



# **Board of Directors**UJR-AmLat

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# Word from the **PRESIDENT**

"They say it takes a group of people to form a community. I would add that it takes a group of communities to form a region."

It is in this spirit that we work at the Union for Reform Judaism in Latin America. Our network of progressive communities has been growing, supporting one another, and building bonds that transcend national borders. We take great pride in what has already been built and, above all, in what we continue to accomplish to strengthen progressive Judaism on our continent.

In recent years, we have seen significant growth in the number of communities, which naturally expands the reach and impact on congregants. More people have found, in our synagogues and community centers, spaces for spirituality, welcoming, and Reform Jewish education. This growth is not limited to numbers: it is also expressed in the quality

of relationships and in the strengthening of community life.

An example of this took place in the second half of last year, when we held our biennial conference in Buenos Aires, which symbolized unity and hope—less than a year after the greatest attack suffered by the Jewish community in Israel, following the Hamas assaults. This gathering was not just a symbolic event, but a practical demonstration that when we act as a network, we are able to provide stronger and more meaningful responses to the challenges around us. At the same time that we welcomed new communities and held adult Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, we continued encouraging and strengthening youth participation in our institutions. Alongside the

conference, we held a seminar for the students of our Reform Rabbinical Institute, which has been ordaining Rabbis and making a significant impact in our region.

Within the framework of the Union for Reform Judaism, we have expanded our educational programmes, bringing progressive Judaism to remote regions while also supporting historic and robust communities that were essential in creating and consolidating the movement in Latin America. This twofold approach—expanding boundaries and reinforcing foundations—ensures that we are always looking toward the future without losing sight of our roots.

Our plan for the coming years is to remain steadfast on this path. We will continue investing in publications and study materials, as we have already done with the distribution of the Plaut Chumash in Brazil, and we will broaden initiatives that promote Reform Jewish learning and practice throughout the region.

Integration with Israel also remains a priority. Israel is, for us, a source of inspiration and a spiritual and cultural reference point. It is from there that we draw much of our energy, our textual and liturgical sources, and it is to Israel that we look when we seek to envision the future of our movement.

In Latin America, we remain united—communities supporting communities—so that Reform Judaism may continue to grow, flourish, and inspire.

#### Shana tova!

Flavio Levi-Moreira

President of UJR-AmLat



# Word from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

#### Dear friends,

This past year has been intense and—allow me the wordplay—filled with much intention, with much *kavanah*. This mix of intensity and intentionality is one of the things I most appreciate about leading UJR-AmLat: both Judaism and "Latin-Americanness" live at that intersection. We are passionate peoples, and our roots and histories propel us to do what we love, what we desire, what is right—with the proper *kavanah*.

In the Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 3) and in the Gemara (Berachot 13a), the sages discuss the intentionality of *mitzvot*. It is not enough to hear the sound of the shofar; one must have the intention, the kavanah, of truly listening to it. The same applies to other *mitzvot*—we do not fulfill them only because they are

*mitzvot*, but because we intend to do them.

Every ceremony, every event, every course, and every programme we offer carries this *kavanah*—and at times we may not see the direct and tangible result of our work, because we are planting small seeds here and there, seeds that will bear fruit many years from now.

Beyond the strengthening of our professional team, we are also investing strongly in our volunteers and in our youth—and by "our," I mean those of UJR as well as those of our communities. Advancing the image, representation, and participation of the Reform movement also involves encouraging our activists to take part in other institutions and initiatives beyond the Reform world, where we are seen not

only as participants but also as ambassadors of the movement.

Our production of educational and liturgical material is also in full swing, even if much of it happens behind the scenes. We are working on an unprecedented Portuguese translation of an Israeli handbook, on leadership courses, on the traditional Adult B-Mitzvah programme... and of course, on our upcoming Regional Conference, whose programme will be filled with engaging and relevant topics.

We work with intensity, but above all, with intentionality. May this *kavanah* guide us and inspire us to continue doing what we do for the world and for the Jewish community in the year ahead.

A gut un gebentsht yor; anyada buena, alegre i dulse; shana tova u'metukah.

> David Britva Beraha Executive Director





## Word from the Reform Rabbinical Council of Brazil

## RABBI JOSEPH EDELHEIT

The Yomim Noraim is a unique annual experience of **listening**. During Elul we are required to listen to the Shofar in preparation for Rosh Hashanah. Our worship services offer us several texts in which we ask God to listen to our prayers and forgive us. The entire process of *T'shuvah* requires that we **listen** to ourselves in order to accept responsibility for our behavior and truly repent. Then we are required **to listen** to those who come to us asking for forgiveness. In our worship we are **listening** to music that intends to touch our souls and minds. We are listening to our rabbis and teachers with their new insights about Torah and our tradition, to understand how to live better lives. At the very end of the last service, N'elah, we conclude this entire period of worship, learning and reflection with the key words

of our identity: *Sh'ma Israel*— **Listen** Israel!

