



Your Honors,

Prime Minister, Mr. Naftali Bennett

Foreign Minister and alternate Prime Minister, Mr. Yair Lapid

Health Minister, Mr. Nitzan Horowitz

Justice Minister, Mr. Gideon Saar

Treasury Minister, Mr. Avigdor Lieberman

Ministers and Members of the Knesset

**Subject: Cessation of the Declared State of Emergency in Israel
in the Absence of an Emergency Situation**

Honorable representatives,

Since June 2020, there exists a law in Israel establishing a state of emergency, providing special powers for the Israeli government and which limits parliamentary checks on the legislative branch.

Declaring a state of emergency is not a trivial matter: special powers to deal with the novel coronavirus (Temporary Provisions – 2020) grants, as the name implies, extensive powers to the executive branch, including substantial restrictions on the population. These powers include imposing restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of the individual, **which should be reserved for emergencies only.**

According to the Ministry of Health, the number of citizens who have tested positive for Covid19 is declining and is at a weekly average of 15 positive confirmations per day. The number of individuals showing symptoms is about 200, with about 70 people who are hospitalized, and the number of patients in critical condition is about 20. In the whole of last week, 2 Covid19 patients died. Thus, in Israel, where the mortality rate is about 125 people per day, Covid19 accounts for 0.2% of daily mortality. This indicates an extremely low morbidity, during a time when the economy is fully open, the education system is in full operation, and without the use of a green or purple pass.

Under the law, the government has the authority to declare a state of emergency if "the government is convinced that there is a real risk of extensive spreading of the virus and significant harm to public health." It is clear that in light of the low morbidity data, despite full opening of the economy, **there is currently no real risk of extensive spreading of the virus**, and accordingly, **there is currently no significant harm to public health.** The inpatient load of the illness has become negligible, with the closure of almost all Covid19 wards.

We emphasize that the complete extinction of the virus should not be expected: it has been clarified by many experts that the virus is expected to remain for many years in an endemic (permanent) form as one of the usual respiratory viruses. **The mere existence of the virus does not justify the continued existence of the state of emergency**, and the authorities have to deal with it as with any other virus. The state of emergency was declared before we had effective tools to combat the virus. More than a year into the pandemic, and after an unprecedented mobilization of the Israeli public to be vaccinated with a vaccine that is 95% effective, according to the literature, **there is no longer justification to continue discourse of an emergency.**

Ahead of the government's upcoming discussion on the continuation of the state of emergency, which will take place on June 20, 2021, a public health service report was submitted to the Ministry of Health regarding the need for an emergency state. Subsequently and bizarrely, despite the improvement in morbidity indices and the beneficial effect of the vaccine on morbidity and mortality in at-risk populations, the Ministry continued with tactics that have accompanied the entire year of the pandemic, of fear mongering, doomsday prophecies, spreading of threatening anecdotes and partial data, with a clear aim to deceive. The report lacked a broad perspective and recent studies carried out by the best experts in the world. For example, the opinion given in the Ministry's report ignores the Ministry's own report of unnecessary hospitalizations of Covid19 patients and the resulting fact that the health system has never been close to collapse. The opinion presents 35% of the Israeli population as unprotected due to non-vaccination, ignoring asymptomatic natural infection, and the survey which found between 20% - 30% of children



have already contracted and acquired natural immunity. The opinion ignores many studies showing that Covid19 is less dangerous for children than influenza, that child mortality in Israel was not due to the virus, and that the issue of long Covid is negligible, and may not be different from any winter virus, and even ignores the fact that all the "threatening" variants which, exploited by the ministry, created great public anxiety, did not cause a significant decrease in the effectiveness of vaccines in the world or in control of the pandemic.

The need, if any, to amend regulations or laws to prevent the spread of the virus, does not in itself justify a declaration of an emergency situation, and can be handled with normal legislative and regulatory procedures, as is appropriate in a democratic regime. A "warlike" emergency state cannot be maintained out of concern of another variant that will defeat the vaccine, just as an emergency situation cannot be maintained for fear of an earthquake or war. If a virus that can "bypass" the current vaccines or a virus with a significantly increased lethality is detected, an emergency situation can be declared anew, taking into account situational data.

The Ministry of Health repeatedly returns to a threatening, intimidating, strict approach - for no medical, epidemiological, ethical or legal reason. It appears that the Ministry's management of the reflects an interest in preserving the elevated status it acquired during the crisis, while placing the war on Covid19 above all other considerations, without examining cost and relevance, and neglecting fundamental considerations of health, economy, welfare, education and democracy.

If the government believes there are conditions for declaring a continuing state of emergency despite data from the Ministry of Health of extremely low morbidity that is no different from other viral diseases, **it is incumbent upon the Ministry to show transparency and present objective threshold values to establish the state of emergency.**

In light of the data currently available, there is simply no justification for maintaining a medical emergency state in Israel, and accordingly, there is no legal justification therefor. We call on you to act immediately to end the legality of the state of emergency, and to return the governmental system in Israel to the necessary checks and balances of a democratic state.



The Members of the Council* (in alphabetical order)



Dr. Yifat Abdi-Kork

An expert in epidemiology and molecular biology, served as a Consultant to the national health basket public committee and Head of Pharmacoeconomics Department, Israeli Center for Technology Assessment in Health Care, the Gertner Institute.



Prof. Zvika Granot

Professor of Immunology in the Faculty of Medicine at the Hebrew University. An international expert in the field of neutrophil research, is developing new approaches to immunotherapy.



Dr. Bruria Adini

PhD in Health Systems Management, serves as head of the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management at Tel Aviv University. Former Head of the IDF Emergency Preparedness Division (Lt. Col.) and Senior Consultant to the Ministry of Health's Emergency Division.



