

# Responding to the Crisis in Israel and Gaza: Rabbi Debra Orenstein's Guide for College Students



First, breathe. Remember when love of Israel involved laughter, joy, blue and white cookies, and other delights, as in this photo. I encourage you to cling to your love for our homeland and to your joy - no matter how difficult or complicated life gets in Israel and the diaspora.

Caring, compassion, and inner tranquility will serve us better in creating security and peace than will anger, upset, blame, or a thirst for revenge. Never forget the ultimate goal, expressed in the prayer for Israel: “peace to the land and everlasting joy to its inhabitants.”

What follows are the following sections:

- **Historical Context Matters**
- **In Their Own Words: Selections from Founding Documents for Israel and Hamas**
- **7 Principles for How to Engage on Campus**
- **The Most Important Resources for You Now**

## Historical Context Matters

People will speak of “tit for tat” or “cycles of violence,” and thus obscure the differences between terrorism and the (painful, difficult, and sometimes no-win) responses to it. It is dangerous to draw false equivalencies between Israel and Hamas.

Hamas deliberately and proudly targets Israeli civilians, and school children in particular. Israel has deliberately and proudly attempted to protect civilian life, by sending messages through the radio, email, and texts, and even warning missiles, to alert residents that they should leave because of an impending strike against Hamas with a real missile. Hamas embedded itself in - and regularly fires rockets from - civilian neighborhoods and institutions. Even now, during the fog of war, Israel has expressed regret over every civilian casualty and worked with the American and Egyptian governments on opening a path out of Gaza for civilians and a path into Gaza for humanitarian supplies. Meanwhile, Hamas has reveled in killing babies and blocked the escape of civilians.

Israel invested in building an Iron Dome to protect its citizens. Hamas endangered Gazans by firing rockets from right next to schools and hospitals. In the words of Natan Sharansky, "While Israelis have developed missile shields to protect children, Hamas has been using children as shields to protect missiles." Hamas created bunkers for terrorists, but no protection for others.

We need to bear in mind, too, that Israel withdrew from Gaza entirely in 2005, to allow its self-governance. To achieve this, the Israeli government evicted over 9,000 Israeli citizens living in 25 settlements. The response from Gaza was to send missiles and rockets and to build “terror tunnels” in order to kill Israeli civilians and kidnap or kill Israeli soldiers. Hamas leaders have received billions in aid, yet everyday Palestinians live in poverty, with poor infrastructure. Cement that was sent by Israel to build houses was instead used to build underground terror tunnels. Electricity afforded by Israel became a tool for Hamas to make and send more missiles.

People who protest the right-wing government in Israel have crowded the streets in the hundreds of thousands during the past year, with peaceful protests and no government reprisals, because Israel is a democracy. Palestinian residents of Gaza who oppose Hamas or engage in with dialogue with Israel are routinely threatened and killed.

Israel’s enemy is not Palestinians. It is the terrorist organization and ideology of Hamas. Too often, people paint Israelis or Palestinians with one brush,

simplistically identifying one group as Self/Good and the other group as Other/Evil. I personally am reaching out to Palestinians and Muslims I know, to inch our way to better mutual understanding, to cry together over the loss of innocents, and to work for peace. I personally am supporting organizations that promote dialogue and collaboration among Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian Israelis (some of whom identify as Palestinians and some as Israeli Arabs or simply Israelis), as well as with Palestinian neighbors who are not citizens.

But I am also aware - and we need to address the issue - that many Palestinians, especially in Gaza, have been brought up on a diet of hate and lies about Israel, in addition to enduring bad conditions. According to [polling by the Washington Institute completed this past July](#), 57% of Gazans express at least a somewhat positive view of Hamas and only half agreed with the statement, "Hamas should stop calling for Israel's destruction."

Israel has been bitterly criticized for installing checkpoints, building a wall in the West Bank, and tightly controlling the Gaza border. These barriers interfere with innocent Palestinians moving quickly and freely across territories for work, family, or medical reasons. But they are also protections and deterrents. In the three years before the West Bank Wall was built, there were 73 suicide bombings. In the three years after, there were 12.

