

## **Subjects for Letter Writing Campaign**

***Please base your letter on at least one of the following sections.***

### **1) October 7th was the Darkest Day in Jewish history in Our Lifetimes**

October 7th was the darkest day in Jewish history in our lifetimes. Israeli citizens were attacked, murdered, brutalized, mutilated and raped. Indeed, the massacres of October 7th were horrific. It was the most disgusting massacre of human life imaginable. Parents and children hid for hours, hearing their neighbors being murdered, wondering when their turn would come. Whole families were tied up and burned alive. Limbs and body parts were cut off living people. Babies were beheaded. One baby was baked alive in the family kitchen, while his mother was being raped and then murdered. Rape was used as a weapon of war – Hamas directed its militants to “dirty and shame the Jewish women”. Young girls, teens and women of all ages were raped in huge numbers.

### **2) Albany Connection to the Horrors of Oct 7th**

Albany is a “Sister City” to the Eshkol Region of Israel, the collection of farming communities near the Gaza Strip. Every year a delegation of students from Israel visits Albany and spends a week with the Jewish teens of our community. Judi Weinstein serves as their chaperone and has stayed in the homes of our community members. Judi, an American citizen and her husband Gadi Haggai were taken hostage and have been held in Gaza since October 7th. We learned last week that Gadi, a 73 year old man, was murdered by Hamas. Judi has visited Albany many times and members of our community call her a friend. The Albany Jewish community has been bereft at her kidnapping and now the loss of her husband. This massacre may have happened in the Middle East but it has real everyday consequences for people right here in Albany. Hearing people call Judi’s kidnapping and her husband’s murder as justified is just a knife in the heart of the Albany Jewish community.

### **3) What is Zionism?**

Zionism is the Jewish movement for self determination in the Land of Israel, the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people. It does not espouse apartheid, genocide, racism or exclusion of other nationalities and religions. 95% of the world's Jews are considered Zionists, meaning they believe in and feel connected to the Jewish state's existence. It is a word that has been corrupted and co-opted in exchange for the term “Jew”. Slurs that were not accepted before are now perfectly acceptable as long as you substitute Jew with Zionist.

The displacement of the Palestinians in 1947, which came to be known as the Nakba, was a result of the Arab Palestinian leadership declaring war on Israel and the Jews and losing that war. The Arab leadership explicitly and publicly threatened to carry out the Nazi Final Solution.

Prior to this, dating back centuries, the Jews were subject to many pogroms (like the October 7th one) and displacement. They were brutal, murderous attacks that made life for Jews in the land of Israel next to impossible.

There has been a continuous Jewish presence in the land of Israel for 3,000 years. Diaspora Jews are Jews who have been displaced by colonization. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, stated “Jews are the only people who ever created a nation state there. At all other times in the past 3,000 years it was merely an administrative district in an empire whose centre was elsewhere: the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Alexandrian, Roman and Byzantine empires, the crusaders of the Holy Roman Empire, the various Muslim empires such as the Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Mamluks and Ottomans, and finally the British. Jews are the only people who have maintained a continuous presence in the land. They are its indigenous, original inhabitants.” Our tribal identity, nationhood and our cultural and spiritual practices predate all of these conquerors and colonists.

#### **4) Are Jews White?**

A comment was made at the last meeting that the world doesn't care about Black or Brown people but only white people. Currently, Mizrahi Jews currently make up more than half of Israel's population, about 3.2 million people. And there are 150,000 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel as well. All of these people live in the land of Israel because they were expelled from their countries- 900,000 Jewish citizens were expelled from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Syria, Yemen , Egypt, Iraq, Iran , Lebanon and Turkey between 1948 and 1972.

#### **5) Is Israel a European Colony on Brown People's Land?**

The Jews in America and Europe are being classified as white colonizers. Jews are not white. If we were, we wouldn't have been historically excluded from country clubs and universities and certain jobs in America. The world has started to only see things in the binary. White vs. Black/Brown, Colonizer vs colonized and Oppressor vs. Oppressed. The Israel/Hamas war cannot be seen through this lens. Israel is fighting an existential war against Hamas, a genocidal murderous terrorist death cult. They have stated publicly that they will repeat the attacks of October 7th again and again.

