

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

DRAFT Tuesday 1-16-2024

Days of Dialogue

Let's Talk About Israel - Palestine

Dear Participants, Facilitators, and Readers,

This is a new public dialogue. It is a difficult, multifaceted one. Thank you for participating. This may be the first time that many of us have been brave enough to come together to explore this topic in community.

Questions that many of us have been asking: Why is there a war in Gaza? What does Zionism mean? Who are the Palestinians? Who are the Israelis?

This dialogue guide is a collection of different views on the topic. It is an invitation to step into the questions that are at the heart of what is unfolding in a mindful and respectful way. The goal of the session is not to solve the conflict in the Middle East. We are here together to create safe spaces where we can more deeply listen to each other and authentically share our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings without being judged. It is also a space where we can empathetically and effectively honor the dignity and worth of all parties and hear what others are saying.

We are all in this together. Let us begin to feel heard, to listen to each other, and to learn.

Dialogue Guide

I. QUOTES



NOTE to Rabbi: Please ADD a couple of quotes from Rabbis and/or other Jewish leaders

“Disagreements do not automatically make a person extreme, bad or evil. Learn to distinguish between the one who respectfully disagrees & the one who is evil.”—Sheik Mufti Menk

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

“The situation today is so terrible that people run from reality as they run from rockets – and hide in the shelter of their blind spots. It’s pointless to wag fingers. The only thing left to do is try to change that reality.”

- Dahlia Scheindlin, International Policy Fellow, Century International; Haaretz.com

“Nothing justifies the killing of thousands of children. Nothing. Not self-defense. Not human shields. Nothing. Period.” -Sheik Mufti Menk

“It should not be hard to shut down hatred and antisemitism where we see it. That is a core tenet of solidarity.” – Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

“Hating people because of their color is wrong. And it doesn't matter which color does the hating. It's just plain wrong.” -Muhammad Ali

“... It is impossible to feel dispassionate in the face of this carnage... All of this is taking place against the backdrop of decades of failure to achieve a durable peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. One that is based on genuine security for Israel, a recognition of its right to exist, and a peace that is based on an end of the occupation and the creation of a viable state and self-determination for the Palestinian people...” - Former President Barack Obama, Democracy Forum at the Obama Foundation, 11/3/2024

“ My heart grieves for the victims of the abominable attacks of October 7 and I reiterate my urgent appeal for the liberation of those still being held hostage...I plead for an end to the military operations with their appalling harvest of innocent civilian victims...May there be an end to the fueling of violence and hatred. And may the Palestinian question come to be resolved through sincere and persevering dialogue between the parties sustained by strong political will and the support of the international community. Brothers and sisters, let us pray for peace in Palestine and Israel.” – Pope Francis, Christmas address, video posted by Reuters on “X”, 12/25/2023

“We don’t want to push the Jews into the sea. All we want is food on the table, no Israeli soldiers in the street, a safe place for our children to play. A chance for them to have a future.” -Amal, in Deheisheh Refugee Camp, 2002, to Penny Rosenwasser, Yes! Solutions Journalism 11/20/2023

- **Israel’s impossible dilemma:** “Israel’s larger stated aim—of utterly eradicating Hamas—is impossible...If the Israelis stay in Gaza out of determination to deny Hamas a hollow win, they will instead ensure that Hamas gets a political victory that is actually worth something—one that will play out over months and years of further warfare.” – Hussein Ibish, Senior Resident Scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute of Washington, The Atlantic, 12/4/2023
- **The one-state delusion:** “Neither Israelis nor Palestinians are going anywhere, and neither will give up their national identity... Those who truly want peace and justice in the Holy Land should start by recognizing this reality.” — Arash Azizi PhD, Political Scientist, The Atlantic, 11/15/2023

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

- **The day after Netanyahu:** “Israel has long succeeded in spite of its leaders, not because of them...As Israel’s population steps up where its prime minister and his hard-right allies have failed, the real source of the state’s strength has never been more obvious.” — Yair Rosenberg, *The Atlantic*, 11/10/2023
- **A message of peace:** “There never has been, nor will there be, a military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian situation on Palestine...Israel obviously can, in its campaign against Hamas, flatten Gaza. It has the machines and bombs to do so. But it can’t destroy the Palestinian desire to be free.” – Zia Asali, founder of The American Task Force of Palestine, *The Atlantic*, 11/4/2023

II. GROUND RULES

- *Silence electronic devices (especially cell phones).*
- *Trust that the Facilitator has the best interests of the group at heart*
- *Speak openly and honestly*
- *Listen carefully and respectfully*
- *Be respectful of the opinions of others.*
- *Explore differences respectfully and look for common ground*

III. THE DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

Part 1 - Introductions (note to facilitators- ask the participants to be brief for these first 3 questions- around 1 minute per person)

1. Introduce yourself and indicate how you identify yourself, racially, culturally, ethnically, or otherwise, if at all.
2. How do you believe that others identify you? How would you like to be identified?
3. What brings you to this discussion today?

