

# Between Memory and Independence

## A National Reckoning and Hope for the Future

Dear Partners and Friends,

Like every year, and perhaps even more so this year, the sharp transition between the memorial siren for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror and the sound of Independence Day celebrations is weighty. This year, once again, we feel the very high price of our precious independence. We will bow our heads in memory of the best of our daughters and sons, the heroes and heroines thanks to whom we are here. We owe them our existence, and we know all too well that the price of independence paid by Israeli society, generation after generation, is immense—an open wound reminding us that the struggle for our home is not yet over.

**A Legacy of Security and Values**—Our commitment to the fallen goes beyond revering their defense of our home. Their legacy must live on in our commitment to protect the essence of the best version of the State of Israel we can achieve—a Jewish and democratic state that serves as a source of inspiration and as a model society. They did not fall merely to defend borders. They fell for values and identity, and to enable future flourishing of the state.

**A Year of Peaks and Deep Concern**—We are now in the third year of a difficult war. While the IDF demonstrates tactical strength and exceptional professionalism, we must face reality. These achievements raise serious concerns for our future—Will we forever live by the sword? Will threats never cease to arise from near and far? How will the prolonged war reshape Israel's standing in the world, particularly with its closest ally, the United States? Military achievements have yet to be translated into a stable national security strategy.

**Memorial Day is Israel's Civil "Yom Kippur"**—A day of reflection and reckoning around security, morality, politics, and nationhood. Each of us must ask what our responsibilities are in these areas. Only through difficult questions, remembrance of the fallen, and recognition of the void they have left behind, can we find our way to celebrating Independence Day.

**Celebration in the Shadow of Absence**—We had hoped that this year would bring pure celebration, without the sense of apology that accompanied last year's holiday, when our brothers and sister, held in captivity, were absent. Yet as the war continues, this year's celebration will be accompanied by a sense of absence—the absence of peace. At times, we avoid using the word peace, as if it reflects weakness or apologetic naivety or even contradicts the strength of security. The absence of peace may be the reality our generation must face, but it is our duty to ensure that this fate is not passed on to future generations.

**The Duty to Offer Hope: Peace Through Strength**—This generation, which carries the scars of the October 7 failure, is therefore responsible for offering hope. We must embrace the fundamental principle of peace through strength. We do not fight to sanctify war, but to achieve peace. Without this ancient Jewish yearning for peace, we would be like the many nations that have vanished from the pages of history.

**On this Independence Day, we pledge:**

to pursue every enemy that seeks our lives with determination and without compromise;  
never to forget that being a free people in our land must not be taken for granted;  
to build a state that is both secure and a beacon of justice and values;  
to forever hold the memory of the fallen in our hearts.

**My best wishes for a happy Independence Day,  
with hope for true security and true peace.**



Maj. Gen. (res.) Tamir Hayman

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