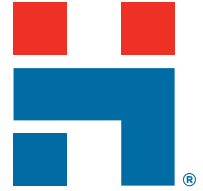


TALKING POINTS FOR YOUR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ISRAEL AT WAR

HADASSAH



When discussing the war in Israel with friends, family, neighbors and colleagues, there are three points that can help address some of the most common misinformation. Please read and share our talking points below:

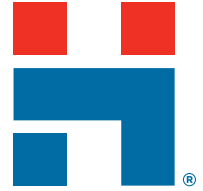
1. We must condemn Hamas. There is no justification for terrorism.
2. The Jewish people have a right to self-determination and Israel has a right to defend itself.
3. Anti-Zionism is too often a mask for antisemitism and surging rates of antisemitic incidents threaten all our safety.

1. WE MUST CONDEMN HAMAS AND IRAN. THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR TERRORISM.

- We must all condemn the actions of Hamas, a barbaric terrorist organization, and their brutal attack against Israel and Israeli civilians, which killed over 1,400, wounded over 5,400 and caused devastation for both Israelis and Palestinians.
- Hamas is a terrorist organization that aims to eradicate Israel and all Jewish people. Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, the European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Paraguay.
- We must condemn Iran, a strong supporter of Hamas. On April 13, Iran carried out an unprecedented attack on Israel, launching over 300 missiles and drones from Iranian soil towards Israel with the sole goal of inflicting mass destruction across Israel without discretion for civilians. This act of war was a major escalation of Iran's on-going proxy war against Israel.
- Hamas is committing atrocious crimes against humanity and its actions have violated international law – including terrorism, kidnapping, rape, holding civilian hostages, and launching indiscriminate attacks against civilians.
- Evidence shows that as part of their planned attacks, Hamas systematically sexually abused and raped Israeli women and girls on October 7. The UN confirmed the evidence. Other investigations and reports have concluded that Hamas used sexual violence as a weapon of war on October 7 and personal accounts from some female hostages describe sexual abuse during captivity. It is likely the 14 female hostages still being held captive have been abused as well.
- At the same time, Hamas is using Palestinian people as human shields. Hamas deliberately places weapons, operation centers and missile launching pads within densely populated civilian areas in Gaza. Under international law if a civilian structure is used for military purposes it then becomes a legitimate military target.
- Israel is a diverse democracy. Israelis of all faiths were attacked by Hamas – Arab, Muslim, Palestinian, including those killed while praying during an attack on a mosque in Israel. The same is true for the soldiers serving in the Israel Defense Forces. They all share a common goal of defending Israel from terrorists.

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- Refusing to condemn Hamas justifies or excuses terrorism and contributes to the normalization of antisemitism and violence against Jewish people worldwide.
- Terrorism is a threat to democracies everywhere. As America's ally and fellow democracy, we must support Israel's right to defend itself. President Joe Biden said during this crisis, "History has taught us that when terrorists don't pay a price for their terror, they cause more death and destruction. They keep going and the cost and the threats to America and to the world keep rising."
- Celebrating Hamas's terrorist attacks against innocent civilians is morally reprehensible. Terrorism is not "resistance" and support for terrorist attacks actively works against any possible path to peace.

2. THE JEWISH PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ISRAEL HAS A RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF.

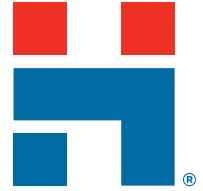
- Israel, like every country, has the right and responsibility to defend itself and its people from these attacks, which threaten its security and sovereignty.
- Israel did not start this war. It is now undertaking military action to achieve legitimate goals to eliminate a terrorist threat.
- Denial of Israel's right to exist as a state and its right to defend itself violates the Jewish people's right to self-determination. The Jewish people have a continuous tie to the land of Israel, which is the ancestral homeland and safe haven of Jewish people worldwide.
- Hamas's attack, which took place on the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War and during Simchat Torah and Shabbat, is the largest killing of Jewish people in a single day since the Holocaust.
- Demonizing Israel, the only Jewish state, directly contributes to growing antisemitism - including antisemitism masked as anti-Zionism - and anti-Jewish violence and hate crimes, which endanger the Jewish community globally.

3. ANTI-ZIONISM IS TOO OFTEN A MASK FOR ANTISEMITISM AND SURGING RATES OF ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS THREATEN ALL OUR SAFETY.

- Anti-Zionism embeds historic antisemitic tropes and themes within its rhetoric and criticism of Israel; often using "Zionist" to replace "Jewish person" to avoid censorship and repercussions for bigotry.
- We can criticize Israel's leaders and government actions without being antisemitic, because one party or leader does not speak for or represent an entire nation. However, anti-Zionism villainizes any Jewish individual with a connection to or support of the state of Israel itself, regardless of their views on Israeli policies, and "others" an entire group of people.