What should Israel do to protect its citizens and residents? What would any government do if the governing structure of a neighboring territory stormed a border, killed thousands of civilians, and kidnapped hundreds more? (Scaling for size and remembering that the recent assault happened on Shabbat and Simchat Torah, the equivalent percentage would have meant roughly 35,000 people dead in the United States from a Thanksgiving Day terrorist attack.)

Reasonable minds can differ. You know the old saying: two Jews, three opinions. Cantor Lenny Mandel and I, for example, have different takes. He is more hawkish on behalf of Israel, and I am more dovish. Each of us would be happy to talk to you about our perspectives, and to learn yours.

I believe it is possible for Israel help meet the humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza, improve infrastructure and social services for Palestinians in the West Bank, and punish any Israelis who target Palestinian civilians - all while simultaneously uprooting Hamas from its control of Gaza and from its place in civil society. Meeting all those goals at once will require a lot of tzedakah, diplomacy, and fortitude, in addition to military prowess. But that wider, longer-term focus on holding ourselves and others to account as neighbors is, to my

mind, more likely to end the war sooner, save Israeli soldiers, protect civilians, and enable peace than an immediate, fury-stoked plan to “flatten Gaza.”

Just as the Cantor and I (or even my family members and I!) don't always see eye-to-eye on the way forward for Israel, there is a great diversity of opinions among Israelis, too. Sadly, Israel, like the United States, is home to a small group of far-right radicals who would deny minorities their rights - including even the right to exist. But the overwhelming majority of Israel's population seeks peace, not domination, and various Israeli administrations have sought to make peace. (I believe that Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu has *not* been focused on making peace, and that is one reason I find him an inadequate and corrupt leader, who does not serve Israel's interests or Jewish values. I am concerned that his military response is influenced more by a desire to show “strength” and save his political career than by wise near- or long-term strategy.)

The State of Israel, under multiple governments, and even before its official founding in 1948, agreed to a partition plan, the exchange of land for peace (after victories in wars), and a two-state solution. Hamas has never acknowledged Israel's right to exist, much less agreed to live side-by-side, in peace. Their charter accuses Israel of wanting to conquer the entire Middle East and declares a holy war to rid Israel of Jews. The Palestinian Authority's official stance does not officially recognize Israel's right to exist, but internal messages and propaganda differ little from Hamas. (The leader of the PA also denies the Holocaust publicly on a regular basis.)

**Ultimately, the only true security for Israeli citizens, Gazans, and Palestinians on the West Bank is peace. Nothing else will suffice. Nothing else will stop the “cycle of violence.” We must keep our prayers, advocacy, tzedakah, dialogue, and politics focused on promoting and making peace.** Martyred Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who spent his life as a warrior and then as a diplomat negotiating for peace, famously said, “You don't make peace with friends. You make it with very unsavory enemies.” Eventually, we pray, Israel's enemies will turn into good neighbors and even into friends.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratalav taught, “Heaven help us, it is forbidden to despair.” Meaning, it is sorely tempting sometimes to give in to despair — but we must not. We waited for our dream of self-determination in the Land of Israel for 2,000 years. We cannot give up hope now on a free, democratic, and peaceful Jewish homeland that lives out the values of the Torah and prophets. The Jewish people has been through so much suffering — and so many miracles. Peace with Egypt came after the terrible losses of the Yom Kippur War. I can only pray that the horrors we have witnessed recently will provide the motivation, and Israel's plan

to eradicate Hamas' power in Gaza will provide the vacuum, to enable peace to break out in the Middle East. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, observed about Israel's unlikely successes: "In Israel, in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles."

## **In Their Own Words: Selections from Founding Documents for Israel and Hamas**

### **From Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948**

Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel, was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, immigrants [who defied British restrictions against Jewish immigration], and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood....