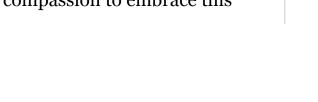
All of these required experiences of **listening and hearing** in a world filled with noise that makes our task even more difficult. We are exhausted by the endless sounds of division, fear, anger and violence. We are looking for ways to quiet our lives, not **to listen** to anything else.

As always we must acknowledge the sacred commandment that requires us **to listen** for those who cannot hear what we are trying to turn-off and ignore! The Mitzvah of the Shofar is **to listen or hear** it, not to blow it, and once again we are painfully aware of Jews whose lives will not permit them **to listen** to these ancient sounds. Some of these Jews are Israelis still being held hostage by the terrorists

Hamas. Some of these Jews are in the Ukraine and Russia where war has destroyed or closed synagogues and Jewish schools and there will be no services. Some of these Jews are filled with the fear and anxiety produced by violent hatred and violence so they have chosen to hide their identity. Some of these Jews are caught by complex waves of illness, poverty and where they live, so they have no access to the sounds of the Shofar. Some of these Jews live without any sound at all, their lives are 'silent' because they live with various forms of hearing impairment, they have never heard a Shofar.

So, regardless of the many ways these Holy Days require us **to listen**, let us challenge each other to find the time, strength and compassion to embrace this

unique opportunity. We are each asked to listen and to hear each sound of the Shofar not just for ourselves but for those we do not even know what cannot and will not hear these ancient blasts of a ram's horn; let our communities stop and announce that these sounds must reach beyond where we are sitting to places of horrible silence. These Yomim Noraim require us to **listen**, but not just for ourselves, and our willingness to embrace this one obligation will surely change how we live the next year.





RABBI Joseph Edelheit

# **Passings**

This year we have unfortunately said goodbye to **Mario Adler z"l** of São Paulo, Brazil; to **Sergio "Iuki" Iokilevitc z"l** of Florianópolis, Brazil; and to **Tom Hamaoui z"l** of São Paulo, Brazil.

**Adler** was president of Congregação Israelita Paulista (CIP), and strongly collaborated with several other Jewish entities, among which the Albert Einstein Jewish Hospital, Tel Aviv University, Ten Yad and Comunidade Shalom. A businessman, Adler founded Brinquedos Estrela, and created Children's Day; he also supported many social initiatives. His discreet but transformational work reflected the ideals of tikkun olam.

**Iuki** was a many-times president of AIC, and a pioneer in establishing the Jewish community in the State of Santa Catarina – sowing seeds of dialogue, leading cultural and religious events, and ensuring the consolidation of the community in the region.

**Tom** was chanich and madrich at Avanhandava, one of the Netzer snifim. He did the Shnat Hachshara programme in 2023, being elected to hanhaga (leadership) positions afterwards. With a life dedicated to tnuati education, Tom left his mark on Avanhandava and on CIP.

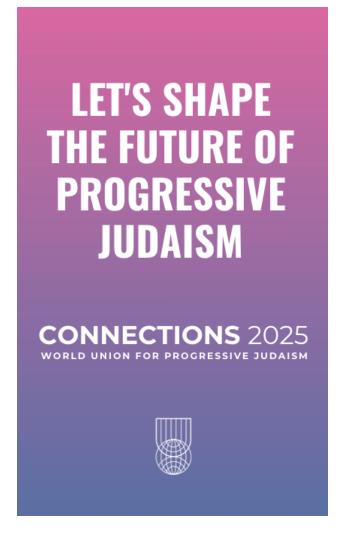
We mourn these losses and wish for their memories to be a blessing.



# Youth

5785 saw the birth of several new Tamar snifim, the young adults department of the Reform movement. With new chapters in Brasília, Buenos Aires, Natal, Porto Alegre, and Rio de Janeiro, we see the involvement of young people in our communities as a growing trend.

The Latin American delegation to Connections 2025 (taking place right after High Holidays) counts a large number of young adults, including representatives of all Netzer snifim, and one Tamar representative per country.





# **Reform Rabbinical Institute**

Founded in 2017/5778, the Reform Rabbinical Institute is based in Buenos Aires and counts with distance learning, allowing us to engage people who are already leaders in communities of all sizes and all parts of the region.

