2023 Israel Hamas War Sentiment Survey

Findings from a poll of Americans – General Public and Jewish

October 29-November 1
Methodology
Survey Methodology

• Goal: Understand the sentiment and needs of American Adults, Jewish and the general public, so that Federations & partners can better serve their local communities.
• JFNA Conducted a national survey in the US October 29th-November 1st
• SMS text-based study fielded by Benenson Strategy Group
• Random sample US Adults and Jewish Americans using Civis Analytics data set
• Sample stratified by the estimated number of Jews within 5 miles of a Zip Code to analyze differences by local Jewish population size and Civis’ prediction of how likely someone was to be Jewish
• Jewish Adults: 2199
• Total Respondents, including Jewish: 3777
  • Responses weighted to represent the general American adult population
Feedback on Response
Perception of Leadership Response: Jewish

Jewish respondents report their local Jewish community is doing a good job responding to the war. They feel more negatively about the job of local politicians and community.
Philanthropy
$603,000,000+

Raised to date through Federations to support the Israel Crisis Fund
92% People who have donated
Indicate they will donate again in the next few months
29% Jewish people indicate they have already donated to a Jewish cause since October 7th.
58% of those who have not donated say they will in the next few months.
37% who have never donated say they will donate to support Israel in the next few months.
Immediate needs are the most meaningful for Jewish donors in this moment. Only under 10% said mid to long-term needs are one of their top 3 priorities right now.

As there is substantial need in Israel, of these priority areas, which three are most meaningful for you to support?
Communication
Americans are Closely Following the War Between Israel and Hamas

75% feel they know a lot or fair amount about the history of the conflict.

In general, how much would you say you know about the history of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians? Would you say you know:

- A fair amount
- A lot about the history

How closely are you following news about the war between Israel and Hamas:

- Somewhat Closely
- Very Closely

Adult Americans

Jewish Americans
Responsibility for the War

Americans view Hamas, Iran, and other terrorist organizations responsible for the current war.

How much, if any, responsibility do you feel each of the following has for the current war that is going on between Israel and Hamas right now?

- Hamas
- Iran
- Other terrorist groups like Hezbollah
- The Palestinian Authority
- Other Arab nations in the region
- The Palestinian people
- The Israeli government
- The United States government
- The Israeli people

Respondents saying a large part of responsibility
Words to Describe October 7th

Nearly all people use the words Terrorism, Barbaric and Massacre to describe Hamas’s attack on Israel. Most people use self-defense and justified to describe Israel’s response, with many also saying it is excessive.
Where Does Empathy Lie?

People feel empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians, with greater amounts for Israelis from all Americans including Jews.
People Still Believe Peace is Possible

There has been no change since 2020 on more than half of Americans including Jews feeling that peace is possible.

In your opinion, do you think a way can be found for Israel and an independent Palestinian state to coexist peacefully with each other?

- Yes, can coexist peacefully
- No, cannot coexist peacefully

Of people who do not believe peace is not possible

Which of the following do you think is most to blame for Israel and Palestine not being able to coexist peacefully?

- Hamas
- Other Arab / Middle East Nations
- Palestinians
- Other Palestinian militant groups
- The Palestinian Authority
- Israel
- The United States
- Jewish Israelis
- Other
- None of the above
Community Relations
Perception of Leadership Response: All

Nearly 30% of adults indicate the Jewish community is doing a good job responding to the war, the highest of any measured group. They give local politicians the lowest ratings.
Talking about the War with Others - Jews

It has become harder for Jews to share their views with people with different opinions and on social media, and the same or easier with family and Jewish friends.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas started, how has it affected your ability to share your views about what’s going on there with each of the following entities? Has it been harder, easier or has there been no change?
Talking about the War with Others - Jews

It has become harder for Jews to share their views with people with different opinions and on social media, and the same or easier with family and Jewish friends.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas started, how has it affected your ability to share your views about what's going on there with each of the following entities? Has it been harder, easier or has there been no change?

