

B'NAI B'RITH  INTERNATIONAL

August 16, 2017

Mark J. Coleman
Board Chair
Queens Museum
New York City Building
Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368

Dear Mr. Coleman,

On behalf of B'nai B'rith International – established in 1843 on the Lower East Side, the oldest and most widely known Jewish humanitarian, advocacy and social action organization with members and supporters around the world – we are writing to express our dismay at the decision of the Queens Museum to cancel an event to mark the 70th anniversary of the passage of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, which endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state within the Jewish people's homeland.

The reason given by Queens Museum President and Executive Director Laura Raicovich to Israel's Ambassador to the U.N. Danny Danon for the cancellation of the event, which was to be a re-creation of that vote on the grounds where the U.N. General Assembly met in 1947, was that the museum did not want to hold a "political event." The event, however, is not openly political in nature, but rather a historical re-enactment and a celebration of that momentous vote which was an important step in the establishment of the State of Israel.

Moreover, the Queens Museum has hosted a number of exhibitions and events that could be interpreted as political in nature. Museums play an important role in transmitting to the public displays on culture and history, sometimes necessarily of a political nature. We respect and honor that role that museums play in our larger society. We question, though, why that respect is not also afforded to Jewish history.

We urge the Board of Trustees of the Queens Museum to rectify this situation and reverse this discriminatory decision immediately.

Sincerely,

Gary P. Saltzman
President

Daniel S. Mariaschin
Executive Vice President

CC: The Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor, City of New York and Ex-Officio Board of Trustees Member

The Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker, New York City Council and Ex-Officio Board of Trustees Member

The Honorable Melinda Katz, Queens Borough President and Ex-Officio Board of Trustees Member

The Honorable Mitchell Silver Commissioner, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and Ex-Officio Board of Trustees Member

The Honorable Tom Finkelppearl Commissioner, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and Ex-Officio Board of Trustees Member

His Excellency Mr. Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the U.N.