



Message from the President and CEO

With an escalation of tensions in Israel earlier this week, we personally became aware of how close to home this was for our friends and families in Israel. We have seen buses and houses bombed blocks away from where our own families reside, and know that many of you, like us, are checking in with families and friends daily who are spending nights in safe rooms and bomb shelters. Israel is under siege, with lynchings and riots breaking out in some towns and cities and simultaneously undoing years of work towards peaceful coexistence and relations between Israel's Jewish and Arab communities. We condemn all of the violence within Israel – the violence perpetrated by Jews on Arabs, by Arabs on Jews and the indiscriminate rocket attacks on civilian populations, both Jewish and Arabs, throughout the centre and south of the country.

We are horrified by the barrage of rockets fired on Israelis by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, terrorist organizations. While we as a community may not agree on the policies of the Government of Israel from time to time or in advance of the recent incidents, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton will steadfastly and unapologetically defend Israel's right to exist and defend itself from these attacks.

Israelis and Palestinians alike deserve to live in peace and security. We are devastated by news of innocent people caught in the crossfire. Our community values the sanctity of life, and we want nothing more than to see an end to the bloodshed.

As many of you know, the narrative and rhetoric on social media and in mainstream media has been one sided against Israel and blind to the war crimes being committed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad on both the Israeli and Palestinian populations. Bari Weiss summarizes how the events have unfolded and the proliferation of misinformation on social media in [this article](#).

Thanks to your UJA donations, we have at our disposal the expertise of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA). CIJA is our advocacy arm and has been unequivocal in its advocacy across Canada in support of Israel. They have also kept us updated, united, and have been working with politicians and social media outlets to get our community's messaging out.

For those of us with children in high school and University, CIJA offered a national program Thursday night to support them and help them through the cyber bullying being experienced by those supporting Israel. We look forward to continuation of this with an Alberta-specific follow-up program. If you or your child missed the notifications and want to be included in future events please email ceo@edjfed.org to be added to our mailing list.



We will continue to email out opportunities for updates and post on our social media channels. If you are on Twitter follow us at [@JewishEdmonton](https://twitter.com/JewishEdmonton) and retweet our messages. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Visit <https://www.cija.ca/israelunderfire/> for updates and messages you can use on social media if you want to voice your support for Israel in these trying times.

We are aware of the car rally for Palestine occurring Saturday in our city. This is part of a national series and is expected to remain peaceful. There is no security threat to our community. We urge you not to protest at this event.

Generation United For Israel, A national gathering of solidarity as Jewish students and Holocaust Survivors from across Canada lead us in prayer for our brothers and sisters in Israel under attack, will occur on Sunday at 10 a.m. MT. [Join us](#) in peaceful way to support Israel and one another.

An additional upsetting event took place this week – closer to home. For the second time in as many weeks, a Hitler youth flag (together with a confederate flag) was being flown on a rural property outside of Edmonton. You can read more in [this](#) Edmonton Journal article. We were involved with law enforcement throughout. As Steve said in the Edmonton Journal, these incidents are proof that “antisemitism, unfortunately, is alive and well in Canada.” The Chief Administrative Officer of Brazeau County called Stacey to discuss the matter and offer the unequivocal support and condemnation on behalf of their county. We will continue to speak out and Tal continues to work with our law enforcement partners, the RCMP and EPS on these matters and to monitor the safety and security of our community.

Our policy is not to email or post on social media during Shabbat and Yom Tovs. We will however do so if there is ever an emergency locally.

Amongst everything else we do, we take an active role advocating for our community and for Israel. We could use your help. If you are interested in getting involved, please reach out to us.

Shabbat Shalom

Stacey and Steve