

# AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT ANTISEMITISM AND ISRAEL/PALESTINE

*From the Union for Reform Judaism and ARZA*

The current Israel-Palestine situation is unsustainable, untenable, and unjust, and it must change resulting in two-states for two peoples, and a mutually agreed upon 'End of Conflict' that assures Israel's democracy, security, and Jewish character, along with a viable Palestinian State living with peace and security.

It would be wrong to claim that all opposition to Israel is antisemitic, but it would be dangerous to believe that none of it is. Even the fiercest criticism of Israeli policies, including the oppressive occupation of Palestine, should never be confused with antisemitism, so long as it is objective, specific and based in fact. In contrast, actual antisemitism can be identified when actions are taken against, or demands are made upon, Jewish individuals or organizations that are never imposed upon others.

The Palestinian people have suffered greatly under Israeli occupation, and their advocates in the U.S. can easily find legitimate material to support their cause. As Jews, we must fight for human, civic, and political rights, in North America and abroad. This work means insisting that both Israelis live up to high moral and ethical standards. This case can be made without bigotry and hate speech. It is disheartening, though perhaps inevitable, that so many have stooped to the disreputable tactics of boycotting Jews or leveling pernicious charges of malign behavior. That is antisemitism, plain and simple.

## SECTION 1 – FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

1. Both Jews and Palestinians deserve to live freely and with security. They both have a right to self-determination. Both peoples have a deep history and claim to the same land as their homeland.
2. One can support the existence of a state while still criticizing the actions of its government.
3. One can criticize and protest the Israeli government's policies and actions, including its 57 years of military occupation of and settlement expansion in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria and East Jerusalem, as well as its war in Gaza, and still support the existence of the State of Israel as the State of the Jewish people.
4. One can criticize the policies, actions, and corruption of the two governments representing the Palestinians - in Gaza and the West Bank — and still champion Palestinian human rights and a State for the Palestinian people.

5. Nothing about this conflict is simple. If something sounds simple — as if one side is good and one side is bad — it's not the whole story. Choosing to see virtue on only one side of the conflict will hurt all the people who live in the Land, because there is not a just, viable, sustainable, or secure future that excludes or oppresses one group of people. We know that both Israelis and Palestinians are deeply rooted to the Land and are not going anywhere.
6. We need to listen to the people who live in Israel and in the Palestinian Authority, and who have been working toward coexistence for decades. We need to raise these voices, highlight these stories, and support the work in Israel-Palestine through our agency as Diaspora Jews that moves both peoples beyond oppression and violence to justice, and to two states for two peoples.

## *Defining the Terms*

**ANTISEMITISM** — hatred or prejudice against Jews — is a conspiracy theory that goes back more than 2,000 years that regards Jews as an evil and corrupting force behind the scenes of world events. Hatred and prejudice against Jews have existed in every society where Jews have lived (and at times in which no Jews have lived) — in Christian and Muslim countries. It has led to restrictions on what jobs Jews can have and where we can live, to expulsions, forced conversions, persecution, and mass murder. The word “antisemitism” was coined in the 19th century to justify the hatred of Jews based on the idea that Jews are not just a religion but a separate race. The definition of a Jew is not based on race as our people include every race, but we are also not only a religion. We are a people — called Am Yisrael — which means we have a religion, rites, faith, history, legal and ethical traditions, cultures, languages, and a national homeland.

Antisemitism is on the rise in America, and it manifests in different ways and from different perspectives or ideological vantage points. It is most painfully manifested in violent outbreaks such as in the synagogue attacks in Pittsburgh and Poway, and it also permeates public consciousness in more subtle ways. Discourse around Israel is increasingly a source of anti-Jewish rhetoric. Many critiques of Israeli policies are not antisemitic, but some are — especially those that deny and ignore Jewish history by rejecting the legitimacy of Israel, the right of the Jewish people to self-definition as a people and self-determination, the right of the State of Israel to exist and defend itself.

