



National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles
543 N. Fairfax Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90036

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2016
Contact: Hillary Selvin
Executive Director
323-852-8501 or hillary@ncjwla.org

NCJW Renews Calls for Action on Marital Rights in Israel

Los Angeles, CA - The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) has renewed its call for resolution of the fate of thousands of women denied their civil right to divorce in Israel. These women - Agunot, or chained women - may not divorce without the consent of their husbands under Israeli law. NCJW CEO Nancy Kaufman released the following statement:

"NCJW joins once again with the International Coalition for Agunah Rights (ICAR) to observe International Agunot Day on March 23, 2016. NCJW is deeply disappointed that despite numerous efforts to reform divorce laws by the Knesset and Rabbinical Courts, no progress has been made since the first International Agunot Day 15 years ago.

"Israel has no civil marriage authority. Marriage and divorce for all women - Jewish, Muslim, and others - are governed solely by religious law and religious courts. In accordance with Jewish law, a Jewish woman may not receive a final writ of divorce or get without her husband's consent. Thousands of women in Israel, called agunot, are unable to remarry or have legitimate children, because their husbands either disappeared or refused to grant them a divorce.

"International Agunot Day is part of an international effort to promote solutions to this problem through change in Jewish law. The day is observed on the day before the Jewish holiday of Purim on the Fast of Esther, who rescued the entire Jewish community from a death sentence, and yet would herself have been subject to this denial of legal autonomy. The day contrasts the essential contributions to Jewish life made by Jewish women with their second-class status under marital law."

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. More information on Facebook and on Twitter at @NCJW.

###

ABOUT NCJW/LA

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates committed to the welfare and well-being of the Los Angeles Community. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. NCJW/LA serves more than 12,000 individuals through our Community Mental Health and Supportive Services, Scholarships, Talkline, Youth Educational Programs and Services, Back 2 School Store, intern training programs and our clothing assistance projects. NCJW/LA social justice programs provide education and legislative advocacy on issues that affect and impact women, children and families in the areas of children's rights, economic justice, healthcare, human trafficking, reproductive justice, LGBTQ rights, and gender related violence. All donations to our 8 Council Thrift Shops support the programs and services of NCJW/LA. NCJW/LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (Tax ID #95-1641433). Donate Today to Council Thrift (800)400-6259. To Get Help Call 877-655-3807 or for more info visit www.ncjwla.org, call 323-651-2930, or email info@ncjwla.org. **Donate Today to Council Thrift (800)400-6259. To Get Help Call 877-655-3807** or for more info visit www.ncjwla.org, call 323-651-2930, or email info@ncjwla.org.