

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

H.E. Mr. Yechiel Leiter
Ambassador of Israel to the
United States

9 May 2026

Dear Ambassador Leiter,

Thank you for your letter regarding the event "The Golden Age of the Jews of Al-Andalus."

We were somewhat surprised by both the tone and framing of your message, particularly given the longstanding and constructive relationship between the World Jewish Congress and Israeli institutions and embassies around the world.

During the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2023, the World Jewish Congress co-sponsored this exhibition together with Centro Sefarad-Israel, a distinctive public institution affiliated with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For many years, Centro Sefarad-Israel has carried out valuable work promoting Sephardic cultural heritage, fostering understanding of Jewish life, and combating antisemitism through cultural initiatives, academic exchanges, and political dialogue.

Since then, the exhibition has been presented in multiple venues in Spain and the United States. It has played an important role in highlighting Jewish life and contributions in the Iberian Peninsula between the 10th and 13th centuries. At a time of widespread ignorance about Jewish history and identity, such initiatives are very necessary.

Spain today is home to a growing Jewish community. In that context, Centro Sefarad-Israel has also become an important bridge for dialogue, not only for the World Jewish Congress, but also for our affiliate, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain.

Our belief in the inseparable bond between Israel and the Jewish diaspora remains unchanged and unequivocal. Nothing in our participation in this initiative alters that reality.

At the same time, we are fully aware of the difficult environment currently facing Jewish communities in Spain, including rising antisemitism and deeply concerning rhetoric by members of the Spanish government toward Israel. We have also grown increasingly alarmed by the

positions taking by Spain's current government vis-à-vis Israel. We engage with these realities constantly and directly.

Precisely because of this reality, however, we believe the responsible course is not disengagement, but engagement - this has been a longstanding WJC policy. We have a duty to protect and strengthen Jewish life wherever it exists. That requires maintaining dialogue with institutions and interlocutors willing to contribute meaningfully to Jewish life, Jewish visibility, and the fight against antisemitism in their respective countries.

The WJC does not believe that withdrawing from every environment serves either Jewish communities or the broader interests of the Jewish people.

We trust that even where opinions may differ, there remains space for mutual respect and understanding in how these conversations are conducted. We would of course be happy to meet and discuss further ways in which we can continue working together in support of Jewish communities, the Jewish people, and the State of Israel at this particularly challenging moment.

Sincerely,



Maram Stern
Executive Vice President
World Jewish Congress



Sara Friedman
Executive Director
WJC North America