

# **ISRAEL AND GAZA:**

## **A RESOURCE GUIDE TO THE CURRENT CONFLICT**

**JANUARY, 2009**



ISRAEL ON CAMPUS COALITION

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# INTRODUCTION

January, 2009

Dear Students and Campus Professionals,

Given the difficult events taking place in and around Israel, it is critical that we work together to prepare for the various scenarios we will see as students return to campus. Time is of the essence – and **the time to begin building proactive plans for Israel engagement on your campus is now**. Students, academics, administrators and other community stakeholders will be looking to us for leadership on campus in supporting Israel, and helping to understand and process what is taking place.

Together, we are steadfastly committed to the support of Israel. **Israel needs this support now, and students need resources, educational and engagement opportunities, and advocacy tools**. We are here for you in whatever capacity you need us -- to help formulate campus strategy, and help work constructively with other community organizations.

Given the events in Gaza, it's critical for you to:

- **Plan Proactively...**

It's essential to *build plans at the start of the semester to proactively engage students in Israel education, advocacy and shows of solidarity*. We can help with programming and engagement ideas, and links to other resources and ideas can be found below. Now is the time to establish proactive plans to strategically build the Israel environment you want to see on your campus.

- **Develop Your Message...**

In difficult times, it's vital to develop a consistent message when discussing the events of the past week with university stakeholders, the media and others. Links to sample talking points appear below; common messaging threads include:

- The current conflict is defensive in nature, as Israel is responding to thousands of rocket attacks;
- Israel is going to great lengths to avoid civilian casualties wherever possible, and Israel continues to do everything possible to provide for humanitarian needs in Gaza;
- Israel has an obligation to defend its citizens;
- Israel, and indeed all of us, desperately want peace; and
- The loss of Palestinian civilian lives is deeply regrettable, and we of course mourn innocent civilians on both sides who have lost their lives.

- **Talk It Through...**

Use the first days of your spring quarter or semester to *gather pro-Israel student leaders together*, and hear their concerns surrounding the conflict; discuss how they want to engage their peers on campus; and gauge the mood of your campus at the start of

classes. Many students will undoubtedly want and need to process what has happened and discuss and better understand this situation, so *organizing student discussions in a safe space* can serve an invaluable function. Be sure to *connect with Muslim students* with whom you have an open dialogue.

- **Talk to Your University Administration...**

Use this opportunity to reach out and *connect with university administrators*, if you have not already, and let them know what your plans are – and what your concerns are vis-a-vis campus.

- **Educate, Advocate and Show Solidarity...**

Plan now to *educate students and the entire campus community about what is now taking place in and around Israel*. Ask scholars on your campus to speak at teach-ins and other forums; bring [subsidized Israeli scholars to your campus](#) through the ICC; bring Hillel's "[talkspace: Israel](#)" program to your campus, including a [specialized "Israel As We See It" unit](#) that focuses on the current conflict; and use other excellent resources from [Makom together with Haaretz](#) as well. Similarly use this time to work with students to plan *shows of solidarity with Israel*, ranging from posters and flyers on campus to vigils and ads in campus press. Be sure to *utilize students returning from Israel* (from Taglit-Birthright Israel and alternative breaks) and those who are now in Israel (on study abroad and other programs) to share their eye-witness experiences, write op-eds and talk to their peers. Also use this time to plan *advocacy campaigns on behalf of Israel*, including directly contacting decisionmakers to encourage support for Israel at this difficult time; [AIPAC has excellent resources](#) to help engage in such a campaign.

- **Be Mindful of Security Concerns...**

The safety and security of students on campus is of course paramount, and protests and other situations on campus can of course raise an array of security concerns. In addition to reaching out to campus police and campus security at the start of the semester to discuss any unique security needs given the current conflict, very helpful resources regarding building security are available from [a special section of the Anti-Defamation League's web site](#) and the [Secure Community Network \(SCN\)](#) as well.

