



International Committee  
FOR THE PRESERVATION OF  
**HAR HAZEITIM**  
הוועד הבינלאומי להגנת הר הזיתים

International Committee For The Preservation of Har Hazeisim

# UPDATE

Fall 2016

## The International Historic Cemetery of the Jewish People



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## Extraordinary Event in British Parliament Launches UK Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim; Prince Charles Sends Emissary with Special Greetings

London...On a day when the UK was preoccupied with the change of its national leadership, an extraordinary event took place on July 14th in the House of Commons to officially

launch the United Kingdom Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim (UKCPHH). The host of the event was MP Matthew Offord, who represents the Jewish community of Hendon but the overflow crowd included representatives from all over Europe, the United States and Canada. It was, said Chairman Filip Slipaczek, an historic event as something so hallowed as Har Hazeisim was being celebrated in the British Parliament. To underscore the interest of the Royal family in Har Hazeisim, Prince Charles sent a special emissary to read a letter from him greeting the event. Also in attendance was Princess Katarina of Yugoslavia, the granddaughter of Princess Alice of Battenberg, the mother of Prince Phillip and the mother-in-law of Queen Elizabeth. In documents recently discovered, it was found that Princess Alice had hidden the Cohen family in 1943 when she was in Athens. After her death it was found that Princess Alice had requested to be buried on Har Hazeisim and she is in fact interred in the garden of

Gethsemane, the small Catholic cemetery on Har Hazeisim. Prince Philip is said to have made at least one private visit to the grave of his mother.



*Menachem Lubinsky, Co-Chairman of the ICPHH addressing the House of Commons to officially launch the United Kingdom Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim.*

Included in the crowd of dignitaries were many prominent rabbanim and Jewish leaders from throughout Europe. They included Dayan Yonasan Abraham, Rav Simcha Steinberger, Rav Moshe Israeloff, the head of the Bukharian community in Vienna, Rav Avrohom Pinter, one of the senior rabbanim in London, Rav Dovid Rose of the Berlin Yeshiva, Rav Zvi Block, head of the Jewish cemeteries in Europe, Rabbi Melvin Hartog, head of the Chevra Kadisha in Europe, Dayan Elimelech

Vanzata, Rav Rafael Godlewsky, and Rav Aryeh Greenfield. A Letter was also read from Israel's Ambassador Mark Regev. The Ambassador from Azerbaijan was also there.

Rabbi Yosef Deutsch, the First Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and the guest of the event, delivered an emotional speech, in which he described how the tragedies of Jewish history passed through Har Hazeisim. The Deputy Mayor made

*(cont. on page 5)*

## Recommend Har Hazeisim to be a “National Priority” at Extraordinary Cabinet Committee Meeting; Leaders of ICPHH Praise New Initiatives

Jerusalem...A number of key resolutions were adopted at an extraordinary Israeli Cabinet Committee meeting in the Prime Minister's Office on July 24th. The meeting, convened by Minister of Sport and Culture Miri Regev, also included Gilad Erdan, the Minister of Internal Security, David Azoulay, Minister of Religions, Jerusalem's Mayor Nir Barkat and other officials from various ministries as well as the top police brass in Jerusalem, headed by the new Chief of Police in Jerusalem, Yehoram Halevi. Menachem and Avrohom Lubinsky, the co-chairs of the International Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim flew to Israel to participate in the historic meeting. The Ministers resolved to introduce a motion to the full cabinet to adopt the security and development of Har Hazeisim as a “national priority” which would in essence obligate all government agencies, where appropriate, to allocate resources for Har Hazeisim. Minister Regev said that the security of Har Hazeisim has been a priority for her since she entered the Knesset, and particularly as Chair of the Knesset's Interior Committee. “As Minister I have devoted resources to bring Har Hazeisim to life and to make it safe for everyone to visit.”

She recently funded a big event on Har Hazeisim on Chol Hamoed Pesach.



*ICPHH Officials discuss security on Har Hazeisim with Yerushalyim's new police chief, Yoram Halevi. L to r Chief Yoram Halevi, Yanky Bichler, Avrohom and Menachem Lubinsky of the ICPHH, hosted by Harav Lief.*



*ICPHH co-chairs Menachem and Avraham Lubinsky discuss development plans for Har Hazeisim with Mayor Nir Barkat*

Minister Erdan said that he has devoted a great deal of attention to the security of Har Hazeisim almost from the day he assumed his post. “I immediately toured Har Hazeisim several times and thanks to the efforts of the ICPHH agreed to requests to add forces to secure the holy mountain. As a result, there were no reported incidents for the first time in 2016.”