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- Anti-Zionism normalizes antisemitism and paves the path for further violence and hatred.
- In 2023, the Anti-Defamation League reported a 140% increase in antisemitic incidents in the US.
- Many Jewish people right now, including many students on college campuses, feel afraid to proudly express their Jewish identity and connection to Israel because of the normalization of anti-Zionism as a mask for antisemitism.

To learn more about Hadassah's war response efforts in the US and on the ground in Israel, visit our [At War: Heal Israel Now web page](#)

Information in these talking points was gathered from a number of public sources, including [BBC](#), [AIPAC](#), and [The Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#).



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ISRAEL AT WAR

WHY IS ISRAEL AT WAR WITH HAMAS?

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprovoked, large-scale, deadly attack on Israel killing more than 1,400, wounding more than 5,400 and kidnapping 241 people, including children, women, and the elderly. This attack was the deadliest for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Israel is now forced to defend itself and citizens from Hamas attacks.

WHO IS HAMAS? IS HAMAS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION?

Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, the European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Japan and Paraguay because of its continued acts of murder and violence toward Israeli civilians and its goal (delineated in its charter) to annihilate Israel and kill all the Jewish people. Hamas is one of two major Palestinian political parties. Hamas governs Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the smaller of the two Palestinian territories after it rose to power in Gaza in 2007 following a bloody coup against the Palestinian Authority.

HOW DO IRAN AND OTHER BAD ACTORS SUPPORT HAMAS AND OTHER TERRORIST NETWORKS?

Today, Iran is Hamas's biggest supporter on the global stage. Iran provides military training, weapons and funds to Hamas. As a designated terrorist organization, Hamas is cut off from official assistance that the United States and the European Union (EU) provide to the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank. Iran and Qatar, also a significant funder of Hamas that has poured millions of dollars into Gaza, harbor Hamas terrorist leaders who aim to destroy Israel, allowing the terrorist group to gain power and influence in the region. Palestinian expatriates and private donors in the Persian Gulf provided much of the movement's funding. Some Islamic charities in the West have channeled money to Hamas-backed social service groups, prompting asset freezes by the US Treasury.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IRAN'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL?

On April 13, Iran launched an unprecedented attack on Israel, launching over 300 missiles and drones from Iranian soil towards Israel. This unprecedented attack and act of war is a significant escalation in Iran's on-going proxy war against Israel. A strong US-Israel relationship was critical to Israel's security and safety during the attack. Israel with help from the United States, Great Britain, France and Jordan thwarted 99% of the attack resulting in minimal damage and no casualties.

WHY IS A STRONG US-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANT FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY?

In addition to aiding Israel in thwarting 99% of Iran's attack, the US has equipped Israel with key military equipment, such as the Iron Dome and the Arrow 3. These systems intercept incoming rockets and missiles before they ever reach Israel. Israel's enemies, like Iran, do not target purely military assets. These defense systems keep civilians safe. A strong US-Israel relationship is essential for Israel's security, stability in the region and America's national security interests.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ISRAEL AT WAR

WHAT ARE THE IRON DOME AND THE ARROW 3?

The Iron Dome and Arrow 3 were developed in partnership with the US in 2011 and 2015. The Iron Dome is a computerized system that intercepts many different types of rockets that fly in high arcs. The Arrow 3, the top tier of Israel's air defense system, intercepts ballistic missiles armed with nuclear and other nonconventional warheads outside the earth's atmosphere. On April 13, Arrow 3 intercepted most of the missiles.

HOW DOES HAMAS USE CIVILIANS AS HUMAN SHIELDS?

Hamas is putting innocent Palestinians in harm's way and using them as human shields. Instead of building safe rooms for their citizens as Israel does, Hamas deliberately places weapons, operation centers and missile launching pads within schools, hospitals, and densely populated civilian areas in Gaza. Under international law if a civilian structure is used for military purposes, it then becomes a legitimate military target. Hamas is also physically stopping people from leaving northern Gaza, even when Israel has warned Gazans to leave.

HOW DOES HAMAS USE HUMANITARIAN AID TO FUEL THEIR TERRORIST AGENDA?

Since Hamas seized power over Gaza in 2007, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Israel have tried to stop the flow of weapons and military supplies into the Gaza Strip and into the hands of Hamas. Before the war, 20,000 Gazans worked in Israel, and 400 to 500 trucks of food, water, electricity, building materials and other goods were delivered daily to Gaza. Unfortunately, most of this material has been used to fuel Hamas' terrorist agenda and infrastructure. While their civilians live without drinking water and electricity, Hamas is hoarding supplies within underground tunnels used for terrorist activity.

DOES ISRAEL OCCUPY GAZA?

No. Israel completely pulled out of Gaza in 2005, fully removing all military installations and settlements.

DOES ISRAEL CONTROL GAZA'S WATER SUPPLY?

87% of the water inside Gaza is provided from within Gaza, controlled by Hamas. Water pipelines from Israel provide only 13% of the water. Hamas is currently hoarding fuel for war efforts, limiting availability for water processing and other critical humanitarian needs.

WHY DID ISRAEL LAUNCH A GROUND INVASION IN GAZA?