**ANTI-ZIONISM** has multiple definitions. For some, it is a stance that denies the Jewish people's right to self-determination in any part of the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people. This position constitutes a denial of Jewish history and is therefore antisemitic/anti-Jewish. For others, anti-Zionism is opposition to the State of Israel as it is currently defined. One can believe that a binational state will be best for both Israelis and Palestinians. As long as proponents of a one-state solution are dedicated to the safety and human rights of Jews as well as Palestinians, and as long as they acknowledge the Jewish people's history and rightful claim to the Land of Israel,

One can criticize Israeli policies in the context of it being a modern nation-state that is failing to live up to its human rights and democratic aspirations without being antisemitic. One can use strong language,

can protest, can even boycott Israel to pressure it to change its policies without being antisemitic. If one participates in the BDS movement, and in so doing denies the Jewish people's legitimate right to self-determination in a state of our own in the Land of Israel, that is antisemitism. If one says that Jews should go back to where their families came from — which is not possible for most Jews whether their families came from Arab countries in the Middle East, North African countries, or European countries — that is antisemitism.

Many anti-Zionists have a history of disturbingly antisemitic commentary encompassing all facets of classical antisemitic language. If one accuses Israel of secretly controlling other world powers, that is antisemitism. If one uses the word "Zionist" as code for Jews or Israelis, that is antisemitism. If one uses the word "Zionist" as a replacement term for "fascism," "imperialism," "colonialism," and "oppression," that is antisemitism.

## SECTION II: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED RESPONSES

### 1. **Why do Jews need their own state? They've lived everywhere for a long time. Lots of religions don't have their own state.**

**Short Answer:** Jews are not just a religion (as noted above); we are a people and, per Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, among the longest continuously surviving civilizations. Jews established the State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people to guarantee that Jews could live in safety and freedom after suffering from extreme antisemitism, which culminated in the Holocaust, and as a Jewish cultural center that can sustain Judaism as a religious-cultural-ethical tradition that inspires world Jewry to be Jewish members proudly identifying in Diaspora societies.

**Longer Answer:** Since almost 2,000 years ago, in the year 70 C.E., following the Destruction of the Second Temple and the forced expulsion of the Jews by Rome, the majority of the Jewish people have lived as a dispersed community throughout many countries, primarily in Europe and the Middle East (and now in the United States), without a state of our own, until 1948 — when the State of Israel was established. As expressed in our prayers throughout the centuries, Jews have longed to return to the Land of Israel, and we have held treasured memories of the 400-year period (from the 10th century to the 6th century BCE) when our people had its own sovereign state in the Land of Israel prior to their exile. During the period of exile, Jews continued to live in the Land of Israel, including in Jerusalem, the Galilee region, Hebron, and Tzfat. However, from 70 to 1948, most Jews lived outside of Israel, in countries where there were Christian and Muslim majorities. Due to violence, persecution, and increased antisemitism in Europe, many Jews concluded that they could only live in safety in a country of their own. It is out of the desire to live in safety and freedom that, starting in the 1880's, Jews began migrating to the Land of Israel. The Holocaust (*Shoah*), the genocide of 6 million European Jews by the Nazis and their allies between 1938-45, led to our people's sense of increased urgency to find a safe Homeland for the Jewish people and ultimately to the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948.

2. **Why do you make such a big deal about antisemitism when Jews are doing fine now? Jews are generally seen as a privileged group in America.**

Throughout Jewish history, in many of the countries in which Jews have lived, antisemitic policies have placed Jews in the “middle position,” meaning that Jews were neither the most powerful nor least powerful people in the society. For example, in Medieval Europe, Jews were barred from many vocations and professions, and instead were only able to work as tax collectors and money lenders. Meanwhile, antisemitic conspiracy theories promoted the idea that Jews were sneaky, greedy, undeserving of their good fortune, and not to be trusted. This allowed ruling elites to blame Jews when things went wrong in their societies, directing the anger of the oppressed groups against Jews instead of against the people in charge and the policies in place that gave rise to those problems. The better Jews do in a society — the more assimilated we have become and the better off we’ve become economically — the more we become a target for resentment. When both the most powerful and the least powerful people turn against the Jews, we are no longer safe in that society. This was the experience of German Jews especially after economic hardship during the 1930’s, and amongst many other Jewish populations throughout history.

