

ARAB CITIZENS AND JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS IN ISRAEL

Impact of Oct. 7th, 2023



IATF Resource Library for Educators

Arab citizens of Israel have been deeply impacted by Oct 7, its aftermath, and the ongoing war. At least [36 Arab citizens were killed](#) and an estimated [9 Bedouin](#) individuals abducted. Arab citizens rescued civilians—some losing their lives in the process. Many more mourn with Jewish friends and neighbors for the lives cut short by unimaginable tragedies and quickly participated in volunteer initiatives.

The Israel-Hamas War is igniting profound fears among Jews and Arabs in Israel for their personal safety and for what the future might hold. Arab citizens are also hurting for Palestinian civilians in Gaza, a feeling that is difficult to hold or express in a charged and fearful wartime atmosphere. As the war continues, these issues are becoming increasingly important and will be core in shaping the future of Israel and the region.

Jewish and Arab citizens are working together to meet emergency needs, prevent escalations, and preserve a shared future in the face of unimaginable difficulties. These stories, and the unique and challenging experiences of a minority community, display a fuller picture of Israel today, beyond the headlines. They also offer kernels of hope and situate our learning in real work on the ground.

About this Resource

This resource is a curated library documenting stories and voices pertaining to Arab citizens and Jewish-Arab relations following October 7. Each source brings learners closer to the lived experiences of people on the ground, draws attention to lesser explored topics, and raises meaningful themes and questions.

These sources were selected to display diverse experiences and perspectives pertaining to Arab citizens. Learners are encouraged to remember that listening/reading doesn't need to mean agreeing. They are divided into 4 categories: 1) Lives Lost and Hostages, 2) Heroism, 3) Volunteers and Changemakers, 4) Challenges and Opportunities of Jewish-Arab relations in Israel today.

As a minority community with deep ties to all parties, Arab citizens inherently live with complexity. Their stories can help learners look beyond the black and white paradigms that dominate social media. As people move from their initial grief and shock to processing what happens next, Jewish-Arab relations in Israel is a key challenge and opportunity. It also provides a concrete entry point for learners to explore and engage.

If you need support integrating these stories into your work or would like to connect to additional resources or speakers on these topics, feel free to contact Erica Shaps at ericash@jdc.org.

Note: This resource is a snapshot in time and is meant to capture the initial period following October 7, 2023; it is not being updated.

Resource Library for Educators

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“He was the kind who didn’t give up”:

Stories of Lives Lost and Hostages from Arab Society

The terrorist attacks on October 7 were indiscriminate, impacting all residents of Israel, regardless of ethnicity. An estimated [36 Arab citizens lost their lives](#) on October 7 both directly by Hamas infiltrators and rocket fire from Gaza. An estimated 9 Bedouins have been [abducted](#)¹, 2 of whom [were freed](#) in late November. Tragically, Samer al-Talalka, was one of three hostages² [mistakenly killed](#) by the IDF in Gaza. Additionally, numerous soldiers were killed in the line of duty. Negev Bedouin communities are [particularly vulnerable](#) to rocket fire due to their location and [limited shelter infrastructure](#).



THE HEROIC LEGACY OF AWAD DARAWSHE, A VICTIM OF HAMAS’ TERROR

JUDITH SUDILOVSKY | *JERUSALEM POST* | 10.21.2023

Awad Darawshe, a 23-year-old paramedic from the Galilee, remained at the Nova Music Festival after other paramedics departed, believing he would be safe because he spoke Arabic. He was shot while treating patients. This article describes these events and shares his life and legacy. *“Despite the pain and sorrow the family is feeling now, they are proud of the decision Awad made, because it means that in the face of unspeakable evil, he remained human and humane.”*

Content Warnings: Non-graphic written mentions of violence and death.



PALESTINIAN ISRAELIS NEAR THE GAZA BORDER KNOW THE GRIEF OF THIS WAR ON BOTH SIDES

LEILA FADEL AND TAYLOR HANEY | *NPR* | 10.13.2023

35-year-old Mohammad Tariq was a garbage collector in the Jewish town of Ofakim when he was shot on October 7. NPR correspondents visit with his family and mourners in the Bedouin city of Rahat. In addition to discussing their loss and hostages from their community, the interviewees describe the turmoil and pain they feel with loved ones and losses on both sides of the conflict.