Below, please find a selection of links to resources from a range of ICC member organizations. As you are planning events on your campus regarding this issue, please share event information and promotional materials with Tamara Sharon at the ICC ([tsharon@israelcc.org](mailto:tsharon@israelcc.org)). Do not hesitate to be in touch with us with questions or if you need resources of any kind.

Very best regards,



David A. Harris  
Executive Director, ICC

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The Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC) is a partnership of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, in cooperation with a network of national organizations committed to promoting Israel education and advocacy on campus. The more than 30 diverse Jewish agencies participating in the ICC are dedicated to working collaboratively to assist students in fostering support for Israel on college campuses across North America.

# ONLINE RESOURCES

## Israel on Campus Coalition and Hillel Resources (click each item to view):

- [ICC Resource Listing](#)
- [ICC Israel Advocacy Grants](#)
- [Greeks for Israel: A Resource Guide](#)
- [Hillel's "Israel As We See It" Facilitated Gaza Discussion Program](#)

## Information from the Government of Israel (click to view):

- [Embassy of Israel Information](#)
- [Sign Up to Receive Daily Updates from the Embassy of Israel](#)
- [Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson](#)
- [Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson YouTube Channel](#)

## Background Information Regarding the Current Crisis, Gaza and Hamas (click to view):

- [Aish HaTorah / Hasbara Fellowships](#)
- [American Israel Public Affairs Committee \(AIPAC\)](#)
- [AIPAC Background on the Hamas Charter \(PDF\)](#)
- [American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise / Jewish Virtual Library](#)
- [American Jewish Committee Informational Videos](#)
- [Americans for Peace Now](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [ADL Background on Hamas](#)
- [CAMERA](#)
- [Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations](#)
- [Conference of Presidents' Daily Alert](#) (subscribe in top left corner)
- [The David Project](#)
- [The Israel Project](#)
- [StandWithUs](#)
- [USD - Hagshama](#)

## Talking Points (click to view):

- [The Israel Project's](#) excellent messaging guide is not available online; please contact Tamara Sharon at the ICC ([tsharon@israelcc.org](mailto:tsharon@israelcc.org), 202-449-6598) to receive copies
- [Jewish Council for Public Affairs](#) (PDF)
- [StandWithUs](#)

## Speakers (click to view):

- [ICC Traveling Israel Scholar Program](#)
- [Other Speakers from the ICC](#)
- [Jewish National Fund Speakers Bureau](#)

**Advocacy Campaigns (click to view):**

- [AIPAC: Thank Members of Congress for Supporting Israel](#)
- [Hillel "Support Israel" Petition](#)
- [HelpUsWin](#)
- [The David Project's Action Center](#)

**Public Relations Materials (click to view):**

- [Ads4Israel](#)
- [Aish HaTorah / Hasbara Fellowships](#)
- [Anti-Defamation League](#)
- [BlueStarPR](#)
- [StandWithUs Israel Icon Campaign](#)
- [StandWithUs Signs](#)
- [StandWithUs Handout](#) (PDF)
- [USD - Hagshama](#)

**Philanthropic Engagement Opportunities (click to view):**

- [JNF's Emergency Campaign for Southern Israel](#)
- [JNF's Sderot Campus Campaign](#) (PDF)
- ["Save a Child's Heart" on Campus](#)

**Partner Organization Statements (click on title to view):**

- Anti-Defamation League: [Israel's Retaliation on Hamas a Fundamental Right](#)
- American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC): [AIPAC Urges Congress and Administration to Support Israel's Right to Self Defense](#)
- American Jewish Committee: [AJC Strongly Supports Israeli Strikes on Hamas Military Targets](#)
- American Jewish Congress: [AJCongress: Israeli Defensive Measures in Gaza Strip Lawful, Moral and Necessary](#)
- Americans for Peace Now: [Supporting Israel Means Seeking a Ceasefire, Now](#)
- Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations: [Conference of Presidents Supports Israeli Action to Protect Its Citizens](#)
- Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life: [Hillel Endorses JCPA Support for Israel](#)
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs: [JCPA Supports Israel's Efforts to Stop Gaza Rocket Attacks](#)
- Orthodox Union: [OU Supports Israel's Self-Defense Actions in Gaza](#)
- Union of Reform Judaism: [Reform Jewish Movement Responds to Gaza Violence](#)
- StandWithUs: [StandWithUs Statement of Support for Israel](#)
- The Israel Project: [Israel Defends Citizens From Hamas](#)
- United Jewish Communities: [UJC/Federation System Responds to Gaza Situation](#)
- United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism: [Our Hopes for Peace and Safety in a Time of War](#)
- Simon Wiesenthal Center: [World's Silence Empowered Hamas' Terrorism; No UN Member Would Act Differently Than Israel](#)