#### **6) Don't Believe Hamas Propaganda**

Many of the groups demanding a ceasefire also do not believe in Israel's right to exist. That is a non-starter. These groups cry for a Ceasefire and then simultaneously call to Globalize the Intifada, which are in direct opposition to each other. Intifada is a call for a violent uprising that in the past has resulted in the death of many Jews, not combatants: people riding a bus, people praying at holy site, people enjoying pizza and people at a disco. A public commenter in your

chambers last week called Hamas, an Iranian funded terrorist group, a freedom fighting group resisting occupation. First of all Hamas has never been recognized as freedom fighters by international standards, rather a murderous terrorist organization. Secondly, their brutality and utter barbarism is not resistance, but rather sadism in its purest form. It is insulting and frankly horrifying that there are people in our community who give carte blanche to terrorists and support the basest of human behavior. These terrorists also filmed their acts and shared them on social media, even calling some of the victims' family members and streaming the deaths live. So it is unfathomable to us as a community that anyone can deny these atrocities. Neglecting to describe Hamas accurately constitutes an omission of key information that distorts people's evaluations of the conflict between Hamas and Israel and it is an intentional use of misleading language intended to cause confusion and spread misinformation while justifying their acts.

## **7) Israel is Not an Apartheid State**

Many have accused Israel of being an Apartheid state. This is specifically a concept pertaining to South Africa, in which black people were intentionally segregated from white society, and were oppressed under the government of the state based on their race. This is a ludicrous accusation towards Israel, as over 2 million Arabs live within the borders of Israel and enjoy full and equal rights of the country, the same as Jewish Israeli residents. Arab Israelis can serve in any job in Israel, including high government positions like that of supreme court judges, or even prime minister.

## **8) Jewish Voice for Peace - Not Very Jewish, Not at all for Peace**

Jewish Voice for Peace is a radical anti-Israel and anti-Zionist activist group that advocates for the boycott of Israel and eradication of Zionism. JVP does not represent the mainstream Jewish community, which it views as bigoted for its association with Israel. JVP's staunch anti-Zionist positions place it squarely in opposition to mainstream American Jews and Jews worldwide, most of whom view a connection with Israel as an integral part of their social, cultural or religious Jewish identities. JVP promulgates the view that Jews who identify even tangentially with Israel are motivated by white supremacy, Jewish racial chauvinism and religious supremacism." "Some JVP activists and event participants have promoted violence and/or terrorism, as well as terrorist groups and figures, including terror organization Hamas and PFLP terrorists Leila Khaled and Rasmia Odeh. Others have minimized or justified terrorism, including by alleging that the idea of "civilian Israelis" is a myth. (Source: [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org))

## **9) Antisemitism Historically and the Charge of Genocide**

One of the oldest forms of bigotry is Antisemitism, which is hostility and hatred towards the Jewish people on the basis of our ethnicity and religion. A classic iteration of antisemitism is

Jewish people “becoming” an iteration of everything a given society hates, such as communists during the Mccarthy era, and now in our modern times, as genocidal racist, apartheid, white settler colonizers. The term “genocide,” which as Jews we have faced many times throughout our history as a people, is now being used against us as something the only Jewish state is being accused of doing. Despite the fact that Hamas actually states publicly their desire to commit a genocide against Jews, we are the ones accused of carrying out genocide, despite doing everything humanly possible to protect innocent civilian life in a brutal war that we did not start or ask for. If a permanent ceasefire is imposed upon us without calling for the end of Hamas, the genocidal terrorist group who wishes for us to be eradicated, we are complicit in our own genocide. Hamas has sworn to repeat the atrocities of October 7th again and again, and sources have shown in a very in depth study of the history of ceasefires that they are largely ineffective (Burke, CSS, 2016). Since warring parties ultimately return to offensives, ceasefires do not work to prevent conflict or bloodshed. There had been a ceasefire in place between Israel and Hamas until Hamas broke it on October 7th, and they have broken all temporary ceasefires during this conflict as well. In contrast with Hamas’s genocidal intentions, the Palestinian population of Israel has more than doubled over the past ten years (World population review, 2023). If Israel wanted to commit genocide of Palestinians, it would have done so by now as it has the military capability to do so. Instead it takes painstaking measures to ensure as many civilian lives as possible are spared during its attacks on Hamas terrorists.