The Lubinsky brothers thanked the Ministers and the Mayor for bringing about a major change to the security of Har Hazeisim. The government officials also pledged to coordinate efforts including such pending projects at the construction of a wall, sponsoring additional cultural events, the restoration of some 23,000 graves, a new shuttle service from Har Hatzofim to Har Hazeisim, as well as the Mayor's initiative to build a cable car that will bring thousands of visitors to Har Hazeisim from the city proper. Another major project that is already

in the final stages of planning is a magnificent Visitor's Center and shul which the ICPHH will build jointly with the Government. ■

## Erdan Promises More Police Security for Har Hazeisim Area

Gilad Erdan, Israel's Minister for Internal Security, promised to continue to add police officers to enhance the security of Har Hazeisim despite the fact that “there were no incidents in 2016.” In a statement, the Minister revealed that 1260 new police officers were being trained for eventual duty in East Jerusalem and that many of these officers would be assigned to Har Hazeisim. Currently a contingent of some 24 officers are assigned to the 3000-year old cemetery. Minister Erdan also revealed that the government would be building at least 5 new police stations in the Arab communities adjacent to Har Hazeisim to bring a measure of law and order to those communities and to assure safe access to Har Hazeisim. ■



*Erdan with Menachem Lubinsky and Malcolm Hoenlein.*

## Minister Elkin in New York: Security of Har Hazeisim is a Government Priority; Thanks ICPHH for its Role in Bringing about Change



*Minister Elkin presents a replica of an ancient Yerushalayim coin to Avrohom and Menachem Lubinsky – l-r Minister Zev Elkin, Avrohom Lubinsky, Menachem Lubinsky and Zev Elkin*

New York... Zev Elkin, Israel's Minister of Jerusalem and Heritage, told an impressive group of Jewish leaders on August 9th that the security of Har Hazeisim

remains a top priority for the government of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Speaking at a breakfast reception organized by the International Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim, the Minister said that the government had already spent upward of NIS 100 million for such security measures as a network of 137 surveillance cameras, the establishment of a police substation and other infra-structure projects, and was in the process of embarking on additional measures.

Minister Elkin said that a new wall would shortly be built, especially around the Eastern section of the cemetery, the scene of much vandalism in past years. He also said that the government was undertaking a major initiative to bring law and order to East Yerushalayim including the hiring of 1250 new officers and the construction of 5 new police stations in the surrounding Arab neighborhoods. Mr. Elkin thanked Avrohom and Menachem Lubinsky for "all that they have done for Har Hazeisim." He added: "None of this would have been possible had you not pushed so hard." He also said that the government was in the process of finalizing plans for a new Visitor's Center and shul in collaboration with the ICPHH.

Minister Elkin was introduced by Malcolm Hoenlein, the Vice Chairman of the President's Conference, which hosted the meeting in its Manhattan headquarters. Mr. Hoenlein has been a key figure in the efforts to secure the historic cemetery. He was followed by Danny Dayan, Israel's new Consul General in New York, who revealed the many personal connections of his family to the 3000-year old cemetery. Menachem and Avrohom Lubinsky

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## Big Crowds at Yahrzeits

"It is thanks to you that people are for the first time visiting loved ones and that large numbers of people came in recent weeks for the yahrzeits of the Ohr Hachaim (40,000), the Zvhiller Rebbe (20,000) and the Lev Simcha of Ger (20,000)," the special Cabinet session on Har Hazeisim was told by the Lubinsky brothers. The large crowds that came to the yahrzeits was unprecedented in recent memory. The Gerrer Rebbe himself as well as members of his family ascended to the maarah of the Lev Simcha for the first time in years. The crowds for the yahrzeits of Zvhill and the saintly Orach Chaim were several times the number of previous years.