# STUDENT INITIATIVES

There is a wide array of initiatives that students can lead to help support Israel during this difficult time; below is just a sampling of ideas regarding how students can engage their peers surrounding Israel.

## **Build Relationships with Campus Influentials and Key University Stakeholders**

Pro-Israel student activists can develop relationships with a variety of campus leaders – ranging from political leadership (i.e., College Democrats and College Republicans) to presidents of student groups and student government members – to build rapport and to convey the importance of establishing pro-Israel activity on campus.

**What You Can Do:** You can begin building positive relationships with influential students on campus by setting up personal meetings with them to discuss their questions and concerns about the current situation in Israel and the broader Middle East. This provides a platform to discuss their support for Israel and pro-Israel sentiment at your school.

## **Circulate a Petition in Support of Israel**

Pro-Israel petitions are a meaningful engagement tool, giving activists an opportunity to discuss Israel – and the need for Israel studies opportunities – with their peers. Petitions can convey campus-wide support for a specific cause.

**What You Can Do:** Craft a petition with language that resonates with the broadest range of students on your campus ([Hillel's petition can serve as a model](#)) and collect signatures from fellow students, faculty, administrators, etc. Once you receive the desired number of signatures, you can publish this as a full-page advertisement in your school newspaper. In addition, you can present the petition to key campus stakeholders (i.e., administration officials and faculty) and community leaders. You can also coordinate a petition campaign with other surrounding schools in your area and can jointly present the resulting petition to administrators requesting that they make a statement in support of Israel.

## **Collect Statements of Support from Campus Leaders**

Similar to petition campaigns, expressed support from campus leadership often helps drive university administrations to look seriously at specific issues. Using previously developed relationships with campus leaders, pro-Israel students can ask that they issue a statement in support of Israel and her right to defend herself and her citizens.

**What You Can Do:** You can leverage pre-established relationships with key student government legislators and political and social leaders on your campus to discuss and to convey the importance of both Israel's contributions to the world and her right to self-defense. You can then ask that they issue a statement in support of Israel's actions.

### **Pass a Student Government Resolution in Support of Israel**

Student government resolutions are policy statements that reflect specific positions on issues or that call for a university policy change. In past years, many student governments have passed pro-Israel resolutions reflecting ongoing support for Israel.

**What You Can Do:** Writing a resolution and sharing it with key student government contacts can help push through legislation that calls on university administrations to support Israel. If passed, the student government resolution can be presented – along with a campus-wide petition – to the administration in order to convey widespread campus support for Israel and investment in Israel.

### **Invite an ICC Traveling Israel Scholar to Your Campus**

As part of the *Israel in Academia* initiative, the ICC will work with students and campus professionals to send **high-caliber visiting Israeli scholars** – on leave from their Israeli universities for a semester or a full year – to travel from their temporary U.S. universities to other American universities for several days at a time to teach in classrooms, provide guest lectures and address the campus community. The ICC invites students and campus professionals to take advantage of this unique opportunity to invite high-caliber Israel scholars to speak on your campus for only \$250.

**What You Can Do:** Hosting a high-caliber Israel Scholar for an intensive day of speaking engagements on your campus is a great way to tangibly increase the exposure students have to the various facets of Israel. You can contact the ICC to learn more about this fantastic program and to submit an application by sending an email to [asorin@israelcc.org](mailto:asorin@israelcc.org). More information about hosting an Israel scholar through the ICC's Traveling Israel Scholars program is available on [the ICC's website](#).

