



UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE'S ORDER – Canada

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Over the weekend, we have been devastated to learn of the horrific violence unfolding in Israel/Palestine. We mourn and grieve the lives already lost and counting in Israel and in Palestine.

Right now and right away, we call for Hamas to end the killing and kidnapping of hundreds of Israeli civilians, for the Israeli army to stop its murderous bombing of Gaza, and for the Canadian and all western governments to desist from escalating the violence.

We believe that the violent and unacceptable actions taken by Hamas cannot be seen outside of a historical context of chronic, colonial oppression from the Israeli state. To quote the Centre for Constitutional rights (ccrjustice.org), “International indifference to 16 years of suffocating closure of the Gaza Strip and decades of Israeli impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity against Palestinians is the necessary context for Palestinian armed resistance.”

We are further disheartened by the language being used by western media and mainstream political actors, who have been using rhetoric to unleash further harm and trauma to civilians, and therefore enabling Israel to call recent events a “war”. This language permits continued vengeful, murderous acts onto those undeserving.

As a secular Jewish organization dedicated to social justice we are disturbed by the decision to launch the attack on a holy day for religious Jews and also on the Shabbat/Sabbath. The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) is grounded in anti-oppressive, anti-colonial social justice principles. We are Jews who care about Jews and non-Jews. We stand against the Israeli occupation and settler colonialism, and know these issues are the root causes of Palestinian suffering and desperation, the background to Hamas' recent actions in Israel. These are not two equal sides. However, we do not support Hamas's appalling violence and consider Israel's retaliation to only inflame and aggravate this terrible situation with much larger resources. We do not consider this a self-hating or anti-Semitic position. To the contrary, we see ourselves continuing a legacy of Jewish activism that embraces a future where dehumanization and flawed justifications for wielding power over others have no place.

We support and hope for an immediate ceasefire from all sides. All people deserve their basic human rights to be upheld.