3. **I was in a discussion with a friend who is not Jewish but knows that I am Jewish. She was very critical of Israel, but said that she had nothing against Jews, but was just against Zionists. I am confused and don’t know how to respond to that.**

One can be critical of Israel’s policies and practices just as one can be critical of the policies and practices of the American government. The Reform Movement has been critical of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem for many years. However, being against “Zionists” means being against the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. This crosses the line into being antisemitic because it is a stance that denies the Jewish people’s right to self-determination in any part of the ancestral Homeland of the Jewish people. The word “Zionist” has become a bad word for many people, but Zionism generally affirms that Jews have a natural right to a state in our ancestral homeland.

4. **Israel is a settler-colonialist state that exists on land stolen from Palestinians. How can you support colonialism?**

**Short Answer:** Israel is not a colonialist state because it is an independent country — it is not a colony of another country, nor is it controlled by any other country. Unlike colonists, most Jews in Israel have no other country or home to go to. In addition, unlike colonists, Jews trace their ancestry to the Land of Israel and can affirm historically that for three thousand years Jews have continually lived in the Land of Israel.

**Longer Answer:** How modern Israel came to exist within its current borders is complicated. To answer this question, we must go back to the events leading to the founding of the State of Israel. Starting in the 1880s when Jews began immigrating to what was then called “Palestine” (based on a Roman designation adapted from the ancient people the Philistines), the Land of Israel was part of territory then ruled by Turkey (i.e., the Ottoman Empire). After World War I, Palestine was

controlled by Great Britain. During both Ottoman and British rule, Arabs who lived in Palestine, just like Jews, did not have sovereignty. Jews purchased land and formed communities, such as kibbutzim, moshavim, towns, and villages, and remarkably, revitalized Hebrew as a spoken language thereby developing a new Hebrew culture. Over time, these communities became the core institutional structures for the modern State of Israel.

It is not correct to say that Israel is a “colonial” country for the simple reason that Israel is not a colony of another country. A “colony” is a territory that is under the control of a foreign nation and exists for the benefit of that foreign nation. Israel was formed by Jews who desired to establish a state of their own in which, after thousands of years of being deprived political independence, they would be able to exercise political and cultural self-determination. Like any nation, Israel has alliances with other nations and is an independent country, not a colony of any other country, nor controlled by any other country.

It is also not correct to say that Israel exists on stolen land. Prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, Jews immigrated to and purchased land throughout Palestine often from absentee Arab landowners, built up communities and formed a new Jewish/Hebraic culture. The success of Jewish settlement in Palestine attracted thousands of Arabs living in other countries seeking work. Over time, many Palestinians objected to the possibility of Jews forming a nation of their own. During the years prior to the founding of the State of Israel, there was increasing violence between Jews and Palestinians as they vied for control of the land. Both Jews and Palestinians argued that they were entitled to a state. To resolve the dispute, in 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine so that there would be a sovereign Jewish state and a sovereign Arab state. The Jews of Palestine accepted the partition plan, but the Arabs of Palestine and surrounding Arab states did not. In May 1948, Britain relinquished control of Palestine and on May 14, 1948, the *Yishuv* (the Jewish community in Palestine) proclaimed “the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine to be called Israel.” The day after, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon invaded Israel, intending to destroy the country. Armed militias of Palestinians supported these efforts, while armed Jews attacked Palestinian villages, in some limited number of cases committing massacres. By January 1949, the war had ended in an armistice agreement, and during the war, Israel gained territory greater than that proposed by the United Nations Partition Plan. During the war, 750,000 Palestinians either fled or were forcibly removed from their homes, making them refugees. The Palestinian people call the Arab-Israeli War the Nakba, or “Catastrophe,” mourning the loss of their homes and villages. The Jewish Israeli people call this the War of Independence in which Jews defended their new country against five invading armies. In subsequent wars of defense, Israel was successful on the battlefield and gained additional territory from its surrounding states including Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Since then, Jordan and Egypt have entered into peace agreements with Israel, resolving all territorial disputes.

##### 5. How can you support an occupying power?

**Short Answer:** It is possible to both support Israel’s right to exist and vehemently oppose the occupation of Palestinians. As Reform Jews, we oppose the military rule by Israel over millions of

Palestinians and support efforts to resolve the conflict between Jews and Palestinians based on “two states for two peoples.”

