



יספר"א האגודה הישראלית לשיקום פסיכיאטרי (ע"ר)
ISPRRA Israel Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (R.A) ispraisrael.org.il

Jerusalem, June 24, 2021

To the ENMESH board members,

We appreciate the clarity and candor of Mike's letter. His description demonstrates two important points. First, Israel's critics on the board aren't interested in facts on the ground¹, nor can they be swayed by nuance or complexity. Second, this is a case of capitulating to a vocal minority² which has the ability to generate ill will and bad press for ENMESH.

The decision to cancel the conference in Israel was particularly startling given ENMESH'S pride in resolving disagreements through discussion. This boycott proved otherwise while introducing considerations which are irrelevant and dishonorable for a professional organization.

We wish to emphasize: campaigns to boycott Israel are failing. According to the World Bank and Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2001 when the BDS efforts began, Israel's GDP per capita was \$20,300. In 2017 it was \$40,270. There were a bit fewer than 2 million tourists in 2001, and more than 4 million in 2018.

David's presentation also reflected this, by showing that Israel is thriving in many fields, and it hosts many large-scale international conferences. The conflict has been festering, sadly, for generations. Nevertheless, collaboration between Israeli professionals and their colleagues worldwide flourish.

So ENMESH's decision doesn't hurt Israel.

Whom does it hurt?

As a professional mental health organization, we had hoped to achieve two goals by hosting your conference. First, to instruct. As in many fields, Israel's actions in the specialty of mental health are path breaking and innovative. We've developed state of the art interventions for post-traumatic treatment. As a diverse society we have developed psychiatric rehabilitation services to meet distinct multi-cultural needs. The Soteria movement is further advanced here than anywhere else worldwide. We're the only place outside of the US where the NAVIGATE program is being implemented. All these should

¹ "She [Sylvia Tessler-Lozowick] raised the concern that Palestinians not Israelis will be the losers if ENMESH 2021 is not held in Israel. My view is that this constructive suggestion **does not address the main issue raised by Board members, which is the political statement (as it is seen by some) involved in holding ENMESH 2021 in Israel.**"

² "Concern 3: Israel is not the right location for ENMESH 2021 (raised by 4-5 current Board members)" [of 16].

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be instructive to everyone.

Our second goal was to demonstrate to the mental health activists in Israel, most of whom spend their days engaged with concrete and immediate challenges, that they're not alone. That they are part of something larger. Your decision, ironically, will mainly affect them. Those most affected will be our colleagues from the Palestinian organizations, as they participate less than their Israeli counterparts in international discourse.

Mike's letter makes clear this boycott of Israel is unprecedented for ENMESH, and as mentioned above, has nothing to do with the reality of the profession of mental health treatment. For some of you it's an ideological stance; for others an evasion of unpleasantness generated by the ideologues. Whatever your personal reasons, you have compromised your professional values in the name of political posturing.

We will continue to build and expand our professional relationships with all ethnic, religious and national groups. Our colleagues in ENMESH have eschewed the opportunity of adding their value to this process.

Mike - since the announcement that the ENMESH 2021 conference would be held in Israel was announced to hundreds of your members at the conference in Lisbon, we would appreciate if you would send this letter to your entire membership.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Tessler-Lozowick
Chair

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