

15.3.2026

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students,

I hope that you and your families are safe and that you are managing through this difficult period as well as one can under the circumstances.

Over two weeks have passed since the war with Iran began, and about ten days since Hezbollah joined the fighting. While there are some indications that the war with Iran may come to an end within a few weeks, it seems likely that the confrontation with Hezbollah may continue for a much longer time. Life on the home front is not easy for anyone, but it is especially hard to imagine what the residents of northern Israel are going through, among them many members of our university community. Our thoughts are with them. We hope that their nightmare will soon come to an end, without further harm to those who have already suffered so much.

Since the war began, thousands of members of our university community, most of them students, have been called up for reserve duty. We will support them to the best of our ability, both financially and academically, as we have done in the past. They are the primary reason we decided to postpone until after Passover the opening of the Spring Semester, which was scheduled to begin today. In doing so, we also hoped to provide a degree of certainty for all our students, most of whom have not yet completed their Fall-Semester examinations.

In recent days I have visited laboratories on campus that continue to operate despite the war, in the Faculties of Exact Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, and Life Sciences, and in the School of Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences. It is difficult to convey how much inspiration and encouragement I drew from meeting our researchers and their students as they continue their work in the laboratories. They represent our resilience, our hope, and our future. I also met international doctoral and postdoctoral fellows who have not for a moment considered interrupting their research here. In their presence one can clearly feel the continuation of our international activities, despite the academic boycott we have been facing over the past two and a half years.

The challenges facing the university in the coming years, given Israel's situation both internationally and domestically, will not be simple. A central mission will be bringing Israeli doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows back to Israel after completing their training abroad. This will be the central task of Israeli academia in the years ahead, and of Tel Aviv University as well. We are investing considerable effort, including financial resources, to meet this challenge. A few days ago I spoke with an outstanding Israeli researcher in the life sciences who recently completed a postdoctoral fellowship at a leading American university and has chosen to return to Israel despite the many incentives to remain abroad. She told me that there is no

better place than Israel to live and raise her children. I feel the same way, and yet I was deeply moved to hear her say it.

Please take care of yourselves and your loved ones. May the war end soon.

Yours,

Ariel Porat

President

Tel Aviv University