

From: [REDACTED]
Cc: [City Council](#)
Subject: Israel-Hamas War Resolution
Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024 3:07:22 PM

Dear Councilmen,

It is curious that of all the violent conflicts affecting our world today, the Israeli-Gaza war has ignited more debates, some verbally as ferocious and hateful as the shooting war flaring out on the ground in Gaza. Unfortunately, many of the people engaged in these debates never took the time to study the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which the current war in Gaza is just the latest, perhaps its most violent, chapter. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is over a century old and is as complex as one could come. Yet, some residents of Santa Rosa felt strongly about the war to pressure the city Council to take a public position hastily. And as one would expect of hastily constructed position paper, it missed the point and revealed the lack of knowledge of its authors. I am glad the Council decided to reconsider issuing the position paper and withdrawing it.

Public opinion is important but it is effective only when it sticks to the facts resisting the temptation of propaganda and misinformation emanating from either side.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is multiple generationally old. Millions of words, thousands of articles, and dozens of books were written about it, scholarly conferences debated it, and thus I cannot begin to do justice to history if I attempted to address it here. The horrific massacre perpetrated on the Israeli residents of the towns and villages in the vicinity of Gaza and the unimaginable brutal violence inflicted on the attendees at the Nova Music Festival on last year's October 7, and the Israeli response thereafter, are part of the tragic blood soaked history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and must be viewed that way in any discussion of a long term solution to the conflict. However, what happened on October 7 and the violence inflicted on the civilian population in Gaza which was ensued in the aftermath, are unprecedented in the history of the conflict and must be understood on their own merits if one is to make sure nothing like it is allowed to ever happen again.

The first thing one must understand is that Hamas, unlike the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is not a Palestinian national movement. It is an offshoot of the extremist Islamic Muslim Brotherhood organization, whose goals are the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in the entire Middle East, not very different than the goals of the infamous Islamic State organization that emerged in the wake of the Iraq war. The Muslim Brotherhood is outlawed in Egypt and some other Arab Middle Eastern countries, and Hamas is designated as a terror organization by the US, Great Britain and most other Western countries. The existence of a Jewish state in what Hamas considers as "Muslim Lands" is viewed by them as an obstacle to this vision and thus the physical eradication of Israel as a political and physical entity is Hamas's *raison d'être*. This genocidal objective has been one of the declared principles in Hamas's political charter since its inception. Article 20 of Hamas's charter say, in part, "*Hamas believes that no part of the land of Palestine shall be compromised or conceded, irrespective of the causes, the circumstances and the pressures and no matter how long the occupation lasts. Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea.*" Hamas believes in the superiority of armed struggle against Israel as the preferred mean for their goal of replacing Israel with an Islamic Palestinian state. Article 25 of the Charter says, "*Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws At the heart of these lies armed resistance, which is regarded as the strategic choice*

for protecting the principles and the rights of the Palestinian people..”

In 2007 Hamas had usurped power in Gaza in a violent coup ousting the Palestinian Authority local government and murdering their officials. In the following sixteen years Hamas has focused all their attention on planning the launching of a war against Israel to execute their genocidal objectives. They dedicated all their efforts and resources on building a well equipped and trained military force consisting of tens of thousands of terrorists. During that time they spent close to a billion dollars on turning Gaza into a fortress by digging a extensive and sophisticated tunnel system under the entire Gaza Strip, more extensive than the New York City subway system, equipped with weapons, food, generators, arms and ammunition manufacturing facilities, and other means to enable them to be self supporting under ground for many months, in war with Israel that they correctly anticipated would ensue as a reaction to the massacre they planned for October 7, 2023.

During the period since Hamas took control of Gaza, the Israeli towns and villages along the border with Gaza became the targets of regular barrages of missiles and mortar shells that provoked from time to time Israeli military responses aimed at the source of the incoming fire. These regular hostilities lasted until October 7, 2023 when, at dawn, Hamas launched a massive surprise attack along the entire length of the Israeli border with the Gaza Strip. The attack involved thousands of fighters on vehicles, motorcycles and on foot by land, paragliders from the sky, and boats from the sea, overwhelming the few poorly manned IDF positions, attacking the civilians in the neighboring settlements and the attendees of a music festival that was taking place near by. They brutally butchered helpless men, women, and children in their beds, igniting fires and burning houses with their inhabitants inside, gang raping women and girls before killing them and mutilating their dead bodies. When it was all over, more than 1,200 Israelis and visiting foreigners were dead, the majority of whom civilians, and over 250 hostages were kidnapped and brought into Gaza as hostages to serve as bargaining chips. The massacre was the worst pogrom in the long history of pogroms perpetrated ever against the Jewish people. The bodies of some of the murdered victims were so badly mutilated or burnt that they could only be identified by DNA analysis. More Jews were killed on that one day than at any time since the holocaust. The barbarism of the atrocities exceeded anything ever experienced. Unlike the Nazis who understood the evil enormity nature of their actions and tried to destroy evidence attempting to hide their crimes, the Hamas murderers were proud of their actions. They came to the crime scene equipped with body cameras to record themselves in action. They posted proudly the videos on social media in real time for the whole world to see. They used their dead victims’ smart phones to send videos of murdered victims to the victims’ families and friends. They called home to their parents in Gaza and proudly bragged about the atrocities they had just committed. “Mother, I have just killed ten Jews with my bare hands!” called one of them excitedly from the crime scene, proudly to tell his mother, using one of the murdered’s cell phone. They brought the hostages to Gaza, some with missing limbs, wounded, half naked, raped young women, some mutilated dead bodies, old people and young children, one baby as young as nine months, and paraded them on Gaza’s main street while the Gaza residents lined the street cheering their “victorious” men, cursing and spitting at the hostages. A scene from hell. Hamas prepared for this assault for at least two years. They bought equipment and vehicles and amassed weapons and ammunition using money provide them by Qatar and other members of the international community for supporting the civilian population of Gaza. They used Gazan workers who daily crossed the border to work at the Israeli Kibbutzim and towns to bring back precise drawings of every settlement, defensive fences, and other intelligence. They practiced their attack plans. They also prepared a massive organization for inciting protest demonstrations in all major

