

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

## Introduction:

On October 7th, 2023, the State of Israel and the broader Jewish community experienced one of their worst tragedies in modern history. A murderous coordinated assault by the terror organization Hamas struck towns in Southern Israel and around Gaza, inflicting more than 1400 casualties, with twice that amount injured, and took over 240 hostages. Of the 1400 murdered, many were women, children and elderly, with no regard for race, religion or ethnicity.

In the days that followed the attack, horrific footage surfaced in all media, revealing the depths of Hamas's inhumanity, including the torture and burning of victims, raping of women, and dismemberment and execution of entire families. In committing these war crimes, Hamas has shown itself to be worse than the Nazis and ISIS.

A month later, Israel is still heavily engaged in a just war to eliminate Hamas. It is a costly war, to both sides, but it is not an act of retribution or punishment, nor is it against the Palestinians, Arabs, or the Islamic community. It is a war against Hamas, a designated terror organization in many western states, including the United States.

Regretfully, since October 7th, the Jewish community worldwide is facing another battle, one that is no less fierce and important – The battle for the future of Jewish life abroad. Let there be no mistake, this is not about the legitimacy of Israel's war, or even the legitimacy of Israel itself, it is about the legitimacy of Jewish life, in Israel and abroad. Therefore, this battle must not be delegated to governments, civil society organizations, or other individuals. It is the responsibility of each and every Jew to stand up for themselves and their community.

Recognizing the central role of campuses and universities in the United States as arenas for debates, the following toolkit should serve as a go-to source for cold numbers and facts, updated information to counter falsehoods and debunk popular myths.

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

## Legitimacy - Israel

While the current wave of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiments reached new heights after October 7th, the movement to delegitimize Israel and its right to exist has always been a facet of modern antisemitism, regardless of developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While it should not have to be defended, Israel's right to exist as the Jewish homeland is predicated on multiple grounds:

### Historically:

- Jewish presence in modern Israel can be traced back 3000 years. Jews have lived continuously in that land, whether independently (Kingdom of Israel, Judah and David), or under foreign rule (Roman empire, Ottoman empire, or British Mandate).
- Archeological findings from different ages support the claim of a unique Jewish identity such as language and culture, throughout different ages, in the land of modern Israel.
- Recent genetic research into Jewish DNA has revealed many genetic markers that prove a link between Jewish communities worldwide, and Jews who lived many centuries ago in the modern land of Israel.

### Legally:

- Israel was formed on the basis of continuous declarations, commissions and resolutions, which all advocated for its creation as an independent state, such as the Balfour Declaration (1917), the British Mandate's Peel Commission (1936), and United Nations Resolution 181 (Or the "Partition Plan-1947").
- Israel satisfies all parameters under international law of a sovereign state: Permanent population, defined territory, elected government, and international recognition. It is a contributing member of the international community, and its many organizations.

### Morally:

- Israel is the only Jewish state. It was formed to provide a homeland for the Jewish people, who have been persecuted for millennia. The massive spike in worldwide antisemitism only serves to prove this point.
- Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East. Minorities living in Israel, such as Israeli Arabs, enjoy full rights and play an integral part in all sectors of government, academia and industry.
- Israel is the only state in the Middle East where the 3 monotheistic religions enjoy full freedom of worship, and more importantly, are free from persecution and harassment.

## The War

A key talking point in pro-Palestinian rallies is the illegitimacy of the war declared by Israel. Protesters tend to conflate moral and legal <sup>33</sup>"reasons" ,without full understanding of basic international law, the facts on the ground and the lengths to which Israel goes to uphold human rights. It is therefore crucial to remember the follow basic facts about it:

### The onset of the war:

- Israel did not start this war. The murderous attack on October 7th was a deliberate, unprovoked, and unhinged attack by Hamas. Israel is within its full rights to defend itself and its citizens, and act to remove the ongoing threat posed by Hamas.
- Hamas deliberately attacked civilians  
Hamas attacked towns and villages in the vicinity of Gaza, the participants of the " NOVA " Festival, and any individuals spotted along the way. Their only goal was to murder, terrorize and kidnap.
- Firing of rockets from Gaza has persisted since before the attack – At no point has Hamas ceased to fire rockets indiscriminately into Israel, killing and injuring civilians.

### The war:

- Israel has entered the war with clear military goals – Dismantling Hamas and freeing all hostages .Israel cannot cease its campaign without realizing all its military goals .Retribution and collective punishment are not the goals.
- Israel upholds international law – it adheres to the principles of:
- Distinction :The military targets struck by the IDF are based on accurate intelligence. Unfortunately, Hamas uses civilian infrastructure, such as residential houses, schools and hospitals to store ammunition, launch rockets, and shelter terrorists.
- Proportionality :The IDF seeks to minimize civilian casualties by providing ample warning time and allowing civilians to evacuate. Regretfully, civilians are still killed during the war , mostly as a result of Hamas's unlawful use of human shields. Regardless, the IDF works tirelessly to minimize collateral damage, even at the height of the ground invasion.

