

From: [City Council](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Foster Unity and Peace in Sebastopol
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:44:00 AM

Thank you for reaching out to the City of Sebastopol and providing your input and comments on matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the City of Sebastopol. This will confirm receipt of your email, and that it will be forwarded to the City Council and appropriate City Staff and posted to the city web site.

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From: Val Gu [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 8:15 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>; Mary Gourley <mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: Foster Unity and Peace in Sebastopol

Dear mayor and council members of Sebastopol,

I am reaching out to you as a resident of a neighboring Marin County, as a concerned citizen and proud American Jew who firmly believes in the fundamental values of democracy, wherein state and local governments hold a constitutional duty to safeguard public safety. As a refugee from the former Soviet Union, I have personally experienced the harsh realities of anti-Semitism. The current climate in the United States, particularly in California, leaves me deeply shocked and concerned for my family's future. According to the FBI, in the months following the events of October 7th, incidents of antisemitism have surged by almost 400%, particularly in districts that had previously considered a ceasefire resolution.

The extent of animosity directed towards our community is not only distressing but also appears to contravene the very principles that define American values. I am offering for you to review an [impactful speech by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer](#), which provides a comprehensive context for the fears the American Jewish community is experiencing due to rising anti-Semitism. Additionally, the speech offers a brief but fair historical background of Jewish people in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. I urge you to consider the insights shared in this speech as we collectively strive to uphold the ideals that make our nation strong and inclusive for all its citizens.

I have attended numerous City Council, Board of Supervisors, Board of Education meetings and the sheer volume of disrespectful comments and the evident hostility towards the Jewish community during the meeting are profoundly challenging to witness. Please, review the [condemning statement from Mayor London Breed of San](#)

[Francisco](#) and review how scary and dangerous the meeting was for the Jewish Community.

On January 31, 2024, [the 16th Congressional District Debate at Palo Alto City](#) was marked by disruptive behavior from pro-Hamas supporters. Their complete denial and audible disapproval of the October 7th massacre left me in a state of disbelief, shock, and genuine fear. [On March 26, I was left utterly speechless by another appalling disruption at the Berkeley City Council meeting, as we worked to proclaim Holocaust Remembrance Day.](#) The blatant disregard for solemnity and respect was absolutely disturbing.

It is disheartening to witness such a divisive and alarming atmosphere, and I fear that this hostile climate may extend to Sebastopol. Cities and counties that have adopted this reprehensible resolution have sadly witnessed a surge in hateful incidents and antisemitism, permeating our streets, schools, and local businesses with a distressing persistence. As a result, I find myself resorting to heightened security measures, such as sleeping with my alarm on and using chairs to barricade my entrance door. I implore you to consider the ramifications of contributing to this divisive environment by bringing the ceasefire resolutions to Sebastopol. Such initiatives seem to only escalate hate and fear within and surely beyond the Jewish Community. Having left the Soviet Union in pursuit of safety in the United States, the current situation is particularly distressing.

I kindly request that you take the time to review historical events and base decisions on factual information, considering the well-being of your constituents rather than aligning with a trend that fosters animosity in our country.

The narrative Israel commits genocide is a false and anti-Semitic statement. Hamas fires deadly rockets from schools, hospitals, and densely populated areas knowing that Israel, like any democracy, would have to take whatever military action was necessary to stop the rockets. Hamas also knew the media would broadcast the dead Palestinian children, which Hamas uses as human shields, around the world to cause outrage directed at Israel for the cause of their deaths. President Biden, on behalf of The United States of America, unequivocally condemned the appalling assault against Israel by Hamas terrorists from Gaza on October 7.

Furthermore, despite Hamas' blatant disregard for the lives of the civilians around them, the Palestinian population has increased from 954,898 to 4,654,421 since 1967. This false, antisemitic rhetoric falls short of our American value system and has no place in bringing safety to citizens of the city of Berkeley.

I understand you may be under pressure for this hateful a vicious resolution that takes the position of solidarity with Hamas terrorists and characterizes Israel's attempts to rescue the hostages and liberate the Gazan people as a "genocide." This is a foul affront to the victims of the October 7th massacre. Furthermore, expressing ghastly support for Hamas, who openly murdered, raped, and kidnapped citizens from 25 countries, does not lead us to peace of any kind.

This type of resolution, which falsely claims to support the Palestinian people, achieves the opposite outcome. In order for Palestinian citizens to be free, we must dismantle Hamas and help rebuild Gaza to become a beautiful and thriving place for well deserved Palestinian Citizens. The ceasefire resolutions are solely aimed to bring hate, destroy unity and intimidate Jewish Community and beyond.

As an example, if you remember, the BDS movement severely weakened the Palestinian economy and imposed hardships on the Palestinian people. [In a 2015 article, Bassem Eid](#), human rights activist and commentator on Palestinian domestic affairs, explained that the objectives of BDS activists abroad would actually increase economic hardships for the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. BDS leader Omar Barghouti, has expressed support for terrorism, promoted anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and regularly demonizes Israel. He opposes the Jewish right to self-determination and Israel's existence, openly calling for its destruction as a Jewish State.

As Hamas and its supporters attempt to manipulate public perception by portraying Israel as uniquely "illegitimate," **I strongly urge the Sebastopol City Council to refrain from entertaining this anti-Semitic resolution today or in all future meetings.** This is NOT a true Ceasefire resolution; it perpetuates hateful and unfounded claims that only serve to exacerbate an already complex and sensitive situation as well as offer ZERO help to Palestinians and Israeli Citizens in the Middle East and in Sebastopol.

Sincerely,
Val Gu