“My heart is bleeding for the ones on the east side or the ones on the west side,” he said. “All of them are the sons of Adam.”

Content Warnings: Description of death, dead bodies, and humanitarian situation in Gaza. Air raid sirens can be heard in the audio repeatedly.

“He was the kind who didn’t give up”:

Stories of Lives Lost and Hostages from Arab Society



MAJED IBRAHIM, 19: KILLED BY ROCKET THAT FELL IN ABU GHOSH

TOI STAFF | TIMES OF ISRAEL | 10.16.2023

Majed Ibrahim, 19, died from shrapnel wounds when a rocket landed in Abu Ghosh while he was unable to reach a protected area when the siren went off. His father speaks of his love for his son in an interview, and shares he was supposed to study computer science at Hebrew University this fall.

“He was happy, he was excited to fulfill his dream. This joy has turned into sadness and pain.”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic description of rocket fire and death.



LT. COL. SALMAN HABAKA, 33: RESPONDED TO HAMAS ASSAULT; FELL IN GAZA

TOI STAFF | TIMES OF ISRAEL | 11.6.2023

Lt. Col. Salman Habaka, 33, from the Druze village of Yanuh-Jat was killed in northern Gaza. He was one of the first IDF soldiers to enter Kibbutz Be’eri. The article includes an excerpt from his experience and eulogies delivered after his death.

“At the time of his death, Habaka, a native of the Druze village of Yanuh-Jat, was the highest-ranking officer to perish during IDF ground operation. He left behind a wife and a two-year-old son, along with his parents, two brothers and three sisters.”

Content Warnings: None

“He was the kind who didn’t give up”:

Stories of Lives Lost and Hostages from Arab Society



FREED HOSTAGE BILAL ZIYADNE: HAMAS KIDNAPPED US EVEN THOUGH THEY KNEW WE’RE ARAB **TOI STAFF | TIMES OF ISRAEL | 12.11.2023**

Bilal Ziyadne, 18, a Bedouin from Rahat who was released from Hamas captivity in late November with his sister Aisha, briefly describes his experience in Hamas captivity. He was held with his father, Youssef, 53 and older brother Hamza, 23, who have not been released.

“Asked what he spoke about with his family, Bilal said: ‘I don’t remember. We were scared.’”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic description of experience in captivity, descriptions of hostage-taking, murder and dead bodies.



PARTNERS IN FATE - THE BRAVERY AND LOSS OF HAMID ABU AR’AR **HAVE YOU SEEN THE HORIZON LATELY | 11.23.2023**

Hamid Abu Ar’ar recalls the death of his wife Fatma, a religious Muslim woman, on October 7 after she was shot in a car by Hamas militants. After she died, he hid with his infant son for several hours, and prevented IDF soldiers from being shot by Hamas militants. He also describes his grief and calls for unity to prevent hate.

“He doesn’t know who he killed. A mother of 9...Every day I visit the cemetery to be by my wife. I try to think, try to process, try to analyze. There is no meaning to this.”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic footage of car being shot by people on motorcycles, non-graphic description of Fatma’s final moments, of hiding from Hamas militants, and processing grief.

“As a human, as an Israeli, ‘I’m going to save their lives’”:

Stories of Heroism

On October 7, ordinary heroes saved lives and brought a spark of light to dark days. Arab citizens are among those who saved lives and cared for the survivors, with new stories still coming to public awareness.



PARTNERS IN FATE - ARAB CITIZENS HEROIC RESCUE OF JEWS FROM THE BE’ERI MASSACRE

HAVE YOU SEEN THE HORIZON LATELY | 11.5.2023 | 7 MINUTES

This video includes testimony from Aya, resident of Kibbutz Be’eri, and members of the Alkrenawi family from Rahat who saved her. They rescued Aya, their cousin Hisham, and dozens of people from the Nova Music Festival. During the rescue, Hisham and his cousins were nearly mistaken for Hamas terrorists.

“After 2 or 3 hours of work, where we rescued and evacuated people, we said to ourselves ‘What are we going to do now?’ Either we go and rescue Aya and Hisham, or we end up dying there.”