*Gerer Rebbe Yurzeit*

A huge crowd also attended a special concert in early July, headlined by world-renowned Cantor Itche Meir Helfgot. The concert was organized by Rabbi Hillel Horowitz, who heads the Council of Cemeteries in Jerusalem. ■

## Plans for ICPHH-Government Visitor's Center Move Forward



Plans for the construction of a multi-million-dollar Visitor's Educational Center on the foot (just outside) of Har Hazeisim are moving forward with a groundbreaking expected within months. The ICPHH has committed to partner with the government in the construction of the Center which will fortify Jewish sovereignty and encourage large numbers of tourists to visit the holy cemetery. The Center will include a shul, multi-media presentations, exhibits on prominent personalities buried there, a computer bank of people buried on HH and much more. A central lobby with a magnificent view of the Har Habayit will be one of its distinguishing features. Mayor Nir Barkat has announced plans to significantly improve the transportation to Har Hazeisim by building a cable car and extending the light rail to the area. He also proposes to have regular shuttle bus service from nearby Har Hatzofim. ■



## Minister Elkin in New York: Security of Har Hazeisim is a Government Priority

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thanked the Minister and his “exceptional staff” headed by Sarit Goldstein and Rachel Gur who have been extremely helpful in securing Har Hazeisim. Menachem Lubinsky mentioned the renewed sense of security on the cemetery that is once again bringing thousands of visitors to Har Hazeisim including some 80,000 people who came for the yahrzeits of the Zhviller Rebbe, the Lev Simcha, and the Orach Chaim.

The initial remarks by the Minister and the Consul General were followed by a questions and answers session. Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, the executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America, recalled when Avrohom Lubinsky first knocked on his door more than six years ago to discuss what can only be described as “our national disgrace.” He thanked the Minister and the expanding ICPHH network worldwide for “turning this disgraceful situation around.”

The meeting with Minister Elkin follows an historic Cabinet Meeting in Yerushalayim on July 24th at which

time the Ministers decided to ask the government to adopt Har Hazeisim as a “national priority”. At that time, Gilad Erdan, the Minister for Internal Security revealed that some 1260 officers were being trained for duty in East Yerushalayim, many of which will be stationed on Har Hazeisim. ■



*Leading members of the ICPHH meeting in New York with Minister Zev Elkin. Seated at the table l-r Israel's new Consul General to New York, Danny Dayan, Minister Zev Elkin, Malcolm Hoenlein, and Menachem Lubinsky.*

## Extraordinary Event in British Parliament Launches UK Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim; Prince Charles Sends Emissary with Special Greetings



*British Parliament Launches UK Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim.*

*(cont. from page 1)*

the trip to show his support for the world-wide efforts of Jews to preserve the 3000-year old cemetery that contains 150,000 Jewish neshomos. The keynote address was delivered by Menachem Lubinsky, the co-chairman of the ICPHH who described the history of abuse and neglect and the dramatic changes that have taken place there in recent months. Other speakers included Dayan Abraham, Stephen Pack, the President of the United Synagogue, representative broad consensus of British Jewry about the importance of Har Hazeisim, and Dr. Paul Rosenstock, a member of the ICPHH Executive Committee in New York. Rabbi Jonathan Sigal, the executive director of the ICPHH in Europe, played a big role in organizing the historic event. ■



# MK Moshe Gafni Authorizes NIS 3 Million to Build Wall/Gate; City Already Advances NIS 1.5



MK Moshe Gafni

The long awaited wall/gate that will secure the Eastern section of Har Hazeisim is now only days away from being erected. MK Moshe Gafni,

Chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee informed the ICPHH leadership that he had authorized NIS 3 million for the construction of the wall. The Municipality of Jerusalem had already transferred its share of NIS 1.5 million for the wall, thanks to the relentless efforts of Mayor Nir Barkat and First Deputy Mayor Yosef Deutsch. In a tour of Har Hazeisim, police officials led by Deputy Inspector Chaim Shmueli, said that they were confident that the wall first proposed by the ICPHH would have "a very positive effect" on the security of a sector that has faced so much desecration in past years.

