



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the unprecedented, orchestrated attack by the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas against Israel and its implications on the security situation in the OSCE area and the Mediterranean Partner Countries

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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The world watched in horror on October 7th as Hamas terrorists massacred families in their homes, slaughtered hundreds of young people enjoying a music festival, and kidnapped elderly women, children, and entire families who are now being held as hostages. The United States unequivocally condemns the appalling attacks by Hamas terrorists against Israel, including civilians and civilian communities.

Terrorist actions by Hamas have no justification, no legitimacy, and must be universally and unequivocally condemned. As President Biden said on October 10th, "Hamas does not stand for the Palestinian people's right to dignity and self-determination. Its stated purpose is the annihilation of the State of Israel and the murder of Jewish people. They use Palestinian civilians as human shields."

We stand in solidarity with the government and people of Israel and extend our condolences for the lives lost in these attacks. Israel has the right – indeed it has the obligation – to defend itself against these attacks from Hamas, and to do what it can to make sure that this never happens again. And, as Secretary of State Blinken has said, Israel "needs to do it in a way that affirms the shared values that we have for human life and human dignity, taking every possible precaution to avoid harming civilians."

We are also outraged and deeply saddened by the explosion at the Al Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza, and the terrible loss of life that resulted. While we continue to collect information, our current assessment is that Israel is not responsible for the explosion at the hospital in Gaza. We stand unequivocally for the protection of civilian life during conflict, and we mourn the patients, medical staff, and other innocents killed or wounded in this tragedy.

President Biden announced that the United States is providing \$100 million in humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. This funding will help support over a million displaced and conflict-affected people with clean water, food, hygiene support, medical care, and other essential needs. The United States provides humanitarian assistance through trusted partners including UN agencies and international NGOs.

Civilians are not to blame and should not suffer for Hamas's horrific terrorism. Civilian lives must be protected and assistance must urgently reach those in need.

Mr. Chair, the United States has stood and will continue to stand with Israel. We will continue to work with partners around the world to prevent and counter terrorism.

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