



October 7, 2024

Dear Secretary-General Guterres:

On the somber one-year mark of the horrific October 7th attacks on Israel by Hamas terrorists and in response to last week's shocking bombardment from Iran, we write to you to unequivocally reaffirm the support of Southern Baptists for the people and the nation of Israel.

Since the inception of the modern state of Israel in 1948, Israel has faced numerous attacks, incursions, and violations of its national sovereignty. The Jewish people have long endured genocidal attempts to eradicate them and to destroy the Jewish state. These antisemitic, deadly ideologies and terrorist actions must be opposed.

As thousands of evangelical leaders wrote in the [Evangelical Statement in Support of Israel](#) in the days immediately following the October 7th attack, "Israel stands as a rare example of democracy in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes. The tragic events of October 7th further underscore the importance of democracy in our world and stand as a sober reminder that supporting Israel's right to exist is both urgent and needed."

This summer at the annual meeting of our convention of churches, Southern Baptists overwhelmingly passed a [resolution](#) "On Justice and Peace in the Aftermath of the October 7 Attack on Israel." That resolution states clearly that Southern Baptists "condemn Hamas' terrorist attacks of October 7, commit to standing with the Jewish people and those suffering in the region, and oppose all forms of antisemitism." The resolution further rejects "calls for the nation of Israel to lay down its arms, repudiat[es] any calls for a permanent ceasefire that do not also result in the immediate release of all hostages" and urges "the international community to redouble its efforts to support the nation of Israel toward a just and lasting peace, addressing underlying issues such as terrorism, human rights violations, and regional instability, consistent with biblical calls to defend the oppressed and promote justice, especially among non-combatants and civilians."

The very treaties that animate the United Nations unequivocally echo these same calls for peace, defense, and justice. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter enshrines "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs" for each of its member states. Both the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute of the ICC expressly prohibits the taking of hostages.



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY COMMISSION
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

As tensions rise and broader conflict throughout the Middle East appears imminent, our churches remain committed to praying for a peaceful end to this conflict. At this dire moment, we urge you not to waver in your commitment to support the right of Israel to exist and defend itself, to see all of the hostages returned home, and to oppose all forms of antisemitism that emerge at home and abroad.

Respectfully,

F. Brent Leatherwood
President
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
of the Southern Baptist Convention

cc:

The Honorable Linda Thomas-Greenfield
United States Ambassador to the United Nations