Israel's Finance Minister Moshe Kachlon told Jewish leaders in New York that he totally supported the funding of the wall and was more than happy to assure that the transfer of the funds was made. ■

# ICPHH in the News

# ICPHH Vows to Help "Latet Panim" Put Face to Unknown Soldiers Buried on Hazeisim

At the initiative of Jeff Daube, the ICPHH leadership met Dorit Perry, Annie Zlotnick, and Uri Sagi of the Latet Panim Organization, which is dedicated to literally putting a face to the Unknown Soldier or in-name only soldier. On Har Hazeisim, for example, there are 226 such heroes from 1860- 2004, including many who died while in service of the British army, the Etzel, Haganah and more. Latet Panim found these tombstones with only a name and is

systematically researching the backgrounds (tedious work until they are even on the right trail) and finally adding details on their lives. They have already filled in the life stories on about 45 tombstones. What an incredible project! They asked us for help and we committed to add their story to some of the PR and educational materials that we sponsor. ■

## ICPHH Voices Concern over Shocking Conditions of Bartenura's Burial Site; Arab Seizure of Chelkat Miriam



*Menachem and Avrohom Lubinsky, co-chairmen of ICPHH found garbage strewn on top of the Bartenurta's kever when they toured the holy Bais Hachaim recently (July 25th).*

The tomb of the saintly 15th century tzaddik Rav Ovadia of Bartenura was drenched in urine and mountains of garbage were strewn above his kever in what could only be described as “despicable and sad.” This is what Menachem and Avrohom Lubinsky, co-chairmen of the International Committee for the Preservation of Har Hazeisim found when they toured Har Hazeisim in July. They were joined by Harvey Schwartz and Jeff Daube, co-chairmen of the Israel Chapter of the ICPHH and leading police officials. Rav Ovadiah ben Abraham of Bartenura (1445 -1515) came to Jerusalem from Italy and is best known for his popular commentary on the Mishnah, commonly known as “The Bartenura”. In his later years, he rejuvenated the Jewish community of Jerusalem and became recognized as the spiritual leader of the Jews of his generation. In addition to being a great tzaddik and gaon, the Bartenura built the first yeshiva in 1000 years and many institutions for the elderly and poor including a hospital. He also got the Muslim authorities to eliminate a tax on the Jews. The Bartenura's kever is just below the troublesome Silwan neighborhood. The Arabs who live in the apartments above simply dump their refuse on the cemetery below. This will now become a major priority of the ICPHH.

Another disconcerting discovery was the continued refusal of a local Arab to vacate Chelkat Miriam which is on the lower part of Har Hazeisim. Chelkat Miriam was a small Sephardic chelka that included the burial site of many prominent Sephardic leaders. A local Arab who owns a very large house nearby seized the cemetery, uprooted the matzeivos and turned it into his personal garden. Both a Jerusalem District Court and the Israeli Supreme Court ordered his eviction but several attempts to remove him by the police were unsuccessful as the Arab organized large crowds to confront the police, who each time backed down. The situation was brought to the attention of the ICPHH by Dr. Aryeh Kimmelman, a prominent scholar and the world's leading authority on Har Hazeisim. The ICPHH promised the octogenarian scholar that they would take up the issue anew with the government and police.

“Aside from these two shocking discoveries, we found Har Hazeisim to be cleaner and safer than it has been in years,” said the Lubinsky brothers in their report of their fact-finding mission. They added: “There are still pockets of areas that require maintenance and, of course, then there is the restoration of some 23,000 graves destroyed by the Jordanians (1948-1967) that must be attended to. ■



*Garbage strewn on top of the Bartenurta's kever on Har Hazeisim.*

## Meet our Man on Har Hazeisim



*Josh Wander*

By now, many of our friends have gotten to know Joshua Wander, our representative on Har Hazeisim. Josh is armed and a licensed medic with an armored car who is also well versed on the accomplishments of the ICPHH. Although security is much improved on Har Hazeisim with few incidents reported, many visitors still prefer to visit with an armed escort. He will either meet you at the Dung Gate or can pick you up at your location in Jerusalem. Whether you are coming for a yahrzeit or just want to visit the graves of tsaddikim, Josh will escort you. He can also arrange for the yahrzeit services.

Many people have used Josh for a tour of the 3000-year old mountain visiting the mekomos hakedoshim and other historic sites on Har Hazeisim (i.e. location of the ashes of the Parah Ha'adumah). There is virtually no site in Israel that holds as much history as Har Hazeisim. You can trace the footsteps of history by beginning with the burial site of several Nevi'im, proceed to visit the graves of some of our greatest scholars and leaders like Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura, and continue through the ages to some of the luminaries of the 20th Century.

Because of the increased demand for Josh's services, it is advisable to book well in advance. You can book on-line at [www.harhazeisim.org](http://www.harhazeisim.org) or call our office at 972-58-400-5260. In either case, you will be required to fill out the Visitor Registration Form on-line or when you arrive on Har Hazeisim.. ■



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