

Dear Dean Gerken,

As alumni of Yale Law School, we write to express profound concern about the environment at the law school in light of the terrorist organization Hamas's recent massacre targeting Israeli civilians.

In the immediate aftermath of the October 7, 2023 atrocities in Israel—the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust, a day of unfathomable cruelty, including the slaughter and torture of families, the brutal rape of women and girls, and the burning of babies—the Yale Law School chapter of the National Lawyers Guild endorsed and released the organization's national statement “emphasiz[ing] the legitimacy of the right of the Palestinian people to resist illegal military occupation, apartheid and ethnic cleansing” and “urg[ing] public recognition of the right to resist unlawful occupation ‘by all available means, including armed struggle.’” By October 8, 2023, the Yale Law School chapters of the National Lawyers Guild and Law Students for Justice in Palestine also endorsed a rally to “show solidarity with Palestinians in their struggle for liberation, after more than seven decades of struggle against Israeli apartheid and ethnic cleansing” and that featured “speakers who will speak about Israeli crimes against humanity, apartheid, [and] ethnic cleansing.”

Additionally, individual students at Yale Law School sent messages that said, in part:

- “This week’s events were not unprovoked; they are a direct result of Israel’s apartheid regime. The root cause of this violence is Israel’s illegal and violent military occupation, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing of Palestine.”
- “Expecting Palestinians to peacefully respond to unspeakable war crimes and illegal collective punishment they’ve experienced at the hands of Israel is laughable. . . . We shouldn’t only start to care because it’s now affecting Jewish folks.”
- In response to an email about a vigil for the victims of October 7, 2023: “You want Palestinians to suffer in silence and accept decades of oppression, injustice, and ethnic cleansing? You are part of the problem fr [for real].”

We assume that you and the entire faculty agree that those comments are abhorrent. They also reflect a shocking lack of understanding about war crimes and human rights, particularly for law students.

Unfortunately, these comments are only the tip of the iceberg. To date, no student group other than the Jewish Law Students Association has been willing to publicly condemn Hamas or its barbaric attacks. There was little to no pushback in public comments from other students in response to the hateful, insensitive, and mocking messages Jewish students received after expressing their shock and hurt at the community’s silence regarding Hamas’s brutal massacre. The law school has not yet hosted a school-wide event or any other formal programming on Hamas’s gratuitous violations of human rights

and international law, nor programming to address attitudes towards Jews and Israel that produce indifference or even celebration when defenseless Jews and Israelis, including babies, children, the disabled, and the elderly, are murdered, brutalized, and kidnapped from their homes and a music festival.

Even more unfathomably, the Orville H. Schell Jr. Center for International Human Rights at Yale Law School (“Schell Center”) is declining to sponsor an event on the October 7, 2023 massacre, despite multiple student requests. Students have received various justifications for this unwillingness, including that the Schell Center feels that doing an event on these horrors is “more complex” than those “hurt so directly” by Hamas’s attacks realize. The Schell Center’s unwillingness is particularly jarring considering that just last year, it sponsored an [event](#) that was *entirely* about “Israel’s apartheid.”

In this environment, it is little wonder that the Jewish Law Students Association was initially hesitant to make a public statement for fear of backlash and reprisal. At the same time, it is simply impossible to imagine that any other affinity group experiencing a tragedy of this scale, particularly one marked by such depravity, would feel afraid to do so at Yale Law School.

To that end, we are also concerned that the lack of empathy on display is a signal of a broader problem at Yale Law School. Individuals who insist Israel is a colonial-oppressor at times have resorted to publicly shaming and harassing their peers. Some of us experienced similar problems as students. We are deeply concerned that Yale Law School has not taken satisfactory steps to protect Jewish students, particularly those with connections to Israel. Moreover, as we witness increasingly aggressive hostility towards Jewish students at campuses across the country, including at Cooper Union where Jewish students had to be locked in a library to protect them against an angry crowd pounding on the doors, our fears about adequate safety are only heightened.

