

**Statement on Behalf of Israel-based Progressives and Peace Activists
Regarding Debates over Recent Events in Our Region:**

We, Israel-based academics, thought leaders and progressive activists committed to peace, equality, justice, and human rights, are deeply pained and shocked by the recent events in our region. **We are also deeply concerned by the inadequate response from certain American and European progressives regarding the targeting of Israeli civilians by Hamas, a response which reflects a disturbing trend in the global left's political culture.**

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented attack that included mass murder of innocent civilians in their homes, indiscriminate violence towards women, the elderly, and children, and mass kidnappings of Israeli citizens. Entire families were wiped out in this carnage, whole communities were reduced to ashes, bodies were maimed, infants were massacred. It is impossible to overstate the damage caused by these events, both on a personal and a collective level. The traumatizing events of that Saturday in October will leave a lasting mark on our hearts and memories.

As expected, in response to Hamas's actions, the State of Israel launched a massive military operation in Gaza. We still cannot estimate the death toll of these attacks, but it is likely to be higher than anything we have witnessed heretofore. **This cycle of aggression severely undermines our long-standing struggle against oppression and violence and in pursuit of full rights and equality for all residents of Israel-Palestine. At this moment, more than ever, we need support and solidarity from the global left, in the form of an unequivocal call against indiscriminate violence towards civilians on both sides.**

Many of our peers worldwide have expressed strong opposition to Hamas's attack and have offered unambiguous support for its victims. Prominent voices in the Arab world, too, have made it clear that there is no justification for sadistic murder of innocent people. **However, to our dismay, some elements within the global left, individuals who were, until now, our political partners, have reacted with indifference to these horrific events and sometimes even justified Hamas's actions.** Some have refused to condemn the violence, claiming that outsiders have no right to judge the actions of the oppressed. Others have downplayed the suffering and trauma, arguing that Israeli society brought this tragedy upon itself. Yet others have shielded themselves from the moral shock through historical comparisons and rationalization. And there are even those – no small number – for whom the darkest day in our society's history was a cause for celebration.

This array of responses surprised us. **We never imagined that individuals on the left, advocates of equality, freedom, justice, and welfare, would reveal such extreme moral insensitivity and political recklessness.** Let us be clear: Hamas is a theocratic and repressive organization that vehemently opposes the attempt to promote peace and equality in the Middle East. Its core commitments are fundamentally inconsistent with progressive principles, and thus the inclination of certain leftists to react affirmatively to its actions is utterly absurd. Moreover, there is no justification for shooting civilians in their homes; no rationalization for the murder of children in front of their parents; no reasoning for the persecution and execution of partygoers. Legitimizing or excusing these actions amounts to a betrayal of the fundamental principles of left-wing politics.

We emphasize: there is no contradiction between staunchly opposing the Israeli subjugation and occupation of Palestinians and unequivocally condemning brutal acts of violence against innocent civilians. In fact, every consistent leftist must hold both positions simultaneously.

The seventh of October is a dark day in the history of Israel-Palestine and the lives of the peoples of this region. Those who refuse to condemn Hamas's actions do immense damage to the prospects of peace becoming a viable, relevant political option. They weaken the left's ability to present a positive social and political horizon, turning it into an extreme, narrow, and alienating political force. **We call on our peers on the left to return to a politics based on humanistic and universal principles, to take a clear stance against human rights abuse of any form, and to assist us in the struggle to break the cycle of violence and destruction.**

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