#### **10) Increase in Antisemitism**

When we consider the appalling increase of antisemitism in this country, it is even more important to consider how the Council’s actions on a resolution such as this could further target the Jewish community. Right here in Albany, we have been the victims of terror attacks driven by Jew hatred. A man with a shotgun fired shots outside one of our places of worship, Temple Israel, a synagogue as well as an early childhood center, while 75 preschool aged children were inside. The man yelled threatening statements during his attack, including the phrase “Free Palestine.” In the last few years there have been countless bomb threats to Jewish institutions in the Albany area, including synagogues and the Jewish Community Center. As people who frequent these institutions and send our children to these schools, we live with constant fear and anxiety for our safety. We are accustomed to police and security presence in all of our institutions for protection; this is the reality of being Jewish.

Based on a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, “nearly half of Americans (48%) say that when thinking about the war, they are extremely or very concerned about the possibility of increasing violence against Jewish people in the United States” I assure you that among the Jewish community you represent, those numbers are most certainly higher. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center also indicated that a “sizeable majority of Americans say that Hamas has “a lot” of responsibility for the current war (65%).”

On Wednesday December 20, 2023 Secretary of State Antony Blinken said “What is striking to me is that even as we hear many countries urging an end to this conflict... I hear virtually no one demanding of Hamas that it stop hiding behind civilians, that it lay down its arms, that it

surrender. This would be over tomorrow if Hamas does that...How can it be that there are no demands made of the aggressor and only demands made of the victim? It would be good if there was a strong international voice pressing Hamas to do what is necessary to end this." Even the Secretary of State calls for Hamas to lay down its weapons.

### **11) Precedence re: Resolutions**

The stated purpose of this Council's existence is to regulate and protect the interests of residents within its ward, and introduce, adopt, amend or repeal local laws, ordinances, resolutions and regulations pertaining to property and government affairs within the City of Albany. I have to ask, have there been other resolutions passed by this council regarding global or geopolitical conflicts? This resolution hardly seems to fit within the stated goals of the Council as it does not in any way pertain to property or government affairs within the city of Albany. And if the Common Council of Albany has now decided to pass geopolitical resolutions, why is there no resolution calling for ceasefire in Nigeria, where there is an actual genocide of Christians, who are being ethnically cleansed by the tens of thousands by militant jihadists? Or in Syria, where for over ten years, the current civil war has seen over 500,000 dead, and over ten million displaced? Or in Sudan, and Darfur, where close to 1 million people combined between the two regions have been killed in genocides? Or the actual genocides in China or Myanmar? The crimes against humanity happening in these conflicts are cause for severe alarm, and for real action... yet there is silence. There is no outrage for these appalling injustices, and no voices in this community speaking for the millions of innocent lives lost, and no ceasefire resolutions being passed in local common councils. We must ask ourselves why it is that out of these severe global conflicts in which actual genocides are being carried out, does this community laser focus on Israel, who is not even remotely coming close to genocide. And why do the same protesters who push for these ceasefire resolutions against the world's only Jewish state, protest in the streets in front of Jewish institutions which have absolutely no affiliation with Israel's government or military strategists? Or target visibly Jewish figures who similarly have nothing to do with Israel's government? Sadly, the answer is classic and age-old Jew hatred. It is now thinly veiled in "anti Zionism," and sanitized in criticism of the Jewish state and "Israelis" instead of "Jews," but it is one in the same. Please, as a Common Council with many Jewish constituents, do not pass this one sided ceasefire resolution against the Jewish people and our one and only state.

