

Israel/Palestine/United States: Antisemitism Surges Around World as Israel, Hamas Clash

Thai News Service

October 16, 2023 Monday

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Section: GENERAL NEWS

Length: 1168 words

Body

As the conflict between Israel and Hamas rages for a fifth day, many Jews around the world face a familiar threat: a surge in antisemitism.

From New York to London, St. Louis to Sydney, Jewish communities are grappling with hate and bigotry that often flare up whenever the Middle East erupts.

"It's just a sad fact that whenever conflict arises between Israel and the Palestinians, Jews in all parts of the world will suffer some level of hate violence," said Heidi Beirich, co-founder of Global Project Against Hate and Extremism.

Israel plunged into a bloody nightmare Saturday when Hamas militants unleashed a surprise onslaught, killing at least 1,000 Israelis, wounding more than 2,000, and taking some 150 as hostages.

Brian Levin, a prominent extremism researcher and professor emeritus at California State University, San Bernardino, said the carnage amounted to "the worst single-day slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust."

U.S. President Joe Biden condemned the attack as "an act of sheer evil."

Israel's retaliatory airstrikes against targets in Gaza have been equally deadly, killing at least 1,100 Palestinians and leaving more than 5,000 others wounded, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health.

Threats surge

While Hamas' brutal assault has spurred sympathy for Israel, it also has sparked a surge of online threats against Jews, intimidation of Jewish institutions and brazen displays of antisemitic symbols.

Anti-Jewish threats on Telegram, a platform popular with Islamic State militants and white supremacists, surged by an alarming 488% in the first 18 hours of Saturday, according to the Anti-Defamation League, the oldest Jewish civil rights group in the United States.

Offline, there have been sporadic reports of antisemitic incidents. In Salt Lake City, Utah, a synagogue was forced to evacuate after receiving a bomb threat. Police are investigating threats against a number of synagogues in the state.

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In St. Louis, Missouri, a swastika was spray-painted on the side of a truck. Police said they were investigating it as an act of antisemitic vandalism.

And in London, a kosher restaurant was vandalized in the Golders Green section of the city. Mayor Sadiq Khan said, "There will be no tolerance for hate."

The first four days of the conflict saw a surge of over 300% in antisemitic incidents in the United Kingdom, according to Community Security Trust.

Pro-Palestinian protests around the world have sometimes taken on an anti-Jewish overtone, according to extremism experts.

In New York City, a protester attending a pro-Hamas rally on Sunday was seen brandishing a swastika, leading Mayor Eric Adams to condemn the protest.

In Sydney, unverified footage distributed by the Australian Jewish Association appeared to show a group of protesters outside the Sydney Opera House shouting, "Gas the Jews." Police are investigating the incident.

Pro-Hamas rallies in US

The American Jewish Committee said it has recorded about a dozen pro-Hamas protests in several U.S. cities, including New York, Washington, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Chicago.

Holly Huffnagle, U.S. director of antisemitism at the AJC, said the Jewish advocacy group backs Palestinian rights but warns that the protests extend from criticism of Israel to antisemitism and conspiracies about Jews.

"This is support for Hamas as a terrorist group," she said.

Addressing a group of American Jewish leaders Wednesday afternoon, President Biden acknowledged the war in Israel has led to a rise in hate and antisemitism.

Joined by the second gentleman Doug Emhoff, he said his administration was taking "meaningful actions ... to fight back against antisemitism and hate."

With Israel poised for a massive ground assault on Gaza and no end in sight, experts predict a surge of antisemitic incidents in the days ahead as the conflict intensifies.

"Considering that the current escalation will be longer and most intense, we should expect a more substantial increase in antisemitism in comparison to previous escalations in the conflict," said Arie Perliger, a professor at the School of Criminology and Justice Studies at the University of Massachusetts.

Anti-Jewish attacks at 'historic levels'

The recent surge in antisemitic attacks is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a long-standing pattern, Levin said.

In October 2000, violent protests in Israel triggered a 152% spike in antisemitic hate crimes in the United States, according to Levin's research.

In May 2021, clashes between Israel and Hamas led to a 187% increase in anti-Jewish hate crimes in New York City and a nearly four-fold increase in antisemitic hate in Los Angeles.

"We saw spikes in London, and indeed, nearly every major European country that reported antisemitic hate crimes for 2021 showed increases," Levin said.

The ADL reported earlier this year that incidents of assault, vandalism and harassment targeting Jews in the United States rose to new "historic levels" in 2022.

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Tom Copeland, director of research at the Centennial Institute at Colorado Christian University, said 2023 has been another record year for antisemitic activity.

