

**Dear Friends,**

There are student protests in 38 states to end the genocide in Gaza against the Palestinian people. Once again, it is the young people in our country who are showing themselves to be the conscience of our nation. It is now estimated that over 34,500 Palestinians have been killed. The vast majority has been civilians, over half of them have been women and children. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are on the verge of starvation and millions have been displaced, once again, and have no homes and communities to return to. Their infrastructure of hospitals and schools have been repeatedly bombed, as well as their places of worship, both mosques and churches.

I have seen many different Jewish people and groups from Orthodox to Reformed who have come out against this 'war' and are calling for a cease fire. This movement to stop the violence is not anti-Semitic. We can recognize that Jews in the Middle East are in danger from radical terrorist organizations, and at the same time, hold them to a higher standard than to what is boiling down to: "They started it and we are going to finish it, no matter what the cost."

I would argue the point that the Palestinians have started this conflict last October. From the [United Nations website](#), it shows that between 2008 and 2022 that Israelis has suffered 326 deaths and Palestinians suffered over 6,000. In the same time period, 6,400 Israelis have been injured in attacks and 158,420 Palestinians from Israel forces and settlers. Many say that this conflict has been going on since Biblical times, but looking closer there were centuries of peace between all people of all religions in this region. It is a common thread that for every Israeli citizen that is killed, over 20 Palestinians are killed. This has been the way since 1987 during the first Intifada which protested 20 years of occupation from the 1967 Six Day War.

There will be no clear winners and only losers in this conflict as long as Palestinians are being killed with impunity and there is no peace negotiations on a level playing field. Right now. Right NOW there must a cease fire from the Israeli side that indiscriminately targets civilians and the refugees in Ramah.

God, who proclaimed Christ to be the Prince of Peace, help all sides to pause in their killing and recognize each other's humanity and right to exist. Amen

Peace