



## Closing of the National Library: Position Paper

The National Library Readers Association supports the administration decision to close the library because of budgetary constraints.

As a national library, the National Library of Israel serves a more than a repository for books and culture; for readers it is a living organism where a broad range of individuals can share cultural capital and ideas. The library also promotes projects in the field of humanities that benefit students, pupils, and all who seek knowledge. It is this setting that we wish to defend and whose closing we deeply regret.

\*The closing of the library is extremely detrimental to those who rely on its resources not just for their work but for cultural enrichment; essentially, the entire Israeli public: scholars, academic university staff, independent researchers, translators, and those seeking knowledge (whose numbers include the secular, the religious, the ultra-Orthodox, and children), not to mention artists, writers, and poets.

\*The closing of the library and the temporary suspension of its staff will halt the work of the library in discovering, cataloging, mapping, preserving, and making available to the public the creativity of centuries.



\*The closing of the library will also halt the broad-branched cultural activity promoted by different branches of the library, activity that makes knowledge and cultural riches available to the entire Israeli public.

\*The closing of the library also means no acquisition of new books, ancient manuscripts, archives, and varied documents and ephemera that are being sold worldwide. It will cause the library to regress from its hard-earned status.

\*We are troubled by the fact that the library's three hundred staff members will be on unpaid leave and will perhaps find themselves unemployed. We are also concerned for contract workers and service providers whose livelihoods will be damaged.

The fact that the Israeli government does not have sufficient funds to underwrite the central repository of the Jewish people's cultural treasures and legacy makes a mockery of its claim that it represents the Jewish people and promises its continuity. Without collection and preservation of, and familiarity with, past treasures the Jewish people has no future; without scholarship the state has no future.



For articles (in Hebrew) on the situation:

Ha-aretz: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/opinion/.premium-19063183>.

<https://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/.premium-1.9076565>

Ynet: <https://www.ynet.co.il/entertainment/article/BJv5N31MP>

Makor rishon: <https://www.makorrishon.co.il/news/254865/>

There is also an online petition. To sign, visit:

[https://www.atzuma.co.il/dinayellet?fbclid=IwAR1oV2M\\_oVTckVH3e1Ku4iYoAURMrbe4lOSXhPPO5dakWzyQa213XsR3pNw](https://www.atzuma.co.il/dinayellet?fbclid=IwAR1oV2M_oVTckVH3e1Ku4iYoAURMrbe4lOSXhPPO5dakWzyQa213XsR3pNw)