

# INDIGENOUS COALITION FOR ISRAEL

## MEDIA RELEASE

25 January 2024

## **NZ Indigenous Organisation Leads Opening of Indigenous Embassy in Jerusalem**

*Indigenous Coalition For Israel* is pleased to announce the opening of an indigenous embassy in Jerusalem. Jerusalem's Deputy Mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, who spearheaded the initiative along with the ICFI said, "We are grateful to the ICFI leadership for pursuing this initiative, especially during a time of war. The Jewish people are the indigenous people of the land of Israel and so we are thrilled with the support of the global first people's community".

*Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem* will be hosted at the beautiful *Friends of Zion Museum* in central Jerusalem. Founder of the FoZ Museum, Dr Mike Evans, said, "I congratulate ICFI on the decision to open an embassy in Jerusalem and thank them for their support in Israel, especially in these times".

*Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem* is an international project and opens with strong expressions of support from indigenous leaders from around the world: Singapore, Taiwan, Samoa, American Samoa, Hawaii, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand, Native American chiefs and paramount chiefs from Southern Africa.

According to ICFI co-founder and historian, embassy director Dr Sheree Trotter, 'Antisemitism has seen a disturbing and unprecedented rise in the weeks since 7 October. One of the falsehoods underlying the surge in antisemitism is the narrative that Jews are "foreign colonizers who have oppressed and dispossessed the indigenous Palestinians". Many indigenous peoples reject this historical revisionism and recognise the Jewish people as indigenous to the land of Israel. Further, many view Israel as a truly inspirational expression of self-determination in ancestral homelands.'

*'We believe this is the right time to launch the embassy in order to send a strong message of solidarity from indigenous peoples around the world, that we recognise the Jews as indigenous to Israel and stand with her in her struggle against forces that seek her annihilation.'*

*'IEJ will become a hub for indigenous peoples visiting Israel and a tangible expression of their support. IEJ will also support and promulgate the academic work being undertaken to respond to false narratives.'*

IEJ will not purport to be an official representative of any of the governments of the host nations of the respective indigenous peoples. It will engage in educational and cultural initiatives and mutually beneficial collaborative projects.

IEJ will foster relationships with Israel, promote understanding and fight antisemitism. A formal inaugural event will be held on 1 February at *Friends of Zion Museum*.

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**Media Queries:**

Dr Sheree Trotter

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