**Longer Answer:** To understand what the word “occupation” means, once again we need to look at history. After Israel’s War for Independence in 1949, Jordan and Egypt entered into armistice agreements with Israel. The borders were primarily set based on where each country’s armies held land when the fighting stopped. As a result, the area known as the Gaza Strip was held by Egypt, the West Bank (i.e. the west bank of the Jordan River), and East Jerusalem (including the Old City and the Jewish Quarter with the Western Wall area) was annexed by Jordan — even though under the U.N.’s partition plan much of this land was meant to be designated for an independent Palestinian state, or, in the case of Jerusalem was intended to be under international trusteeship. As a result of the 1967 Six-Day War, which was triggered when the surrounding Arab nations mobilized their troops for an apparent invasion of Israel, Israel captured the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Western Wall area from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai desert from Egypt. Since Israel took control of the West Bank (known in the Torah as Judea and Samaria) during a war, under international law, Israel is considered an “occupying power.” As a result, the Palestinians who live in this area do not have the right to vote in Israeli elections and live under a military administration.

Although Jordan and Egypt have since entered into peace agreements with Israel and resolved all territorial disputes, the status of the West Bank remains in contention. Israel and the Palestinian people, starting with the Oslo Accords in 1993, sought to resolve their conflict with the intention that an independent state of Palestine would be formed within five years in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Old City, and the Gaza Strip. As part of the Oslo Accords, interim Palestinian self-government was to be established and does today exist in parts of the West Bank, with the seat of the Palestinian Authority government in the city of Ramallah, just east of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians did not progress or lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state, as intended. At the 2000 Camp David Summit, President Bill Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to reach a final agreement. Regrettably, the parties did not come to an agreement, and shortly afterwards Palestinian violence aimed at Jewish civilians, known as the Second Intifada (“uprising/shaking off”), started in September 2000 and continued until February 2005. As peace seemed more distant, and Israel voted for governments led by the Israeli right-wing Likud party, the Israeli government increasingly abandoned the goal of a two-state solution, expanded Jewish settlements in the West Bank (now including 600,000 Israelis strategically placed throughout this territory as well as in a ring around Jerusalem), and increasingly oppressed Palestinians in the West Bank still under Israeli military control.

It is the URJ’s view that the occupation is immoral and illegal, and will only lead to continuing violence, pain, and suffering for both Jews and Palestinians.

[For more on the usage of the term Occupation see this video by educator Robbie Gringras.](#)

**6. Israel is an Apartheid state. How can you support Apartheid?**

It depends on what you mean by Apartheid. If by “Apartheid” you mean that Israel is like Apartheid South Africa, with one race subjugating another race, Israel is not an Apartheid state because Jews of color are part of every facet of life in Israel and Palestinians living within the 1948 borders of Israel are citizens of Israel. Though Palestinian-Israelis face discrimination, they do have the right to vote, serve in the Knesset and in the Judiciary system (an Israeli-Palestinian citizen is a member of Israel’s High Court of Justice), have freedom of movement, work in all facets of Israeli society including medicine, law, business, and education.

These are all significant differences from the Apartheid regime in South Africa. However, if by “Apartheid” you mean that Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza do not have basic rights including freedom of movement and self-determination, this is correct - though Apartheid South Africa was far more unjust and insidious a political system than anything we see in Israel-Palestine. That said, the URJ’s response to this unacceptable situation is to protest the Israeli government’s policies and support organizations (both those Israeli political parties and NGOs) working to end the occupation and not call for the dissolution of the State of Israel.

**7. You say you care about Black Lives Matter, but you care about Israel. That’s hypocritical.**

We support the Black Lives Matter movement here in the US because it is just and right. There are institutionally racist policies and proclivities within American society that must be addressed and dismantled to attain the aspirations expressed in America’s Declaration of Independence and in the Preamble to the US Constitutions that states, “We the people...”. We must fully dismantle the legacy of slavery here to heal the United States and to live up to our nation’s foundational ideals.

Israel is the embodiment of the national Jewish liberation movement. It is the only democracy in the Middle East, and liberal Zionism is the social justice movement of the Jewish people. Palestinian human rights and self-determination and Black Lives Matter in the United States —are both movements to make a country more just and enable each society to live up to its ideals and aspirations. However, when protesting the policies of the United States, we do not say that the United States shouldn’t exist, whereas many of those fighting for Palestinian rights say that Israel should not exist. *“From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free”* means that Israel would not exist.

