

**ARE YOU CONFUSED ABOUT WHETHER TO SUPPORT A CALL FOR A**

**CEASEFIRE?**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

Since October 8, one day after Hamas committed the worst atrocity against the Jewish people since the Holocaust, some groups have demanded that Israel immediately, and unilaterally, “cease fire” — forego the self defense of the state and its people against a terrorist organization whose charter says “Israel will exist...until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it,” and “the Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight Jews and kill them.”

**These one-way ceasefire demands levied at Israel—and not Hamas—must be opposed by all people of conscience.**

**At the same time, all people of conscience, including, of course, the Israeli people and the Jewish people, want a ceasefire!**

No one wants this war. No one wants the death and destruction of Israel or Gaza, resulting from the war started and continued by Hamas on and since October 7.

**The question is: Under what conditions should Israel be expected to cease fire, i.e., stop defending itself, while Hamas continues to torture 134 Israeli hostages and send endless rockets and missiles into Israeli civilian population centers?**

A ceasefire is a truce whereby parties engaging in hostilities attempt to negotiate peace. The purpose of calling for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas should be to create a new reality that would allow for a more prosperous Gaza, a safer Israel, and a permanent cessation of hostilities.

Calls for a **unilateral ceasefire** demand that only one party, Israel, end its military action without requiring that Hamas end its genocidal war against Israel or the Jewish people.

Calls for a **bilateral ceasefire** would involve both Israel and Hamas agreeing to cease all warfare simultaneously and refrain from further escalation.

Calls for a **humanitarian pause or temporary ceasefire** would allow for an opportunity to bring more humanitarian aid into Gaza, consider alternatives to more war, and ensure a release of at least some hostages.

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There was a temporary ceasefire/humanitarian pause in late November of 2023, during which 105 hostages, 81 of whom were Israeli, were returned, and Israel paused its military operation against Hamas for 7 days. This was supported overwhelmingly by the Israeli and Jewish people.

**Further temporary ceasefires supported by Israel and the United States have been rejected by Hamas, including just last week**, despite the fact that they would have alleviated the suffering of millions of innocent Palestinians, and included the release of hundreds of convicted Palestinian terrorists in exchange for dozens of Israeli hostages.

**Most of those calling for a ceasefire are silent when Hamas rejects just that.**

For Israel to agree to a ceasefire, i.e. to stop defending itself, the 134 remaining hostages kidnapped on 10/7 must be released. Hamas must be demilitarized, as it is a terror organization with avowedly genocidal aims toward the Israeli people and the Jewish people that **says it will repeat October 7 “a second, a third, a fourth” time.**

Any ceasefire call that is genuinely intended to end the suffering and lay the groundwork for a more peaceful and prosperous future for the Palestinian and Israeli people must therefore include the following components:

- 1) Condemnation of Hamas and its monstrous attack on Israel on 10/7
- 2) Unconditional surrender of Hamas
- 3) Immediate release of all hostages, with priority for the women, children, elderly and sick

There was a ceasefire in effect between Israel and Hamas on October 6, which Hamas broke—part of a pattern that has repeated since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007. With each conflict, Hamas broke the ceasefire, just as they did on October 7.

As Hillary Clinton said about her work as Secretary of State negotiating a ceasefire in 2014, “October 7 made clear that this bloody cycle must end and that Hamas cannot be allowed to once again retrench, re-arm, and launch new attacks—while continuing to use people in Gaza as expendable human shields.”

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“[ Hamas ] have proved again and again that they will not abide by cease-fires, will sabotage any efforts to forge a lasting peace, and will never stop attacking Israel...A cease-fire now that restored the pre-October 7 status quo ante would leave the people of Gaza living in a besieged enclave under the domination of terrorists and leave Israelis vulnerable to continued attacks.”

If a ceasefire demand, resolution or statement does not tie a cessation of hostilities to the release of the hostages and the demilitarization of the terrorist group Hamas, **it will not result in an actual cease fire**, it will result in a temporary pause with guaranteed future rounds of war.

The only way to get to a real, permanent ceasefire is for Hamas to surrender and stop terrorizing Israelis and Palestinians alike. **Hamas could end this war at any time, saving Palestinian lives, but refuses to—quite the opposite. Hamas aims to maximize Palestinian deaths and emotionalize the world, hoping the international community puts pressure on Israel to end the war, so Hamas can avoid accountability for its barbarity.**

Unilateral ceasefire demands that insist Israel stop defending its citizens from this genocidal threat without eliminating the threat or seeing the return of 134 innocent hostages, are perceived by the Israeli and most Jewish people as implicit, even if unintended, support for Hamas’s aims.

There are not “hostages” on both sides.

The hostages that remain in captivity by Hamas are innocent civilians; they are victims of a brazen and horrific war crime.

The Palestinian security prisoners in Israel have committed offenses including acts of terrorism, incitement, membership in militant organizations, violent demonstrations or riots, and possession of weapons or explosives.

To understand what the release of these individuals means for Israel: Yahya Sinwar, the architect of October 7, served 22 years of a life sentence in Israeli prison before being released (along with 1026 others) in exchange for **one** IDF soldier, Gilad Shalit, in 2011.

Any comparison between the hostages and the prisoners is categorically false and shameful.

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Unilateral ceasefire calls have operated as blood libels against the Israeli people and the global Jewish diaspora, insinuating that Jews and/or Israelis who support Israel's right to self defense are bloodthirsty warmongers who are finding some twisted pleasure in perpetrating violence against the Palestinian people. The implication is that the Jewish state's existence is the real crime—not the crimes against humanity Hamas perpetrated on 10/7.

In reality, the Jewish people have, since 10/7, wanted a bilateral ceasefire according to the above existential needs of the Jewish state and Jewish people. Those needs have never been considered by those calling for a unilateral ceasefire. A ceasefire could have been achieved immediately, on October 8, or at any point since then, if the international pressure had been on the only party who can end this war: HAMAS.

**This is not about being “pro-Israel” or “pro-Palestine” — we should all be both! If we are pro-HUMANITY, we should demand a ceasefire, forcefully and immediately, by HAMAS.**