### **Create an Israel-Focused Speakers' Forum**

As events in Israel and Gaza continue to be a focus of international attention, students are increasingly interested in hearing from experts on the region. Creating a lecture forum for speakers from varying perspectives and with diverse areas of expertise can afford students an opportunity to learn about the Arab-Israeli conflict from experts in the field.

**What You Can Do:** Aside from hosting a Traveling Israel Scholar, there are many ICC organizations that can help you bring high-level experts to speak on your campus. Based on these resources, you can create a semester or year-long speakers' forum that features community and national experts from a variety of political perspectives to share their expertise on current events in Israel and the Middle East. These events can target a broad cross-section of your campus' most influential student leaders.

### **Create a Pro-Israel Film Series**

Israel has a vibrant film industry that has grown in the past five years. Many of Israel's most interesting films promote varying political opinions and can provide context about the current realities of life in Israel. Creating a film series can be an excellent way to educate about Israel outside of the classroom.

**What You Can Do:** You can organize an ongoing film series featuring some of Israel's most recent and popular films. Students can also make a film series more attractive by inviting a film's director, producer or actors to introduce the film and

take questions before and after the screening. In some cases, students have worked with faculty to make viewing a specific Israeli film a requirement for class. See [IsraeliFilms](#) for more information.

### **Engage and Involve Pro-Israel Faculty**

On every campus, there are faculty members in a variety of departments who are sympathetic to Israel but have not spoken out or offered their expertise to pro-Israel students. University faculty members are excellent resources and mentors for pro-Israel students on campus. By fostering relationships with pro-Israel faculty in varying departments, students can forge a broad-based faculty network that can help navigate university bureaucracy and demonstrate faculty support for increased Israel study opportunities.

**What You Can Do:** You can identify pro-Israel faculty members, meet with them and discuss the need for increased Israel programs on campus. You can leverage these relationships to ask that faculty serve as key advisors in the effort to establish more favorable Israel attitudes on campus. Faculty can help students navigate the university system in order to effectively engage key administrators.

### **Write Op-Ed Pieces for Your Campus Paper in Support of Israel**

The op-ed page is one of the most commonly read sections of campus newspapers. This section often gauges the pulse of the university regarding certain important issues. Writing an op-ed for your campus paper can ensure that your message is communicated to the broad campus community.

**What You Can Do:** You can develop an initiative where students write op-eds in support of Israel, or increased Israel studies at your school, and submit them to the campus newspaper (view example op-eds from [UCLA's Daily Bruin](#) and [The Harvard Crimson](#)). These op-eds should be factual, sourced and checked for correct spelling and grammar. You can choose to work with local and national pro-Israel organizations to learn more about various Israel-related issues in order to convey an effective message.

### **Participate in Extracurricular Educational Initiatives**

Several ICC organizations such as Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life and Aish Ha Torah/Hasbara Fellowships have created educational curriculum addressing challenging issues in Israel's history through the present. These curricula have been used in student-led discussion forums outside of class. The first of such initiatives was created by Hillel, and is called "[talkspace: Israel.](#)" Since the launch of the pilot program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 2006, the demand for similar educational programs has grown exponentially. The model for these programs has typically consisted of a 10-week discussion forum that encourages undergraduates, graduates and faculty to think deeply about Israel and its relationship to their Jewish identity using a variety of diverse sources. The goal of these sessions is to create an opportunity for meaningful and thoughtful conversation by providing a "safe-space" where participants can explore their relationship to Israel.

**What You Can Do:** You can contact Hillel or download and use the "[Israel As We See It](#)" [facilitated Gaza discussion program](#); Hillel and other organizations can provide you with the resources you need to start a discussion group on your campus. Likewise, [Aish HaTorah's](#) "Israel by the Book" is also available. You can apply for funding for an initiative of this kind by reaching out to the appropriate organization.

