



**13<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY  
of the WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS**

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**HEADQUARTERS REPORTS**

World Jewish Diplomatic Corps

## **WORLD JEWISH DIPLOMATIC CORPS (WJDC)**

### **Mission**

The World Jewish Diplomatic Corps (WJDC) has dual, integrated missions which simultaneously serve the current diplomatic needs of the Jewish people while providing for the future of Jewish diplomatic leadership. The WJDC:

- Effects diplomatic outreach to regional and global inter-governmental institutions on issues affecting Jews and Israel;
- Utilizes the part-time services of young Jews established in their own professions across the globe, and by doing so, develops the talents and skills of the next generation of Jewish lay leaders – for local, national or international service.

### **Program**

The WJDC participants engage with governmental and political decision-makers in a variety of venues at which the vast amount of international policy-making is achieved through multilateral decisions and programs.

The heart of the WJDC program is the preparation for, attendance at, and follow-up to specific international diplomatic events.

### **Diplomatic Effort**

The WJDC diplomatic effort consists of a series of steps, implemented to varying degrees depending on the objective:

- Identifies prospective meetings of international/multinational organizations whose agendas include issues of importance to Jews and/or Israel;
- Prepares a written policy position and strategy for these meetings;
- Informs national Jewish community organizations, via the WJC, of upcoming meetings, highlighting those communities whose governments sit on the particular multilateral body to give them the opportunity for approaching their own governments on the issue. (Because of the plethora of International Organizations and the competing interests for attention from a given foreign ministry, many Jewish communities and their governments are often unaware of the agendas and policy implications of these important meetings.);
- Attends multilateral meetings under the auspices of the WJC with the objective of achieving as many of the following as possible: presenting the WJC position to the body in formal session; lobbying the voting or representative members of the organization; informing the media; and attending the deliberations;
- Reports back to Jewish communities and organizations on the outcome of events, and particularly, the positions and votes taken by each member country, again, assisting national Jewish organizations to engage their own governments with information not otherwise available.

### **The Corps**

To build and sustain a corps of young diplomats and leaders, the WJDC uniquely provides the necessary resources and then activates, facilitates and engages successful, talented Jews – who are professionals in their own fields – in diplomacy on behalf of Jewish interests. In short, the WJDC is put to work on a project-specific basis. Jewish Diplomats (JDs) are empowered to represent the organization on a local, regional and international level and pursue tangible results from their efforts, whether side-by-side with WJC professionals or on their own. This way, Corps members learn by doing and become effective leaders in advancing the Jewish agenda from day one. The method ensures the program earns maximum return for its investment in each JD.

Since its first meeting in February 2006, the WJDC has recruited, trained and engaged dozens of young Jewish professionals in important diplomatic advocacy. To date, the WJDC has recruited approximately 80 JDs from 34 countries.

WJDC is Chaired by Adam Koffler and its staff includes Director Peleg Reshef, Coordinator Ariel Rodal, Director of Future Generations- WJC- Latin America; Ariel Isaak, and Director of WJC-North American Section; Betty Ehrenberg. All aspects of the program are carefully coordinated with the WJC regional offices.

The WJDC's interactive web platform, [www.jewishdiplomats.org](http://www.jewishdiplomats.org), is the principal means for JDs to exchange ideas, share updates, and discuss diplomatic issues and outcomes. In addition to updates via the web platform, JDs receive periodic email bulletins briefing them on recent WJDC activities and concerns.

Each JD is requested to engage in at least one Task Force, well-suited to his/her expertise. Current Task Forces include the Durban II Task Force, Iran Task Force, Inter-religious Task Force, OAS, OSCE, and UN Task Forces, Anti-Semitism, Energy Security and Strategic Forum Task Forces.

## **RECENT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **The UN Durban Review Conference**

- In preparation for the Durban Review Conference in April 2009, a secure web site, [www.drc2009.org](http://www.drc2009.org), has been developed by the WJDC. Its mission is to serve as an online resource center for NGOs, groups and individuals involved in the planning process leading up to the Durban Review Conference; to coordinate the activities of these parties by utilizing this web platform, to facilitate the timely flow of relevant and pressing information, and to mobilize concerned parties. Jewish organizations and communities around the world will be invited to contribute reports, updates, and strategies to be implemented both in preparation for, during and post the conference. The web platform, designed by JD Eyal Raviv (Israel), will be administered by Ariel Rodal, Coordinator of the World Jewish Diplomatic Corps. Shiri Cohen (Intern), is assisting the activities of the Durban Review Conference Task Force.
- January 2009: WJDC Director Peleg Reshef and JD Lior Herman (UK) attended the UN Inter-Sessional Inter-Governmental Working Group to draft the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, which took place in Geneva.
- December 2008: WJDC Director Peleg Reshef and JD Yariv Nornberg (Israel) attended the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism. This year, the annual gathering was dedicated to Durban II, and included addresses by Minister Isaac Herzog, Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni, Israeli diplomats, and Jewish leaders and activists. While Israel will not be officially present at the conference, the different parties present at the forum agreed that it is important to coordinate resources and efforts. Peleg Reshef presented the WJDC's general capabilities and its Task Force dealing with the Durban II conference.
- September 2008: JDs Mark Pozniak and Gershon Hurwitz (South Africa) attended the African Regional Meeting on the Durban Review Conference in Abuja, Nigeria. Their participation highlighted the importance of having JDs attend the preparatory meetings, allowing them to shape the outcome of the conference. In this case, the JDs were successful in keeping Israel off the NGO agenda and crafting the final NGO document to tacitly reject the "hijacking of Durban II". They identified problematic NGOs to be watched in Geneva, fostered relationships and alliances with a number of NGOs, and made a positive impression on the delegation from the South African Government, which plays an instrumental role in the Durban II Conference.