OPTIONAL – Include the following “instructions” for use in this dialogue guide, or omit.

This opening section could be LONGER. Adding personal + emotional questions. Sets the stage for a deeper dialogue. May be used during a single, stand-alone session, or-

***RECOMMENDED *** Divide the guide into three parts, for a three-session dialogue.

Day 1- Part 1, Introductions: Who are we? and Introduction to the topic- including Q’s 1 – 10

Day 2- Part 2, The Heart of the Matter: Q’s 1- 10 and possibly 11

Day 3- Part 3, Calls to Action: Q’s 1, 2 +...

4. What is your direct or indirect relationship to Israel, Palestine, or other areas in the Middle East ?
5. What are your sources for current news, culture, and history, addressing this topic?
6. Do you feel that you are knowledgeable about all sides of this issue ?
7. Are you able to discuss issues of Israel/Palestine with family, friends, co-workers?
8. Have you had close relations with a Palestinian person ? With a Jewish person ?
9. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt unsafe because of your identity ?
10. How does the current situation in Israel/Palestine impact your daily life?

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

Dialogue Questions Part 2 – The Heart of the Matter

1. In what ways can we create a more inclusive environment where people feel safe to discuss sensitive topics like Palestine, Israel, and Hamas that doesn't lead to accusations of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia?
2. What might be more effective strategies that community and faith-based organizations should consider to highlight the shared values and experiences between Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities, fostering unity and understanding?
- 3 - How do we protect free speech, even if it involves hate speech? How do we engage in dialogue with two groups (or more) where each has the entrenched belief- body and mind- that the other group is determined to annihilate them?
4. How do you think mainstream media narratives about regional conflicts, particularly those framing them as religious wars, impact the relationship between Muslim and Jewish communities in the U.S.?
5. Who are the victims in the current conflict? In your opinion, who has a credible legitimate stake in this conflict?
6. Let's talk about the children whose world has been turned upside down with violence. What does the Palestinian child think? What does the Israeli child think? What is it like to live in Israel? What is it like to live in Palestine? Discuss the child's POV (point of view):
 - Today
 - 5 years from now
 - 10 years from now
 - 20 years from now
 - ...
7. On the world stage, do we treat Palestinian Muslims as lesser victims? Do we treat Israeli Jews as lesser victims? What if one or both sides were Christian and not Muslim or Jewish?
8. What do you understand were the causes of the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas?
9. CEASEFIRE NOW Consider what the basic details of an agreement would look like. What details need to be included in a Ceasefire agreement?
10. What is the viability of a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel? What would a two-state solution look like? Is there a yet un-explored alternative to a two-state solution? What incentive does each group have in creating a two-state or alternative solution?
11. How can the voices of moderation be amplified above the voices of extremism so that alternative solutions can be identified?

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

12. Definitions- Discuss:

- Ceasefire Now
 “Calling for a ceasefire does not mean supporting Hamas. A ceasefire is when everyone in a conflict agrees to stop fighting and negotiate on non-violent terms. It means ending the siege and massacre of Gazans, a hostage exchange, no more escalation toward further war, and creating space for a diplomatic solution in pursuit of a lasting and just peace for all Palestinians and Israelis. An end to the fighting is only the beginning; a ceasefire sets up space to address the root causes of the violence.”
 – Definition is excerpted from materials developed by Dorit Cypis and members of *If Not Now*, November 2023

- Racism, Hate
- Islamophobia
- Antisemitism
- Xenophobia

(POSSIBLY- OMIT THE “Definitions”section. OR- WE PROVIDE DEFINITIONS. OR – YES- HAVE THIS BE PART OF THE DISCUSSION- people’s subjective definitions may be fruitful for the groups to explore)

Dialogue Questions Part 3- CALLS TO ACTION:

Have each group suggest some actionable ideas.

Discuss-

1. **In what ways are you committed to expanding your knowledge and understanding of the Israel-Palestine situation?**
2. **How might you approach friends, relations, co-workers to engage in this active learning?**
3. **Other actions: _____; _____; _____**

- IV. **RESOURCES for further study and action on this topic:** Following is a list of organizations that are working for mutual understanding, multi-party solution building, anti-racism, and peace. There are many people and agencies doing this work. Also included are several organizations providing humanitarian assistance.