Israel did not start this war. Hamas launched an unprovoked, brutal attack on Israel in the name of destroying Israel and the Jewish people. Israel must defend itself and its citizens from terrorism. Israel has begun the next phase of the war with a goal of removing Hamas from Gaza, while protecting as many civilian lives as possible.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ISRAEL AT WAR

HOW MANY HOSTAGES WERE TAKEN AND WHAT HAS HAMAS DONE TO THEM?

Hamas kidnapped around 240 hostages in the initial days of the war, including babies, children, women, the elderly and the disabled. Over 100 were freed through hostage deals or rescued as part of IDF operations. Nearly 130 of the hostages captured remain inside Gaza, some of whom are already presumed to be dead. Taking hostages is a war crime. Hamas is physically, psychologically and likely sexually abusing these hostages. Hamas has refused to allow the International Red Cross to visit the hostages to provide critical medical care to hostages.

DID HAMAS COMMIT ACTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON OCTOBER 7?

Yes. There is clear, documented evidence that Hamas sexually abused, raped and tortured Israeli women and girls as part of their terrorist attack. There are several international efforts to document these atrocities and bring justice for the victims. Hamas must be fully held accountable for these war crimes.

HAVE WAR CRIMES BEEN COMMITTED?

Hamas's terrorist attack on October 7, which included the torture and slaughter of civilians, rape and sexual abuse, and the kidnapping of Israelis as hostages (and which have been grotesquely documented by Hamas with extensive video footage), are war crimes. Each act of hostage taking is a war crime. The law – and human decency – requires Hamas to return the hostages to their families immediately with no negotiations.

SHOULD WE CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE?

Hamas could at any time end the war by freeing the hostages and surrendering its arms. However, Hamas has rejected overtures for peace and ceasefire deals. While a ceasefire might sound like a path to peace, right now, a blanket ceasefire would allow Hamas to garner more power and continue to develop and launch terrorist campaigns. Israel has a legitimate right to defend itself and its citizens from terrorism and attacks. Israel is working to defeat Hamas, put an end to its terrorist threats and secure the release of the remaining hostages.

WHY ARE PERSISTENT CALLS FOR A CEASEFIRE FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DANGEROUS?

Biased, misleading resolutions being proposed to local and state governments across the country have promoted hatred and deep divisions in communities. Allowing false information to become normalized contributes to the alarming rise in antisemitism. Calls to withdraw US security aid from Israel only embolden Hamas and allow them to continue to use civilians as human shields, torture hostages and launch attacks on Israel. By withdrawing aid and security funding Israel's security and the stability of the entire Middle East region will be threatened.

WHY DOES THE FIGHTING CONTINUE?

Israel is working to eradicate Hamas, an internationally recognized terrorist organization, after they attacked and invaded Israel. Hamas continues their terrorist campaign against Israel and still illegally holds over 100 hostages, despite the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israel has proposed several ceasefire frameworks negotiated with the US, Egypt and Qatar, but Hamas continues to reject them and instead chooses violence over peace. As long as Hamas aims to destroy Israel, Israel will not stop defending itself and its civilians from terrorism.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ISRAEL AT WAR

ARE CIVILIANS IN GAZA RECEIVING HUMANITARIAN AID?

Israel and allies, including the United States, are delivering humanitarian assistance to Gaza, including food, water, medicine, fuel and shelter supplies, despite Hamas' continuous terrorist campaign to destroy Israel. Since October 7, nearly 8 million tons of aid have entered Gaza from Israel. Egypt also shares a border and shares in the international responsibility to provide aid to Gaza. The US is providing additional humanitarian aid to Gaza through air drops. Hamas is fully responsible for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza as they continue to use civilians as human shields by developing terrorist infrastructure in mosques, schools, hospitals and homes.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH MISINFORMATION?

Information provided by Hamas is likely to be inaccurate propaganda designed to advance its agenda. At the same time, antisemitism – prejudice or hatred against Jews – has persisted in many forms for over 2000 years and, right now, is growing at alarming rates. Misinformation that is easily spread online continues to fuel conspiracy theories about Jews and the Jewish state of Israel.

IS ISRAEL A “SETTLER COLONIALIST ENTERPRISE”?

No. Using the term “settler colonialism” is inaccurate when referring to Israel. Jews are native and indigenous to the land of Israel, and Israel is integral to the Jewish religion and culture. Many Jews came and still come to Israel escaping antisemitism and other forms of persecution. Israel is a democracy that extends rights and protections to all its citizens. Israel is essential as a homeland for the Jewish people and their right to self-determination.

HOW CAN THE UNITED STATES SUPPORT ITS ALLY, ISRAEL?

The US and Israel have a longstanding strategic relationship founded on shared values and interests. The US must continue to uphold this strategic partnership providing critical security funding without unnecessary political conditions to Israel to ensure that Hamas is destroyed. Congress must stand with Israel, defend its right to exist, raise awareness around the sexual violence committed by Hamas and pass an aid package for military and security funding for Israel immediately.

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