Currently, the Institute has 19 students of eight different countries, distributed among Argentina (7), Brazil (5), Spain (2), and one each in Chile, Italy, the USA, Costa Rica, and Switzerland. Communities of origin include ACIB (Brasília), SIBRA (Porto Alegre), NCI-Emanu El (Buenos Aires), Kehilá de Córdoba, Or Jadash (Madrid) and more. This reflects a significative geographical diversity, with representation from both sides of the Atlantic.

In June 2025 / Sivan 5785, the Institute held the first rabbinical ordination ceremony in Spain in over 500 years, unheard of since the expulsion of the Jews in the Inquisition. We celebrate the ordination of rabbis Yael Cobano, Hanan Grau and Andrés Boaz Mosquera.

#### Mazal tov!

Learn more about the Institute at <u>institutorabinico.org</u>, or on social media:
<a href="mailto:@institutorabinico">@institutorabinico</a>.



# **Jewish Content creation**

## The Torah - A Modern Commentary (Portuguese edition)

Published at the end of 2021 after seven years of work by a team of paid and volunteer staff, the Portuguese version of "The Torah - A Modern Commentary" is an achievement and a continuing project at UJR. The Chumash, originally edited by the German-Canadian rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, is used in more than 1200 congregations throughout the world. In 5785, we celebrated the delivery of more than four thousand volumes, including the second Brazilian edition. Learn more at the website plaut.com.br (in Portuguese).



## Living with our Dead, by rabbi Delphine Horvilleur

With over 250 thousand copies sold, in versions ranging from French to Japanese, the book is a collection of essays on mourning, based on rabbi Delphine Horvilleur's experiences. With UJR support, the French rabbi's book got its Portuguese translation by Editora Garamond.



## Flyers on Chagim

Written by rabbis, rabbinical students and other partners, UJR's chagim flyers bring reflections on each chag we celebrate. Read the flyers published in Portuguese, Spanish and English on our website: <a href="https://ujr-amlat.org/en/what-we-think/chagim/">https://ujr-amlat.org/en/what-we-think/chagim/</a>



## Academia Judaica (Jewish Academy)

The <u>Academia Judaica</u> (Jewish Academy) is an educational start-up created by Congregação Israelita Paulista with the goal of furthering and valuing the pride of belonging to the Jewish community, through knowing its history, its sources of wisdom, and its impact on humanity.



The Academy offers tools on community development through knowledge, connection with Israel, and the strengthening of Jewish identity in a plural, relevant and innovative perspective.

With UJR support, affiliated communities and their members get a 50% discount on courses.

UJR also publishes a bimonthly column at Tribuna Judaica (Jewish Tribune), a periodical of large readership in the São Paulo community.



# **Events**

UJR-AmLat took part and organised several events in partnership with local communities. Among which, we highlight:

## UJR-AmLat supports communal activities in Natal

Following a need from the Centro Israelita do Rio Grande do Norte, UJR developed with the CIRN an educational and rabbinical support project to the Natal community. With monthly visits by educators, the goal is to listen, understand, empower and develop the community to sustain a relevant Jewish life coherent with the values of the Reform movement. The project counts with supervision and participation of UJR director rabbi Kelita Cohen, and educators from the other two Reform congregations in the Brazilian Northeast – Recife and Fortaleza, as well as UJR's education coordinator André Liberman. The programme is partly funded by the National Center to Encourage Judaism (NCEJ).







## Adat Israel Guatemala welcomes new Torah scroll

In partnership with the Memorial Scrolls Trust, Adat Israel Guatemala was gifted a new Torah scroll, of Czech origin. Written around 1850, Scroll no 1505 served the Podivín community until its extermination in the Shoa. Kept in the Prague Jewish Museum, it was sold by the Communist regime to an English philantroper who founded the Trust, seeking to restore and

give new homes to the more than 1500 rescued scrolls. With UJR support, the Guatemalan community welcomed with much joy and celebration scroll 1505, after being a few decades between England and Australia, and a brief stint in the USA. We thank the generosity of Lori Garg and Sharon Freed, who sponsored the scroll in honour of their father, Frederic J. Freed z"l; the collaboration of Andrew







Keene, a Trust board member and friend of UJR. The event was also marked by the presence of the Israeli Ambassador to Guatemala and El Salvador, Alon Lavi, and the executive director of the Jewish Community of Guatemala, Ilan López – presences which demonstrate the bridge-building between the Reform and Orthodox communities, and between the local community and the State of Israel.