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations....

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it

will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The State of Israel is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

We appeal in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

We extend our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

### **From Hamas' Charter/Covenant in 1988 (with updates in 2017)**

**From the Preamble:** Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.

**From Article 2:** The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of Moslem Brotherhood in Palestine. Moslem Brotherhood Movement is a universal organization which constitutes the largest Islamic movement in modern times. It is characterized by its deep understanding, accurate comprehension and its complete embrace of all Islamic concepts of all aspects of life, culture, creed, politics, economics, education, society, justice and judgement, the spreading of Islam, education, art, information, science of the occult and conversion to Islam.

**From Article 6:** The Islamic Resistance Movement is a distinct Palestinian movement that is loyal to Allah, adopts Islam as a way of life and works to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine. Under the wing of Islam, followers of other religions can all live safe and secure in their life, property and rights; whereas in the absence of Islam, discord arises, injustice spreads, corruption burgeons, and there are conflicts and wars. Allah bless the Muslim poet Muhammad Iqbal who said: "When faith is gone, there is no safety,/And there is no life to him who has no religion./He who is content to live without religion/Has taken death as a consort of life."

**From Article 7:** The Islamic Resistance Movement is one link in the chain of jihad in confronting the Zionist invasion. It is connected and linked to the [courageous] uprising of the martyr 'Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam and his brethren the jihad fighters of the Muslim Brotherhood in the year 1936. It is further related and connected to another link, [namely] the jihad of the Palestinians, the efforts and jihad of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1948 war, and the jihad operations of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1968 and afterwards. Although these links are far apart, and although the continuity of jihad was interrupted by obstacles placed in the path of the jihad fighters by those who circle in the orbit of Zionism, the Islamic Resistance Movement aspires to realize the promise of Allah, no matter how long it takes. The Prophet, Allah's prayer and peace be upon him, says: "The hour of judgment shall not come until the Muslims fight the Jews and kill them, so that the Jews hide behind trees and stones, and each tree and stone will say: 'Oh Muslim, oh servant of Allah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him,' except for the Gharqad tree, for it is the tree of the Jews." (Recorded in the Hadith collections of Bukhari and Muslim).

**From Article 11:** The Islamic Resistance Movement maintains that the land of Palestine is *Waqf* land given as endowment for all generations of Muslims until the Day of Resurrection. One should not neglect it or [even] a part of it, nor should one relinquish it or [even] a part of it. No Arab state, or [even] all of the Arab states [together], have [the right] to do this; no king or president has this right nor all the kings and presidents together; no organization, or all the organizations together – be they Palestinian or Arab – [have the right to do this] because Palestine is Islamic *Waqf* land given to all generations of Muslims until the Day of Resurrection.

**From Article 13:** The initiatives, the so-called peace solutions, and the international conferences for resolving the Palestinian problem stand in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement, for to neglect any part of Palestine is to neglect part of the Islamic faith. The nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its [Islamic] faith. It is in the light of this principle that its members are educated, and they wage jihad in order to raise the banner of Allah over the homeland....There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are a waste of time and a farce. The Palestinian people is far too eminent to have its future, its rights and its destiny toyed with.

**From Article 15:** The day the enemies conquer some part of the Muslim land, jihad becomes a personal duty of every Muslim. In the face of the Jewish occupation of Palestine, it is necessary to raise the banner of jihad. This requires the propagation of Islamic consciousness among the masses, locally [in Palestine], in the Arab world and in the Islamic world. It is necessary to instill the

spirit of jihad in the nation, engage the enemies and join the ranks of the jihad fighters.

The indoctrination campaign must involve *ulama*, educators, teachers and information and media experts, as well as all intellectuals, especially the young people and the sheikhs of Islamic movements. It is [also] necessary to introduce essential changes in the curricula, in order to eliminate the influences of the intellectual invasion which were inflicted upon them by the Orientalists and the missionaries....

