



February 2023

Dear Friend,

We have a new Israeli Government and that is a very good thing. Comprised of parties with similar outlooks on political issues, most people assume it will manage to govern for most if not all of the designated term of just over four years. And that is a relief. Stability is very important for any country, and after more than three years of unstable governments, **we are hoping that this government will be in power long enough to get things done.**

I am particularly encouraged by some of the statements that have been made by government ministers regarding Judea and Samaria. **We have been promised increased investment in tourism in Judea and Samaria and in roads and other vital infrastructure in our area.** Government ministers have promised to provide final authorization of the young pioneering communities that have suffered terribly from the lack of official recognition. Authorization will bring them proper infrastructure and the ability to receive government funding for vital services. Government ministers have also promised to halt all illegal Arab construction, generously funded by the Palestinian Authority and the European Union, with the express purpose of preventing the expansion of Jewish communities in Area C – that area of Judea and Samaria, explicitly remaining within Israel's jurisdiction under the Oslo Accords.

I have lived in Judea and Samaria for more than 35 years. I have seen governments come and go. I have experienced the horrors of Oslo and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, which changed our lives and threatened to destroy everything we have built here. **I moved to the area when there were fewer than 100,000 Jews living here. Today there are more than half a million.** I witnessed governments that cheered for us and those who expressed venom towards us. But there are two things I have learned: No one ever fulfills everything they promise and strong initiatives at the grassroots level can compensate for governments who don't fulfill their promises.

Friend, these lessons resonate with me today even more than ever before. When I look back at all that we have accomplished through CFOIC Heartland, at **all the communities you have helped and all the vital needs we have been able to provide, I know that we will continue to move forward regardless of the government.** If the government fulfills its promises, then things will be that much easier. But with you at my side, I am confident that we will continue to pick up the shortfall and ensure that the wonderful pioneers of Biblical Israel will continue to settle the land and foster its continued development.

Shalom,

Sondra Oster Baras
Director, Israel Office

P.S. enclosed you will find the most recent edition of our Nahala newsletter. In it you will find encouraging stories of Christians who support Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria and stories of Jews who are settling the heartland of Biblical Israel. We also share some exciting news about community projects that you have helped! So I hope you'll take a moment and read through the enclosed newsletter and know you are a vital part of making this happen. If you would like additional copies of Nahala, to share with your family, friends or congregation, call Kim at 800-647-3344 and she will be glad to send you additional copies.