



Israel
Religious
Action
Center



Israel Movement for Reform
and Progressive Judaism
התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה הפרוגרסיבית
ישראלית לתקדמת בישראל

Religious Freedom in Action

Conversion

Israel was established as a homeland for all Jews, and continues to encourage Jews of all denominations to become citizens under the Law of Return. The Law of Return, passed in 1950 and amended in 1970, affords the right of citizenship to anyone who converted to Judaism or who can prove that at least one of their grandparents was Jewish according to religious law.

Reform and Conservative converts often encounter bureaucratic hurdles in applying to make Aliyah and become Israeli citizens, or are denied citizenship altogether, despite Supreme Court rulings in 1989, 2002, 2005, and 2021 that recognize non-Orthodox conversions within the Law of Return and for the purposes of registering as Jewish in Israel's Population Registry.

Erika moved to Israel in 2001 and converted 5 years later in 2006 through the Reform Movement in Israel. When she left Israel after breaking up with her boyfriend, she was barred from reentering the country. She was detained for a night at Ben Gurion airport before being deported to Hungary and was only allowed home four months later.

While living in Israel with a tourist visa and a worker's permit, Erika discovered that she had breast cancer. As her visa did not include health insurance, she had to pay all medical bills out of pocket. Today, she is in a relationship with a Jewish Israeli citizen, but she wants her status in Israel to be based on her Judaism, as she considers Israel to be her true spiritual home.

Through LACO, we offer help to countless converts like Erika from around the world to make Israel their home.

IRAC continues to petition the courts regarding recognition of non-Orthodox conversions for the purposes of adoption, and equal funding for circumcision of non-Orthodox converts, as well as working towards the recognition of emerging Jewish communities, such as the Abayudaya community in Uganda.

Additionally, we will continue to ensure that the implementation of criteria for the recognition of conversions performed abroad respect the rulings of Israel's Supreme Court, and give full and equal rights to converts affiliated with the progressive Jewish movements.

