



בית דין צדק דק"ק יוהנסבורג והמדינה  
BETH-DIN OF JOHANNESBURG  
(JEWISH ECCLESIASTICAL COURT)

ב"ה

**STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF RABBI AND BETH DIN**  
**REGARDING CIRCUMCISION/ BRIT MILA**

Circumcision, 'brit mila', is a foundation pillar of the Jewish people, and has been for almost four thousand years since Abraham circumcised his son, Isaac, on the eighth day. It is the sign of our eternal covenant with G-d, and, consequently, is one of our most important and precious mitzvot.

Recently a circumcision took place in our community which resulted in injury to the baby. The Chief Rabbi and the Beth Din have established a Commission of Enquiry to investigate this case. The Commission of Enquiry is headed by retired Judge Phillip Levinsohn, former Deputy Judge President of Kwazulu/Natal. The other members appointed to be commissioners in this enquiry are Rabbi Dr Pinchas Zekry, an expert retired mohel and Dr Jeffery Glocer, a specialist urologist.

To be clear, the mohel in question has never before been the subject of such queries relating to his competence. On the contrary, this mohel has been practising as such for many decades successfully. Having said that, this case will be fully investigated by the Commission, which will make recommendations in respect of the specific case, as well as recommending action, if any, it deems necessary to improve safety standards of 'brit mila' in South Africa. The Commission's mandate has been expanded to include any complaints regarding any other 'bris' which has taken place in the past. If there are complaints regarding any other 'bris' which any member of the community would like to submit to the Commission for investigation they must notify the Beth Din office as soon as possible.

We also wish to inform the community that the mitzvah of 'brit mila' has specific halachic requirements which can only be met by a properly trained mohel, and not through a doctor, who may be unqualified to perform the mitzvah in accordance with the halacha.

We would also like to take this opportunity to wish a speedy recovery – 'refuah shleima' – to the baby and his parents and family. Our Jewish methods of circumcision, through trained mohalim, has stood the test of time throughout every era of history, throughout the globe, and indeed also here in South Africa. Over more than the 150 year history of the South African Jewish community, hundreds of thousands of successful circumcisions have taken place. Nevertheless, even one injury, is a serious matter, and we remain committed to maintaining and improving halachic and safety standards of 'brit mila' in South Africa. This Commission is part of honouring that commitment.



**RABBI WARREN GOLDSTEIN**  
**CHIEF RABBI**



**RABBI MOSHE KURTSTAG**  
**ROSH BETH DIN**