### **Responses to specific sections of A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ALBANY'S COMMON COUNCIL CALLING FOR A CEASEFIRE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS:**

#### **12) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Current War & Meaning of Ceasefire**

*WHEREAS, there is broad community support in Albany for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the current war between Israel and the people of Gaza, including a petition signed by nearly 2,000 Capital District community members over just a few days' time and a series of*

*rallies and vigils calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire attended collectively by thousands of community members; and*

**The current war** is between Israel and the internationally designated and Iran-backed terror organization Hamas. Hamas is an extremist organization that calls for the eradication of the State of Israel. The United States, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan and the UK have all designated Hamas as a terrorist organization (Anti Defamation League). The people of Gaza have been under a total rule of Hamas for 17 years. Hamas' charter calls for the destruction of Israel. They do not accept the idea of a 2-state solution – only destruction. Hamas has built a death culture of indoctrination, in which children desire to become martyrs. The path to such martyrdom is through killing Israelis. Hamas steals the humanitarian aid raised for the Gazans. The civilian deaths are entirely the fault of Hamas, who started a brutal war and shield themselves with civilians.

**The call for a ceasefire** is a call for Israel to stop fighting Hamas. This is not possible, as Hamas has sworn to execute missions akin to that of the October 7 massacres 10x over. Hamas still holds more than 100 hostages. A ceasefire will occur when Hamas surrenders and hands over the hostages, or is destroyed. **The fact that many people** locally have rallied and petitioned for a ceasefire does not “make it right”. In fact, it illustrates how much of a minority Jews are, among so many other cultures. Additionally, just last week Israel offered a ceasefire in exchange for hostages and HAMAS REJECTED it. As recently as this week, a deal was proposed by Egypt for a complete end to the war, if Hamas surrenders their power and of course, Hamas rejected it.

### **13) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Deaths of Civilians**

***WHEREAS**, we believe, in particular, that the lives of all children are precious, and that there is no difference in the pain and agony caused by the death or injury of a Palestinian child in Gaza as compared with that of a Jewish child in Israel, and we, as a community, mourn all such losses; and*

***WHEREAS**, we, like all other peace loving people around the world, are deeply concerned about the present crisis in the Middle East; and*

**The people of Israel** and the Jews of the Capital Region also mourn all such losses. All civilian deaths are a terrible tragedy. No life is more important than another. The lives of innocent Palestinians are equally important as those of Israelis. We are bereft and heartbroken at the loss of all lives in this war. Throughout Israel's history the Israeli people have consistently striven for peace with their Arab & Muslim neighbors. We pray for the day that we can live in peace side by side. We pray that the people of Gaza will be free from Hamas and will be willing to pursue peace with Israel. War is horrible and it is ugly. Unfortunately the responsibility for deaths of innocent Palestinians in this war lies solely on Hamas. They regularly abuse and indoctrinate their children with radical Jew hatred and encourage and champion violence against Jews. They use children as human shields, hiding weaponry, artillery, even hostages and fighters underneath schools, hospitals, and even childrens bedrooms. They take away children's innocence by glorifying war and terrorism and teaching them only about hatred and martyrdom.

Hamas has billions of dollars of aid at its disposal that could be used to protect the innocent civilians of Gaza as Israel does using bomb shelters or a protective iron dome system, but instead Hamas uses all resources donated to them to create terrorist infrastructure such as terror tunnels, and purchase weapons to use in their terrorist activities. Hamas steals all humanitarian aid from innocent gazan civilians to use for itself, only prioritizing its fighters, and never putting its starving and suffering children at the center by giving them the food and water they so desperately need. Just this week, Hamas shot and killed an 11 year old Gazan boy who was trying to get humanitarian supplies from a truck, before hijacking the truck full of aid for itself and its fighters.

