

Rabbi Michael Melchior appeals to the JNF not to evict a Palestinian family from their home

To: Danny Atar

Chairman of Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF)

To Danny my honorable friend, greetings and blessings,

Only very rarely do I sign petitions but nonetheless I decided to sign [the open letter calling on KKL-JNF to prevent the eviction of the Sumarin family from their home in Silwan](#).

I feel that I must explain why I have signed this petition.

My connection to the Jewish National Fund goes back to my early childhood, to the blue box in my parents' house. From the time I could speak for myself at the age of 10 or 11, I went about collecting contributions and counting coins from the homes on my collection route in Copenhagen. As public servant, Chief Rabbi [of Norway], and as a Member of Knesset in the Government of Israel, I have appeared countless times at KKL-JNF events. I have done so with pleasure and inner conviction in the justice of the JNF's goals.

When I learned the details of the case of the Sumarin family, involving the trampling of their dignity and security as a result of actions taken by the KKL-JNF in the name of the Jewish people, I could not remain silent.



Amal Sumarin and her granddaughter.

The illegitimate use of the Absentee Property law, which was later corrected—and justifiably so, and the injustice which has been done to the family, under the pretext of law, cries out to heaven. There is no question here of right or left, religious or secular. Our existence here in the land must be grounded in integrity, justice and fairness towards all residents, Jews and Palestinians alike. Even KKL-JNF itself recognized [in the past] the problematic nature and injustice in this case, and ceased the efforts to evict the family.

I rely on you to do the right thing and not cause the friends of KKL-JNF to be offended by it and its practices.

If you permit me, I will remind you that at the end of the laws of the sabbatical year (Shmita) in the Torah, God says to the children of Israel that in the last analysis “the land is Mine”; “ you are but strangers resident with Me”. We here are subject to systems of just law and we are temporary residents on this earth. “Zion shall be redeemed through justice, and those who return unto her with righteousness”. If we do not follow these standards then we are not worthy to redeem Zion.

In friendship and respect,

Michael Melchior

Rabbi Michael Melchior | הרב מיכאל מלכיאור

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Rabbi Michael Melchior is an internationally renowned Jewish leader, thinker and activist. He has served as Chief Rabbi of Norway, and has been living in Jerusalem since the 1980's. He served as a Member of Knesset, a Cabinet Minister, and was the founding chairman of Birthright Israel. He works to bring together religious leaders to work towards peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the Middle East, and is the founder and chairman of several organizations that work to facilitate social change for a shared and sustainable democratic society in Israel.