

Statement from the Masorti (Conservative) movement condemning the decision to outlaw circumcision of baby boys in Germany

June 29, 2012

Masorti Olami, Masorti Europe and the Rabbinical Assembly of Europe join the Central Council of Jews in Germany in condemning the decision of the district Court in Cologne to outlaw circumcision of baby boys.

The circumcision of 8 day old male babies remains an important and meaningful rite in the lives of Jews all over the world. No other country has outlawed circumcision and this new legal decision impinges upon the religious freedom of Germany's citizens be they Jewish or Muslim and the rights of other parents who wish to circumcise their sons.

A brit milah, as the circumcision ceremony is called in Hebrew, is one of the first mitzvot (or commandments) that God asks of Abraham. Just as Abraham observed the commandment, so too have his Jewish descendants over 1000s of years. While the Masorti movement consistently balances the needs of modernity against the needs of halacha or Jewish Law, there is no overwhelming proof that the circumcision of newborn boys causes any "irreversible damage against the body" as stated in the German court's decision. On the contrary, medical research has shown that circumcision can reduce the risk of HIV infection, penile cancer and other urinary tract diseases.

The over 1.7 Million people in the 900 congregations and organizations in 45 countries represented by the Masorti (Conservative) Worldwide Movement call upon the Government of Germany to quickly work to reverse this grievous course of curtailing religious freedoms and dictating fundamental actions of faith communities.



The Rabbinical Assembly
כנסת הרבנים



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