**8. Isn’t this just a case of racism - white people oppressing People of Color? Also, I’ve read that Zionism is a racist ideology, which supports the genocide of the Palestinian people. Is that true?**

Israeli society is made up of Jews of every color and ethnicity and come from over 120 nations in the world. Jews of Middle Eastern origin (known as Mizrahi Jews) include Iraqi, Iranian, Moroccan, Yemeni, and Syrian, People of Color like the Palestinian population. Mizrahi Jews, and Jews from Ethiopia are Black, and they constitute a significant portion of Israel’s population. As we sadly find in too many countries, there is racism against Jews of Color in Israel. There is also hatred of

Palestinians and Islamophobia in Israel, but it's false to claim that Israeli Jews are all white, and Palestinians are all People of Color. It doesn't work to apply the American framing on racism to Israel.

Zionism is not a racist ideology. It is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people seeking to create a homeland in the Jewish people's ancestral land based upon principles of justice and freedom, where Judaism as a religion and people were born more than 3500 years ago when Abraham and Sarah first journeyed to the Land from Mesopotamia. It is a lie and slanderous to state that Zionism supports and advocates the genocide of the Palestinian people.

#### 9. **What about the slogan “Free Palestine!”?**

The URJ is for a 'Free Palestine' living side by side in peace and security with Israel. However, the slogans “Free Palestine” or “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free” describe a vision in which Israel would not exist. Simply saying (or sharing a post) “Free Palestine” in and of itself is not antisemitic, but it is often decontextualized and intentionally simplified to create a public campaign to paint the Palestinian story in the same light as Tibet, or Soviet Jews of the 1980s, or any other people who are not free. [Read more about this on the ARZA website.](#)

#### 10. **I thought Judaism was about *Tikkun Olam*, social justice, and saving lives. This is the one Jewish country, and this is how it acts?**

Judaism *is* about *Tikkun Olam*, social justice, and saving lives. The Israeli Declaration of Independence includes commitments to these ideals, declaring that the state “will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture...” However, Israel has been in a state of war or occupation for almost all its short history, and it has struggled to live up to Jewish ideals and values under those conditions. Until you live in Israel, it is difficult to understand what it feels like to be surrounded by enemies on all sides, to go so long without peace, and to hold disproportionate power while being continually attacked. The calls for Israel's destruction have only increased recently resulting in a strong need for strength and to provide for security needs. It is also tragic and terrible to see the one Jewish state dominate, abuse, and even kill its neighbors. That is why the URJ continues to protest the occupation of the Palestinians and advocates for a two-states-for-two-peoples resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

#### 11. **Why are we opposed to BDS? It was an effective tactic in the struggle against Apartheid and the civil rights movement to create a more equitable world, why not with Israel?**

The predominant drive of the BDS campaign and its leadership is not criticism of policies but results in the demonization and delegitimization of Israel. BDS campaigns promote a biased and simplistic approach to the complex Israeli-Palestinian conflict and present this dispute over territorial and nationalist claims as the fault of only one party – Israel. The BDS campaign does not support Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts and rejects a two-state solution to the conflict.



Many of the founding goals of the BDS movement, including denying the Jewish people the universal right of self-determination – along with many of the strategies employed in BDS campaigns - are antisemitic as noted above. Many individuals involved in BDS campaigns are driven by opposition to Israel's very existence as a Jewish state. They are not just opposed to Israel's occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza after the 1967 Six-Day War. They are opposed to Israel itself when it was established as a Jewish State in 1948.

**12. In the U.S., we believe in separation of Church and State, but Israel is a religious state that suppresses Reform Jews, women, and gay people.**

The Israeli model, like many countries in Europe and unlike the United States, is not a model of total separation between religion and state. Like the United Kingdom, Germany, etc., Israel has an official state religion run by the ultra-Orthodox Chief Rabbinate. There is a struggle and great disagreement over this issue in Israel as the Government-appointed Chief Rabbinate maintains a monopoly over control of official religious life and can maintain its control over Judaism itself in the Jewish State. Both the North American and Israeli Reform Movements, support the full separation of Religion and State in Israel so that everyone can follow their religious conscience without coercion in any form as stated clearly in Israel's Declaration of Independence.

