

News Release

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CONTACT

Kim I. Mills

kmills@apa.org

(202) 336-6048

STATEMENT OF AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION IN REACTION TO ATROCITIES IN MIDDLE EAST

APA warns of immediate and long-term psychological impacts of violence, including fear and trauma

WASHINGTON – The American Psychological Association has condemned in no uncertain terms the recent violent attack by Hamas on Israel.

We also are deeply disturbed by the crisis of human suffering and loss of life and liberty for civilians who are caught in this escalating conflict.

We recognize that the situation is complicated, but there can be no justification for acts of indiscriminate violence. There can be no justification for holding people hostage. There can be no justification for cutting off access to basic necessities, such as electricity, food and medicine.

APA is gravely concerned for the physical safety and mental health of the millions of Israelis and Palestinians affected by this growing surge in violence. APA deplores the human cost of aggression, including violations of human rights, adverse humanitarian consequences, deep psychological distress, and the loss of dignity and freedom. All individuals deserve to live free of fear and violence so that their mental health and well-being can flourish.

We also condemn the rise of anti-Jewish and anti-Arab rhetoric as a result of this most recent conflict.

There is much research outlining the immediate and long-term psychological impacts of violence and trauma on the people who are targets, especially civilians.

Psychological science tells us that fear, anxiety and traumatic stress have long-term effects on health and well-being. These impacts are also being felt by people around the world who have families and friends in the region, as well as those concerned about the effects of war everywhere.

The psychology community stands in solidarity with all who are working to protect and safeguard human life during this conflict. Psychologists are expert in the science of human behavior. Problems cannot be solved without understanding their root cause. Prevention of violent conflict is imperative for a world in which mental health and well-being are the norm, and to achieve peaceful, sustainable societies. We call for peace, dialogue and conflict resolution as a pathway to ending the conflict, which is necessary for us to begin the work to prevent the suffering that will continue to result from ongoing violence.