- With your Jewish friends
- With family
- With your non-Jewish friends
- On your social media posts
- People with a different opinion
- With your Muslim or Arab friends
- At work/school
- With non-religious organizations or groups you belong to

Easier to share your views | No change | Harder to share your views | Not applicable
Talking about the War with Others - Jews

It has become harder for Jews to share their views with people with different opinions and on social media, and the same or easier with family and Jewish friends.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas started, how has it affected your ability to share your views about what’s going on there with each of the following entities? Has it been harder, easier or has there been no change?

Net Change: Easier-Harder
Antisemitism & Security
Local Antisemitism and safety concerns

Jewish Americans are worried about their safety and see antisemitism rising in their local communities. All Americans also see rising levels of local antisemitism.

In the past month, how often have you been worried about your personal safety because of your race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other defining personal characteristics?

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- Very much
- All the time

Thinking just about the past few weeks, do you think the level of antisemitism and antisemitic feelings in your local community are...

- Don’t know / Not sure
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Increasing
Americans have seen more than 2x growth in discrimination against Jews in the last 2 years

Please tell us how much discrimination there is against each of these groups in our society today.
Percent of general public reporting “A lot”

Muslims
Jews
Wearing Distinctive Jewish Items

Community members who “wear something distinctively Jewish such as a kippa (yarmulke) or a chain or bracelet with a Star of David or chai symbol” are more than twice as likely to report always being concerned for their safety right now.

In the past month, how often have you been worried about your personal safety because of your race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other defining personal characteristics?

- All the time
- Very much
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not at all

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Wearing Distinctive Jewish Items

In the past month, how often have you been worried about your personal safety because of your race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or other defining personal characteristics?

- All the time
- Very much
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not at all

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Berman Jewish DataBank | Jewish Federations
Mental Heath
The War is Taking an Emotional Toll

Nearly 90% of Jewish respondents report the war affecting them emotionally.

How much, if at all, is the news about the war between Israel and Hamas emotionally affecting you?

Is it affecting you...

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- Not much
- Not at all

Total

Jewish Americans

Adult Americans
Emotional Impact of War

Both engaged and non-engaged Jews are emotionally impacted by the war.

How much, if at all, is the news about the war between Israel and Hamas emotionally affecting you?

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- Not much/Not at all

Not engaged

Engaged
Personal Connections to Israelis

60% of the Jewish community is personally connected to someone who has been hurt, killed or displaced.

Do you personally know someone who has been killed, hurt, or displaced because of this conflict?
- I personally know someone
- I have friends who know someone
- Friends of friends know someone
- I do not have personal connections to victims

Jewish Americans

Adult Americans

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Jewish Life/Engagement
Interest Areas

Three main areas of interest among the Jewish community are discussing antisemitism, Israel advocacy, and Interfaith/Intercultural conversations. They are much less interested in spirituality and socializing than in recent studies in non-crisis times.

What kind of programming would you be most interested in at the current time (choose up to 4)?
Increased Local Opportunities - Jewish

Jewish Americans are looking for opportunities for learning, expertise, and stories about Israelis in addition to wanting increased security locally.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas started, would you want more of any of the following opportunities in your community or area? Please select all that apply.

- More educational and informational opportunities on the history of the situation
- Opportunities to hear from credible experts on the subject
- Stories from Israelis
- Increased security at local institutions
- Safe/Brave community spaces
- Stories from Palestinians
- Opportunities to gather with community
- Psychoeducation or psychosocial support
- Counseling
- Other
- I don’t really feel like I need any of these things right now
Increased Local Opportunities – All Americans

While less interested overall, non-Jewish respondents also want educational opportunities.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas started, would you want more of any of the following opportunities in your community or area? Please select all that apply.

- More educational and informational opportunities on the history of the...:
- Opportunities to hear from credible experts on the subject:
- Stories from Israelis:
- Increased security at local institutions:
- Safe/Brave community spaces:
- Stories from Palestinians:
- Opportunities to gather with community:
- Psychoeducation or psychosocial support:
- Counseling:
- Other:
- I don't really feel like I need any of these things right now:
Thank You!