



# Talking to Your Friends About What's Happening in Israel

Jewish communities around the globe have been rocked by the scenes of the horror in Israel. There are simply no words any of us can say to explain these attacks, the brutality of those who committed them and the atrocities which are being uncovered.

Now, more than ever, we need to reach out to our friends, neighbors and co-workers to help them understand this situation and what will likely happen next. These may not be easy conversations to have but it is important that our Jewish community starts immediately to reach out to others for understanding and support.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

On October 7, during a religious holiday, Hamas terrorists launched terror attacks on Israel from Gaza, firing thousands of rockets, breaching the country's borders, killing at least 1,400 Israelis, wounding thousands more, and taking hundreds hostage. More than 30 Americans are among the casualties.

Hamas is a known terror organization, recognized as such by most Western countries, include in the United States.

The brutality of these attacks is unprecedented. Civilians were intentionally targeted. Women were raped, kidnapped and paraded bleeding through the streets. Teenagers attending a music festival were shot and killed. A grandmother was killed in her home and the murder was filmed on her own cell phone and published on her Facebook page. Children saw their parents killed in front of them and were then kidnapped. Babies were killed and some were beheaded.

These are not the acts of a "nation at war" or collateral damage. This was a well-coordinated terrorist attack intended to cause physical, emotional and psychological harm on a nation.

This was the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

These are not just crimes against Jews.  
These are crimes against all humanity.

## WHY NOW?

We may never know why the timing was selected but we do know that, since its formation, Hamas has had in its charter the total destruction of the country of Israel (and the United States) and ridding the earth of all Jews.

There are two other factors which may have gone into the timing of these terror attacks:

Over the last several months, Israeli citizens have been arguing among themselves – oftentimes protesting in the streets – about proposed changes to the country's Supreme Court.

Democracy often isn't pretty, and Israel is the only democracy in the entire middle east.

Hamas may have misinterpreted democratic rights to free speech and opposition to the government (rights that aren't granted anywhere else in the Middle East) for a fractured resolve.

According to reports, the United States has been close to brokering a peace arrangement— a normalization of relations— between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Hamas – backed by Iran – does not want to see more countries recognize the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Nor does Hamas want there to be peace in the region.

## IS THERE ANOTHER SIDE?

There is no other side. There is no justification for these attacks.

This is not about Palestine. This is about killing Jews.

Palestinians in Gaza elected the terrorist organization, Hamas, as their leaders. Since then, there have been no subsequent free elections.

Hamas continues to use the Palestinian people as human shields and cannon fodder. Hamas leaders knew that these terrorist acts would result in an extensive military operation by the Israel Armed Forces and that innocent civilians will almost surely die. They don't care.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir put it best: "It is impossible to negotiate peace with someone who wants to kill you."

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

The Israeli government has declared war on the terrorist organization, Hamas. Not on the Palestinian people or Gaza.

Over the coming weeks, Israeli armed forces will almost certainly continue to bombard Gaza, targeting known Hamas hideouts, arms depots, and military centers. Hamas often locates these targets near civilian locations such as schools, hospitals, etc. to discourage Israel from targeting them. That may not be enough in this war on terror.

There is a strong likelihood that Israel will eventually invade Gaza to root out Hamas leaders and terrorists. If this happens, it will be a long and difficult siege.

Israel's best – and perhaps only – hope for peace is if the Palestinian people in Gaza turn on Hamas. Hamas' terror attacks resulted in the Israeli bombing. If the people work against Hamas, there is an increased likelihood for peace.



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