

Statement from Israel's cabinet secretary Zvi Hauser with regard to the conversion bill agreement (provided by Rabbi Steve C. Warwick to Pacific Southwest Region, United Synagogue):

The **Movement for Progressive Judaism in Israel and the Masorti Movement in Israel** will freeze their petitions pending before the Supreme Court (*Bagatz*) and the **Government** will suspend the legislative action for half a year on the subject of conversion. This agreement was reached tonight by the Government Secretary, Zvi Hauser, based on the instruction of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "to find every way to keep the unity of the Jewish people."

According to the agreement with the heads of the movements, in the next half year, until January 1, 2011, there will be no change in the current status quo with regard to conversion. As part of this agreement, the movements obligated themselves to freeze all legal proceedings that are currently pending in *Bagatz* and that are related to the conversion issue. The movements, in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General will submit to the court a joint statement based on this agreement. At the same time, the Government will suspend any legislative action on this issue.

In addition, there will be a team headed by the Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky, in which the movements and representatives of the Government will participate in order to reach a consensus during this period that would enable completion of the legislative process with regard to the Conversion Bill.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu endorsed the progress on this path toward solving the dispute: "The change in the conversion law in Israel," said the Prime Minister, "needs to be done with a wide consensus due to the need to prevent a split in the Jewish people. Unity is a primary national interest of the State of Israel and of the Jewish people and I intend to firmly adhere to this principle."