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

## The end of the war:

- The war cannot end before Israel achieves its military objectives .Any relief from the attack on Hamas would only rejuvenate it, embolden it, and prolong the conflict.
- Calls to impose a ceasefire are reckless – They only serve Hamas, which is being defeated. A humanitarian ceasefire is not needed, since relief efforts are occurring at all times, through humanitarian corridors which the IDF maintains. So far, more than a million Gazans have already used these corridors to escape North Gaza into safer areas.
- On the other hand -Calls for immediate release of all hostages would hasten the end of war.

## Debunking Myths

As arguments intensify, there is a growing need to counter some rehashed talking points by pro-Palestinian protesters, which are either completely false, or based on false information. The following are some of the most frequently used points:

"Hamas is fighting for the Palestinians".

**FALSE !** Hamas does not care about Palestinian rights. It has siphoned food, fuel and shelter from Palestinians in Gaza to build its terror tunnels and infrastructure. Furthermore, it has denied Palestinians freedom of movement to escape Northern Gaza and flee to the south, and tried to convince the population to distrust IDF calls for evacuation. [Hamas recently stated that the tunnels were built for them only, while the UN should take care of the Palestinians.](#)

"The October 7th attack was an act of resistance".

**FALSE !** Hamas are not resistance or freedom fighters – but an internationally designated terror organization. Torturing victims, raping women, burning entire families – These are not acts of resistance, or even acts of war. Regardless of anyone's stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, such acts can not be justified by any moral human being, and must not be rationalized.

"Hamas did not intend/did not plan to perform the inhumane murderous acts".

**FALSE !** The attack was planned and orchestrated well in advance, with its mission clear– "Kill as many as possible" .There is plenty of evidence, [from Israeli sources and from the terrorists themselves](#) ,depicting Hamas's murderous intent before, during and after the attack. Any attempts to humanize such people or acts is ignorant at best and evil at worst.

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

"More people have been killed in Gaza – Therefore Israel's attack is disproportionate".

**FALSE !** While true that there are more reported casualties in Gaza since the start of the war , intent matters .While Hamas are bent on the annihilation of every Jew and the Israeli State, the IDF seeks to eliminate the terrorists, and prevent any civilian casualties. Unfortunately, as in wars, civilians die, especially when used maliciously as human shields.

Also, using the number of casualties to gauge the proportionality in wars is false. In WW2, the number of Germans killed far exceeded those of the allies, and yet it was not disproportionate.

"Israel is responsible for Gaza and its people".

**FALSE !** Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 ("The Disengagement") ,it does not maintain effective control over Gaza, as per international law. Therefore, it is not Israel's responsibility to provide water, food or fuel to Gaza, but simply to facilitate such aid by third parties, if possible . The only responsible agent in Gaza since 2006 has been Hamas.

"The attack by Hamas will help/advance/promote a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict".

**FALSE !** Aside from the destruction Hamas has brought on both itself and Gaza, it had no wish or goal to ever reach a resolution to the conflict, and seeks only the destruction of Israel.

"Arabs coexisted peacefully with Jews for centuries – proving the fault is in the creation of the State of Israel".

**FALSE !** While Jews did live in many Arab and Muslim countries for centuries, they lived as a minority, did not enjoy full rights, and were frequently persecuted and harassed. In fact, many Jewish communities were forced to flee their country for no reason other than being Jewish.

As for the Arab-Jewish relations in Israel pre-1948 – The Arab movement had directed many attacks on the Jewish community ,such as the Hebron Massacre in 1929, in which 67 Jews were killed (including women and children), and the Arab leader at that time, Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, held deep ties to the Nazi regime in Germany.

As clearly demonstrated, it was always a Jewish problem, not an Israeli problem.

"Every criticism against Israel is labeled as Antisemitism".

**FALSE !** Israel faces harsh criticism domestically and abroad. In fact, it had faced its biggest protests ever throughout this year, with civilians criticizing judicial reforms, economic policies and even the Israeli-Palestinian situation. As a democracy, Israel is open to criticism and advice from its allies and international organizations. The following are just some frequent examples used to distinguish between criticism and antisemitism:

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

- Criticizing Israel and delegitimizing it and calling for its destruction are not the same . Policies can be debated, argued over and even protested against, but not allowing space for the only Jewish homeland to exist is an attack against the Jewish community itself.
- Criticizing Israel and holding it to a different standard is not the same .Throughout the Middle East – Muslim and Christian Arabs including Palestinians, are killed daily, in civil wars (such as in Syria), religious wars (Lebanon), or by terror groups (Yemen, Iraq, Libya). Yet not even a fraction of the same outrage Israel is facing now is directed at these countries . Selective outrage against Israel is selective outrage against Jews.

