

## שם הפעולה | Program Name: *Processing current Events in Israel*

ועדה | Planners: *Stephanie Kallish and Shira Keshet*

Date: May 12th

Location: Zoom

Duration: 1 hour

# of Participants: \_\_\_\_

Age of Participants: *8th-12th graders*

### ציוד | Supplies needed

- None

### מטרה | Purpose

- Why are you creating this Peulah?
  - I am creating this program to provide a space for teens to process and unpack what is happening in Israel right now.
- What are the topic(s) for the Peulah?
  - The topic of this Peulah is the current events in Israel.
- How does it support and move forward the mission of USY?
  - This moves forward the mission of USY because it engages teens in nuanced and meaningful conversation about Israel

### תוצאות | Outcomes

- חוויה - The participants will experience a change to decompress and talk about what is going on in Israel with their peers.
- לימוד - The participants will learn more about what is happening and will hopefully gain a more balanced understanding.

### מהלך הפעילות וזמנים | Session Timeline & Outline

- (5 mins) | **Part 1: Intro**
  - Hi everyone, welcome. We wanted to create an open and safe space to process what is happening in Israel right now. The point of this program is not to prove anyone right or wrong, but to process the events and points of view and examine our relationship with them as American teens.
- (5 mins) | **Part 2: Norms**
  - Now we are going to create conversation norms. As we all know, this can be a sensitive topic so I want to ensure that it can be a safe space where everyone feels comfortable to participate and contribute.  
*For example: Use "I feel.." sentences, respect all opinions and points of view etc.*
- (20 mins) | **Part 3: Guiding Questions**
  - What do you know about what is happening in Israel right now?

- *Let this conversation flow naturally. After there is a break in conversation, state some of the facts of the situation.*

Over the past 48 hours, Hamas has fired over a thousand rockets at civilian population centers across Israel, forcing hundreds of thousands of Israelis into bomb shelters. In response, the Israeli military has attacked terrorist targets across Gaza. Tragically, there have been several civilian deaths — both Israeli and Palestinian — and many have been injured. Protests and riots have erupted all over Israel, most notably at the Al-Aqsa mosque in the old city.

### **Reasons:**

- Ramadan celebrations coincided with Jerusalem day parades which heightened already inflamed tensions.
- The approaching of Nakba day, the catastrophe which commemorates Palestinian displacement after the establishment of Israel
- Instability in both Israeli and Palestinian governments.
- A number of Palestinian families in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem are set to be evicted from their homes on Sunday, after an Israeli court ruled that the homes had belonged to Jewish families before 1948. The homes were purchased in the 1800s from Ottomans by religious Jews because their town is near the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Hatzaddik. Palestinians have been living in the homes for over 70 years since the annexation of East Jerusalem by Jordan after the 1948 war, but have not been paying rent to the Israeli organization that currently owns them. Some believe that these evictions represent an effort to 'Judaize' traditionally Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem. Palestinian protesters have clashed with Israel Police in recent weeks in protest against the planned evictions.
- *(20 mins)* | **Part 4: Discussion**
  - What resources are you using to learn about what's happening in Israel and was there anything you found interesting / conflicting / controversial?
  - How has the situation made you feel?
  - How have you seen this issue portrayed on social media?
  - Feel free to share links to info graphics so we can unpack them as a group
  - From what is being reflected to you from social media and all around you relating to this situation- **what change would you like to see?** (encourage to phrase the change in a positive way in order to focus on the reality you prefer to create rather than what you don't want)
  - What can we do about it as individuals and as a community?
- *(10 mins)* | **Part 5: Conclusion**

Yisrael means to struggle. Israel is in a constant struggle to remain a Jewish and democratic state and our relationships with Israel can be a struggle at times. It is okay to unequivocally love the state of Israel, but be frustrated with the actions of its government. Wherever you are in your journey is valid. I want to highlight that multiple narratives can coexist simultaneously and that it is important to keep listening, learning and engaging, but also take breaks from the news and social media when you need to. It is okay to not know all of the answers. I am going to conclude with this poem.

“On a roof in the Old City  
Laundry hanging in the late afternoon sunlight:  
The White sheet of a woman who is my enemy,  
The towel of a man who is my enemy  
To wipe off the sweat off his brow

In the sky of the Old City  
A kite.  
At the other end of the string,  
A child  
I can't see  
Because of the wall

We have put up many flags  
They have put up many flags  
To make us think they're happy  
To make them think that we're happy”

This poem was shared to Israeli High School students and Palestinian High School students. The Israeli students thought it was written by a Palestinian and the Palestinian students thought it was written by an Israeli. This was written by Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai. As we can see from this anecdote, the trauma and struggling of both Israelis and Palestinians is real. Though we are different we have much in common. Thank you all so much for coming and engaging in this important conversation.