IF NOT NOW <https://www.ifnotnowmovement.org/>

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/>

[AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL](#)

THE CARTER CENTER [Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope](#)

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE [Arab Peace Initiative II](#)

[DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS](#)

LA For All: Stop Hate Resource Hub <https://civilandhumanrights.lacity.gov/laforall>

RESOURCE GENERATION <https://resourcegeneration.org/>

EMERGENCY RELIEF FOR CHILDREN IN GAZA [UnicefUSA.org](https://www.unicef.org/usa)

GRASSROOTS INTERNATIONAL <https://grassrootsonline.org/palestine/>

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th
[Neve Shalom Wahat al Salaam](#)
[Combatants for Peace](#)
[Standing Together](#)
[Zochrot-Things Can Be Different and They Must Be Different](#)
[The Parents Circle Family Forum](#)
[Women Wage Peace](#)

FIND SOME ARAB /PALESTINE/GAZA BASED RESOURCES and add to the list:

V. **CONTEXT:** Background/historical information about Muslims and Jews; Palestine and Israel

[Islamic-Jewish Relations; Similarities between the two faiths](#)

[What is Happening in Our World?](#) -Thomas L. Friedman, NYT, 12/31/2023

[What is Hamas and why is it fighting in Israel?](#)

[Gaza Strip](#) - geography, geopolitical history

[Counter Terrorism Guide](#)

[Why are Israel and Hamas at War? A basic explainer](#) by Leo Sands and Adela Shulman, WaPo, 11/22/23 (omit because this article is now behind a paywall)

Middle East Crisis – explained [special NPR series](#)

[Freed Hostage Speaks About Hamas Captivity](#) (possibly omit?)

[What is Happening in Gaza? Humanitarian Crisis Grows](#)

[United Nations Relief Agency- Ability to Deliver Aid Very Limited](#)

[Israel at War](#)- AIPAC's perspective; American Zionists

[J Street](#) – “The political home of pro-Israel, pro-peace, pre-democracy Americans”

[Jewish Currents](#) – Progressive Jewish Perspectives

[Israel-Hamas War](#): Journalist Gideon Levy's speech on Israel's occupation of Palestine

VI. **Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and other issues relating to Racism and Hate**

[Countering and Dismantling Islamophobia](#) guide by [Institute for Social Policy and Understanding](#)

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

HATE CRIME CIRCULAR <https://www.lapdonline.org/hate-crime-circular/>

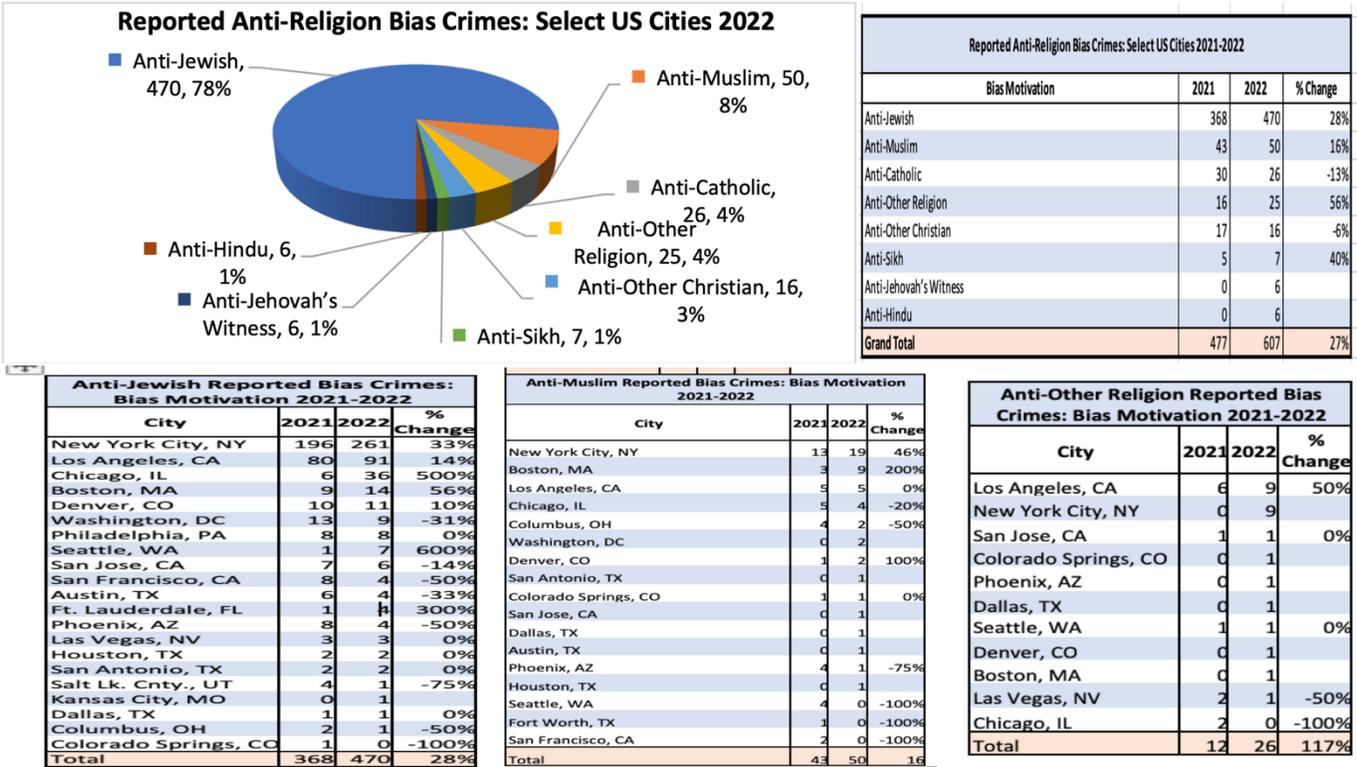
[Antisemitism Explained](#) article with videos by United State Holocaust Memorial Museum

