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**EXCLUSIVE** We have to listen to our 'diaspora family', says Tzipi Livni

# We ALL have a voice on Israel

**BY STEPHEN POLLARD AND MARTIN BRIGHT HERZLIG**

ISRAEL'S OPPOSITION leader, Tzipi Livni, has made an unprecedented declaration of support for the call by Mick Davis, chairman of the UK and the executive committee of the Jewish Leadership Council, for a role for the diaspora in discussing Israel's future.

Ms Livni, speaking to the JC, said: "As leaders, we in Israel must take into account the concerns of diaspora Jewry. Israel is strong enough to take criticism from within the family of Jews, who say so, we disapprove of Israeli policy, but we stand firm for Israel."

The leader of the Kadima Party said that diaspora leaders had a "duty" to speak out where Israel "does something wrong".

She was speaking after Mr Davis called at the annual Herzl Day conference for a "global Jewish conversation" about Israel, which recognises the crucial role of the diaspora community in the debate about the country's future.

Ms Livni's response is a radical departure from generations of Israeli politicians who have insisted that the diaspora's role is to give money, and that diaspora Jews should only have a say if they emigrate to Israel, pay taxes and serve in the army.

But Mr Davis, speaking on a panel discussing the future of the Jewish people, said: "Ironically, Jews outside Israel are at the vanguard of the battle over Israel's legitimacy but because we are diaspora Jews, we have no impact on how Israel itself responds to this battle."

Mr Davis was expanding on a theme that caused controversy when he first raised it last November: that Israel needs to pay more attention to Jews living outside the country and recognise the effect its actions have on the diaspora.

He also defended himself in an article in this week's JC, in which he wrote: "I spoke honestly and personally to a group of fellow Jews of the London Jewish Cultural Centre who were thirsty for debate. My words were made into a racist caricature. Yet Jewish conversations like this are critical." He argues that diaspora Jews "need to drive an agenda".

The JC chairman could not have chosen a more high-profile platform than the Herzl Day conference for his call for a global "big conversation" about the campaign to undermine Israel's right to exist.

He condemned the boycott movement and the "red-green alliance" of the hard left and radical Islam, but he said criticism of Israel should not always be seen as an attack on its right to exist. "Not every criticism of Israel is delegitimisation. Not even every untrue or unfair criticism of Israel is delegitimisation."

Mr Davis urged Israel to reach out to Jews beyond its borders.

"If diaspora Jewish leaders are to have effective support for Israel, bringing their entire communities with them in the fight for Israel's legitimacy, their voices should be done about the growing acceptance of delegitimisation in liberal circles in the UK," Mr Davis explained. "The definition of who is a delegitimiser has to be a narrower one." He said critics of Israel from inside or outside the Jewish community "should not be automatically labelled as self-hating Jews or antisemites".

Liberal Jews and people on the left who were critical of Israel should be brought into the debate.

Others on the panel, which included Sir Ronald Cohen and Nathan Sharansky, proposed a less accommodating view of Israel's critics. Madelon Horowitz, of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, agreed that a new approach was needed. However, he said the term "liberal" was too much of a compliment to delegitimisers. "You have to call a spade a spade and show the world the hypocrisy of human rights groups which provide cover for the anti-Israel agenda. When they cross the line, we have every right to expose them."

But in Mr Livni's comments to the JC, she made it clear where the trend on the matter speaking, she said: "I'm not a Jew, and I'm not on Israeli," she declared. "We must draw a distinction between understanding and supporting Israel's values and existence, and criticising any Israeli government's actions."

Asked by the JC what he thought

need to be heard in Israel. Their perspectives and opinions need to be discussed and considered.

"Israel needs to join the big conversation sweeping through the Jewish world. It is indeed time for a new 'global Jewish conversation'."

Asked by the JC what he thought

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## LIFE TRAVEL

### HOTEL OF THE WEEK ST MORITZ, POLZEATH

▶ AT THE end of a pitted track of a road near a spartan hamlet lies the most private of beaches where locals can be found walking dogs, fishing from rocks or on all fours sifting the sand for coraline.

You won't find tourists there and you won't be bothered by beach traders. The little bay is as delightfully remote as you could ever want for the sake of a short walk and local knowledge. Once upon a time, strolls along it would inspire John Betjeman.

Back up the hill, halfway along that track, sits a hotel as private as anything carved out of the landscape by a millennia of pounding seas: a spectacular sprawl of white stone and wall-to-wall windows with balconies overlooking the bay and out across the Atlantic.

Take a suite here and you can shut out the world. Roomy lounge/dining rooms with adjoining kitchens big enough for the Jewish Princesses attract a fair few celebs looking for anonymity in the countryside. Set into small 'courts' you can even take a couple of neighbouring rooms, close the door at the end of the corridor and create



Private: total living space with sea views

your own self-contained villa.

Rooms are set away from the main building so there's none of the usual noise of people coming and going. The restaurant, in a large loft over the reception, is as



Public: view from afar

stylishly unfussy as it gets, with leather sofas scattered across wide wooden floors and an airy dining area behind a glass partition. You can even see the kitchen staff at work beyond the counter.

But it's the reputation of the Cowshed spa that's the real draw. Six treatment rooms, a hand-picked staff, and bespoke, hand-blended products courtesy of a partnership with Babington House in Somerset impressed Conde Naste Traveller

readers enough to vote it second only to the Mandarin Oriental in London. There's bags of parking around two sides of the complex and the suites come with their own spaces. If you want to whet your appetite, snatch a look from one of the tourist boats that sail out of Padstow. It virtually shimmers on the clifftop like a palace.

Rate: from £95  
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