



Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Response to Council of Torah Sages Statement

New York, NY – We strongly reject the statement issued by the Moetzet Gedolei HaTorah, the Council of Torah Sages, that any synagogue in which a woman performs any rabbinic functions represents a radical and dangerous departure from Jewish tradition and can no longer be considered an Orthodox synagogue. This view does not recognize the many women who perform rabbinic functions in major Modern Orthodox synagogues around the country – as teachers, leaders, pastoral counselors, yoatzot halakha and more. The appointment of women in religious leadership roles is a natural evolution of the increased learning and synagogue responsibilities being undertaken by Orthodox women today. Many respected Modern Orthodox rabbis have endorsed women’s new religious roles in synagogue life and have welcomed these new initiatives as a contribution to building up community.

The statement by the Moetzet is clearly a political move, designed to put pressure on both the RCA and the Modern Orthodox community to delegitimize its own congregations and attack its individual leaders. It is also an attempt to pressure Modern Orthodoxy to pull back from the noble and fully halakhic strides it has made in this generation by welcoming women’s spiritual and intellectual gifts for the sake of our people.

For more information about JOFA’s advocacy efforts, please contact Audrey Axelrod Trachtman, VP of Advocacy, at jofa@jofa.org or 212-679-8500.

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About JOFA (Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance)

Founded in 1997, JOFA's mission is to expand the spiritual, ritual, intellectual, and political opportunities for observant Jewish women within the framework of *halakha* (the collective body of Jewish law). JOFA's commitment is rooted in the belief that fulfilling its mission will enrich and uplift individual and communal life for all Jews. It enjoys the support of scholars and leaders throughout the Jewish world. Membership is open to women and men. For more information, visit www.jofa.org or call 212-679-8500.