**13. You say you're in our progressive coalition, but you don't care about Palestine.**

We do care about Palestine and the Palestinians, and we must do all that we can to support and advocate for a two-state solution wherein there will be a Jewish state and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with clear boundaries between them.

**14. There is no equivalence between Israel and Hamas when one side can obliterate the other.**

It is true that there is a massive power differential between the Israeli military and Hamas. Yes, one side can obliterate the other, but it does not. Meanwhile the other side (Hamas) terrorizes Israelis and continues to do so unabated. One reason there are fewer casualties in Israel is that the Israeli government has significantly invested over many years on missile defense systems and the majority of homes and buildings are equipped with shelters and safe rooms. Hamas, and other organizations (like Islamic Jihad), has poured money into offense, rockets, and tunnels, while not protecting its citizens, even putting them in vulnerable spaces and uses. Palestinians living in Gaza are also affected by Israeli military actions against Hamas, and Hamas refuses to accept the legitimacy of a State of Israel in any form and continually attacks Israelis living in towns and villages and fires rockets into undisputed Israeli territory beyond the borders of Gaza thus provoking an Israeli military response.

**15. Oppressed people should be allowed to fight for their lives however they want or need to, this is life or death.**

No, this is not such a case. Hamas is a terrorist organization and not a resistance organization. That was proven to be true on October 7, 2023. Murdering innocent civilians is not fair game, and the

Geneva conventions have clearly outlined what are war crimes and what are not. Israel goes to great lengths to minimize any loss of life – especially in comparison to American use of force in places like Afghanistan and Iraq. If the Palestinian goals are to achieve statehood, then it should be done through negotiation. If the Palestinian goals are to destroy the State of Israel, then it will be met with force.

**16. As Jews, refugees, how could you condone the Nakba and ongoing forcible eviction? People hold the keys just waiting to go home!**

As progressive Jews and Zionists we have long advocated for recognizing the Nakba. The fact that our independence as the State of Israel, after two-thousand years of exile, is seen by others as a catastrophe (Nakba) is a difficult story for us to digest, and we know that internalizing the Palestinian narrative is essential to moving forward.

The fact that many Palestinians were forced to leave their homes is a tragedy, and often a result of war (in this case, waged by five Arab armies) If there is a negotiated arrangement it is likely that it will include a clause about some Palestinian refugees being repatriated to some extent.

**17. Our sense of justice leads us to support the underdog, which in this case is the Palestinians.**

Our Jewish sense of justice leads us to support causes and movements that are just and moral. Sometimes that means supporting an underdog and sometimes not. While Hamas may appear to be an underdog, they are in no way moral or just. Simply look at their charter, their actions in governing Gaza, and the brutality in which they massacred 1200 people and kidnapped 240 innocent civilians, for proof of their immoral behavior. Rather than spending the millions of dollars it receives from international bodies to help its people, so much of those dollars have been spent to build tunnels into Israel to attack Israeli civilians and to arm themselves with rockets to attack Israeli settlements inside Israel.

**18. I often hear that violence is not the answer and that there is no military solution. When has any terror or hate group been obliterated through force?**

Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran are dedicated to destroying Israel and killing Jews. Read the Hamas charter for confirmation of this fact. That is why Israel must defend itself with a strong military and continue to strive for peace and coexistence with Palestinians who desire to live side by side with Israel.

**Note: Quotes from the Hamas Charter**

- "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." (*Preamble*)
- The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: 'O Moslem, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.'" (Article 7)

- "The HAMAS regards itself the spearhead and the vanguard of the circle of struggle against World Zionism... Islamic groups all over the Arab world should also do the same, since they are best equipped for their future role in the fight against the warmongering Jews." (Article 32)
- The Prophet, Allah bless him and grant him salvation, has said: "The Day of Judgement will not come about until Moslems fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Moslems, O Abdulla, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."... "There is no solution for the Palestine question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals, and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors. Palestine is an Islamic land..."

[Download a guide on how to have productive conversations about hard topics](#), which can help you facilitate group conversations around Israel/Palestine.