



The Knesset
Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee

Jerusalem, 24 October 2023
10 Heshvan 5784

His Excellency António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

It is with a profound sense of shock that I write to you following your "small introduction" to the United Nations Security Council. After hearing your remarks, I am convinced it would have been best had you said nothing at all.

As you are aware, we in Israel are still attempting to identify and bury our dead as well as working to return our children, women, and civilians from Hamas captivity. Israeli children struggle to fall asleep at night due to fears they will be ruthlessly murdered in their beds by Hamas terrorists. The international community, the citizens of Israel, and the families of the captives looked to you for a message of hope. Unfortunately, they heard a statement providing justifications for terrorism and the deaths of innocent civilians.

Mr. Secretary-General, you opened by saying that "nothing can justify the deliberate killing, injuring and kidnapping of civilians." However, you then did an about-face and added that the "attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum." Statements of this kind legitimize murderers, rapists, and terrorists around the world—rendering your condemnations null and void.

There can be absolutely no justification for terrorism. It should be clear by now that Hamas' sole objective is the destruction of Israel and that it will stop at nothing, including the cynical exploitation of their own civilians as human shields, to achieve it. The nature of the terrorist threat requires forceful and unequivocal condemnation, sending a message to the world that these acts of barbarism and inhumanity will not be tolerated.

There will never be justification for the brutal atrocities committed by Hamas. Unfortunately, this defense of terrorism is just one of many that we have heard in the annals of the United Nations. Words play an important role in shaping the regional and international landscape. It is therefore regrettable that your words not only failed to provide moral clarity at such a critical moment, but have likely fanned the flames of hatred in the region and around the world.

Sincerely,

MK Yuli Yoel Edelstein
Chair, Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee