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1/3

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Unprecedented call from world's chief rabbis to unite against coronavirus

In a letter, the rabbis call on Jews to, "to adhere – with total commitment – to the health and safety protocols as set out by their country," and to keep the 'Great-Shabbat' leading up to Passover.

By CELIA JEAN APRIL 3, 2020 10:48



Lauren Hoffmann covers her and her son Asa's eyes during their Shabbat dinner in San Antonio, Texas in February
(photo credit: REUTERS/CALLAGHAN O'HARE)





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2/3

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As part of a campaign called [#KeepingItTogether](#), chief rabbis from around the world have come together to call on the global Jewish community to keep the 'Great-Shabbat' leading up to Passover together, so that in face of the coronavirus outbreak, the biggest impact can be made by "supporting one another and praying for the welfare of all."

"Over the last few weeks we have witnessed first-hand the devastation that coronavirus can cause," said Rome's Chief Rabbi Raccardo Di-Segni. "We are blessed to have Shabbat and the more special we can make it for ourselves and our households the more strength we will get from it to fight this virus."

In an open letter, the coalition of Jewish leaders, encourage Jewish organizations "to work together", and call upon Jews to do three things: call or message each other with words of support before Shabbat, pray for each other, and all of human kind just before candle lighting, and keep this Shabbat together.

In the letter the rabbis also call on Jews to, "to adhere - with total commitment - to the health and safety protocols as set out by their country." The letter is signed by 11 [chief rabbis](#), and "is the first-time that there has been a joint call of Chief Rabbis on this level," according Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein of South Africa.

"The unprecedented nature of the crisis that the coronavirus has caused requires an unprecedented show of unity," he said.





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The 11 chief rabbis signing the letter come from Israel, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Argentina, South Africa, Moscow, Rome, Brussels, as well as the Conference of European Rabbis.

The goal of this movement is to emerge from this "incredibly challenging time together," says Rabbi Dr Goldstein. "This alliance of Chief Rabbis will going forward continue to work together in partnership to make the world into a better place."

While these actions intend to have a far-reaching impact, and aim at connecting the Jewish community, emphasis is made on the ability to do so while still maintaining vital social distancing measures put in place by government's and health authorities.

"In Italy, our community is mourning and many people have been unwell, we must support each other to find a way through this crisis. I would urge every Jew to support their community and take this opportunity to reach out and show solidarity to one another," said Rabbi Di-Sengi.

<https://www.jpost.com/judaism/unprecedented-call-from-worlds-chief-rabbis-to-unite-against-coronavirus-623468>

