

Reflections on Israel-Hamas War by *Peacemaker in Action* Yehezkel Langau

Peacemaker in Action Yehezkel Landau, from Israel, shares reflections in response to the war between Israel and Hamas that started on October 7, 2023.

October 20th, 2023 | Yehezkel Landau, Israel/Palestine

“As a dual Israeli-American citizen, I have strong feelings evoked by the atrocities in Israel on October 7 and ensuing events.

I feel deep anguish and heartache over the lives lost and shattered on all sides; outrage at the Hamas terrorists for brutally murdering and abducting innocent civilians from Israel and other nations; despondency over the massive military response by the Israeli government, even if understandable, without a peace offensive directed at the hearts and minds of Palestinians; along with profound anxiety over what will happen next. Above all, I feel enormous sorrow and grief over the loss—not just of human lives—but also of a shared emotional, moral, and spiritual framework that could bolster mutual empathy and compassion.

I have a son, daughter-in-law, and 3-year-old granddaughter in Israel. They are now internal refugees who fled their Tel Aviv-area home after a rocket from Gaza fell a few blocks away. They found sanctuary, at least for now, farther north. I am praying for their physical safety; and I am grieving over the loss of my beloved granddaughter’s innocence and sense of security, as another generation of Israeli and Palestinian children is being traumatized.

As a long-time religious peace activist and interfaith educator, I lament the grave distortion of fundamental moral teachings within all our religions, as this conflict intensifies and becomes even more gut-wrenching. I also lament the fact that the arc of inclusive justice and genuine peace for Israelis and Palestinians will bend farther into the future.

To heal violent conflict, we must transform mutual fear to mutual trust; mutual anger and recrimination to mutual acceptance; and debilitating grief to compassion for the suffering of others. Religious leaders and actors have a special role to play in promoting these shifts in consciousness and action. We are all called to do what we can to end the bloodshed and to intensify our efforts to heal broken hearts, alleviate the collective trauma of both peoples, and detoxify the political discourse that is fomenting hatred and division.



Peacemaker in Action, Yehezkel Landau

Hashem yerachem. Allah kareem. May God have mercy on us all, especially the grief-stricken families in Israel and Palestine.”

- **Yehezkel Landau, October 20th, 2023**