

Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis appointed 11th Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the UK and the Commonwealth

Rabbi Mirvis to succeed Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks in September 2013

London, 19th December 2012 - **EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 AM**

The Chief Rabbinate Trust has today confirmed the appointment of Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, as the 11th Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the UK and the Commonwealth. He will assume office when Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks steps down in September 2013.

The recommendation to appoint Rabbi Mirvis was unanimously endorsed on Monday evening following an exhaustive eight month selection process.

Rabbi Mirvis has earned a reputation as one of the UK's most respected community Rabbis, currently serving as the Senior Rabbi at Finchley United Synagogue, (known as Kinloss) a community of well over 1,800 members. In this role since 1996, he has galvanised the community and been responsible for founding pioneering education projects, such as the Kinloss Learning Centre and is the founding Principal of local Primary School, Morasha. As Chief Rabbi of Ireland from 1984 to 1992, Rabbi Mirvis represented the Jewish community to government, other faith communities and the media. He joined the UK Rabbinate in 1992 when he was appointed as successor to Lord Sacks at the prestigious Western Marble Arch Synagogue in London and was appointed to the Chief Rabbi's Cabinet in 1996.

Accepting the appointment, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis commented: **"It is with enormous excitement and a profound sense of privilege that I accept this post. My wife, Valerie, and I are extremely moved by the warmth of the community's support. I pay tribute to the current Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, who, with his unique gifts, has served British Jewry with distinction. In the coming years, I will seek to take our community to even greater heights through a deeper commitment to Jewish identity, values and learning. Our United Hebrew Congregations have outstanding Rabbis, and I will aim to empower and inspire them further to transform their synagogues into powerhouses of religious, educational, cultural and social activity."**

Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks commented: **"It's a terrific appointment. Rabbi Mirvis is a good friend and valued colleague, respected by the rabbinate and community alike. He is a man of warmth and wisdom who will excel in his new role. I wish him and Valerie blessings and best wishes in the great task ahead."**

Stephen Pack, President of the Chief Rabbinate Trust added, **"Rabbi Mirvis is an extraordinary man, a dedicated teacher, a trusted academic and a deeply inspirational**

Rabbi. His unwavering commitment to promoting Jewish values and his natural ability to lead made him the stand out candidate for this position. During the selection process, Rabbi Mirvis set out a truly uplifting and achievable vision for British Jewry and one which I feel privileged to be able to help deliver under his spiritual leadership.”

-Ends-

For further information, please contact:

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Rabbi Mirvis' spokesman: Zaki Cooper - rabbimirvis.office@gmail.com

Notes to Editors

Photographs

A small number of photographs of Rabbi Mirvis taken today will be available by e-mailing rabbimirvis.office@gmail.com

Further photographs are available through the Press Association – 020 7963 7000.

Statement

A short statement from Rabbi Mirvis on assuming the position has been released separately today.

Biography

Born in 1956 and raised in South Africa, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis gained a BA in Education and Classical Hebrew from the University of South Africa. He received his rabbinic ordination from Machon Ariel, Jerusalem (1978 – 80), having also studied at Herzlia High School, Cape Town (1968 – 73), Yeshivat Kerem BeYavne (1973 – 76) and Yeshivat Har Etzion (1976 – 78).

Rabbi Mirvis has held educational and community positions in Israel, Ireland and the UK. He was the Chief Rabbi of Ireland (1984 – 92), a position previously held by Lord Jakobovits, and Rabbi of the Western Marble Arch Synagogue in London (1992 – 96), a position previously held by Lord Sacks. He has been a member of the Chief Rabbi's Cabinet since 1996 and was Chairman of the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue (1999 – 2002).

Rabbi Mirvis joined the Finchley community (Kinloss) in May 1996. Under his leadership, the congregation has been transformed into a vibrant powerhouse of educational, social, cultural and religious activity and, for the past two years, the fastest growing community in the United Synagogue.

At Kinloss, Rabbi Mirvis is the Founder and Director of the popular community education programme, the Kinloss Learning Centre (KLC), which has attracted hundreds of participants on a weekly basis since 2003 and has been an innovative model that many other communities

have adopted. He is also the Founder Rabbi and Honorary Principal of Morasha Jewish Primary School.

Rabbi Mirvis has led many successful campaigns. As Chairman of the Irish National Council for Soviet Jewry (1984 – 1992), he lobbied successfully against the request of Nazi War Criminal, Pieter Menton, to reside in Ireland. He has been Guest Speaker and Scholar-in-Residence at numerous communities and campuses around the globe. He has written articles for newspapers and journals and has often appeared on television and broadcast on radio.

Rabbi Mirvis' wife, Valerie, is a local authority senior social worker who has carried out Frontline Child Protection for many years. Rabbi and Mrs Mirvis' eldest child, Liora Graham, passed away in 2011, following a long battle with cancer. They have four sons, Hillel, Daniel, Noam and Eitan, a son-in-law, Jonathan, two daughters-in-law, Melanie and Althea, and five grandchildren, Kinneret, Elitzur, Naama, Rafael and Tamara.

For more information about the Office of the Chief Rabbi, please visit www.chiefrabbi.org

For more information about the United Synagogue, please visit www.theus.org.uk