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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Religious Zionists of America-Mizrachi Condemns Maryland Israel Bond Divestment Campaign RZA warns that Maryland pension funds must not be hijacked by the BDS movement

New York, NY — May 26, 2026 — The Religious Zionists of America-Mizrachi strongly condemns the campaign pressuring the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System to divest from Israel bonds and prohibit future investments in the State of Israel.

The campaign, led by anti-Israel organizations including Jewish Voice for Peace and CAIR Maryland, has claimed victory after Maryland's pension system reportedly reduced its Israel bond holdings from approximately \$73.7 million in July 2025 to approximately \$11 million by the end of March 2026. The same campaign is now demanding permanent divestment and is supporting legislation to bar future investments in Israel bonds.

"This is not a neutral debate over pension management," said Stephen M. Flatow, President of the Religious Zionists of America. "It is a political assault on Israel, dressed up in financial language. The groups behind this campaign are using the familiar vocabulary of the BDS movement—accusing Israel of 'genocide,' 'apartheid,' and 'ethnic cleansing'—while ignoring the terrorism, hostage-taking, rocket attacks, and genocidal antisemitism directed against Israel and the Jewish people."

RZA warned that Maryland public employees and retirees deserve a pension system guided by fiduciary responsibility, not by pressure campaigns targeting the Jewish state.

"Teachers, police officers, firefighters, state workers, retirees, and Maryland taxpayers should not have their pension system turned into a platform for anti-Israel activism," Flatow said. "Investment decisions should be made for the benefit of pensioners, not to satisfy organizations whose real objective is to isolate and demonize Israel."

RZA noted that Israel bonds have long represented a legitimate investment in a democratic ally of the United States. Singling out Israel for economic punishment, especially through rhetoric that demonizes the Jewish state, sends a dangerous message to Maryland's Jewish community and to all Americans who value the U.S.-Israel alliance.

"Those who claim to speak in the name of justice are trying to punish the one Jewish state in the world while remaining silent about the enemies who openly seek its destruction," Flatow added. "That is not justice. It is discrimination."

The Religious Zionists of America urges Maryland officials, pension trustees, legislators, and community leaders to reject anti-Israel divestment efforts, oppose legislation that would blacklist Israel-related investments, and reaffirm that public pension funds must not be used to advance the agenda of the BDS movement.

Established in 1913, the RZA is one of the oldest and most influential Zionist organizations in the United States. It helped create pioneering Jewish communities in the Land of Israel, campaigned for the establishment of Israel, and has inspired numerous American Zionists to make aliya. Today the RZA is on the front lines of pro-Israel activism and religious Zionist education. The RZA is not affiliated with any American or Israeli political party.