It is necessary to establish in the minds of all the Muslim generations that the Palestinian issue is a religious issue, and that it must be dealt with as such, for [Palestine] contains Islamic holy places, [namely] the Al-Aqsa mosque, which is inseparably connected, for as long as heaven and earth shall endure, to the holy mosque of Mecca through the Prophet's nocturnal journey [from the mosque of Mecca to the Al-Aqsa mosque] and through his ascension to heaven thence.

**From Article 22:** The enemies have been planning expertly and thoroughly for a long time in order to achieve what they have achieved, employing those means which affect the course of events. They strove to accumulate huge financial resources which they used to realize their dream.

With money they have taken control of the world media – news agencies, the press, publishing houses, broadcasting services, etc. With money they sparked revolutions in various countries around the world in order to serve their interests and to reap profits. They were behind the French Revolution and the Communist Revolution and [they are behind] most of the revolutions about which we hear from time to time here and there. With money they have formed secret organizations, all over the world, in order to destroy [those countries'] societies and to serve the Zionists' interests, such as the Freemasons, the Rotary Clubs, the Lions, the Sons of the Covenant (i.e. B'nei [sic] B'rith), etc. All of these are organizations of espionage and sabotage. With money they were able to take control of the colonialist countries, and [they] urged them to colonize many countries so that they could exploit their resources and spread moral corruption there.

There is no end to what can be said about [their involvement in] local wars and world wars. They were behind World War I, through which they achieved the destruction of the Islamic Caliphate, reaped material profits, took control of numerous resources, obtained the Balfour Declaration, and established the League of the United Nations [sic] so as to rule the world through this organization. They were [also] behind World War II, through which they reaped enormous profits from commerce in war materials and paved the way for the establishment of their state. They [also] suggested the formation of the United



Nations and the Security Council to replace the League of the United Nations [sic] and to rule the world through this [new organization]. Wherever there is war in the world, it is they who are pulling the strings behind the scenes.

**From Article 31:** The Islamic Resistance Movement is a humane movement which respects human rights and is committed to the Islamic tolerance towards the followers of the other religions. It is hostile only to those among them who display hostility towards it or stand in its way, hampering its activities and foiling its efforts. Under the wing of Islam, the followers of the three religions – Islam, Christianity, and Judaism – can co-exist in security and safety. It is only under the wing of Islam that safety and security prevail. Recent and ancient history provide the best evidence for this. The followers of the other religions should stop competing with Islam for sovereignty in this region, because, when they rule, there is nothing but carnage, torture and deportation, and they cannot get along with their own, let alone with followers of other religions. Both the present and the past are full of evidence for this.

**From Article 32:** World Zionism and the colonialist powers attempt, by clever maneuvering and meticulous planning, to pull the Arab states, one by one, out of the circle of the conflict with Zionism, so as to ultimately isolate the Palestinian people. It has already taken Egypt out of the circle of conflict to a large extent through the treacherous Camp David Accords [of September 1978], and it is trying to pull additional [Arab] countries into similar agreements so that they leave the circle of conflict.

The Islamic Resistance Movement calls upon all the Arab and Muslim peoples to strive seriously and diligently to prevent this horrible scheme, and to alert the masses to the danger inherent in leaving the circle of the conflict with Zionism. Today it is Palestine, and tomorrow some other country or countries, for the Zionist plan has no limits, and after Palestine they want to expand [their territory] from the Nile to the Euphrates, and when they finish devouring one area, they hunger for further expansion and so on, indefinitely. Their plan is expounded in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and their present [behavior] is the best proof for what we are saying.

Leaving the circle of the conflict with Zionism is an act of high treason; all those who do this shall be cursed. "Whoever [when fighting the infidels] turns his back to them, unless maneuvering for battle or intending to join another [fighting] company, he incurs Allah's wrath, and his abode shall be hell. Most unfortunate is his fate." (Koran, 8:16)

All forces and capabilities must be pooled to confront this ferocious Mongol, Nazi onslaught, lest homelands be lost, people be exiled, evil spread on the earth and all religious values be destroyed.

