

Response to the Crisis in Israel/Palestine

The Havurah Shalom Steering Committee

February 13, 2024

At Havurah Shalom we represent a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives regarding Israel-Palestine. Collectively, though, we are dedicated to the value of *B'tzelem Elohim*, the sacredness of all human life, and feel united in our commitment to advocate for actions that preserve life.

We mourn with all those who lost loved ones killed in the brutal attacks by Hamas militants against Israelis on October 7, and we hope and pray for an immediate release of all hostages. At the same time, we are horrified by the impacts of Israel's military assault in Gaza, which has killed so many, left hundreds of thousands facing starvation, and displaced almost the entire population. We mourn with all those who are grieving and are in solidarity with everyone living in fear.

We do not believe that this military path will make anyone, Palestinians or Israelis, safer in the long run. Rather, we believe that a multilateral ceasefire, including the unimpeded flow of adequate humanitarian aid into Gaza, and the negotiated release of hostages and political prisoners, is the only path forward toward a just and lasting resolution to the ongoing violence.

We hope for a shared future for Israelis and Palestinians, which requires the commitment of all parties to good-faith negotiations with the goal of a just and lasting peace. We believe that the essential first step toward this vision is an immediate and permanent ceasefire.

May the One who makes peace on high, bring peace for us all — for all the People of Israel, for all the People of Palestine, and for all who dwell on Earth.