

Kol vaChol BaSochnut: Jewish Agency Updates

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News from the Director General

Olim Soldiers Complete Jewish Identity Course

Earlier this month, a group of 450 olim soldiers finished Nativ, the three-month course developed and implemented by the Jewish Agency, IDF and the Absorption Ministry. The course is held on the Education Campus at Kiryat Moriah, where many of the soldiers live for its duration.

The study program combines educational concepts that the Jewish Agency advances including strengthening the soldiers' Jewish identity, knowledge of Jewish and Israeli subjects and sense of belonging to Israel. The course is open primarily to olim soldiers who are not halachically Jewish, and for whom the studies are the first step in converting to Judaism.



Graduate of the Nativ Jewish Identity study program

The program has been operating since 2003 and has, to date, reached out to some 9,000 soldiers, one-third of whom continued with the formal conversion process. Of this group of soldiers, fully 80 percent have indicated their intention of converting.

Jewish Agency Assembly Resolution on Conversion

The issue of conversion was discussed during the Jewish Agency Assembly that preceded the recent Board of Governors meetings. Citing "a deep crisis within the conversion process," a resolution was adopted calling on the Israeli government to establish special courts of Jewish law that "will base themselves on appropriate moderate and tolerant prior halachic decisions to allow the conversion process to move forward."

Noting that Israel's Supreme Court already has recognized "conversions by the different streams of Judaism for civil matters," a second resolution calls on the government to "establish immediately an independent conversion authority to resolve and deal with the conversion issue".