

MERCAZ forces public rebuke of Swedish FM over anti-Israel remarks

We really do make a difference. Immediately following the Swedish Foreign Minister's blatantly **prejudicial** accusations of **extrajudicial** killings of Palestinian terrorists by Israel, I reached out to the local Jewish community in my capacity as vice chairman of the WZO responsible for hasbara to see if there were something we could do. The end result was a special briefing held for legislators in the Riksdag, the Swedish parliament. Details of the event and the gratifying outcome – which include the introduction of legislation to limit Swedish funding of the Palestinian Authority as well as a public debate with FM Wallstrom - can be found in the following articles:

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/swedish-mps-challenge-wallstrom-to-debate-over-israel-comments/>

<http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/its-easier-than-you-d-think-but-still-impossible/>

<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Swedish-opposition-lawmakers-to-call-Wallstr%C3%B6m-out-over-Palestinian-incitement-442101>



Dr. David Breakstone at the Riksdag, thanking MP Mikael Oscarsson together with other members of the Swedish parliament, for hosting the special briefing on Palestinian incitement initiated by the WZO.

The point here, though, is that this wouldn't have happened without MERCAZ, for though I was acting on behalf of the WZO I was only in a position to do that because MERCAZ put me there. This is an occasion, then, to take pride in who we are and what we stand for, not only in terms of advancing our own parochial interests but also in advancing the Zionist cause which, after all, is why we are here.

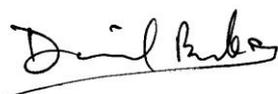
While in Stockholm I also had the occasion to meet with the Chief Rabbi of Sweden – our very own Rabbi Ute Steyer. This, too, is not to be taken for granted. Rabbi Steyer is undoubtedly the only woman chief rabbi in the world and the only Masorti chief rabbi as well. In the freezing cold weather (-12°C), it was gratifying to have such a warm, welcoming Masorti minyan to daven with - as it is every time I travel to one of our communities. It is something which always makes me appreciative of the herculean efforts made by our pioneers of yesterday who laid the foundation for the vibrant, worldwide movement we currently enjoy, and of the ongoing energies expended by all who continue to build our congregations and our institutions today. That aside, the occasion gave me the opportunity to develop ideas of how the WZO might engage with the Swedish community and deepen its connection with Israel in mutually beneficial ways.



Thursday morning minyan at the beautiful Masorti Great Synagogue in Stockholm.

I now look forward to continuing the relationship I began to establish with the community on both fronts, and thank all those involved with MERCAZ Olami and Masorti Olami for the opportunity to act on your behalf. Please feel free to share the links above with your various constituencies. It is important that those whose support we count on are aware of what it is that we are able to do with their backing.

With wishes for a joyous Tu b'Shvat.



David Breakstone