



Dear <<First Name>>,

For the last several months, at least since October 7, I wake up each day feeling like I am living in an alternative reality. Many days I wonder if it is me. Am I mad? Have I gone crazy or does the entire world seem turned upside down?

In this alternative universe, there are still 136 hostages being held in Gaza for nearly 100 days, all of whom are innocent civilians including a baby who has now spent one-third of his life in captivity. When my children were in pre-school and elementary school it was always a fun milestone reaching 100 days of the school year. There were 100-day parties, 100 M&M's to share, 100 pennies to count, and a relief that we were more than halfway to summer break.

The 100-day mark for our hostages should be creating a worldwide outcry. It has been 100 days since loved ones were ripped from their families. 100 days since Hamas brutally massacred innocent civilians. 100 days since women and men were violently sexually assaulted. 100 days since people have been able to return to their homes. It has been a brutally long mind-boggling and stomach-churning 100 days.

Please join the community on Sunday at 11:30 AM at the JCC to demonstrate for the release of our hostages as we sadly mark 100 days. [Click here to register.](#)

Over these last 100 days we have also witnessed a precipitous rise in Jew hate across college campuses, in city council meetings, and on the world stage. The most preposterous example in this upside-down universe is the International Court of Justice (ICJ) convening to hear an application by South Africa alleging that Israel is in breach of the Genocide Convention. The United Nations Genocide Convention made genocide and incitement to genocide a crime in the wake of the Holocaust. The term genocide originated with the Holocaust and

constitutes not only a crime against a people or the victims of genocide but also a crime against humanity.

One need read no further than the Hamas charter to see in black and white who is actually calling for genocide. The Hamas charter, written in 1987, states, “The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims 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.’” The charter declares, “Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws.” We see a movement of people across the globe shouting resistance is justified and rationalizing the brutal events on October 7, while not once calling for a release of hostages or recognition of Hamas as a terrorist organization.

In contrast, the Israeli Declaration of Independence states, “The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it 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; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

Since Israel completely disengaged from Gaza in 2005 and Hamas took control from the Palestinian Authority in 2006, Hamas has engaged in an international campaign of Jew-hatred while continuously inciting genocide against Israel and Jews globally. Even after October 7, while celebrating in the streets of Gaza, proudly sharing video footage of the terrorist attacks and parading defiled bodies to celebratory crowds, Hamas leaders have declared that they will commit these atrocities over and over again.

There is a humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Gaza. Innocent civilians have been killed and there is terrible suffering. This suffering is brought on by Hamas who uses its own people as human shields, builds massive tunnels under residential areas and stores its weaponry there, and uses hospitals and mosques as military installations. Hamas has murdered civilians trying to flee combat zones and access humanitarian supplies. Hamas ensures the death of civilians because of how it operates in Gaza so that the organization can claim Israel is committing genocide. These claims are then reaffirmed across the globe by those who support Hamas’s brutal Jew-hatred, those who do not understand history, and by those who co-opt a truthful narrative. The world continues to ignore that Israel seeks to minimize civilian casualties through targeted evacuations, communication by leaflets, and facilitating critical

humanitarian aid by creating safe corridors to provide these critical supplies. Israel has an army that follows all terms of the Geneva Convention and Hamas is a ruthless terrorist organization.

In our upside-down universe, completely baseless claims are being heard in the International Court of Justice while our hostages remain in captivity, innocents continue to die in Gaza, and Hamas enacts its vile Jew-hating agenda. It should be Hamas who is brought up on charges of genocide. South Africa is very dangerously attempting to turn the ICJ into one more corrupt international body peddling antisemitic tropes by denying Israel's right to defend herself like any other nation-state. This court process clearly applies a double standard, dehumanizes Israel, and denies Israel's sovereignty. The court today did not allow Israel to present the Hamas videos taken on October 7 as evidence. This is inexcusable.

Past performance is an indicator of future behavior, and in this upside-down world, this is also most certainly true for the International Red Cross (ICRC) which has made very little, if any, effort to help the hostages in Gaza. During the Holocaust, the ICRC notoriously ignored and lied about the status of Jews in Europe and in concentration camps. The ICRC has refused to bring vital medication to hostages and has had no contact with the hostages to assess their well-being and has made little effort to insist on finding out the status of the hostages or by helping them. In all of the hostage exchanges, Hamas was able to administer tranquilizing medication to hostages, prior to their release. Where is the outrage?

In this week's Torah portion, Va'era, it should be noted we read of Moses's demand of Pharaoh over and over again, as plagues are unleashed, to "let my people go". This Sunday, as we mark 100 days of our hostages being held in captivity, we will once again implore the world to "let our people go."

I am afraid that the world is going to feel upside down for some time and we can never become accustomed to a "new normal." We must stick together as we support our people, challenge the world to understand us, illuminate the dangers of terrorist organizations like Hamas for all people, and continue to support the sovereign Jewish democratic State of Israel.

[Please do not forget to register for Sunday's demonstration.](#)

Shabbat Shalom.

Meredith

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