

March, 2020

Dear Friends,

In this challenging time, I hope these words find you and your loved ones in good health and good spirits. I know that all of you are facing these challenges, and I wanted to share with you the situation here in Tel Aviv-Yafo.

After 21 years as Mayor of Tel Aviv-Yafo, I find myself in a situation unlike anything we have dealt with before. This crisis requires us to solve challenges that are completely different even from what our emergency procedures could prepare us for.

Many residents and businesses are rapidly losing their income and at the same time we are required to reach each resident and serve his or her special needs in a time of lock-down.

We have closed all schools and kindergartens, postponed all public events and transferred the Municipality to emergency work-procedures. We have strengthened our social services teams and infrastructure to allow us to reach and assist those whose social or economic situation make them most vulnerable, with an emphasis on our elderly. We have taken the action of postponing business city taxes and payments, and we are working promptly to change our routines and policies in accordance with the Israeli government's instructions.

It is my responsibility as Mayor and our joint responsibility as a city to ensure that together we will all overcome these challenging times and maintain our resilience and capabilities to serve our residents. Our City Administration is strong, committed and capable and has the knowledge and experience to deal with this new situation.

I am proud of our Municipality, filled with outstanding individuals, who are doing everything they can to fulfill their duties in this dynamic and complicated situation. I am also proud to find the friends of the Tel Aviv Foundation from around the world who are committing to assist us in facing these challenges.

Together with them, we have dedicated the Mayor's Emergency Relief Fund to assist our city's most fragile individuals and communities, especially the elderly, those with social-economic challenges and asylum-seekers. This fund, already supported in a meaningful way by Israeli and international donors, receives dollar-to-dollar matching from the Municipality. It focuses on immediate financial assistance grants to assist those who are most severely affected. The allocation of the funds is done based on the professional input of our Social Services Administration who are dealing with these situations on the ground daily.

Israeli society is showing its strength in solidarity. "Kol Yisrael Arevim Ze LaZe" – We are all responsible for one another.

I wish you and your loved ones health and happiness, and remain grateful for your support and friendship, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Yours,

Ron Huldai
Mayor of Tel Aviv-Yafo
Chairman of the Tel Aviv Foundation