

“Congressman Meeks: Let me acknowledge the fear and suffering of the people of Israel right now. A Rabbi in my Congressional District spoke of how his family these last days has been in a shelter because of Hamas’ rockets. Hamas is committing a terrorist attack and war crimes trying to hide behind civilians. It is a war crime. I am in daily contact with the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC.”

intends to be here for a long time), I have an unwavering commitment to both the sovereignty and security of Israel as a Jewish State. With sovereignty and security comes the inherent right of self-defense, a right that every state, including our own, takes for granted. Why should Israel be an exception to the rule? Why should Israel be held to a deadly double standard in a moment of terror?

It is unreasonable to expect a nation state to be the passive target of hundreds of rockets and then forfeit the right to defend itself amid a constant stream of terror. No right minded person would impose that kind of self-destructive burden on any other country.

What is under siege is not only Israel. What is under siege is the truth itself. Circulating on social media is a vicious lie - a lie that deceptively reframes the terrorism of Hamas as self-defense and deceptively reframes the self-defense of Israel as terrorism. Increasingly, we seem to live in an Orwellian universe where the truth no longer matters.

Now is not the time to be silent. All of us, especially those holding elected office, have to be visible and vocal - fearless and forceful - in standing up for our greatest friend in the Middle East.

Support for Israel, especially in moments like these, is not for the faint-hearted. The moment I sent out a statement denouncing the terrorism of Hamas, I was swiftly demonized by extremists as a white supremacist, as a supporter of apartheid/ethnic cleansing/genocide. Although these comments cause great pain to my loved ones, I remain as determined as ever to speak out. And if I can speak out, then anyone can. And everyone must.

We cannot allow ourselves to be silenced by an overbearing Twitter mob, dominated by the extremes of American politics. If we, in elected office, are not willing to say and do what is right, then we are unworthy of the office we hold.

I am here to state, in clearest possible terms, that I stand with Israel because doing so, quite simply, is the right thing to do.

Congressman Gregory Meeks, 15th CD, Southeast Queens, Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee:

Let me acknowledge the fear and suffering of the people of Israel right now. A Rabbi in my Congressional District spoke of how his family these last days has been in a shelter because of Hamas’ rockets. Hamas is committing a terrorist attack and war crimes trying to hide behind civilians. It is a war crime. I am in daily contact with the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC to ask what we can do as members of Congress and if additional material must be sent to ensure they can protect themselves. I applaud Israel for sending drones over the Palestinian people to warn them that they have the ability to bomb, and will bomb, but only after people are out of targeted buildings. This is showing great restraint. I and members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee stand strongly with you through your time of suffering and fear and you have my support. I hope we can find peace and a cessation of violence in short order. We stand

in solidarity with you.

Zahava Tesfay, The Jewish Agency for Israel:

My family and I are refugees from Ethiopia and now Israeli citizens. During these last days my family has been running to shelters, shivering and praying as they heard the explosions. Every alarm can mean running up and down 4 flights of stairs. My family has not slept for 3 days. How can they explain the sirens to their two and three year old daughters as they experience anxiety attacks? I cannot shake the image of fathers holding their newborn babies in hospitals during these attacks knowing the reality of the first sounds imprinted in those babies’ ears is the sound of sirens. Jews and Arabs are standing together in these hospitals. Israel should not live under terror. Our homes should not be the frontlines.

Rabbi **Menachem Creditor** recited the Prayer for Peace in English and Hebrew and Cantor **Azi Schwartz** sang the Jewish song for peace to conclude the Zoom Rally.



From left: **Eric Goldstein**, CEO, UJA-Federation of NY. Photo: Event official video. **Congressman Ritchie Torres**, 15th Congressional District. Photo: Event official video. **Congressman Gregory Meeks**, 5th Congressional District. Photo: Event official video. **Zaharia Tesfay**, The Jewish Agency for Israel. Photo: Event official video.