

The massacres that occurred in southern Israel on Saturday October 7 have rightly been described as a pogrom, the scope of which has not been seen since the Holocaust. The images and testimonies from this day will not soon be forgotten. It is now clear that Hamas terrorists targeted Jewish civilians, including women and children, in a brutal and coordinated attack. Nothing justifies such inhumanity. The violence toward women was particularly horrific including abductions of women from the very old to the very young, kidnapping children from their mothers, the desecration of dead female bodies, and parading naked victims. Hamas filmed and shared images of these atrocities, preserving a record of the extent of the violence which is beyond dispute.

More atrocities may yet emerge and will require careful documentation. The Hamas assaults resulted in the death and injury of thousands of Israelis and Palestinians as part of the defensive counterattack. Meanwhile, many families still await the release of loved ones who have been abducted and are held hostage in the Gaza Strip, many family members dismayed by Israel's reluctance to negotiate until the conclusion of fighting.

Hamas' terrorism has contributed to and escalated a vicious cycle of violence in the region. As information about Hamas' atrocities comes to light, Israel's airstrikes and attacks on Gaza, as well as the blockade, yield a growing number of civilian casualties and the decimation of communities. Women and children have fallen victim once again. Israelis and Palestinians cannot join together in peaceful co-existence until such brutality ends. As scholars of genocide and mass violence, we decry any act of violence that targets civilians.

In this digital age, news travels quickly and in brief sound bites. The need for accurate information and empathy has never been more pressing. Our study of genocide teaches us that often the most accurate and powerful voices can be found among survivors and first-hand witnesses of violence. We await such testimonies and we mourn those individuals whose voices can no longer be heard.

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