

Dearest Meir,

I stand here because of the gaping void that comes from you leaving us. I wish to say a few words on behalf of all your friends in the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists in which you were so actively involved for so long, and especially during the past few years.

After wording the notification and informing all our friends worldwide, phone calls began to flow in from everywhere imaginable, calls from stunned friends who loved and admired you, and who knew what you meant to me in an everyday context.

The wonderful advice and support I received from you on the many matters we delved into, and are still working on, were worth more than their weight in gold. Your rich experience in so many areas, your common sense, your fairness, and always accompanied by humor and a smile, were such significant support for me.

We planned to be in Paris together, at the ambassador's residence, meeting with local lawyers. Then we were to be at the Geneva offices of the Human Rights Council attending an event we were holding there. While these events were unfolding, you were already in hospital, and very much missed.

The Zionist spark connected us, Meir, our love of Israel, and the Jewish people. Yes, for me you represent the beauty of Israel, and whenever I asked that you join us, your answer was an immediate 'yes'. Little wonder that we found our way into the offices of so many ambassadors representing countries supporting UNRWA, and met with such a diversity of personages tied to our work in which we so deeply believed.

In the latest elections, when I asked you to continue as an executive member, you mentioned your uncertainty over continuing to commit at your age. And I answered, that I cannot begin to imagine myself working without you alongside.

Looking back at the last conference we held in Eilat, and remembering how we sang the Shabbat songs after the Sabbath meal, and how happy you were... that is how I will remember you, and think of your heritage to us as being without a doubt the continuation of our work. That is what we shall do.

Today is a symbolic Holocaust day. We spoke a great deal about your life before you came to Israel, and none of it was simple. Against that background you said how deeply you thank Israel for making it possible to achieve all you achieved.

Now Israel thanks you, Meir, for all you have done. You will be greatly missed. May you rest in peace.

And to you, Vera, and your daughters, our deepest heartfelt condolences.