

We reject the use of the phrase “from the river to the sea”— a phrase used by many, including Hamas, as a rallying cry for the destruction of the State of Israel and genocide of the Jewish people. We all feel deep anguish for the human suffering caused by the war in Gaza. Hamas started this war with a barbaric terrorist attack on October 7, 2023, and neither the Palestinian nor Israeli people can have peace as long as Hamas still rules over Gaza and threatens Israel.

This war is tragic and deeply painful for everyone, especially those who identify with the land and the people—Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike. Every civilian killed, every family torn apart, Palestinian and Israeli, is a tragedy. Every human being deserves dignity and respect, and each of us must do all we can to always see the humanity of the innocent people caught in the middle of this war.

We support Israel’s right and obligation to defend itself — to protect its citizens, secure its borders, and rescue its people held hostage in Gaza. Israel also has the obligation to, as best as possible, protect civilians, and in all its actions adhere to international humanitarian law (notwithstanding Hamas’ complete disregard for the same).

We also recognize the desperate needs of the civilians in Gaza, and fully support doing everything possible to expand safe zones, provide transit corridors, and deliver life-sustaining humanitarian aid. A humanitarian pause, of limited space and time, preceded by the release of the more than 240 hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, the cessation of rockets fired by Hamas at Israel from civilian neighborhoods in Gaza, and the release of all Palestinian civilians being detained by Hamas as human shields in Gaza, would go far toward achieving these goals.

We are grateful for President Biden’s extraordinary leadership, for his steadfast support of our ally Israel, and for his unwavering commitment to pursuing a lasting solution to the conflict.