

Statement from President Joe Biden on American Citizens Impacted in Israel

As we continue to account for the horrors of the appalling terrorist assault against Israel this weekend and the hundreds of innocent civilians who were murdered, we are seeing the immense scale and reach of this tragedy. Sadly, we now know that at least 11 American citizens were among those killed—many of whom made a second home in Israel.

It's heart wrenching. These families have been torn apart by inexcusable hatred and violence. We also know that American citizens still remain unaccounted for, and we are working with Israeli officials to obtain more information as to their whereabouts. My heart goes out to every family impacted by the horrible events of the past few days. The pain these families have endured, the enormity of their loss, and the agony of those still awaiting information is unfathomable.

The safety of American citizens—whether at home or abroad—is my top priority as President. While we are still working to confirm, we believe it is likely that American citizens may be among those being held by Hamas. I have directed my team to work with their Israeli counterparts on every aspect of the hostage crisis, including sharing intelligence and deploying experts from across the United States government to consult with and advise Israeli counterparts on hostage recovery efforts.

For American citizens who are currently in Israel, the State Department is providing consular assistance as well as updated security alerts. For those who desire to leave, commercial flights and ground options are still available. Please also take sensible precautions in the days ahead and follow the guidance of local authorities.

This is not some distant tragedy. The ties between Israel and the United States run deep. It is personal for so many American families who are feeling the pain of this attack as well as the scars inflicted through millennia of antisemitism and persecution of Jewish people. In cities across the country, police departments have stepped up security around centers of Jewish life, and the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other federal law enforcement partners are closely monitoring for any domestic threats in connection with the horrific terrorist attacks in Israel.

In this moment of heartbreak, the American people stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Israelis. We remember the pain of being attacked by terrorists at home, and Americans across the country stand united against these evil acts that have once more claimed innocent American lives. It is an outrage. And we will continue to show the world that the American people are unwavering in our resolve to oppose terrorism in all forms.

The United States and the State of Israel are inseparable partners, and I affirmed to Prime Minister Netanyahu again when we spoke yesterday that the United States will continue to make sure Israel has what it needs to defend itself and its people.