

HIGH HOLIDAY TALKING POINTS

on the Israel-Hamas War 2024/5785

- **The destiny of Israelis and Palestinians is inextricably linked.** The only future is a shared future. Palestinians and Israelis equally deserve the protection of their human rights, physical safety, and right to self-determination.
- **Every human being — no matter their religion, ethnicity, or national origin — is created *b'tselem Elohim*, in the image of God,** and therefore the most important religious obligation is to protect and save life.
- **A negotiated bilateral ceasefire is urgently needed,** and it is the best way to save the lives of hostages and stop the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza. This is also what the families of hostages are asking for.
- **There is no question that Hamas has repeatedly committed war crimes** — including through the October 7 murders, sexual assaults, and kidnappings, as well as by failing to distinguish between its fighters and civilians and by using civilians as human shields. **But these war crimes do not permit Israel, legally or morally, to lay the full responsibility for the unimaginable suffering of a massive population of trapped civilians at the feet of Hamas.**
- **PM Netanyahu is failing the hostage families by refusing to make a deal.** The hostage families have been a consistent presence protesting in Tel Aviv, in front of the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem, and throughout the country to demand that the government prioritize their loved ones' safety over continuing the war.
- **This war has no clear strategic aims, as top Israeli and American military analysts have warned.** Israel cannot eliminate Hamas, and every day that the war drags on, the death toll for Palestinians rises, the danger to the lives of the hostages increases, Israeli civilians remain under missile attack, and more Israeli soldiers fall in battle.
- While international attention has largely focused on Gaza, Israel's far-right government has taken advantage of the moment to foment and enable **settler violence and displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank**, as well as the expansion of settlements and an increased rate of home demolitions and expulsions in East Jerusalem.
- **Ultimately, there is no military solution to this conflict.** A negotiated political solution is the only path to protecting the rights of Palestinians and Israelis.
- **This war is not only devastating for Palestinians in Gaza; it is becoming catastrophic for the soul of the Jewish people.** We must refuse to harden our hearts to the suffering of Gaza's children and all other civilians caught in the crossfire, or we risk losing our own humanity.