

23/4/15

Dear Members,

While watching the ceremony honoring the outstanding achievements of 120 members of the Israel Defense Forces at the President's residence today, I decided to share with you my feelings re: Yom Atzmaut 67 of the State of Israel. I was born a few years before the birth of the state and grew up with her in good as well as difficult times. As you know, the last year was not easy wherein on the one hand we lost many soldiers and citizens and on the other hand there were many disputes evidencing sharp polarization in the society before the elections.

Yom Atzmaut by its nature represents the positive aspects. I wanted this time to dwell on the positive and the exceptional in our nation. It caused me great emotion to witness the "Kibbutz Galuyot", the gathering of soldiers from many countries who have found their way to Israel and proudly stand ready to defend it. We were particularly proud of the number of Ethiopians who were distinguished along with those born in Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA. President Rivlin, who has been in office for only a short time, has opened his residence for "Kol Israel", for all Israelis and has declared his aim to fight racism.

Traditionally on Yom Atzmaut, the International Bible Quiz was held in the morning, the theme of which was "Kibbutz Galuyot", an event which draws young people from all over the world. This was followed by an Air Force fly-over the country and in the evening the ceremony of granting the Israel Prize for achievements and excellence in the sciences, literature, films, public diplomacy, acting, etc. It is always a very moving event and one which makes one feel proud to be a part of this nation.

Telescoping the past 67 years, you and us should enjoy a sense of satisfaction from Israel's accomplishments. Israel and its dedicated citizens full of hope for a better future will strive to attain this goal together with the help of all of you doing your part in your country, as one united Jewish nation with a common goal. This morally strong union will ensure the existence of the State of Israel and will serve as a basis for the continued work of our Association.

Yours,

Irit Kohn, President