

Publication: Jewish News
Date: 18.04.19

Rabbis' 'immense sadness' after Notre Dame blaze

Jewish leaders around the globe joined Israel's president in expressing solidarity with France in the wake of the devastating fire which swept through Paris's 850-year-old Notre Dame cathedral on Monday night.

In a tweet accompanying a video of shocked crowds singing and praying near the site of the blaze, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis wrote: "The horrifying Notre Dame fire may have caused untold physical damage but these Parisians are proof that there is no force in the world that can destroy the human spirit".

Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, who is president of the Conference of European Rabbis (CER), said: "Places of worship are a bridge between our past and future, symbolising the aspiration of man to reach new heights and spirituality." He said the CER wished "solidarity, strength and hope", particularly to the French Catholic community.

Israel's president Reuven Rivlin said that Notre Dame was "one of the most beautiful symbols of Paris and of France, and also one of its most



The iconic spire of Notre Dame collapses in the blaze

important cultural symbols...Our hearts are with the people of France and the legends of Notre Dame Paris, real and fictional, and we pray it will stand in eternity."

On Monday night, French president Emmanuel Macron visited the scene and said a national subscription to rebuild Notre Dame would be launched. Donations have begun to pour in from around the world.

Francis Kalifat, president of CRIF,

the umbrella body for French Jewish organisations, tweeted: "Terrible photos of the cathedral in flames. Our solidarity and thoughts go to France's Catholic community. Immense sadness as we face this tragedy, which the nation is mourning".

The Board of Deputies also tweeted its support, saying: "Our thoughts with Parisians and all of France. The devastation of any place of worship is a tragedy".