#### **14) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Anti-Israel Bias of Major World Organizations**

*WHEREAS, the information contained within this resolution has been reported on and verified by leading international non-governmental organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, UNICEF, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Human Rights Watch, and others; and*

**Every single organization on this list** has a known reputation for anti-Israel bias. On November 2, 2023, Iran (yes Iran!) who executes its citizens daily was given the chair of the UN Human Rights Council Social Forum. Since the UN Human Rights Council was founded it has condemned Israel 99 times and countries like China and Saudi Arabia have received none. Anyone with an objective lens would see the inherent bias in the UN. None of the NGOs or relief organizations have demanded to see the hostages and many of them even deny the sexual violence against Israeli women. The International Red Cross is known for their antisemitism as they visited Auschwitz and reported there was nothing amiss. They have been asked, nay begged, to visit the hostages and they have answered that they do not have the authority, they have even gone as far to say that Israel is at fault for not meeting Hamas' demands. These are all hardly organizations that I would rely on for an objective point of view.

#### **15) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: The Reasons for This War**

*WHEREAS, without the establishment of a robust, bilateral, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, this war will lead to a further loss of civilian life, including the deaths of many more children; and WHEREAS, the continuation of this conflict will increase the chance of a larger war in the Middle East, causing even more death and destruction; and*

**A bilateral ceasefire** is a wonderful idea which has yet to be realized. Since it took power in 2007, Hamas has been firing rockets at Israeli civilians indiscriminately. In May 2018, Hamas launched incendiary balloons and kites from the Gaza border in order to take advantage of prevailing winds and start forest fires. By July 2018, incendiary kites and balloons started 678 fires in Israel, burning 910 hectares (2,260 acres) of woodland, and 610 hectares (1,500 acres) of agricultural lands. Hamas has used UNRWA funds to build tunnels that breach the border between Gaza and Israel, for the purpose of murdering Israelis. A ceasefire that begins with



Israel always ends with Israelis being targeted. If Hamas were to truly engage in a ceasefire, there would be no war.

**A larger war** is best prevented through Israel being strong in defending itself. Make no mistake - every possible risk of war in the Middle East is currently being propagated by Iran. Israel must show its strength to Iran's proxies (Hamas, Hezbollah, Houtis) – anything less is exploited as weakness.

#### **16) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: The Horrific Massacres on October 7**

*WHEREAS, we reaffirm our unequivocal condemnation of the Hamas attacks on Israel that took place on October 7th, in which Hamas killed over an estimated 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals, and captured over 200 hostages, who were subsequently taken to Gaza; and*

**Indeed, the massacres of October 7 were horrific.** We are grateful that you share in such condemnation of the murders that day. However, they were not merely murdered – they were terrorized & tortured, raped and burned. It was the most disgusting massacre of human life imaginable. Parents and children hid for hours, hearing their neighbors being murdered, wondering when their turn would come. Whole families were tied up and burned alive. Limbs and body parts were cut off living people. Babies were beheaded. One baby was baked alive in the family kitchen, while his mother was being raped and then murdered. Rape was used as a weapon of war – Hamas directed its militants to “dirty and shame the Jewish women”. Young girls, teens & women of all ages were raped in huge numbers.

**More than 240 men, women, and children were taken hostage, including young babies and toddlers, and survivors of the Holocaust.** Some 80 were released through supremely unfair exchanges – 1 innocent hostage in exchange for 3 violent criminals. The International Red Cross has not attempted to reach these hostages, the remainder of whom's fate or condition is unknown. Among the hostages, at least a dozen are diabetic and without insulin or proper food. Released hostages speak of being deprived of food & water, and most have been violated sexually. Not a single supporter of the resolution who spoke in the Albany Common Council chamber in support of a ceasefire acknowledged the atrocities of October 7 nor did they even once mention the release of the hostages.

