

**Rabbi Malomet's Remarks at Highland Park Borough Council Meeting  
October 24, 2023**

Friends:

I want to thank Mayor Elsie Foster for her show of sympathy to our community.

On the day after the Hamas massacre, she came to my synagogue to be with us and to comfort us. And she presided at our vigil on that Monday.

And thank you to all who have stood with us during this difficult time.

I am here representing a grieving community.

I am not exaggerating when I say that each person in our community knows someone, or someone who knows someone.

Adi Vital-Kaploun was the daughter of someone I grew up with. She was murdered in front of her two sons. The Hamas terrorist who broke into her home shot her dozens of times. In front of her children. Her body was then booby-trapped so that it would explode when she was found.

1400 people were murdered. In ways that could only be described as barbaric. And a crime against humanity. The Jewish people have not experienced that horror since the Holocaust.

I have a friend in Israel. Two of her neighbors, ITAY and MAYA REGEV are among the 222 hostages in Gaza. They were at the music festival.

Yesterday, journalists viewed bodycam footage of the massacre. In all the wars they had covered they had never seen such brutality.

Hamas is pure evil.

But what makes this evil even worse, as if it could be worse, is that there are people who celebrated it.

It barely took a couple of days. Rallies erupted celebrating the massacre and calling for more genocide against the Jews.

University professors called it, "exhilarating."

Members of Congress defended it and blamed Israel.

University leaders, educational and community leaders, were so spineless, that they couldn't rise to the moral challenge of condemning it unequivocally.

Sadly, we have examples of this even in our own community. People whose ideologies blind them from seeing the moral difference, between the intentional barbaric murder of innocent civilians, the torture, rape, burning and dismemberment of Jews, versus the tragic loss of civilian life in Israel's lawful and legitimate acts of self-defence.

On the one hand, they flatter themselves in their compassion for dead Jews.

And on the other, they preen in self-righteousness when they condemn Jews for trying to defend themselves legitimately and lawfully from being slaughtered.

That is moral bankruptcy.

And because of that moral bankruptcy all around us, the inability to call evil, evil, the inability to clearly condemn mass murder and the equivocation between barbaric murder and lawful, legitimate collective self-defense, Jews are scared.

In this country.

In this state. And even in this community.

Jewish students are afraid of being subjected to abuse in our very own schools and a mile away from here at Rutgers.

Like every single Jew and Israeli I know, I wish that there were no civilian casualties in Gaza.

But I also wish that the terrorists wouldn't launch rockets on their own hospitals, killing their own innocent people.

I wish they wouldn't locate their launchers next to schools, in violation of every norm of armed conflict.

I wish they wouldn't store weapons in mosques, or conduct terror operations from residential buildings.

I wish they wouldn't use their own civilians as human shields.

There is only one entity that is responsible for all of the civilian suffering in Gaza:

Hamas, an organization whose sole purpose, as defined by their charter, is to destroy Israel and kill as many Jews as possible, not only in Israel, but throughout the world.

I wish good people would recognize that clearly, and condemn that.

I wish that good people would understand what we're dealing with here: a brutal, ruthless, evil, barbaric, terrorist genocidal regime.

Defending Hamas is defending evil.

On October 7 Hamas succeeded in murdering 1400 innocent men women and children. Their atrocities ignited a war with Israel.

Israel's war against Hamas is a morally just war if there ever was one.

It is a war for the existence and survival of the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

It is a war to ensure that no-one will ever again fire a rocket into a home, that no terrorists will ever shoot up a music concert, that no sick, depraved, murderous monster will ever, ever again, shoot a mother in front of her children or raise a hand against a Jewish child.

I pray for the safe return of the 222 hostages.

I pray that Hamas is defeated and crushed. Decisively.

I pray that no civilian either in Israel or in Gaza live in fear.

And I pray that good people in this community and this state will have the decency and the moral clarity to see this atrocity for what it is: pure evil.

Thank you again Mayor, for your support.

And thank you all for standing with us.