

May 18, 2021

The Violence Must Stop

Dear Tanenbaum Community,

In light of the ongoing violence in Jerusalem and Gaza, we join the chorus of communities calling for an immediate ceasefire on all sides and an end to violence against all civilians.

We know that violence only fuels more violence, and hate only begets more hate. Regardless of goals, the loss of life is a tragedy for all of us. Grief knows no borders, no nationality, no faith; it is all-consuming. And yet in the face of so much loss, an [Israeli woman and a Palestinian man](#) who've both lost children to this same violence work daily to ensure that the children of Israel and Palestine have a different future.

The grim escalation of the past week serves as a stark reminder that peace is not linear. Today, we have the mandate to look back on the decades of peacebuilding work carried out by our *Peacemakers in Action*, among countless others, and identify a persistent vision for peace that preceded and will survive these cycles of violence.

That vision lives in Israel, where [Dr. Yehezkel Landau](#) has approached the issue through [interfaith dialogues](#), [reflections](#) and [responses](#), and the amplification of allied voices clamoring for reconciliation.

In I'billin, in the Galilee where [Archbishop Elias Chacour](#) has worked tirelessly for [nearly 40 years](#), the vision is present in a town that has rejected violence and hateful speech. Archbishop Chacour himself states that they “*..still believe in the necessity of and the possibility of living together with mutual respect and hope for a very much needed reconciliation... That it is extremely important to continue teaching our kids that their dignity can be respected only when they can respect the dignity of every other person on Earth, Jews included, Palestinians also.*”

Finally, we see that vision in the unlikely alliance of [Osnat Aram-Daphna & Najeeba Sirhan](#), founded at the height of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in October 2000 amidst heightened mistrust and devastating violence. Although Osnat passed away in 2008, [their story](#) still demonstrates the complexity of modern Israel: they came from one land, yet two worlds. Twenty-one years later, we see that their differences did not prevent them from becoming spiritual sisters, and they are proof that the seeds of peace can take root in such soil.

Even when it seems there is no hope, that vision for peace continues to inspire us to build the world we need, the world we deserve, the world we can imagine. As long as this violence continues, we will continue to see a rise in global Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, especially on social media. Tanenbaum would like to offer some resources to help navigate these heavy conversations and emotions.

- [Explaining Extremism and Addressing Islamophobia](#): Five practical steps about how parents and educators can explain extremism and address Islamophobia.
- [Five Ways to Combat Anti-Semitism NOW!](#): A resource for learning about and combating anti-Semitism.

- [Five Ways to Counter Extremism on Social Media](#): A “How To” resource sheet for rising above social media extremists and right-wing hate groups.

In lieu of my own words, I leave you with the words of [Bassam Aramin](#), who has experienced unfathomable loss to this conflict and has used his grief to build a bridge across the divide: *“We are not going to give up. We will continue to work to spread our message as long as we survive, as long as we [are] alive because this is the only way, the only tool for us to try to be safe for our kids and our families and our people.”*

In solidarity,

Rev. Mark Fowler
CEO, Tanenbaum