

**Statement from Sonoma County Jewish Community Leadership  
Regarding the War in Israel and Gaza**

*Issued: November 8, 2023*

We write this letter as rabbis and leaders of congregations and organizations serving the Jewish community of Sonoma County. We are outraged by the massacre perpetrated by Hamas on October 7, and by the fact that they continue to hold more than 200 hostages from more than 30 countries. Our hearts are filled with grief, sadness, and deep concern as we all grieve the loss of lives of so many Israelis and Palestinians. At this time of war and conflict, we stand united with each other as we work, pray and hope for a lasting peace and for justice for all in the region.

To achieve this peace, we call on Hamas to immediately return all of the hostages to their homes. We urge the US administration to work with the Israeli government to minimize civilian casualties in Gaza in every possible manner, and for continued humanitarian aid to reach the Palestinian population in Gaza. As we ask for restraint, we acknowledge that too many lives have already been lost on both sides. Let peaceful coexistence be the goal for all of the leaders of the nations and peoples who live in the Middle East.

It is clear that the status quo in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unjust and untenable. This is time for creativity and vigor to find a solution that takes into account the security needs of Israel and Palestinians. We call on all the relevant governments, and our own, to rapidly move to the implementation of a comprehensive negotiated two-state solution.

Perhaps most importantly, we call on peace-loving Jews and Palestinians, our Muslim and Christian neighbors, and people of faith and people of conscience, not to give up hope. May we all rededicate ourselves to bring more lovingkindness into the world, more dialogue, more compassion, and more human decency. May we all live to see the day when “they shall turn their swords into plows, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:4) and “the cry ‘violence!’ will no more be heard in your land. . .” (Isaiah 60:18). May that day come soon, sooner than we think possible, and may it last.

(Organizational Names for Identification Purposes Only)

Signing:

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