

Hi all,

As you know, since last Monday the negotiations have been mediated by Steve Adler, the president of the national labor court. According to VERA, the petition to the court was supposed to speed up the negotiations. Well, here is a brief chronological order of the negotiations since last Monday. On Monday the sides agreed to focus initially on the mechanism that would prevent future erosions in our salary. Adler suggested a general idea (that we would be linked in some manner to the top 10% of the public sector), and Magidor even proposed a specific index that might help in this regard. We were open to both suggestions and even accepted the index suggested by Magidor. On Wednesday we had a long session that lasted 14 hours. During this period the treasury representatives flatly rejected these proposals and rejected all other proposals that were raised. At the end of this session (and perhaps being tired of this process) Adler suggested that the treasury officials will suggest a proposal of their own. We agreed to meet on Thursday at noon and hear the treasury's proposal. Just prior to noon time on Thursday, the treasury officials announced that they still do not have any proposal. After pressure from Adler, the treasury officials agreed to submit a written proposal on Friday and meet on Saturday evening. On Friday we received a written document in which the treasury representatives stated that they still do NOT have any new proposal. As a result, the meeting on Saturday was postponed and another meeting may be scheduled for today. After all this, I read this morning in the newspaper that the treasury officials claim that we (the "segel") asked to postpone the meeting, re-defining the term cynicism.

Everyone knows that time is running out. How can one explain this behavior of the treasury? The only explanation that we can come up with is that they are aiming for 'tsavei meniaa'. And again, VERA representatives have claimed that the petition for tsavei meniaa was supposed to speed up the negotiations. We seem to be in the midst of a play from an absurd theatre. During this long strike we received three times proposals by a mediator (VERA and the prime minister office). We accepted these 'paths' for agreement and the treasury officials rejected them. Yet, VERA representatives filed a petition against us. It is clear now that the treasury officials are dragging their feet and have no intention to negotiate with good faith. And the threat of tsavei meniaa is yet again against us.

As we stated many times, we will not stop this strike before our demands are fully met. Unless someone in the government wakes up and realizes what is going on, there is now a serious possibility that the unthinkable would happen and that the semester (and the academic year) will be cancelled. The possibility of tsavei meniaa is even more unthinkable. We will of course obey to any court order, but there are no tsavei meniaa for good-will cooperation and as we know the universities cannot function without it. At this point the only alternative to these catastrophic scenarios appears to be a new direction by VERA. We know AND our presidents know that the problem lies squarely in the government's side. It is high time to act in this direction.

Meanwhile, we are doing all that we can do (with the help of legal, communication, and political experts) to prepare ourselves for all possible scenarios. In the coming days we will keep updating you as frequently as we can.

Best, Asher