cities around the world in anticipation of a massive response by Israel. Indeed, on October 8, less than 24 hours since the attack, while the Israeli IDF was still fighting the invaders, and while the scope of the massacre was still being absorbed, protesters in all major American and European cities were already out on the streets demonstrating against Israel, waving Palestinian flags and prepared posters in support of Hamas and decrying the Israeli "aggressors," proclaiming the genocidal goal quoted verbatim from Hamas's charter, "From the river to the sea Palestine will be free." Hamas understood that the Israeli response to their planned massive attack would be massive as well. They also understood that they could not match the IDF in a conventional warfare. Their strategy was therefore to utilize the local civilian population as human shields, hiding among them, and strategically placing their underground command and control and weapon storage facilities under civilian houses hospitals, schools and mosques and facilities of the International aid organizations in Gaza, and other locations that in the past were spared by the Israelis. Hamas plan was to create conditions that would result in scores of civilian casualties, including a large number of children, in anticipation that seeing the impact on civilians would elicit pressure from the International community on Israel to agree to a ceasefire and terminate their assault. They have used this strategy successfully before. Hamas has been saying proudly on every occasion that they welcomed death. Martyrs have a special place in Paradise and thus martyrdom is welcome, not feared. Hamas's planned strategy worked as planned. As anticipated the Israeli response was massive and deadly. The physical destruction in Gaza was immense and the civilian casualties is reported by the Hamas health authorities to exceed 30,000, and Western governments under pressure from student organizations and other demonstrators pressed Israel to stop the fighting and agree to a ceasefire, thus allowing Hamas to emerge as "victors" so they could take the next two years to prepare for the next round of violence. All went according to Hamas' plan. Israel demanded the release of hostages as a condition for any pause in the fighting. Some 50 hostages were released as part on an agreement a couple of months ago but as of now still about 140 hostages about whom Hamas has refused to provide any information, are still held captive, presumably in tunnels under the city of Rafah, where Hamas leadership is presumed to be hiding as well. Hamas leaders, when asked whether they would have launched the October 7 attack had they known the scale of devastation and death it would bring upon Gaza's civilian population, unhesitatingly said Yes. Furthermore, they said, they would do it again, and again, and again and as many times as they could possibly repeat it until they accomplish their goal of destroying Israel. They are proud of their "accomplishments." It is clear that in order for Israel to eliminate the threat of a repeat of such a catastrophe and provide security to the settlements neighboring Gaza it must cripple Hamas's ability to rebuild its military power and remove them from the position of governing the Gaza Strip territory. An unconditional and permanent ceasefire now, while Hamas still maintains thousands of armed terrorists and with its leadership virtually unscathed, will serve Hamas's goals and guarantees their continued hold on the power of governing Gaza. This will be a gift of victory for Hamas and a guarantee that the October 7 or something worse will happen in the not so distant future. An agreement by Hamas for the immediate release of all the hostage and the return of the bodies of those who were murdered or died in during the over five months of their captivity will bring an immediate. With the escalation of violence in the region by Iran's proxies - Hezbollah and Syria in the north and the Yemeni Houthis in the south, preventing Hamas from ever being able to commit terror of any magnitude should be not only in Israel's interest by also the interest of any peace loving person.

Hamas is the only organization in the world whose declared *raison d'être* is to commit genocide on

another people. Israel, and the civilized world must make sure that Hamas does not get another chance. Hamas's declared objectives do not end with the physical destruction of the State of Israel. Forcing an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza before Hamas threat is permanently removed, will encourage Iran's other proxies in the region, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen that violence will ultimately deliver victory to them, with unthinkable threat to peace in the region and beyond.

Having said all that, I believe that the Israeli government should be encouraged to reach out to the more moderate leadership of the Palestinian people to mutually develop plans for a long-term peaceful permanent settlement of the century old conflict. Incentivizing and convincing the Israeli government to adopt and pursue the idea of a two-state solution in support of the Biden administration stated policy will a positive initiative.

I am an Israeli American living in Sonoma County. I grew up, educated, and became an adult in Israel. I Served in the IDF, and as an academic have been intensely involved in conversations and debates about a peaceful resolution to the conflict that will satisfy the national and human rights of both nations for national self determination.

Respectfully,

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