

Jewish groups mobilize for march on Washington

JP www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Jewish-groups-mobilize-for-march-on-Washington-479049

Michael Wilner



PREPARATIONS ARE FINALIZED on the West Front of the US Capitol, where Donald J. Trump will be sworn in as America's 45th president on Friday. (photo credit:REUTERS)

WASHINGTON – Donald Trump will draw hundreds of thousands of supporters to the National Mall on Friday for his inauguration as US president. His opponents will take their turn the following day, marching on the same ground in a show of force for civil liberties they fear are under attack.

More than 300,000 people are registered to join the rally – equivalent to the 1963 March on Washington that famously drew Martin Luther King Jr. to share his dream for the nation.

Be the first to know - [Join our Facebook page.](#)

- [Jewish comedian Chelsea Handler blames Kardashians for Trump election](#)
- [Obama warns Trump on Israel](#)

Saturday's event was initially designed to be a women's march, but it quickly transformed into a moment for liberal groups to unify in solidarity against Trump, whose presidential campaign featured frequent attacks on religious and ethnic minorities.

Several Jewish organizations are joining in the effort, working together to bring out thousands of community members in spite of its scheduling over Shabbat.

"The march isn't just about a march – it's really a weekend, and all of it has happened because of the march, which has galvanized people," said Jody Rabhan, Washington director for the National Council of Jewish Women. "We've had movements throughout our history, and it really feels like the beginning of something.

And this march has really been the impetus." Several Jewish groups will begin the morning at Sixth and I, a historic non-denomination synagogue in downtown Washington.

Events are scheduled around the US, with large "sister" marches expected in New York and Los Angeles.

Trump: "We have to protect Israel"

"There was a lot of conversation, soon after the election, about our desire to speak out," said Robert Bank, president of the American Jewish World Service, a nonprofit humanitarian organization that has registered more than 1,050 attendees for Saturday's events. "We're very worried about a retreat on human rights from the administration."

Various Jewish organizations are working in concert and pooling resources, Rabhan said, sharing mailing lists and organizing cross-group conference calls.

Some groups struggled for weeks on whether to participate, given its scheduling on the day of rest, but for those on the fence, there is a service planned just a short stroll up from the Mall.

More than 1,200 members of the Reform Movement have registered to attend a pre-march Shabbat service at the Hyatt Regency before joining their Sixth and I compatriots. Twenty rabbis and cantors are orchestrating the service, which is intended to show "solidarity for women's rights and equality," according to a release from the Religious Action Center.

Sixth and I expects to overflow its listed capacity of 800 people, and organizers around the event are planning accordingly.

"We have been inundated with interest," Bank said, describing tikkun olam as the core of his organization's mission.

"They want to stand for these deeply held Jewish values that all of us are created in God's image, and that each of us is created equal."

A march is also planned in Tel Aviv, with roughly 250 people registered.

"We worked over the last year to oppose Trump's tyrannical and divisive agenda, and since the election we've been bringing together hundreds of Jews to get organized in their communities for the work ahead," said Stosh Cotler, chief executive of Bend the Arc, a progressive American Jewish group that fights for equal rights and justice.

"What we told our members is this," Cotler continued: "We don't get to choose the historical moment we live in, but we do get to choose how we respond. And right now, everyone who cares about women's rights and human rights is being asked to step up and show up on this day."

Other groups working on the effort include Jews United For Justice, T'ruah, Jewish Women International, Lilith magazine, Jewish Women's Archive, HIAS, Keshet, Workmen's Circle, Moishe Kavod House and Avodah.

Relevant to your professional network? Please share on LinkedIn