### **Inter-religious Affairs**

- November 2008: The International Youth Forum- "Intercultural Dialogue and its Religious Dimension" took place in Kazan, Russia. This conference, sponsored by the Council of Europe's Youth Directorate, the Russian government, and the government of the Republic of Tatarstan, was attended by WJDC Director Peleg Reshef and JDs Arseniy Finberg (Ukraine), Maria Kopelyan (Russia), Peter Gyori (Czech Republic), Sarith Felber (Israel).

- November 2008: WJDC Coordinator Ariel Rodal, JD Daniel Speckman (Mexico) and JD Marcell Kenesei (Hungary) participated in the 20th ILC Conference in Budapest, Hungary. For the first time, the official ILC meeting was preceded by an "Emerging Leaders" pre-conference weekend that brought together young Jewish and Catholic participants to engage in dialogue and experience customs of each others' faiths. The delegates came from Hungary, Israel, the U.S., Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, and Brazil. The main goal of the weekend was to discuss and plan another young leadership inter-religious dialogue conference, planned to take place in "Castel Gandolfo", Italy, in June 2009. This conference will invite 25 young Jews and 25 young Catholics to engage in dialogue over the course of a number of days. In Budapest, it was decided that the conference would be tentatively titled: "Discovering Common Values: Catholic-Jewish Leadership Conference".
- November 2008: JDs Nir Boms (Israel) and Andras Buchler (Hungary) attended the Council of Europe Conference "Beyond Religious Differences" in Baku, Azerbaijan. The main aim of this conference was to address and respond to Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and other forms of discrimination based on religion or belief, through youth work.

### **Preventing a Nuclear Iran: Diplomatic and economic counter-measures**

- The WJDC Iran Task Force has been engaged in a research initiative into firms that are enabling or encouraging Iran's defiance of international nuclear agreements. Now, inspired by the WJDC's conference call in December with Prof. Irwin Cotler, during which he discussed his proposal and petition to diplomatically isolate and restrain Iran and its leaders, JDs are planning to disseminate the petition to hold Ahmadinejad's Iran to account for its incitement to genocide and to lobby state parties, NGOs, and scholars to adopt it. JDs will also be requested to write/ translate and circulate existing op-eds on the subject in their local and national media.

### **Ongoing Diplomatic Involvement**

- Via [www.jewishdiplomats.org](http://www.jewishdiplomats.org), the WJDC web platform, JDs have been receiving material related to Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, which is available to them as a resource when writing responses and op-eds in their respective governments and communities.
- November 2008: The Ambassador of Israel to Argentina, Daniel Gazit, received a group of Latin American JDs at the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires. In attendance were the LAJC Director of New Generations Ariel Isaak, the Director of the LAJC Claudio Epelman, and Argentinean JDs Alejandro Donzis, Melina Rozenbaum, Natalia Krañasky and Sebastian Azerrad. The JDs shared the efforts of the WJDC in Latin America.

- November 2008: KolDor held its Global Conference in Ein Gedi, Israel. JDs Lenny Roth (U.S.), Yariv Nornberg (Israel), Andrei Schwartz (Romania), Peter Gyori (Czech Republic), Eyal Raviv (Israel), Jake Bennett (U.S.), Doron Gurevitz (Israel), Terry Newman (Israel/UK), and Nir Boms (Israel), The WJDC was invited to present its work on the various task forces with a particular focus on the Durban II Task Force and the Energy Security Task Force.
- October 2008: JD Nir Boms (Israel) participated in the 2008 OSCE Mediterranean Conference in Amman, Jordan. This annual conference gathered representatives of the participating states and the Mediterranean Partners, as well as international organizations and civil society to discuss the OSCE approach to regional security – “a model for the Mediterranean”.
- September 2008: JD Peter Gyori attended UNESCO’s 61<sup>st</sup> Human Rights Conference in Geneva. Peter Gyori, Director of Bejt Praha in Prague, is the JD designated to specialize in the area of NGOs.



Emerging Leadership Delegation  
at the ILC Conference in Budapest

OSCE approach to regional security – “a model for the

### Expanding the Corps

The Diplomatic Corps currently has over 80 professionals from 34 countries. Recent additions to the Corps include JD Amichai Wise (Canada), a lawyer in Ottawa, and JD Laura Kwiatowski (France), an advisor in the French government. A principle focus of 2009 will be to continue recruiting JDs with specialized expertise and to engage these professionals in diplomatic work on behalf of Jewish communities around the world.



JD Gershon Hurwitz (South Africa) at the African Regional  
Conference on the Durban Review Conference in Abuja

To obtain reports authored by JDs, please email  
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To visit the WJDC web platform homepage: [www.jewishdiplomats.org](http://www.jewishdiplomats.org)



JD Nir Boms (Israel) in Working Group  
at Baku Conference

Report prepared by Peleg Reshef  
Director of Future Generation Activities



Argentinean JDs with Israeli Ambassador  
Daniel Gazit