"It's a long-term trend in the U.S. and in the U.K. as well," Copeland said in an interview. "So, it does seem that from this weekend, certainly on social media, especially on Telegram [and] to a certain extent on TikTok, all of the voices that are antisemitic are emerging once again."

But Jews are not the only targets of hate when violence flares up in the Middle East.

In 1985, Palestinian activist Alex Odeh was killed in California by a pipe bomb allegedly set off by extremist American Jews. The case remains unresolved.

In 1994, American Israeli extremist Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Muslim worshippers and wounded 125 others inside a mosque in Hebron in the West Bank.

The recent conflict has also spawned isolated acts of Islamophobia. On Tuesday, a sign at a Muslim religious academy in Boston was defaced with the word "Nazis, sparking calls for a hate crime investigation.

The Council on Islamic American Relations said on Wednesday it has received a flood of reports of Palestinian and Muslim students facing harassment for their advocacy on behalf of the Palestinian territories.

But Levin said anti-Muslim hate crimes sparked by violence in the Middle East have tended to be smaller in size compared to anti-Jewish violence.

"It's not as routine, and it's generally not as significant," he said.

Maha Elgenaidi, founder and executive director of California-based Islamic Networks Group, condemned the recent acts of antisemitism as "horrific."

"I just think it's fueling the anti-Semitism that has always existed in the United States and throughout Europe," Elgenaidi, an Egyptian American, said.

She said that while dialogue is the key to healing the rift between Jews and Muslims, the pain inflicted on both sides is too fresh to enable an interfaith conversation.

"A lot of people that I know have family in Gaza and that have been directly hurt and the same thing with Jewish friends that I've spoken with," she said. - VOA

Load-Date: October 13, 2023

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Voice of America News

October 11, 2023

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Section: VOA ENGLISH SERVICE

Length: 1041 words

Byline: Masood Farivar

Body

October 11, 2023 7:32 PM

washington -

As the conflict between Israel and Hamas rages for a fifth day, many Jews around the world face a familiar threat: a surge in antisemitism.

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"It's not as routine, and it's generally not as significant," he said.

Levin said promoting tolerance could reduce the level of hate. He pointed out that after former President George W. Bush urged Americans to show respect for Islam six days after the attacks of 9/11, "anti-Muslim hate crimes declined the next day. And they stayed lower into the following year."

"It is key that we continue interfaith dialogue," he said, "because in the end, especially here in the United States, this can be the place where seeds of peace can germinate, certainly not with respect to Hamas, but overall, between both people."

Load-Date: October 13, 2023

President Dobkin responds to violence, unrest in DC calling it 'an attempt to subvert' democracy

President Dobkin responds to violence, unrest in DC calling it 'an attempt to subvert' democracy

The Forum: Westminster College

October 12, 2023 Thursday

University Wire

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Section: BEYOND-CAMPUS; Pg. 1

Length: 452 words

Byline: Cami Mondeaux

Body

Westminster College President Beth Dobkin responded to the violent protest outside the U.S. Capitol while Congress prepared to certify the presidential election, calling it "an attempt to subvert democratic processes." (Photo courtesy Westminster College)

Westminster College President Beth Dobkin responded to the violent protest outside the U.S. Capitol Wednesday while Congress prepared to certify the presidential election, calling it "an attempt to subvert democratic processes."

After the chaos within the nation's capital subsided - which forced an emergency recess and a shelter-in-place for Congressmembers inside the building - D.C. police reported Wednesday night it had recovered five weapons and arrested 13 people. One woman was shot and killed.

"The actions were horrifying but not unanticipated," Dobkin said in a statement. "As a citizenry, some of us have been too willing to ignore patterns of words and deeds, to selectively consider facts and recall history, and to undermine the very institutions that have the potential to bring our country together."

Protests rejecting the results of the 2020 election were not unique to Washington. Several Trump supporters gathered at the Utah Capitol at the same time, chanting about election fraud and the coronavirus pandemic being a "hoax." Both claims are unsubstantiated and unsupported by evidence.

This speaker is calling the #COVID19 pandemic a hoax, and saying that the Democrats stole the election. He says they need to fight it. I shouldn't have to say this, but the pandemic is not a hoax and there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud. #utpol pic.twitter.com/q3LARuh3A3 - Sonja Hutson (@SonjaHutson) January 6, 2021

The protest in Salt Lake City resulted in counter-protests by members of the Black Lives Matter movement.

