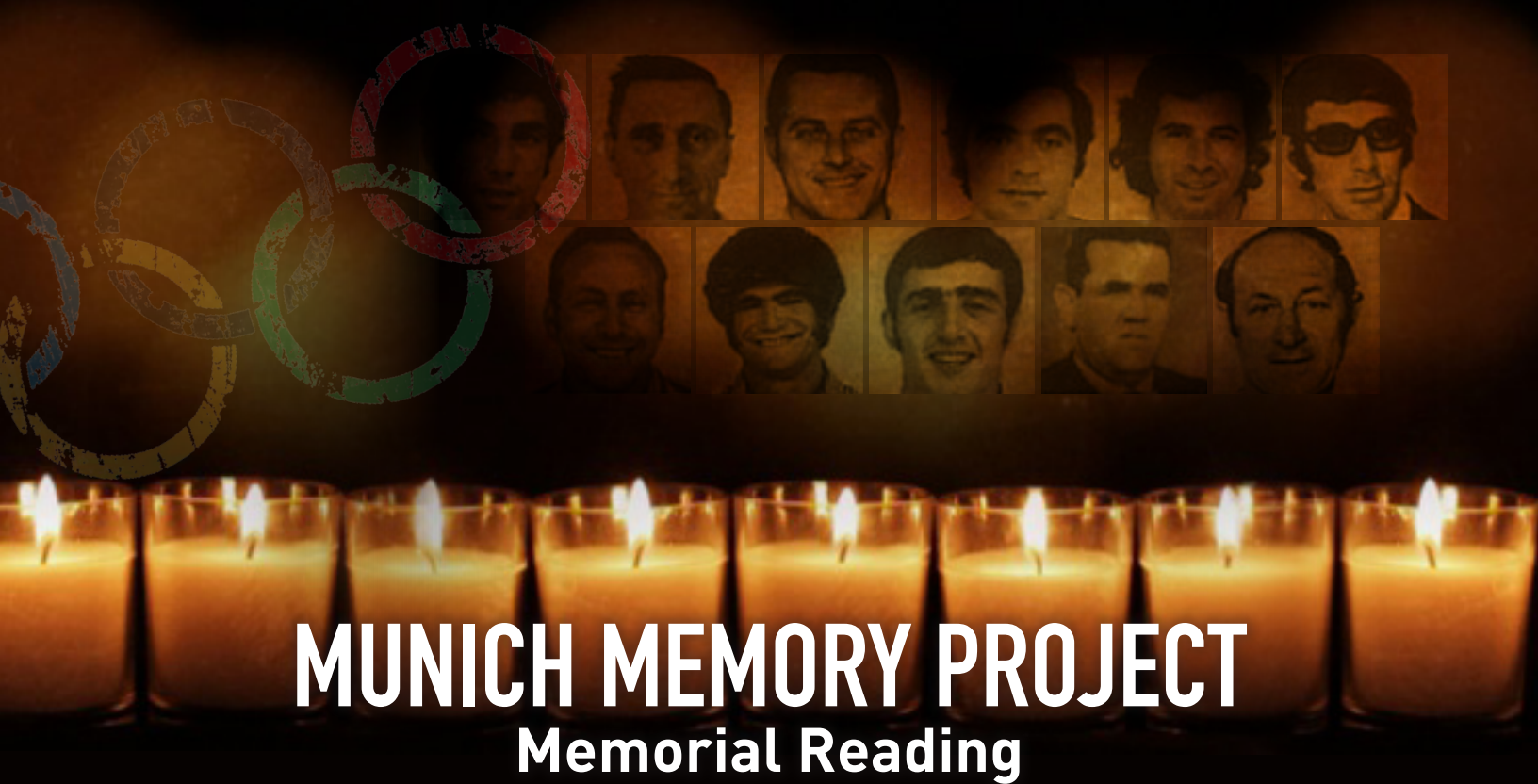




MUNICH MEMORY PROJECT

Memorial Reading

Munich, 1972.

16 Israeli athletes joined in the Olympics in the spirit of sportsmanship and brotherhood, looking to represent their nation and the people around the world who relished in this celebration of our one and only Jewish State on the global playing field.

They sought to uphold the doctrine of the Olympic Spirit, “to build a peaceful and better world which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.”

The team began their journey with an act of remembrance: a visit to the site of the Dachau Concentration Camp, and Jim McKay acknowledged the importance of this moment in history.

“There was great applause when the nation of Israel walked in. Of course you can’t be in Munich, Germany and not remember. We are just about 15 miles from Dachau, but it is perhaps a measure of the fact that people and times and nations do change. Israel is here and Germans are cheering Jewish athletes.”

These Olympic athletes embodied the spirit of Israel, with dreams of success they hoped to achieve in the name of the land, and in turn, in the name of Jewish people everywhere.

