

Former Chief Rabbis of Jerusalem

Rabbi Shlomo Amar & Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu

Translation of a letter from Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

Thursday, the 21st day of Iyar (May 29, 2003)

His Excellency The Prime Minister

Mr. Ariel Sharon

Jerusalem, Israel

May Life, Peace and Blessings Be His Forever Your Excellency, On the 14th day of Adar A 5763 (February 16, 2003) the government of Israel, which you lead, decided to bring the remnants of our brothers the “children of the Felash Mura” from Ethiopia, where they are living today in to camps, one in Addis Ababa, and the other in Gondar. They are subject to the scourge of hunger and various illnesses, to which I was an eyewitness when I visited amongst them. There is much death, particularly amongst the children, may G-d have mercy. And I have already examined and investigated their Jewishness for a long period of time, and I wrote a long reasoned legal decision, and in it I stated that they are “yehudim gemurim” (completely Jewish), and I also held that after they immigrate to Israel, it is appropriate to arrange for them a “giyur le’khumrah” (a conversion ceremony as a stringency) in order to eliminate all doubt. To my sorrow, I have been told that there are those who erred in understanding my opinion that was written with respect to this matter, therefore I am clarifying to Your Excellency, that the children of the Felash Mura who are found in the camps mentioned above, “hem yehudim gemurim be’lo saphake.” (they are completely Jewish without any doubt), and it is a great mitzvah (commandment) to expedite the implementation of the aforesaid government decision, in order to save them from the gates of death. “Ve’yapheh sh’ah akhat kodem (And it would have been better

if it had already been done an hour ago) to check and bring to Israel all those who were born to a Jewish mother (who are the great majority there, approximately 90 percent of the residents of the camps mentioned above). And I pray that Your Excellency will be privileged that by his hand the downtrodden of Israel shall be gathered, and shall come to Zion joyfully. And may the pleasantness of the Lord be upon you, and may he gift you with good judgment, to guide this people in the paths of righteousness and peace until the Messiah comes to Shiloh and unto him will be gathered the nations. With the blessings of Torah and with gratitude,

Rabbi Shlomo Amar
& Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu

Rishon LeZion Chief Rabbi of Israel
President of the Supreme Rabbinical Court

Blessed Be His Name
24 Adar 5752

To The President of NACOEJ
New York, New York