the Wall and past member of the Jerusalem City Council, for her role in advocating a woman's right to pray at the Kotel opens a new and troubling chapter in intra-Jewish relations in Israel.

The many groups of Conservative Judaism listed below, affirm that Hoffman's detention, following the recent arrest at the Kotel of Nofrat Frankel for wearing a tallit and carrying a Sefer Torah during worship services on Rosh Hodesh, drives a wedge between our communities at a time when working for unity within Israel and enhancing the connection between Diaspora Jewish communities and Israel should be a primary concern. We urge the municipality of Jerusalem, the State of Israel and its ambassador to the United States to realize the gravity of this issue and take immediate steps to promote religious pluralism, provide equitable treatment to non-Orthodox streams of Jewish life and end the harassment of women seeking to pray with dignity at the Western Wall, Judaism's most holy place.

We urge members of our congregations and all members of Conservative Judaism to write a letter to Ambassador Michael Oren expressing the above sentiments. Further, as Conservative Jews, we hope for a pluralistic Israeli society that welcomes all Jews who share a commitment to Jewish continuity, peoplehood and Zionism. When the government limits access at the Kotel, changes the status quo of "who is a Jew," and refuses to grant Masorti rabbis equal rights in Israel, many in the Diaspora community, whose support of Israel is crucial if Israel is to continue to flourish, instead feel alienated.

By standing with the Women of the Wall, we affirm our unity as a single world-wide Jewish community. We affirm our connection with our sisters and brothers in the Land of Israel and we affirm the abiding holiness of the city of Jerusalem in our lives.

**The following groups of Conservative Judaism support this statement:**

Cantors Assembly  
Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs  
Jewish Educators Assembly  
Jewish Theological Seminary  
Masorti Foundation  
Masorti Olami  
MERCAZ Olami  
MERCAZ USA  
Rabbinical Assembly  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies