

SBL SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

16 October 2023

SBL COUNCIL STATEMENT ON THE HAMAS ATTACKS IN ISRAEL

The following statement has been approved by majority vote of the Society of Biblical Literature's Council

The Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) vigorously condemns the terrorist attacks in Israel initiated by Hamas on October 7, 2023. The slaughter of innocents, taking of hostages, wanton destruction, and the ongoing atrocities against civilian non-combatants are horrific and opposed to the values we espouse as human beings and as a professional society dedicated to the advancement of scholarship on the Bible. We are concerned by the subsequent upsurge in anti-Semitic violence in the United States and globally, and encourage each one of you, our scholarly community, to stand firm against such actions in your own academic institutions. As a professional organization, we stand in solidarity with the people of Israel and wish to support all impacted by these tragic events, especially our members and their families. SBL resolves to develop appropriate educational media, publications, and conferences challenging the use of biblical and other authoritative texts to justify hatred and intolerance in any form. As SBL's governing board, we pledge our support and send strength to members of our organization in Israel whose family members are missing or held hostage by Hamas in Gaza, and we mourn with our colleagues impacted by these tragic events and all other innocent victims of the conflict.

20 October 2023

SBL COUNCIL STATEMENT CONCERNING THE ONGOING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA AND ISRAEL

The Society of Biblical Literature's Council is saddened and horrified by the ongoing humanitarian crisis and human rights violations unfolding in Israel and Gaza. Of particular concern are the ongoing violence, loss of innocent life, and deprivation of basic shelter, safety, food, water, electricity, medical supplies and other life essentials currently experienced by innocent victims in Gaza.

We recognize that the realities currently experienced by Palestinian and Israeli communities have complex historical and geopolitical origins that are not easily resolved, and that some of these communities have been subject to military occupation, forced migration, and other atrocities.

Critical examination of the ways the Bible and other scriptural texts have been used to justify anti-Palestinian / anti-Israeli, and anti-Muslim / anti-Jewish sentiments as well as violence against other religious and cultural communities across the globe must be critical dimensions of the work we undertake. As biblical scholars, we must develop strategies to mitigate the ill effects

of marginalization and diaspora.

Therefore, as SBL's governing board, we affirm again the Society's resolve to develop appropriate educational media, publications, and conferences challenging the use of biblical and other scriptural texts to justify hatred and intolerance in any form. As the situation on the ground leads to more suffering and more death, we hope for the immediate release of all hostages, the preservation of lives, and a swift end to military activities.

Many members have expressed their concern to us. Although we are not able to respond individually, we wish to assure you that your letters have been read carefully and your concerns are heard. We hope that our statement addresses some of these concerns and we express support and sympathy to all our members who are directly involved, and enjoin all of us to act with peace and justice in this time.