

Your Excellency:

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International – the world's oldest and best-known Jewish humanitarian, advocacy and social action organization, with members in over 50 countries – we are writing in strong support of the initiative to add Yom Kippur as a holiday on the official United Nations calendar.

The Jewish people have observed Yom Kippur, the most sacred day of the Jewish calendar, for thousands of years. It is a day when millions of Jews seek forgiveness and self-improvement in the hope of creating a better life and, ultimately, a better world.

We believe that the time has come for the United Nations to add Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, to its calendar. The initiative to add Yom Kippur to the UN calendar would represent a modest but meaningful step in helping the UN to better live up to its Charter's embrace of diversity and respect for peoples large and small.

The UN is headquartered in New York City, the city with the largest Jewish population in the Diaspora. There is an active Jewish presence at UN Headquarters, among secretariat staff, diplomats, and NGO representatives alike. These contributors to the work of the UN, hailing from some of the roughly 120 UN member states where organized Jewish communities can be found, should not be forced to choose between violating their religious beliefs and neglecting professional demands.

We strongly urge you to support adding Yom Kippur to the UN calendar, alongside other religious and civil holidays.

Sincerely,

Allan J. Jacobs  
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin  
Executive Vice President

David J. Michaels  
Director of UN and Intercommunal Affairs