## Seven Principles for How to Engage with Israel on Campus



### 1. Put on your own rescue mask first.

- What do you know? What do you need to know?
- Seek information from reputable sources and multiple viewpoints. Get advice from someone knowledgeable whom you trust about which news outlets, blogs, parties or organizations you can look to for accurate and fair reporting. If you are not sure about a source, ask. No one source will give you the full picture; a varied media diet is healthy. Reputable English-language publications that will give you a range of views in the Israeli press include *Times of Israel* (centrist), *Haaretz* (left leaning), and *The Jerusalem Post* (right leaning).
- Avoid doom scrolling, getting into fruitless arguments online or in person, or other unhelpful behaviors.
- Sign up for the free, [5-Day Program from Tiny Habits](#). It's a small (in fact, very easy and tiny!) step you can take to add a positive habit and regular dose of self-care to your day.
- Seek the support you need - emotionally, politically, or otherwise. Please reach out to me, the Cantor, your campus rabbi (from Hillel, JLIC, or Chabad), and, of course, your parents.

### 2. Receive — and offer — empathy.

- Be compassionate with yourself and others during this difficult time.
- Again, reach out to your parents, your campus rabbis, or your CBI clergy for empathy and support.

- Gather with other Jewish students on campus to process what is happening.
- Call or WhatsApp friends and family in Israel to express your caring.
- If you have existing relationships or the opening to create new ones, let Muslim and Palestinian students know that you can understand how upset and worried they are. You might also let them know that you are praying for safety and peace for everyone in the region.

### 3. **Take breaks.**

- While community sustains us, each of us also needs some alone time, to decompress and process our own thoughts.
- Following the news is valuable, but turn your attention elsewhere for a while if you are getting anxious or depressed.
- Be selective about what you choose to watch. For example, there is no need to stay tuned while someone rants in a prejudiced manner. While it is important to keep informed about what is happening, watching footage of abductions or missile strikes is unlikely to serve you. Instead of watching or posting such videos, interact, live, with your community.

### 4. **Don't allow yourself to be put on the spot.**

- As a Jew, you are responsible for yourself and you have *areyvut*, a mutual connection with and responsibility to fellow Jews. I hope that you also have a deep love and appreciation for the Land of Israel. None of this makes you responsible for the Israeli government, its policies, or the wounding and death of Palestinian civilians in a time of war.
- You can choose to opt out of public conversations. It's OK to say, "This is very personal to me and very distressing. I am not ready to talk about it." Or, "I care deeply about Israel, but I feel I need to study the situation more before I can comment."
- You both can — and don't have to — offer your perspective and/or educate your classmates about the conflict and unfolding events.
- Educate yourself. Learn how misinformation and incomplete information are frequently used against Israel. Attend trainings and webinars by the Jewish organizations of your choice. Start with your local Hillel or the national [Israel on Campus Coalition](#).

- Speak respectfully and set an expectation that you, too, will be spoken to with respect - on this and every topic. Do not tolerate yelling, sarcasm, or name-calling.
- Think in advance of how you will disengage from a conversation or confrontation, should that become necessary. “You are raising points that I am not familiar with, and they don’t seem plausible to me. But I hear you, and I thank you for this conversation. I will reflect on what you said and do my own research.” Or, “I think this is getting too heated, and I don’t want to fight with you, so I am walking away.”

## 5. Coordinate support, education, and advocacy.

- Don’t go it alone!
- Reach out to rabbis and other trusted Jewish professionals. On campus, that means talking with your local Hillel, JLIC (Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus), Chabad, Koach (Conservative Judaism on Campus) or connecting with the national [Israel on Campus Coalition](#). Many campuses now offer [Kol Yisrael](#) (“a 6-week cohort learning program for students to explore big ideas and big questions with Israel as a real-world case study,” sponsored by Hillel).
- Gain exposure to different Jewish ideas and orientations: [ADL](#), [AIPAC on Campus](#), [JStreetU](#), [RAC \(Religious Action Center\)](#), [Kol Yisrael](#), [Zioness](#), etc. There are many Israel educational retreats, fellowships, informal classes, and trips for students to join. **November 5-7 will be the AIPAC Fall Political Student Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C.**
- Make safety a priority. Work with others to take a stand, and keep local and campus police informed of your plans.