'From the River to the Sea '...chant is simply a call for freedom and peace.'

**FALSE !** The chant clearly calls for a Palestinian state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River, leaving no place for an Israeli state. Claiming otherwise is either ignorant or disingenuous. Furthermore, this chant remains a popular call to action for terror affiliated groups, that have no intention of promoting peace or a two-state solution.

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. What are the details of some of the tactics the IDF are currently using to minimize civilian casualties in the Gaza strip?

The main effort is to get civilians to leave the war zone. At this point, most have left northern Gaza for the south. Since the beginning of combat the IDF has:

- dropped some 1.5 million flyers (WATCH [video of airdrop](#)).
- made nearly personal 20,000 calls to local residents (LISTEN to a [personal call made to a resident of Jabaliya](#) in northern Gaza)
- sent nearly 6 million automated calls (LISTEN to [an automated call](#)).
- sent 43 million text messages.
- Over the last week, the IDF is opening daily safe corridors for more Gazans to leave. The IDF will continue to facilitate evacuation of civilians.

See [infographic](#) with precise numbers.

### 2. Can you provide specifics as to what the IDF's rules of engagement are?

It is impossible to go into details, but generally there are 2 types of targets:

The first type are intelligence-based targets which serve as part of Hamas war infrastructure: a command post, a weapons depot, a launch site, etc., OR where Hamas terrorists are located.

The second type, relevant to the ground operation, is a target from which troops are fired upon or troops see is being used by Hamas for military purposes.

### 3. Where is the IDF primarily operating in Gaza? What about in Lebanon/North and the West Bank? What are its strategic objectives in each particular area or region?

In Gaza, the IDF is focusing on northern Gaza, including Gaza City. That doesn't mean the IDF won't strike in other parts of Gaza given actionable intelligence, but the main fighting, including the ground combat is in the North.

There are daily attacks from Lebanon, including rocket launches, anti-tanks missile fire and UAVs penetrating Israeli airspace. There have been both IDF and civilian Israeli casualties from these ongoing attacks. IDF is responding by attacking launch sites and terror cells firing or trying to infiltrate border. The situation is very serious and the IDF is prepared if the situation escalates.

In West Bank, IDF is targeting Hamas and other terrorists preparing attacks against Israel. It has also arrested hundreds of suspected Hamas terrorists.

While the IDF is prepared for a deterioration in these areas, its focus is the operations in Gaza.

### 4. Yemen just declared war on Israel, and launched a missile at Israel which was thankfully intercepted. Are we anticipating that other nations will declare war on Israel in the coming weeks?

IDF is on high alert and prepared on all fronts. The Houthis in Yemen are (another) proxy of Iran.

### 5. We are hearing a lot, on social media, the news, etc., about settler violence in the West Bank. Is the IDF concerned about this? Is the news of an uptick in settler violence disseminated by national news outlets legitimate?

Yes. IDF views all forms of illegal activity, including vigilante attacks, as unacceptable. The situation is volatile in the West Bank as elsewhere and it is important that civilians not take the law into their own hands and that those who do be prosecuted.

### 6. What is the best advice to help us deliver the message to our peers on campus that there is no moral equivalency between the IDF and Hamas?

A. Question of intent. The intent of Hamas is to kill Israeli civilians. They declare they want to destroy the state of Israel. They declare they will carry out Oct 7 attacks again. Therefore, Israel has every right to dismantle Hamas. The intent of Israel is to kill Hamas terrorists, NOT Gaza civilians. The IDF never intentionally targets civilians. However, in targeting Hamas, civilians are endangered because Hamas intentionally embeds itself into civilian population.

B. If one was looking for proportionality literally speaking, that would mean the IDF would behead Gazan civilians, rape women, burn up families, etc.

# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

C. Numbers of dead are not a way to measure who is right and who is wrong. For example, 8 million Germans died in World War II compared to 400,000 Americans. That means 20 times as many Germans died as Americans. Does that mean that somehow the Nazis were right and the Americans were wrong?

## 7. What sources can serve as proof that Hamas is in fact preventing civilians from leaving dangerous areas in Gaza?

There is a lot of info available on IDF website, twitter. Here for example Hamas is preventing Gazans from evacuating:

- LISTEN [Gaza resident describing Hamas not letting people leave](#)
- SEE [aerial photo of Hamas roadblock along main evacuation route](#)

## 8. What do we answer when people claim Israel is using white phosphorous?

IDF uses all munitions in compliance with international law.

The smoke-screen shells most commonly used by the IDF do not contain white phosphorus. Other smoke-screen shells, with white phosphorus, are not unlawful and many Western militaries possess them, including the IDF. IDF procedures require that such shells are not used in densely populated areas, subject to certain exceptions. This complies and goes beyond the requirements of international law. The IDF does not use such shells for purposes of targeting or setting fire.

## 9. What is the best reply to non-Jewish Students telling me their family members are in Gaza and are displaced despite being innocent?

There is great suffering now being endured by the people of Gaza. The war was started by Hamas, knowing there would be an Israeli response. Hamas knew this and doesn't care. They don't care how many Gazans die for the cause of liberating all of Palestine and destroying the state of Israel.

This video also provides some good answers .

<https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1722395571636371505?t=oTS2OWWeIA1WfHhIFjOctA&s=08>

## 10. What are the best responses when pro-Palestinian students claim Israel's response is disproportionate?

See question 6. Also REGARDING HIGH GAZAN CASUALTIES,

When fighting an Islamic fundamentalist terror organization which is deeply embedded with civilian population, there are inevitable high civilian casualties. We saw this in the war against ISIS



# Jewish Student Toolkit

---

wage by US and many allies. The city of Mosul in Iraq, a ISIS stronghold, was almost completely destroyed after 9 months of fighting. That is an analogous situation to war with Hamas.

Third, in recent wars, including ISIS, there have civilians have made up a huge percentage of those killed – as much as 90%, according to the UN .

See <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14904.doc.htm>

Given that IDF has so far killed thousands of Hamas members, it is well in line with civilian casualties in other wars against terror groups.

**11. There are reportedly over 3,000 children killed in Gaza, is that true? How do we explain these numbers to non-Jews?**

Don't accept numbers that are not independently verified. Nevertheless, there is no doubt many children have died in Gaza. (see responses above)

**12. At what point will the operation in Gaza end? When will the IDF know that the operation was successful and stop?**

When Hamas no longer has the capacity to attack Israel. This is going to take months to achieve.

## A Call to Action

As a result of the massive wave of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiments around the world, and in US campuses specifically, there is a growing understanding of the need to firmly oppose violence and hate and draw a line in the sand between legitimate and illegitimate protests and debates, and most of all, protect Jewish life and community.

As we see a shift in the behavior of states, academic institutions, and private companies and individuals, there is a unique opportunity to press the issue now. Therefore, the following tools and resources should be used to maximize efforts at combating antisemitism, explaining the ongoing situation in Israel and the Jewish community, and countering misinformation.

- 1. The State of Israel's official resources and messages website** – This is the ultimate source for updated information on the October 7th massacre, the war on Hamas, and the hostage situation: <https://govextra.gov.il/mda/israel-under-attack/israel-under-attack/>
- 2. An official newsletter of the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism** – The newsletter is updated every two days, with the most up to date information in English, containing the latest facts and figures. We recommend subscribing to it and sharing it among as many allies as possible: <https://govextra.gov.il/mda//swords-of-iron/home>
- 3. Stories of the kidnapped** – Every hostage has a story. Parents, wives, kids, friends. Their story should be told. The following is a file containing a sign for each of the hostages .Help bring them home:  
[https://www.kidnappedfromisrael.com/files/ugd/bff748\\_e5369dd8e7ac47c0b358d7a364598968.pdf](https://www.kidnappedfromisrael.com/files/ugd/bff748_e5369dd8e7ac47c0b358d7a364598968.pdf)
- 4. Briefings for community heads and leaders** – There is an opportunity to organize briefings, led by government officials, IDF spokespersons, and other relevant Israeli spokespersons such as educators and first responders .**If you know or think this may be useful to your community, such a briefing is encouraged and can be arranged, by emailing : [yahelb@pmo.gov.il](mailto:yahelb@pmo.gov.il)**
- 5. Creating and organizing partnerships and groups to spread pro-Israeli messages** – There is an opportunity to quickly train and guide groups to help and assist in spreading Israeli and Jewish messaging in social media .**If you believe you can help in organizing such a group, or know those who do, you are encouraged to email: [yahelb@pmo.gov.il](mailto:yahelb@pmo.gov.il)**
- 6. A study into the latest trends in antisemitism worldwide** – This may serve as an important source for facts and figures on the status of the Jewish community:  
<https://govextra.gov.il/media/jdolfxnd/the-state-of-antisemitism-around-the-world-three-weeks-of-the-swords-of-iron-war.pdf>
- 7. Spread the word!** Promote and use the following hashtags in all your posts on social media :  
**#IsraelUnderAttack #StandWithIsrael**