Nothing about Yale Law School’s appropriate commitment to the principles of free speech relieves it of its obligation to educate students, particularly when they are under the misimpression that the atrocities and war crimes committed on October 7, 2023 are justifiable or that Jewish students who expressed sadness and concern should be mocked and belittled. And when such statements are considered acceptable by the student body generally, the law school has a responsibility to take more significant measures.

At a minimum, those changes should include:

- Implementing a zero-tolerance policy toward antisemitic threats or harassment that reflects the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (“IHRA”) definition of antisemitism, including threats or harassment against students for expressing Zionist or pro-Israel opinions.
- Reporting student endorsements of terrorism to state bar committees on character and fitness.

- Launching a thorough, transparent investigation and report on antisemitism and the state of Jewish belonging at Yale Law School.
- Providing regular updates from the administration on Yale Law School's progress in combating antisemitic and anti-Zionist hostility on campus.

The failure to make these and other changes swiftly and substantially would be a betrayal of the law school's history and values, as well as of the Jewish community. This climate—and what the administration does or does not do—will undoubtedly cause many alumni, of all religions and political views, to think hard about their continuing connection to Yale Law School.

We are currently circulating this letter to the broader community of alumni and to others interested in the state of Jewish life at Yale.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together to ensure a better Yale Law School.

1. Emily Shire, Law School '20
2. Tamar Holoshitz, Law School '16
3. Emmett Gilles, Law School '20
4. Jordan Hirsch, Law School, 2016
5. Dana Gibber, Law School '13
6. Noah Greenfield, Law School '16
7. Miriam Rosenbaum, Law School '17
8. Debra Fine, Yale College '81
9. Yiftach Yarmar, School of Management '25
10. Shua Mermelstein, Law School '20
11. Rebecca Claire Brooks, Law School '22
12. Rani Cohen, School of Management '91
13. Yishai Schwartz, Law School '18
14. David A. Schwartz, Law School '95
15. Carey Lines, '82 Yale College
16. Ezra Husney, Law School '21
17. Mike Bender, Yale College '96
18. Dorian Barak, Law School '02
19. Brian Weinstein, Law School '97
20. Marshall Huebner, Law School '93
21. Dina Gerber Huebner, Law School '91
22. Lauren Nathan, Law School '20
23. Robin Rotman, Law School '09
24. Danielle Gentin Stock, Law School '99, Yale College '95

25. Chris Michel, Law School '13, Yale College '03
26. Lawrence Burian, Law School '94
27. Reyna Marder Gentin, Law School '91, Yale College '88
28. Laura I. Appleman, Law School '98
29. Ronnie F. Heyman, Law School '72
30. Peter Burke, Law School '91
31. Dvora Toren, Law School '16
32. Carl Liederman, Law School '91
33. Daniel S. Alter, Law School '91
34. Benjamin Silver, Law School '21
35. Janine Cohen, Law School '99
36. Carter Greenbaum, Law School '16
37. Leigh Schachter, Law School '93
38. Dr. Lisa Wisotsky, Yale College '86
39. Stacey Rosenzweig, Medical School '92
40. Amir H. Raubvogel, Law School '91
41. Hilary Albrecht, Law School '16
42. Norris Nissim, Yale College '88
43. Shara P. Israel (Parent)
44. Jonathan Zasloff, Law School '93, College '87
45. Steven Chiodini, Law School '99
46. Sheon Karol, Law School '82
47. Max Huntsman, Law School '91
48. Peter Deutsch, Law School '82
49. Jeremy Feit, Law School '00
50. Shira Wolosky, English Department Faculty '80-'85
51. Yehudah Mirsky, Law School '86
52. Dr. Ann Olivarius KC (Hon) OBE, Law School '86, School of Management '86;  
Yale College '77
53. Jessica Levin, Law School '91
54. Madison Rinder, Law School '26
55. David Mirchin, Yale College '79
56. Gabe Rosenberg, Law School '09
57. Daniel Feith, Law School '12
58. Noah Simmons, Law School '15
59. Yonat Ben-Ozer, Law School '22
60. Julie Sohnen, Law School '25
61. Brett Cohen, Law School '97
62. Daniel Maggen, Law School '13 (LLM), '20 (JSD)
63. David M. Goldstein, Law School '89
64. Carice Witte, Yale College '83
65. Esther Levy, Divinity School '25
66. Alex Ozar, GSAS '22
67. Michael Klein, School of Management '23
68. Yakir Forman, GSAS '22
69. David Schlusel, Yale College '80