## 6. Learn about anti-semitism and how it relates to anti-Israel sentiment.

- Not every criticism of Israel is anti-semitic. Jews in Israel oppose some governmental policies. But some criticism of Israel are anti-semitic. Consider Natan Sharansky’s three D’s that signal anti-semitism and anti-Israel bias:
  - **Demonization** - Is Israel falsely called an apartheid state or accused of genocide? Does Hamas say that Jews want to take over the entire Middle East? Is Zionism equated with Nazism or racism? These are examples of demonization.

- **Double Standards** - About 800,000 Jews living in Arab countries were expelled in the 20th century, but these are not counted as refugees, while Palestinians who lived under Jordanian and Egyptian rule from 1948 to 1967 are counted as refugees from the State of Israel. Israel has been condemned by the United Nations for human rights violations 45 times - roughly an equal number of times as all the other countries in the world combined. Since the Human Rights Council was formed, it has created 1 commission of inquiry on North Korea, 2 on Libya, 2 on Myanmar, 2 on Syria, and 9 on Israel. The UN human rights expert on Palestine is mandated only to investigate "Israel's violations" of international law, and not violations by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas.
- **Delegitimization** - Delegitimizing claims include: Israel has no historic claim to the land. They are colonizers and immigrants from Poland. Only Muslims have the right to be in the land. Terrorist attacks are justified because Israel is an oppressor, and apartheid state (back to lies and demonization).

## **7. Differentiate between what you can and cannot control. Promote goodness and help that are within your power to contribute.**

- While we all can - and should - make our voices heard, there is a limit to how we can affect Israeli or American strategy, much less that of Hamas. Acknowledging this reality will keep us sane - and focused on all that we can achieve.
- Focus on the unity of the Jewish people. Reach out with emotional and practical support: offer a listening ear; pack and send supplies to Israel when they are requested; buy Israeli products; write encouraging emails and letters to fellow Jews
- Support organizations doing good work for safety, democracy, and peace in Israel with your time, as well as your money.
- Advocate for the U.S. and Israeli government policies and leaders you believe in.
- Pray for victims and survivors. Pray for peace.

## The Most Important Resources for You Now

- Have coffee with your local rabbi or other Hillel staff member. They're buying! Talk about Israel and anything and everything else. These people are your allies, cheerleaders, and mentors.
- Call on me or Cantor Lenny. Have coffee with me when you are home for break. I'm buying! Rabbi Debra: 201-560-3345. Cantor Lenny: 201-618-0716
- Israel on Campus Coalition - national coalition with learning resources, grants, fellowships.
- Kol Yisrael - "a 6-week cohort learning program for students to explore big ideas and big questions with Israel as a real-world case study," sponsored by Hillel.
- ADL on campus - a branch of the Anti-Defamation League devoted to combatting anti-semitism on campus.
- AIPAC on Campus - The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is the centrist, leading lobby for Israel in the United States, and this is their youth and leadership division.
- JStreetU - J Street is student organizing arm of liberal "pro-Israel, pro-peace, pro-democracy" activists.
- RAC (Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism) Youth Engagement - the RAC advocates for many domestic policies, and it is also the home of the Reform movement's lobbying and social action on behalf of Israel.
- Zioness - the "unabashedly progressive, unapologetically Zionist" organization that "fights for the advancement of social, racial, economic and gender equality in America and for the inclusion of Zionists in social justice spaces."

I want to hear from you! Let me know what your campus experience is like and what groups you have joined — or started. Please be in touch about Israeli — and "just because."

Love and blessings,

Rabbi Debra Orenstein