Dr. Michal Hemo Lotem

Pediatrician, Entrepreneur and author on leadership at medical futurism. Served as Vice President of Innovation at the Sheba Medical Center, and as a member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council. Founded Beterem - Safe Kids Israel, and OSHEYA - Women Lead Wellness. Received Prime Minister's special Award for her contribution to children.



Prof. Amos Adler

Professor of Medicine in the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Specialist in Pediatrics and Clinical Microbiology. Director of the Microbiological Laboratory at Sourasky Medical Center Tel Aviv, Treasurer of the Israeli Association for Infectious Diseases.



Prof. Asa Kasher

Professor Emeritus of Professional Ethics and Philosophy at Tel Aviv University. Laureate of the Israel Prize for Philosophy. Member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. Wrote dozens of state and public codes of ethics, including the military code of ethics, as well as serving as a member of several national public committees



Prof. Elian Alkrinawi

Professor of Social Work, served as president of the Achva College, head of the Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University and as dean of the School of Social Work at Memorial University in Canada. Killam Award winner and beacon lighter at the 2013 Independence Day ceremony.



Prof. Amnon Lahad

Specialist in Family Medicine (ISR) and Public health (US). Head departments of Family Medicine Hebrew University & Clalit Health Services, Jerusalem, Israel. Vice Dean Academia – Family medicine, Hebrew University. Chairman of the National Council for the Health of the Community. Active Family physician in Jerusalem.



Prof. Zvi Bentwich

Professor of Medicine, specialist in Clinical Immunology and Infectious Diseases. Served as Chief of Department of Medicine, and pioneered AIDS medicine in Israel. Currently Head of Center for Tropical Diseases and AIDS at Ben-Gurion University. President of NALA Foundation for the Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases in Developing Countries and Board Member of Physicians for Human Rights in Israel.



Prof. Retsef Levi

Professor of Operations Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management. An international expert in safety, risk management and analytics-driven design and optimization of health systems and biologic drugs manufacturing systems. He is leading several large-scale research collaborations across the world with leading industry enterprises and government organizations. He has consulted multiple state governments during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Dr. Orna Blondheim

Specialist in Pediatrics and Neonatology as well as Director of Health Systems. She served as the director of the Schneider Children's Hospital and served 16 years as CEO of Emek Medical Center



Prof. Udi Qimron

Chair of the Department of Clinical Microbiology and Immunology at Tel Aviv University. Expert in T cells, mucosal vaccines, genetic engineering of bacterial viruses, and CRISPR. Published in Science, Nature and Cell and has won prestigious research grants including the ERC. Partner in the establishment of the SARS-CoV-2 testing laboratories.



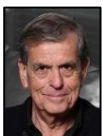
Prof. Emerita Rivka Carmi

Professor of Medicine, Specialist in Pediatrics, Neonatology and Medical Genetics. Served as Director of the Genetic Institute at Soroka Hospital, Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Ben-Gurion University, Chairman of the Dean of Medical Schools Association, President of Ben-Gurion University and Chairman of the Board of Universities.



Dr. Amir Shachar

Specialist in internal medicine, cardiology, emergency medicine and health administration. Established and managed the Department of Emergency Medicine at Sheba Hospital, was deputy director of Meir Hospital and currently heading the ER at Laniado Hospital. Founded the Emergency Medicine department at Tel Aviv University.



Prof. Aaron Ciechanover

Serves as a Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Awarded with the chemistry Nobel Prize, as well as the Lasker Award, the Israel Prize, and the EMET Prize. He is a member of the US National Academies of Sciences (NAS) and Medicine (NAM), the Israeli National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican.



Prof. Mordechai Shani

Professor of Medicine and Medical Management, Specialist in Internal Medicine. Winner of the Israel Prize. Served twice as Director General of the Ministry of Health and Director of Sheba Hospital, as well as Chairman of the Medicines Committee. Founded and managed the School of Public Health at Tel Aviv University, and also established and managed the National Institute for Health Policy Research.



Prof. Eran Dolev

Professor of Medicine, Military Medicine and Medical History, Specialist in Internal Medicine, Director of Health Systems and Ethics in Medicine. He served as Surgeon General of the IDF, as Director of the Internal Medicine Department, and as Chairman of the Ethics Bureau of the Medical Association and Head of the International Review Board of Tel Aviv University.



Prof. Emerita Zahava Solomon

Lt. Col (ret). Recipient of the Israel Prize, the Emet Prize and The Laufer Award. Her research in Social Work and Psychiatric Epidemiology focuses on man - made trauma. Served as head of research in mental health IDF. Head of the School of Social Work and director of the Trauma I-Core, TAU and DSM-4 (APA) committee.



Prof. Asher Elhayany

Professor of Medicine, Specialist in Family Medicine and Public Administration. He served as the CEO of Meir Hospital, the director of the Central District at Clalit Medical Centre, and as the director of the United Health Fund. He served as chairman of the National Council for Health in the Community. Family doctor in the Negev.



Dr. Yoav Yehezkeili

Specialist in Internal Medicine and Medical Management. Lecturer in the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management at Tel Aviv University. Lt. Col. Res., One of the founders of the epidemic treatment team and evaluation programs for extreme biological incidents. Served as a hospital's deputy director, district physician, director of the primary care division in the HMOs. Medical consultant to KI research institute.



Prof. Eitan Friedman

Professor of Medicine in the Department of Genetics and Biochemistry, Specialist in Internal Medicine and Medical Genetics, PhD from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Established the Ontogenetic Unit and Clinic for High-Risk Women at Sheba Hospital, serves as chair of the Ministry of Health's Supreme Helsinki Committee.

*The opinions expressed are the individual opinions of the members, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the institutions to which the members are affiliated.