



Introduction to the Israel-Hamas War

At 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, October 7, 2023, sirens wailed in southern Israel as thousands of rockets hit border communities near Gaza. At the same time, the country's southern border was infiltrated by hundreds of Hamas terrorists from Gaza. They were well-trained, well-armed, and breached the border in vehicle, by air, and on foot—shooting at surveillance cameras and overrunning army bases along the way. They moved on to the Nova Festival, an outdoor music event, where they gunned down or captured hundreds of innocent young people as they tried, futilely, to run to safety. Other commando units of terrorists headed for *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* along the border, where they brazenly destroyed property and brutally killed entire families in their own homes or dragged them back over the border into Gaza as hostages—nearly 200 in all, men and women; children, including babies and toddlers; the elderly; and members of the military. After these heinous attacks, more than 1,400 people are dead; they're mostly Jewish citizens of Israel but among them are Bedouins, Arabs, and foreign workers.

Israel was taken by surprise and no doubt there will be numerous investigations into this intelligence catastrophe that led to the death of more Jews in a single day than on any other day since the Holocaust. Israel retaliated by bombing Gaza and a ground invasion to root out and destroy Hamas—once and for all—is imminent. The IDF has urged Gazans to move from the north, out of harm's way, a difficult directive given the lack of electricity, food, water, and fuel and the unfortunate fact that Hamas is preventing many from leaving the area. Fear of battles with Lebanon and Syria in the north only adds to the complexity of the war.

The JCC Movement Stands With Israel

As detailed in JCC Association's [Statement of Principles](#), "Israel is an eternal birthright of the Jewish people, linking us to our past and to Jews around the world today." Never before have we felt such a strong sense of peoplehood among Jews worldwide. We applaud JCCs for being staunch players in efforts to strengthen *k'lal Yisrael*, and we are pleased to offer resources to augment your endeavors related to the war in the coming months.

For Children and Their Parents

These resources and activities may be useful for young children and families:

- [PJ Library](#) offers resources for how to talk to children about what's going on in Israel and how to deal with scary situations.
- [The Jewish Education Project](#) and [JCC Chicago](#) also have materials available
- You can create letters, video clips, or a special kudos.com board that can be shared with soldiers or families of those who have been kidnapped. Send to the [Michael Levin Lone Soldier Center](#) or [the JCC Association's Center for Israel Engagement](#) to be forwarded appropriately. (Please remember to say from whom and where the messages originated.) Share with teens the following articles: [An interview with the granddaughter of a couple who have been kidnapped into Gaza](#) and a [piece about 21-year-old Mia Schem, who was also kidnapped to Gaza](#).

Support and Resilience

JResponse[®], a signature program of JCC Association, offers this short guide, [A J.C.C. Model of Resilience](#). It was initially created at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and has been updated to help support our communities during the war in Israel.

Music

You may wish to play Hebrew songs with English subtitles as part of your programming, meetings, events, or recognition of the war in Israel. Other selections can be found on Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube, and other online platforms.

- [Ishay Ribo & Omer Adam- Halev Sheli \(My Heart\) English CC/Lyrics- YouTube](#)
- [Lu Yehi- English subs and transliteration- Chava Alberstein singing to soldiers of Yom Kippur War- YouTube](#)
- [Chanan Ben Ari- Amen al Ha'yeladim \(w/ English\)- YouTube](#)
- [Etzlenu Bagan-In our kindergarten English subs](#)
- [A million stars](#)
- [Ein li Eretz Acheret \(I have no other land\) with English subtitles](#)
- [Playlist of Israeli songs with English subtitles](#)

Information to Help Your Community Stay Updated

Consult these sources:

- [Times of Israel](#), daily newspaper
- [The Daily Briefing](#), a daily, 15-minute podcast update on what's happening in Israel and the Jewish world
- [For Heaven's Sake Podcast](#), produced by the Shalom Hartman Institute
- Avi Melamed's [Inside the Middle East](#), a website with analytical articles and updates about Israel's security
- [Ynet news](#), English edition of Hebrew daily newspaper
- [Ha'aretz](#), daily newspaper
- [Jerusalem Post](#), daily newspaper
- [Unholy: Two Jews on the News](#), weekly podcast featuring Yonit Levi of Channel 12 Israel and Jonathan Freedland of The Guardian, who offer commentary on politics and life in Israel and around the world
- [Caroline Glick](#), journalist and political analyst with right-of-center perspectives
- [Israel From the Inside With Daniel Gordis](#), thoughtful, nuanced analysis of Israel
- [View From Jerusalem](#), written daily since the start of the war by Leah Garber, director of JCC Association's Center for Israel Engagement in Jerusalem