#### **17) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Hamas Embeds Its Military Activity Within Gaza Population for the Purpose of Maximizing Civilian Casualties**

*WHEREAS, we also share dire concerns with the ongoing Israeli response, in which the Israeli Defense Forces have killed an estimated XYZ Palestinians as of November 27, 2023, with the exact amount unknown due to the inability to count the dead as the health system collapses, including women and children and tens of thousands of more injured; and with approximately 7,000 Palestinians in Gaza reported missing and presumed to be trapped or dead under the rubble, awaiting rescue or recovery; and*

**Any amount of civilian deaths are tragic.** It should be evident to the world that the blame and shame for these deaths lie squarely at the hands of Hamas. Hamas started a brutal war and



then takes full advantage of their own people by hiding behind them. They have committed innumerable war crimes such as using schools, hospitals and private homes as military centers and actual launch sites for rockets. It is important to note that Hamas reports the death toll numbers of Gaza. Israel is still counting and identifying bodies from the October 7th massacre, months later. Gaza is in complete chaos, and during this time there is absolutely no definitive measure of accurate death toll numbers, despite the Hamas run agencies somehow always reporting “exact” numbers. It looks better for them the higher the numbers of civilian deaths are, so they report extremely inflated numbers, which are not questioned by the media. There is actually no way to know how many actual civilians have died and absolutely no way to verify their reported stats. Hamas also does not delineate between civilian deaths and combatant deaths. Israel estimates combatant deaths at around 7,000, making the civilian death toll ratio 2 deaths per 1 combatant death. This is significantly less than what is being reported, and quite low for any war zone. For example, in the US war on terror in Afghanistan, death toll ratios were 3 civilian deaths per 1 terrorist death.

Additionally, roughly 20% of all rockets launched by Hamas and PIJ fail and detonate within the civilian areas from which they were launched, resulting in more deaths of Gazans that they attribute to Israel.

#### **18) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Conflict and Facts about The West Bank**

*WHEREAS, during this same time, Israeli forces or settlers have killed approximately 205 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank which is not governed by Hamas; and*

**The West Bank Areas A & B are governed by the Palestinian Authority, without much actual authority.** Therefore, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terror cells operate throughout, but primarily in the towns of Jenin and Tulkarem. Although these are referred to as “Refugee Camps”, they are both largely military installations, as most of the civilian population has fled these terror groups. IDF Special Forces enter the towns to arrest known terrorists, with an interest in protecting both Palestinian and Israeli civilian populations. Typically upon entry the forces are fired upon. They return fire defensively and terrorists have been killed in the exchange of fire.

**There are rogue, unsanctioned settlers who have attacked Arab villages.** This activity is considered illegal activity by Israel. The occurrence of settler violence is a rare outlier. Suspects of such illegal activities are arrested and punished.

**The Jewish towns are in Area C.** The great majority of those towns’ residents live peacefully next to their Arab neighbors, sharing roads, check-points and shopping.

#### **19) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: The Rights and Abuse of Children**

*WHEREAS, we are profoundly shocked by the grave violations of children’s rights in the context of armed conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and*

**Children’s rights are nothing to Hamas.** Instead of singing happy songs and playing, children in the Gaza UNRWA & UNICEF schools are learning how to be jihadists. They are taught that

their highest aspiration should be martyrdom. How shameful that their schools are used for storing weapons and launching rockets at Israel. How tragic that 20% of all the rockets fall back on their source and kill civilians, including these children. How unfair that these children do not have a government that protects them, but instead uses them as human shields so they themselves can cowardly hide. Terror tunnels open up directly under children's beds. Why is the UNRWA not protecting these children from Hamas?

**20) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: It is a War Crime to Use Hospitals for Military Purposes, Such as Staging Attacks or Weapons Storage**

*WHEREAS, international norms require that all parties to an armed conflict protect children and prevent the commission of grave violations against them, including killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, recruitment and use of children, abduction of children, and denial of humanitarian access; and*

*WHEREAS, despite Hamas not meeting these norms, Israel is a country, not a terrorist organization, and must be held to a higher standard; and*

**It is a Geneva Convention War Crime to use schools and hospitals for military purposes.**

This is exactly what Hamas does. It is neither conjecture nor rumor. The US State Department confirms that Al Shifa hospital and untold numbers of schools and youth centers are storage and launch facilities for military action. Israel does have higher standards. After clearing these areas of civilians, Israel destroyed their enemies' military infrastructure.

