



*Embassy of the United States of America
Jerusalem, Israel*

July 16, 2025

Dear Mr. Minister:

It is with great distress that I write to you my profound disappointment that the meeting held in your office has not resulted in what I hoped to be a simple resolution of the issue of routine granting of visas for Christian organizations and workers, as has been practiced for decades. I left the meeting with a very positive feeling that we had resolved the issue that necessitated that meeting. It had appeared that a staffing change in the Ministry of Interior resulted in an employee changing the long-practiced process of granting visas to Christian organizations, a list of which is enclosed. The situation has actually gotten worse.

1. As of the beginning of 2025, the Visa Department arbitrarily ceased honoring the recommendations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and has initiated an independent investigation into each of the Evangelical organizations to ascertain whether or not they should be recognized as Religious Institutions and continue receiving visas. This includes many historic organizations such as the Baptist Convention of Israel, Christian Missionary Alliance, Assemblies of God, etc., some of whom have been active here since before 1948. The vast majority of them have headquarters in the United States. They have all been required to fill out extensive questionnaires regarding their religious beliefs, their activities, their assets in Israel, etc. And to the best of my knowledge, none of them have received new A3 Clergy Visas since the beginning of the year, as they are all "under investigation."

As a solution, we simply requested that the Visa Department return to the status quo and recognize the recommendations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (its own department).

2. There are a handful of Protestant/Evangelical educational institutions active in Israel, such as the Anglican School under the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC), IBEX from Masters University, University of the Holyland, and the Jerusalem University College. Because they are all affiliated with churches or are

The close partnership between the United States and Israel governments is at an all-time high having just concluded a joint military operation that will hopefully curtail the threat from an Iranian nuclear ambition.

For our formal and cordial official request from U.S. Embassy Jerusalem to return to the "status quo" of long-standing practices regarding visas to be rebuffed and made worse is shocking and a source of inexplicable disappointment.

Let me reiterate that we are not asking for special or out of the ordinary treatment. We are simply requesting that the long-standing policy that has been employed for generations be continued. It is the abrupt change and additional burden and expense that has been imposed without explanation that we find bewildering. The United States and evangelical Christian organizations are your friends. We feel we are being treated as adversaries.

As the U.S. Ambassador representing the United States and President Donald J. Trump, I am formally requesting that this deteriorated relationship with the Interior Ministry be resolved so that the issue is not further escalated.

It would be very unfortunate that our Embassy would have to publicly announce throughout the United States that the State of Israel is no longer welcoming Christian organizations and their representatives and is instead engaging in harassment and negative treatment toward organizations with long-standing relationships and positive involvement toward Zionism and friendship to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. We would further be obligated to warn Christians in America that their generous contributions to organizations to promote goodwill in Israel are being met with hostility and that tourists should reconsider travel until this situation is resolved with clarity.

Finally, and most regrettably, if the Government of Israel continues to cause the expense and bureaucratic harassment for the granting of routine visas that for decades have been routine, I will have no other choice than to instruct our Consular Section to review options for reciprocal treatment of Israeli citizens seeking visas to the United States.

Surely this is NOT the relationship the State of Israel wishes to have with its best partner and friend on the planet.