Suddenly, it all changed.

In Ancient Greece, all hostilities were set aside to allow athletes to complete the Games. “The idea of the Olympics is to come together in spirit, and through sports to find good in each other, make friendships, forge relationships and find brotherhood and peace in each other,” Andre Spitzer, victim of Munich massacre.

In 1972, this tradition was disregarded by the terrorists when, on September 5, terror took the world’s stage and 14 Israeli athletes hostage.

"It all seemed so terribly unreal... that sense of sacrilege and a feeling of horror that the world's greatest sporting event should suffer such an attack...against people who had been training for what should have been the greatest event in their lives," - London Mayor Boris Johnson

For 22 hours the world watched, hoping, praying, and filled with fear. And then, three powerful words: "They're all gone...."

In their honor, let us recall the life of 11 men whose destinies united them in Israel. Imagine the story of their lives as they led up to this moment. They came to Munich in the spirit of peace and solidarity. We owe it to them to keep that spirit alive.

And so we mark this tragedy with a commitment to the memory of the dreams lost on this day and the meaningful expressions that demonstrate the global recognition of this historical event and its impact on humanity.

"To remember for a minute is like breaking the glass at a Jewish wedding. In time of intense joy, we remember that the world is not whole. To remember is to raise the hope of no future Munichs," - David Kweskin Stamford, Connecticut

"Silence is a fitting tribute for athletes who lost their lives on the Olympic stage. Silence contains no statements, assumptions or beliefs and requires no understanding of language to interpret," - Ankie Spitzer

JOIN US IN A VIRTUAL MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF THESE FALLEN ATHLETES.

Eliezer Halfin, 24

Child of survivor, born in Riga, Latvia denied from playing sports for being a Jew able to make Aliyah with his family only in 1963 Olympic Lightweight Wrestler for Israel 1972.

"We should never forget those who tried to put politics aside and could not do so. They were murdered and cut down in their prime for no other reason except that they were Jews. May their memories be blessed," - Meryl Weingarten Jamaica, NY

"The memory of our athletes slain in Munich by Palestinian terrorists is forever etched in our collective national soul, something we each take personally...In deafening silence, we unite with the memory of our eleven athletes. They passed us a torch, and with a heavy but confident heart, we pledge to carry the torch forward. And the time for that, is now, and forever," - Limor Livnat, Former Israeli Minister of Sports and Culture.

Amitzur Shapira, 40

Born in Tel Aviv head coach for the Israeli track and field team trained 10 of Israel's best athletes. Discovered/coached Esther Roth-Shahamov, the first Israeli to reach an Olympic final in 1976. Track Coach for the 1972 Olympic Team.

"These men were sons, fathers, uncles, brothers, friends, teammates, athletes. They came to Munich in 1972 to play as athletes in the Olympics. They came in peace and went home in coffins," - Ms. Rekhes-Spitzer

"Never let them be forgotten... if we do, we let terrorism win... Let us together make a difference and do the right thing," -Leigh Humpage, London

Ze'ev Friedman, 28

Child survivor of the Holocaust from Poland who fled the Nazi regime for Siberia made aliyah in May 1960 with his family. Served in the Israeli Air Force Israeli champion featherweight class for seven years 7th place in the World Championships. Won the silver medal at the 1971 Asian Games. Placed 12th in his weightlifting event 2 days before his death, one of the best achievements of any Israeli athlete at the time.

"I remember this happening when I was little. I remember not understanding...my father with tears running down his face and him wiping them with the back of his hand. These beautiful athletes filled with optimism for their sport, their country, and the world, wiped out by violence. It is brave to be optimistic in our cynical world," - PaintKZ

"Eleven human beings were murdered because they were Jewish, because they were Israeli...at a place where they should have been safe, where they should have been protected," - Ronit Fraid Melbourne, Australia

Mark Slavin, 18

Child of survivor of the Holocaust from Minsk, USSR began his athletic training as a result of fighting back against anti-semitic attacks and beatings. Finally able to make Aliyah only three and a half month before the 1972 Olympics he was greeted by reporters at the airport, frenzied by the possibility of an Israeli Olympic champion.

His international debut as a weightlifter was to have taken place on the afternoon of the day he was murdered.

"The games are supposed to bring athletes and countries closer together in good faith and team spirit. The experience was done in bad faith by cowards. They should never be glorified. The athletes were there as goodwill ambassadors and should be remembered as such always," - Patricia Griffin

"My heart aches for what these innocent Israeli athletes and coaches suffered. No one will ever forget what they and their families endure to this day," - Caroline Deonarine

Andre Spitzer, 27

Child of survivor from Romania. Made Aliyah in 1956. Served in Israeli Air Force. Founder of the Israeli National Fencing Academy.