On October 7, the Barzilai Hospital in the Israeli city Ashkelon was struck by Hamas rockets. The international community said nothing of that. Hamas, needless to say, did not attempt to clear away Israeli civilians safely before striking it. Their goal is maximum civilian casualties.

**21) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Israel Prevents Civilian Casualties like No Other Country at War**

*WHEREAS, Israel is not currently doing enough to protect non-combatants in Gaza; and*

**No country in the world protects non-combatants to the extent that Israel does.** Hamas started a brutal war and Israel must protect its citizens and borders against further attacks. Their sworn enemy Hamas embeds itself within a civilian population, cowardly hiding behind their own people, and then cry crocodile tears for civilian casualties. Make no mistake - this is war. Israel did not want this war, but they must win it. Despite those facts, the IDF goes to tremendous measures to minimize civilian deaths. This includes evacuating civilians, pin-pointing bombings, prior warning of attacks through leaflets & cellphone calls, providing safe evacuation corridors and fighting street-by-street urban warfare instead of relying on air attacks. They do all of this knowing that it places their own soldiers at greater risk.

**22) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Hamas Does Not Distinguish Between Combatant and Civilian in Both Their Own Population and Israel's**

*WHEREAS, the fundamental rule of international humanitarian law in conflict is that all parties must distinguish, at all times, between combatants and civilians, and civilians must never be the target of attack; parties may only target combatants and military objectives; and*

**How can Israel distinguish between combatant and civilian, when Hamas does not?**

Hamas embeds itself amongst civilians. They launch rockets from schools and from private apartment buildings. They store munitions in hospitals. They have built a massive tunnel system under the very neighborhood whose residents they purport to mourn. This system serves only the needs of the Hamas militia, and provides no protection for civilians. Moreover, Hamas steals the majority of humanitarian aid and stores it underground, away from the people who need it. They do nothing at all to protect their own people, in fact, their every effort is aimed at maximizing the suffering of their own civilians. They hide behind the population. They use them as decoys. They abuse and indoctrinate them.

**Hamas, needless to say, does not distinguish** between the soldiers of Israel and the civilians. Both the ground attacks of October 7 and the 17 years of rockets shot into Israel have been aimed at the general population.

**23) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: Hamas must Fight the War They Started**

*WHEREAS, the Secretary General of the United Nations has said the war is having a staggering, unprecedented and unparalleled number of civilian casualties every day and that it is “long past time to move in a determined, irreversible way” to a permanent solution; and*

**How could Hamas launch a brutal war on Israel and expect to not have any retaliation?**

The attacks of Oct. 7 and the 17 years of rocket launches from Gaza on the Israeli population are unacceptable to Israel, as they would to any sovereign nation. Having a violent enemy that seeks to destroy Israel at their border poses an existential threat to the nation. Perhaps America has forgotten what it takes to win a war, but when the threat is at your immediate border, you have no choice but to fight to win. It would be a violation of Israel's government to desist in protecting its own citizenry against an enemy that is sworn to destroy the nation.

**24) Response to Early Draft of Resolution: There is No Diplomatic Compromise With a Terrorist Enemy Sworn to Your Destruction**

*WHEREAS, there is no military solution that will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and*

**This is a war against Hamas. It is a war against Palestinian Islamic Jihad.** These groups have declared war on Israel and they are sworn to destroy it. Their fervent desire is to drive the Jews into the sea and inhabit the entire land themselves, “Judenfrei”. There is no diplomatic compromise that Israel can possibly make with such parties.

**However, Israel is not at war against the Palestinian people.** Although polls show that 90% of the Palestinian population supports Hamas and PIJ, there is always hope for a peaceful resolution between the populations of Israel and the Palestinian people.