## Yala Programme - Jewish Organisations Accelerator

In a partnership between
Fundação Arymax and
Instituto Golden Tree, the Yala
programme began in 2020,
first to organisations based in
São Paulo. With institutions
from the whole spectrum of
the São Paulo community,
the Yala network allows for
the development of a more
integrated communal work,
with events and partnerships of
diverse institutions. In 2023, the
programme expanded to include

organisations in Rio de Janeiro and in Recife.

With virtual meetings and in-person gatherings, Yala strengthens personal and professional relationships between UJR and partner organisations.



# Arzenu

Arzenu is the Reform movement's organization within the framework of the World Zionist Congress. With representation in Brazil and Argentina, we have been bringing important issues to the table and taking part in events in defense of Israeli democracy.

The elections for the 2025 World Zionist Congress brought an important victory for the Reform movement, which secured seats in Brazil and Argentina, ensuring its representation in a decisive space for the future of the Jewish people.

In Brazil, there were 6,585 registered voters and 3,197 valid votes. The Reform and Conservative list, Arzenu-Mercaz, received 471 votes, a result that guaranteed the election of Beatriz Rubinsztain as a delegate of the Brazilian Reform community.

In Argentina, 5,942 voters participated (92.27% turnout). Arzenu Argentina ran with its own list, without alliances,

received 410 votes, and won the Reform seat with Sergio Brukman as delegate.

These results reflect the Reform movement's commitment to actively participating in the democratic life of world Jewry, strengthening its representation, and bringing new perspectives to global discussions. The campaigns mobilized communities, gave visibility to the Reform ideal, and demonstrated the importance of plurality within contemporary Judaism.

More than electoral victories, this is the reaffirmation of a commitment: to bring the Reform voice to the center of the global Zionist debate, contributing to a more inclusive, pluralistic, and hopeful future for the entire Jewish people.



# **Communities**

#### By affiliation date and alphabetical order

### 2009 (founding of UJR-AmLat)

Associação Religiosa Israelita / ARI - Rio de Janeiro, Brasil Centro de Espiritualidad Judía Mishkán - Buenos Aires, Argentina Congregación Israelita de la República Argentina / Templo Libertad -Buenos Aires, Argentina

Congregação Israelita Paulista / CIP - São Paulo, Brasil
Escuela Comunitaria Arlene Fern - Buenos Aires, Argentina
Fundación Judaica - Buenos Aires, Argentina
NCI - Emanu El / Judaica Belgrano - Buenos Aires, Argentina
Ruaj Ami Comunidad Religiosa y Cultural - Santiago, Chile
Sociedade Israelita Brasileira de Cultura e Beneficiência / SIBRA Porto Alegre, Brasil

#### 2010-2015

Adat Israel Asociación Judía Reformista de Guatemala - Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Associação Cultural Israelita de Brasília / ACIB - Brasília, Brasil
Associação Israelita Catarinense / AIC - Florianópolis, Brasil
Centro Israelita de Pernambuco / CIP - Recife, Brasil
Comunidad Judía de Huánuco Beith Etz Chaim - Huánuco, Peru
Congregação Israelita Mineira / CIM - Belo Horizonte, Brasil
Sociedade Israelita do Ceará / SIC - Fortaleza, Brasil
Sociedad Israelita Max Nordau - Valparaíso, Chile

#### 2015-2020

Associação Israelita Norte Paranaense "Beit Tikvá" - Maringá, Brasil Bnei Israel - San Jose, Costa Rica Congregação Israelita de São Paulo Templo Beth El - São Paulo, Brasil Congregação Israelita Capixaba / CICAPI - Vitória, Brasil Judaica Norte Centro Cultural y Espiritual - Nordelta, Argentina

#### 2020-2025

Associação Minián Neshamá - São Paulo, Brasil União Israelita do Vale do Rio Itajaí / Univri - Balneário Camboriú, Brasil União Israelita Porto-Alegrense - Porto Alegre, Brasil La Casa Kehilá - Santiago, Chile Centro Israelita do Rio Grande do Norte / CIRN - Natal, Brasil Centro Israelita do Rio Grande do Norte / CIRN - Natal, Brasil

#### Youth movements

Netzer

Avanhandava - São Paulo, Brasil Colônia da CIP - São Paulo, Brasil Netzer Costa Rica - San José, Costa Rica

### Tamar (young adults)

MOV 20:35 - São Paulo, Brasil
Tamar Guatemala - Guatemala
Zehut - Recife, Brasil
Tamar Rio - Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
Tamar Brasília - Brasília, Brasil
Tamar POA - Porto Alegre, Brasil
Tamar Argentina - Buenos Aires, Argentina
Tamar Natal - Natal, Brasil

# **Partners and Sponsors**













Luis e Lilian Stuhlberger Dora Lucia Brenner