

To: Minneapolis City Council
From: The Minnesota Rabbinical Association
Date: January 19, 2024



We write to you today in regard to the resolution entitled, “Support of Permanent Ceasefire and Preventing Loss of Human Life in the Middle East” that is presently being considered for a vote by the Minneapolis City Council. We are members of the Minnesota Rabbinical Association, the largest rabbinic organization in Minnesota representing rabbis across all of the major Jewish denominations. We are asking you to vote against this resolution.

We are concerned and disappointed that the Minneapolis City Council has chosen to focus on a conflict occurring on the other side of the world, rather than on the problems that you uniquely have the power to impact directly. In addition to being outside the City Council’s mandate, we believe that this resolution is inaccurate and inflammatory. Demonizing Israel contributes to a frightening atmosphere here in Minnesota that leads to increased antisemitism and puts your Jewish constituents at risk. The vitriolic atmosphere of the January 8th meeting attests to the harmful impact of this resolution.

We are still in shock from the horror of the October 7th attack—the worst atrocity against Jews since the Holocaust—where 695 civilians of all ages and faiths, 373 Israeli security forces, and 71 foreign workers were butchered. Many were even raped by members of Hamas. 240 people were taken hostage, including children and infants. 100 days later, over 120 hostages remain in Gaza.

In response to these atrocities, the State of Israel was forced into a war that they did not choose or want. The State of Israel has an inalienable right to protect its citizens, doing what it must to prevent anything like October 7th from ever happening again.

We disagree with the language of the resolution that states that the Israeli Defense Forces are indiscriminately bombing Gaza. Hamas has immorally chosen to embed their military operations, underground tunnels, and equipment in mosques, schools, hospitals and UN buildings, using non-combatant Palestinians as human-shields. Thus attacks on these military targets result in the tragic loss of Palestinian lives and infrastructure. We hope and pray that the State of Israel continues to search for ways to mitigate civilian casualties without compromising the goals of their mission. Hamas could end this war today by returning the hostages and ceasing its attacks on Israel, but rocket attacks continue to fall on Israeli civilians even now. It is for these reasons that the war continues, and that our federal government continues to support the Israeli Defense Forces.

As rabbis, we hope for peace, and work towards peace in our local and global community. Our hearts are breaking for what this war has wrought. We are horrified by the deaths of civilians in Gaza and the devastation that is happening there. We pray and toil for the day when a secure and peaceful state of Israel stands alongside a secure and peaceful Palestinian state.

We implore you to reconsider the purpose, content, and impact of this deeply flawed resolution. As always, we stand ready to partner with you in the work of improving Minneapolis for all its residents.

Signatories:

Rabbi Esther Adler
Rabbi Morris Allen
Rabbi Jill Avrin
Rabbi Barbara L. Block
Rabbi Norman Cohen
Rabbi Barry Cytron
Rabbi Alexander Davis
Rabbi Max Davis
Rabbi Ryan Dulkan
Rabbi Shoshana Dworsky
Rabbi Avram Etedgui
Rabbi Matt Goldberg
Rabbi Yosi Gordon
Rabbi Justin Held
Rabbi Rebecca Kamil
Rabbi Harold J. Kravitz
Rabbi Lynn Liberman
Rabbi David Locketz
Rabbi Tamar Magill-Grimm, co-chair
Rabbi Tobias Divack Moss, co-chair
Rabbi Cathy Nemiroff
Rabbi Avi Olitzky
Rabbi Debra Rappaport
Rabbi Jason Rodich
Rabbi Marcus Rubenstein
Rabbi Rachel Rubenstein
Rabbi David Steinberg
Rabbi Sharon Stiefel
Rabbi Adam Stock Spilker
Rabbi David B. Thomas
Rabbi Aaron Weininger
Rabbi Marcia A. Zimmerman