

4.3.26

Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends of the University,

We are now on the fifth day of the war with Iran, which Hezbollah joined two days ago. As we have learned in recent years, the civilian home front is a central participant in wars and absorbs a significant share of the damage, to life and property. This time as well, Israeli residents and civilians have been killed and injured, and many have suffered damage to their homes and property. Our hearts are with them and with their families. Several members of the University community have also been affected, mostly through property damage, and in a few cases through minor physical injuries. We are in contact with those and are trying to support them through a modest financial grant and additional offers of assistance. Many students, and also members of the faculty and staff, have been called up for reserve duty. We do not yet have an accurate estimate of the number of those mobilized, but as in the past, we will ensure that they receive the financial and academic support they need. We hope for their safe return home.

On Saturday, about an hour after the outbreak of the war, we opened a "hotline" through the Dean for Student Success Office to provide psychological first aid to anyone who needs it. The Rectorate is providing ongoing updates regarding examination schedules. We understand how important certainty is during this period, and we are doing everything we can to reduce anxiety, in cooperation with the Student Union. We hope to resume classes on the date originally scheduled (March 15). Detailed instructions will be issued in advance in light of developments.

The campus is currently operating in emergency mode; for now, this holds until Saturday night. We have taken precautionary measures to protect samples and records essential to research should the campus sustain damage, and to prepare for possible cyberattacks. In accordance with the instructions of the Home Front Command, the Human Resources Division has updated guidelines regarding which "essential employees" are required to come to work, namely those needed for the physical operation of the campus. Others are working remotely as much as possible and are asked not to come to the University. It is especially important to avoid creating the impression among our students working in laboratories, or among staff members who report to us and are not essential workers, that they are expected to come to campus.

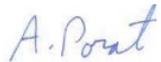
Hundreds of members of the University community are currently stranded abroad and wish to return to Israel. We are in contact with them through the Lowy International School and will try to assist them. As someone who was "stuck" in New York during the previous round of war with Iran, I understand how they feel.

On behalf of all of us, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the University's essential staff members who report to work each day. I have met most of them: employees in facilities and maintenance, IT, human resources, safety, security, custodial services, and others. I was deeply moved by their dedication to the University and their diligence. They are proof that the quality of a university is measured by the excellence of its people: administrative staff no less than academic staff.

Finally, my thanks to the University's friends in Israel and around the world for standing with us in times of routine and in times of emergency. With their help we established the emergency fund that has supported--and continues to support--our students called up for reserve duty.

Please take care of yourselves and your families. May the war end soon and successfully, and may we return to the academic mission--research and teaching--that defines Tel Aviv University.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Porat".

Ariel Porat
President
Tel Aviv University