One photojournalist from the Salt Lake Tribune was pepper-sprayed by a protester who was reportedly upset he was documenting the event. Another protester was filmed telling journalists they should be "hung on the spot."

This guy's comments about journalists: pic.twitter.com/EQRVB4fGZS - Taylor Stevens (@tstevensmedia) January 6, 2021

President Dobkin responds to violence, unrest in DC calling it 'an attempt to subvert' democracy

In response, President Dobkin said it's crucial to "sustain democracy" - noting that Westminster is an institution that plays a crucial role in that process.

"Westminster plays an essential role in sustaining democracy by fostering ethical, informed, and engaged deliberation, care and compassion for others, and equitable opportunities for all," she said. "Learning means understanding the past so that we can create a better future. It includes taking accountability for our words and understanding the impact of actions not just on our own lives, but others as well."

REQUEST CORRECTION

Load-Date: October 16, 2023

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Netanyahu declares war after Hamas launches massive surprise attack

dpa-AFX International ProFeed

October 7, 2023 Saturday 1:03 PM GMT

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Length: 784 words

Body

By Emad Drimly and Sara Lemel, dpa Tel Aviv/GAZA (dpa-AFX) - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his fellow citizens on Saturday that the country is at war, after the Palestinian militant organization Hamas fired 2,200 rockets into Israel in what it called a "military operation." "Citizens of Israel, we are at war, not in an operation or in rounds, but at war," Netanyahu told Israelis, saying Hamas had launched "a murderous surprise attack against the State of Israel and its citizens." Netanyahu vowed to "return fire of a magnitude that the enemy has not known. The enemy will pay an unprecedented price. "We are at war and we will win it." So far Israel reported that a 60-year-old woman had been killed and 15 people were injured, but in an ever moving military situation this is likely to change throughout the day. Palestinian militants had infiltrated Israel by land, sea and air, army spokesman Richard Hecht said. Netanyahu, in his statement, said a top security priority was to "clear out the communities that have been infiltrated by terrorists." Israeli soldiers are currently fighting at various locations around the Gaza Strip, Hecht said, including two military bases, the Erez crossing into the Gaza Strip and several towns. Israeli media reported that hostages had been taken, but there was no official confirmation. It was initially unclear how exactly the Palestinian militants were able to enter Israel despite strict border controls. Hecht said that, among other things, gliders had been used. He could not name the number of attackers. "There were not one or two." The massive attacks set off alarms in many Israeli cities, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. It came as the country is celebrating the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah, which honours the holy book. Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif said in a message that the group had decided to put an end to Israeli violations, as he called them. Israel's response was the swift shelling of Hamas targets in Gaza, according to eye witnesses. "Hamas committed a grave mistake this morning and started a war against the state of Israel," Israeli Defence Minister Joav Gallant countered. Israeli soldiers were fighting "in all the places where incursions were made." He mobilized the country's reservists and called on citizens to obey the authorities' orders. The Israeli army called its defensive action "Iron Swords." Condemnation and support for Israel came from many governments. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen condemned the attack and called it "terrorism in its most despicable form." "Israel has the right to defend itself against such heinous attacks," she wrote on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter. European Council President Charles Michel said the European Union "stands in solidarity with Israeli people in this horrific moment," in a post on X. "Terrifying news is reaching us today from Israel," German Chancellor Olaf Scholz posted on X. "We are deeply shocked by the rocket fire from Gaza and the escalating violence. Germany condemns these Hamas attacks and stands by Israel's side." British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, also on X, said "the UK unequivocally condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians. "The UK will always support Israel's right to defend itself," he added. The massive attack from the Gaza Strip came as a surprise. The situation had recently escalated again, especially in the occupied West Bank. Since Thursday, four Palestinians had died in their

Netanyahu declares war after Hamas launches massive surprise attack

own attacks or in confrontations with the army. The security situation in Israel and the West Bank has long been tense. Since the beginning of the year, 27 Israelis, one Ukrainian and one Italian have been killed in attacks. In the same period, more than 200 Palestinians have died in Israeli military operations, confrontations or after their own attacks. Israel took over the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967. The Palestinians claim the territories for an independent state of Palestine with the Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. There have been several violent protests on the Gaza border in the past month. Explosives have been thrown at soldiers and several Palestinians have been injured by gunshots. The Israeli air force has in turn repeatedly attacked posts of the militant Palestinian organisation Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. According to the UN, more than 2 million people live in very poor conditions in the Gaza Strip. Hamas, classified as a terrorist organization by the European Union, the United States and Israel, seized power by force in 2007 and controls the overpopulated strip. Copyright dpa

Load-Date: October 7, 2023

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