"To truly keep the Olympic dream of unity we must never forget those that were brutally deprived of participating in this unity. If we ignore history we are possibly doomed to repeat it," - Carol Garber

"Every human life is a precious gift from God. They should be remembered as a sign of dignity for the people they were and the lives that were taken away from them," - Cathleen O'Hare Chester, NY

Kehat Shorr, 53

Survived the Holocaust in Romania as a Partisan in the Carpathian Mountains, continuously risking his life to rescue other trapped Jews. A Patriotic Zionist, barred by Romanian authorities from emigrating to Israel. Made Aliyah on September 5, 1963. 9 years to the day before his murder. A civil servant in Israel's Defense Ministry Israel's marksmanship national coach.

"It is most important that we honor and value these men's lives ...through the families and messages of goodwill that no one can ever take away," - Tanya Berenson

"The Olympic 11 deserve more than just a footnote in Olympic history. By remembering the Olympic 11 every year, we ensure that their memory lives on and does not give the terrorists who murdered them a total victory," - Ted Flaum Eagan, MN

David Berger, 28

Born in Shaker Heights, Ohio. Made Aliyah in 1970. Coached disabled athletes in Tel Aviv. Aspired to have a chance at an Olympic medal by competing in weightlifting for the State of Israel.

"To honor the innocent fallen... we can never be silent about the hatred and bigotry that caused this massacre and continues to thrive today... Stand up for Israel. Speak out for truth," - Sarit Catz

"To remember the young athletes, who should have had all their lives in front of them, and to emphasize that the Olympic Games are supposed to be about peace and the brotherhood of all mankind," - Rona Hart Haifa, Israel

Yossef Romano, 32

Born in Benghazi, Libya, his family survived Nazi persecutions. Arrived in Israel on aliyah in 1946 following the upheaval of violence against Jews. Served in the the 1967 Six-Day War Israel's middleweight weightlifting champion for almost a decade.

"The Munich 11 victims deserve not just one moment of silence, but many. Athletes who work hard enough to make it to the Olympics, deserve to be able to compete in the games without having to worry about their safety being compromised. These victims did not get that chance. Here's to hoping the victims are resting in peace and that the Olympic games are never again a grounds for violence," - Rachel Murray

"For years, our society has paid tribute to men and women who have lost their lives under unexpected situations and it is time for us to honor the fallen members of the athletic community. It is time for the rest of the world to join us and give these heroes one more minute of respect and dignity," - Erin Flynn

Moshe Weinberg, 30

Born in Israel. Israeli middleweight wrestling champion in Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestling for most of a decade. Won the gold medal in freestyle at the seventh Maccabiah Games in 1965. Youngest coach of the Israeli national team and Director of Israel's famed Wingate Institute National Center for Physical Education. Wrestling Referee for the 1972 Olympic Games.

"The world needs to work harder to help its children to understand the best and the worst kinds of behavior and the difference between right and wrong. This is the only way to create a world with more tolerance and less struggle and difficulty. Let this tragedy remind us all about how to take steps to show our children how to be ... better," - Scott

"To remember is to be a voice against the destructive power of hate," - Carole Greene West Nyack, NY

Yakov Springer, 51

Fighter in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Made Aliyah in 1957. Taught physical education at the Bat Yam High School. Established weightlifting as a national sport. A renowned international judge, attending the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, serving as the first Israeli Olympic judge ever.

"Rest in peace. May the future hold peace instead of terror. Some may call this remembrance racist, but we know it is meant to remind the world of what happens when true racism and hate come together with those willing to commit violence against others," - Monica Brown

"Every civilized person should recoil in horror at the barbarous criminal intrusion of terrorists into the peaceful Olympic precincts...We mourn our Israeli friends, victims of this brutal assault."

Josef Gutfreund, 41

Romanian-born, imprisoned for Zionist involvement. Made Aliyah in 1948. Served in both the 1956 Sinai War and the 1967 Six Day War Israel's only Class A wrestling referee. The Munich Olympics were Gutfreund's third Games as a wrestling referee.

"May the Blessed G-D of all be with those who died tragically that day and may He grant peace to their families and to the world. The hatred must end and the love must spread, but we must never forget,"
- Mark B., Palatka, Fl.

"They are alive in our hearts and souls. They serve as inspiration to us all for personal achievements, for teams and community growth," - Yuri Krison

May our collective commitment to the memory of the Munich 11 unite us with the Israeli athletes and victims of terror of today and of future generations.

Add your message to the Munich Virtual Memorial Wall today.

SPECIAL THANKS to the Virtual Citizens of Israel throughout the world who continuously express their love and commitment to Israel and her people. Be recognized as a Virtual Citizen of Israel
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