

We are Christian leaders in the City of Ottawa. We offer this letter as an expression of deep concern for our friends in the Jewish community. We are united in our sorrow as we witnessed the horrific attack on October 7 and pray with deep lament for the Israeli civilians butchered, raped, killed, and taken hostage by Hamas terrorists. We carry heavy hearts for civilians in Gaza who have died, been injured, and displaced because Hamas embeds its militants in residential buildings, hospitals, and schools.

We must not be silent as some of our fellow Christian leaders in Canada have offered morally ambiguous statements, where attempts at some foggy kind of balance serve to minimize the severity of the evil at hand and even launder the propaganda of a terrorist organization like Hamas. Ambiguity about antisemitism is complicity with antisemitism. No legitimate expression of "resistance" can ever justify the barbarity of October 7. We are disturbed as protestors in our streets chant direct calls for the death of Jews and the extermination of Israel.

We recognize that there are intense feelings and different beliefs among Jews, Christians, and Muslims on the complicated issues in the Holy Land. However, there is no justification for the tsunami of antisemitic hatred following October 7 and spreading in our communities. We stand against religious and racial hate and every use of political concern to foment, exploit, or pretend it away.

We believe the Jewish people have a right to exist and live in their historic lands. The Jewish people have a legitimate indigenous claim to Israel that is over 3000 years old, supported by overwhelming biblical and archeological evidence. A just peace for Jews and Arabs must affirm the right of self-determination for both peoples secured by recognized, respected, and reliable borders, something repeatedly scuttled by terrorists seeking to eliminate a Jewish national presence in the land.

We believe that the process of a negotiated peace begins when Hamas and other terrorist groups release all the hostages, lay down their weapons, and agree to accept the right of Israelis to live in peace and security in their homeland.

We reach out to the Jewish community in Ottawa during this prolonged season of grief when antisemitic voices must be challenged. You should not have to stand alone at this time, and so, with humility, we want to add our voices to echo your own in a spirit of healing and hope for the future.