What Is Islamophobia? <https://www.un.org/en/observances/anti-islamophobia-day>

[Definition of Antisemitism](#), International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IRHA)

[Report to the Nation: Faith Under Fire](#) (includes the below pie charts and additional material)

CSHE: 2022 Religion Hate Crimes In Major US Cities



VII. Impact in Palestine, Israel, the Middle East and Beyond

[Americans' View of the Israel Hamas War](#)

[Israeli Soldier Turned Anti-Zionist Organizer](#), Democracy Now, 1/5/2024; video from 34 min 48 sec

["There is a moral reckoning for all of us" – Former President Barack Obama](#); video from 2 min 50 sec

[Israel & Hamas Conflict in Brief: Overview, U.S. Policy, Options for Congress 2023](#)

[Claudine Gay Will Remain Harvard President After Controversial Remarks](#) **OMIT?**

[Harvard President Claudine Gay Resigns. Shortest Tenure in Harvard History](#) **OMIT?**

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

[TikTok isn't Creating False Support for Palestine. It's just reflecting what's already there](#)

[Chief Rabbis Rebuke Pope Francis Over Gaza Comments, Call for Holy Father to 'Atone for Sins'](#)

[Middle East Conflict Risks Reshaping the Region's Economies](#)

[Gaza war hits neighbouring Arab economies](#)

[Security Council Discusses Crisis in the Middle East: UN warns of further 'spillover'](#)

[Humanitarian Pause vs. Ceasefire – the debate over how to ease Gaza's suffering](#)

XI. CONTRIBUTORS

Our humble thanks go to Rashad Sharif, Marie Stein, Dorit Cypis, Rabbi Lori Shapiro, Candace Carnicelli, Mohammed Al-Rawi, Rev. Carolyn Wilkins, Scott Martin, Jane Paul, and Tony Piscitelli.

The creation of this dialogue guide was a team effort. Each of the contributors listed above answered the call, and with thoughtfulness and rigor, contributed major elements. Our goal was to develop a format that would be topical and informative, while simultaneously presenting enough of an overview that the guide might be used for months to come within communities and combinations of communities, whether secular or nonsecular, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Humanist, Atheist, Republican, Democrat, third party, or other.

In the context of the tragic, fast moving, and fatally polarizing reality of the Israel-Palestine-Gaza-Hamas conflict, this was an extremely challenging endeavor. We hope you find this guide useful.

-Avis Ridley-Thomas, Executive Director, Days of Dialogue and Jill Frank, Facilitator

XII. Additional Articles

Let's Talk About Israel - Palestine -some random context, more history

Edward Said, 1989 Letter to American Jewry – a long essay. Extremely thought provoking.
<https://jewishcurrents.org/an-open-letter-to-american-jewish-intellectuals>

Growing Up in An Israeli Settlement
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eac1l1ozfLc&ab_channel=TheNewYorkTimes

I Yearn for the World to See Us Too
<https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/11/opinions/gaza-palestinian-israel-hamas-seige-ghraieb>

75 Years of US Support for Israel
<https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/11/politics/presidents-israel-cnn>

The Sinai Campaign -Israel/Egypt 1956
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-sinai-suez-campaign>

DOD Dialogue Guide- Post October 7th

Fighting Antisemitism through the lens of Collective Liberation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmkxfzCIOBM>