

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [City Council](#); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Letter for Meeting on Tuesday 2/20/24  
**Date:** Monday, February 19, 2024 1:09:59 PM

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Dear Honorable Members of Sebastopol City Council,

I commend the Council for bringing to light that loss of life, any life, is fundamentally wrong and should be avoided at all costs. Since October 7, 2023, I have led a weekly prayer group for peace, where we pray for the safety and lives of everyone in the Middle East who is suffering and at risk of death. I mourn the loss of ALL civilian lives lost in the war at hand.

However, I write in Opposition to the Resolution on the Israel-Hamas War. I believe local governments should focus on local issues. Recent events in Northern California and worldwide have proven that Non-Binding Resolutions inflame hate, targeting the Jewish Community. It is reported that 55% of all religious hate crimes are against Jews, who represent 2.4% of the American population. According to studies, there has been a 360% increase in hate crimes against Jews in the United States since October 7, 2023.

In short, the history in the Middle East is very complex <https://twitter.com/Israellycool/status/1755614311190601850> (a few of MANY bullets points worthy of mention not seen in the Sebastopol City Councils Executive Summary and proposed Resolution):

- \*\* Non-Binding Resolutions have little effect Internationally
- \*\* Thousands of rockets fly into Israel annually during times of 'peace and ceasefire'
- \*\* HR Bill 786, written in October 2023, (the one Sebastopol City Council is now supporting) is outdated and out of touch with the reality of today- essential services are being delivered etc.
- \*\* Hamas was elected by Palestinians in January 2006, and have remained the chosen Gaza leadership since then.
- \*\* Hamas is a recognized terrorist organization by the United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, European Union...
- \*\* Hamas considers Hezbollah and Houthis, among many other terror groups, to be allies.
- \*\* The United States has recently been attacked by Houthis
- \*\* In January, Israel offered a ceasefire and Hamas rejected it.
- \*\* In February, Despite efforts involving Qatar, Egypt, Israel, and the United States, talks have not yielded a breakthrough agreement for a ceasefire".
- \*\* Hamas currently does not want a ceasefire and has only broken the last 2 ceasefires
- \*\* The United States is already doing everything they can to assist in working with our ally, Israel, to free all the Hamas held hostages of October 7, 2023
- \*\* Hamas would gain militarily from ceasefire. Just like the cease fire they broke during the previous hostage release, they armed themselves and started killing again.
- \*\* Hamas has never wavered from its goal to eliminate all Jews and Israel
- \*\* United Nations- 30 UNRWA workers directly involved in the October 7, 2023 attack, 6 drones found this last week on an UN sponsored vehicle and direct infrastructure connections have been unearthed from UN headquarters to Hamas tunnels.

I respectfully request that this Council completely reject the current resolution and instead make a Resolution about supporting an immediate release of our 7 American citizens who remain hostage as well as all of the other hostages. I also request that the Council make a resolution condemning Hamas for the rape and sexual violence against the women and girls that occurred on October 7, 2023. As Americans, unlike the Resolution at hand, I do not believe there is anything polarizing about either of the issue of hostage release or sexual violence condemnation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Gitlin

[REDACTED]  
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