



THE PRESIDENT

Jerusalem, October 6, 2013

Your Excellency, Dear Thorbjorn,

I was sorry to hear of the recent resolution stated by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the issue of the ritual of male circumcision practiced by Jewish and Muslim communities.

The ritual of male circumcision has been practiced by Jewish communities for thousands of years and is a fundamental element of our tradition and obligation as Jews. The Jewish communities across Europe would be greatly afflicted to see their cultural and religious freedom impeded upon by the Council of Europe, an institution devoted to the protection of these very rights. I therefore urge the members of this distinguished assembly to reconsider this resolution.

Dear Thorbjorn, you have dedicated a large part of your career to defending the civil liberties of citizens across the world, among other things by implementing fair and equal legislature in Norway and in the European Union institutions. I know how much you value the principles of freedom of religion and trust that you will exert your considerable influence in the Council of Europe for the sake of these fundamental rights.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration, and of my enduring friendship.

In friendship

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shimon Peres'.

Shimon Peres

His Excellency
Mr. Thorbjorn Jagland
Secretary General of the Council of Europe