### **Create an Israel Journal**

Student-initiated Israel journals have proliferated on campuses across the country in the last five years. Israel journals are an excellent way to create an opportunity for students to learn about Israel through an academic prism outside the classroom. Often, these journals contain scholarly articles submitted by faculty members and students and/or include previously published expert analysis and commentary. They have proven to be a fantastic mechanism to connect students and faculty to Israel through academic discourse on prevalent Israel-related issues.

**What You Can Do:** Create an Israel journal on your campus. Contact the ICC's Senior Associate for Student Leadership Development, Tracy Altman at [taltman@israelcc.org](mailto:taltman@israelcc.org) for more specific information, including options for potential funding of this project.

### **Seek Out a Leadership Position on Campus**

Student governments directly affect the entire student body through the decisions they make and implement, including the rules and regulations they establish for campus programming. Many student governments are also clearinghouses for pools of funding for student groups and student programs. Pro-Israel students can increase their involvement in student government through efforts to utilize campus resources (both human and financial) for Israel-related work on campus.

**What You Can Do:** You can work within student government in a variety of meaningful ways, including:

- developing relationships with candidates running for office;
- volunteering on campaigns of pro-Israel candidates;
- mobilizing fellow pro-Israel students to support and vote for pro-Israel candidates who will pass pro-Israel resolutions; and
- running for office yourself.

### **Bring a Member of Congress to Campus**

Pro-Israel activists can invite their members of Congress to discuss the relationship between the U.S. and Israel, their connection to Israel and why they support Israel with campus leaders. Visits from US Congressmen and Congresswomen can raise the profile of Israel within campus circles of leadership and can stress the importance of further opportunities to study about Israel as part of normative coursework.

**What You Can Do:** Contact your member of Congress' office to see when they will be available to speak on campus or when they are already in town. Hosting a member of Congress is FREE and they are often excited at the prospect of visiting universities in their districts.

### **Promote Student Travel to Israel**

ICC organizations sponsor and promote a variety of Israel travel opportunities for students – from [Taglit-Birthright Israel](#) trips, missions and short-term volunteer programs to long-term study experiences for a semester or year.

**What You Can Do:** Invite representatives from your school's Study Abroad department to talk about spending a semester or year in Israel, or ask the [MASA](#) intern on your campus to talk about the dozens of short and long-term programs available during and after college. Check out [www.birthrightisrael.com](http://www.birthrightisrael.com), [www.masaisrael.com](http://www.masaisrael.com), and your school's website for more information.

# ICC MEMBERS

(Click each organization's name to view more information)

[Aish HaTorah / Hasbara Fellowships](#)

[Alpha Epsilon Pi \(AEPi\)](#)

[Alpha Epsilon Phi \(AEPHi\)](#)

[American Israel Public Affairs Committee \(AIPAC\)](#)

[American Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#)

[The American Jewish Congress](#)

[American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise \(AICE\)](#)

[Americans for Peace Now \(APN\)](#)

[Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#)

[CAMERA](#)

[Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation](#)

[Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations](#)

[The David Project](#)

[Hillel - The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life](#)

[Israel Program Center](#)

[Israel University Consortium \(IUC\)](#)

[Jewish Council for Public Affairs \(JCPA\)](#)

[Jewish National Fund \(JNF\)](#)

[KESHER - Union for Reform Judaism \(URJ\)](#)

[KOACH - United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](#)

[Media Watch International \(MWI\)](#)

[Stand With Us](#)

[Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America \(OU\)](#)

[Union of Progressive Zionists \(UPZ\)](#)

[United Jewish Communities \(UJC\)](#)

[USD - Hagshama of the World Zionist Organization](#)

[Yavneh Olami](#)

[YJ Impact!, sponsored by Hadassah](#)

[Zionist Organization of America \(ZOA\)](#)

## **Affiliate Members**

[BlueStar PR](#)

[The Israel Project](#)

[MASA Israel Journey](#)

[Simon Wiesenthal Center Campus Outreach](#)