70. Grant W. Gabriel, Law School '21, Yale College '17
71. Clifford M. J. Felig, Yale College '82
72. Jacob Rosenbaum, GSAS '24
73. Dr. David Wolfsohn, School of Medicine (Faculty)
74. Dr. Ben Freiberg, Yale New Haven Hospital Fellow
75. Sarah Beck, Yale College '99
76. Evan Risch, Yale College '18
77. Rena Donin Schluskel (Parent)
78. Bill Schnoor, Law School '83, Yale College '80
79. Yossi Moff, Yale College '27
80. Jack Wenik, Law School '85
81. Andrew N. Koss, Yale College '02
82. Martin Krall, Law School '65
83. Ephraim Helfgot, Yale College '27
84. Mitch Webber, Yale College '03
85. Bill Garland, Yale College '80
86. Issar Birger, Law School '15 (JSD)
87. Michael Slomovics, Law School '21
88. David Michaels, Jackson School of Global Affairs
89. Seffi Kogen, School of Management '23
90. Michael B. Mukasey, Law School '67
91. Yarone Tokayer, GSAS '27
92. Harvey Risch, MD, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Yale School of Public Health
93. John D. Menke, Law School '67
94. Avi Sutton, Law School '13, Yale College '10
95. Danya Perry, Law School '96
96. Stephen Juris, Law School '98
97. Arthur R. Hessel, Law School '67
98. Max Karpel, Yale College '96
99. Terry Philip Segal, Law School '67
100. Andrew G. Brucker, Law School '67
101. Gregory S. Chernack, Law School '98
102. Mark Trachtenberg, Law School '98
103. Jacob W. Buchdahl, Law School '97, Yale College '94
104. Sarah Golabek-Goldman, Law School '16
105. Toby Hecht, Director of Shabtai
106. Richard I. Wideman, Law School '67
107. Joe Lieberman, Law School '67
108. Hillel Sommer, Law School '89 (LLM), '94 (JSD)
109. J. H. Chajes, PhD GSAS '99
110. Matthew Mausner, Yale College '96
111. Alisa Rubin, Yale College '87
112. Joan Hartman, Law School '83
113. Adam Hirst, Yale College
114. Lee V. Kaplan, Yale College '81
115. Abe Mezrich, Yale College '98

116. Philip Hahn, Law School '67
117. Lisa Hershman (nee Friedman), Yale College '99
118. Yaron Luk-Zilberman, Yale College, GSAS
119. Devra Wolfe Lehmann, Yale College '86
120. Michele Golabek-Goldman, Law School '14
121. William R. Cohen, Law School '59
122. Hershel Safer, Yale College '81
123. Rachel Yaffa Zisk-Rony, Yale School of Nursing '06 (Post-Doctoral Fellow)
124. Rebecca Schlussel, Yale College '13
125. Phillip Waldoks, Yale College '73
126. Gabriel Motzkin, GSAS '73
127. Donald Birtley Brant, Jr., Law School '67
128. Yan Ross, Law School '67
129. Jon Landy, Law School '98
130. Ira Moskowitz, Yale College '78
131. Professor Emeritus Amos Shapira Tel-Aviv University Faculty of Law, Law School '68 (JSD)
132. Alfred Lambremont Webre, Law School '67, Yale College '64
133. Philip M. Halperin, School of Management '82, Yale College '74
134. Elizabeth Breit, Yale College '10
135. Richard Buckley, Yale College '80
136. Caroline Fox, Law School '99
137. Avital Rosenfeld, Law School '24