Content Warnings: Audio recordings with people screaming “Don’t shoot.” Non-graphic description of dead bodies, gun violence, and seeing people shot in shelters.



THE TESTIMONIES ARCHIVE: YOSEF

TABLET STUDIOS | *TABLET* | 10.10.2023 | 3 MINUTES

Yosef, a Bedouin bus driver who drove people to the Nova Music Festival, returned to help, not knowing about the massacre. When he saw what was happening, he saved as many as he could.

“When I arrived at the beginning, I could’ve turned around and left them there. But as a human, as an Israeli, I said ‘I’m going to save their lives.’”

Content Warnings: Description of gun violence and death.

“As a human, as an Israeli, ‘I’m going to save their lives’”:

Stories of Heroism



ACROSS ISRAEL, JEWS AND ARABS JOIN FORCES TO HELP WAR VICTIMS AND PREVENT RIOTS

NETTA AHITUV AND NADIN ABOU LABAN | *HAARETZ* | 10.12.2023

While the IDF was still trying to regain control of the South, dozens of Bedouin volunteers from Bir Hadaj utilized their deep knowledge of the desert to find and rescue the missing and the injured.

“We divided ourselves up in the cars so that there would be people responsible for different things: gathering information, rescuing and administering first aid.”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic descriptions of rescues, death, and detaining Hamas infiltrators.



HOW AN ARAB-ISRAELI NEWS ANCHOR AND CELEBRITY HUSBAND SAVED FAMILIES FROM HAMAS MASSACRE

I24 NEWS TEAM | *I24 NEWS* | 10.16.2023

Lucy Aharish a news anchor, helped save two families in Kfar Aza. After finding out their location, she mobilized her husband, actor Tzahi Halevi and members of his reserve unit, to coordinate their rescue.

“She prayed as a mother prays for her children and held her breath until the terrorists were eliminated and the two families were freed.”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic description of families trapped in homes as terrorists tried to break in, death, and rocket fire.



DRUZE SOLDIERS CELEBRATE HEROISM ON OCTOBER 7

EINAV HALABI | *YNET* | 11.08.2023

This article recalls stories of heroism in Druze communities on, and in the aftermath, of Oct. 07. It tells the stories of Druze soldiers who quickly mobilized to respond to the situation in the South.

“Everyone, both Druze soldiers and residents, have been volunteering since the outset of the war, setting aside political discord and feelings of discrimination by the Israeli government.”

Content Warnings: Descriptions of gunfire and casualties.

“There are people who want to come together and reject the violence that we are seeing”:

Stories of Volunteers and Changemakers

Thousands of Israelis quickly mobilized to volunteer locally and to support families in the North and South and evacuees. At least 29% of Arab citizens [volunteered](#) during the first two weeks of the war and continue to be part key volunteer networks. Volunteer programs generally fall into two categories: 1) Responding to emergency need, particularly for Jewish and Arab residents of the Negev; 2) Deescalating conflict and promoting strong Jewish-Arab relations within Israel in a time of war, particularly in mixed cities.



BEDOUIN COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL COPES WITH WAR, PREJUDICE

VOA NEWS | *VOICE OF AMERICA* | 10.24.2023 | 4 MINUTES

This video offers an overview of the challenges and experiences of Bedouin communities following October 7 and the work that volunteers and heroes are doing together in the Negev. It starts with an interview with Yosef, the shuttle driver who saved 30 people ([see above](#)). It then interviews volunteers and shows footage from the Emergency Situation Room: an initiative of many NGOs to bring Jewish and Arab volunteers together to respond to humanitarian needs in the South.

“Rabbi Benny Lau: ‘The message that comes out of this war room is that we choose life, and we choose life together.’”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic description of deaths, hostages, anti-Arab incitement.

[This article](#) covers the same situation room and similar themes.



ARABS AND JEWS COME TOGETHER TO CLEAN HUNDREDS OF BOMB SHELTERS IN HAIFA

YANIV SHARON | *DAVAR* | 10.25.2023

Activists from the local Jewish-Arab movement in Haifa, “Rov Ha’Ir” (majority in the city) volunteered to clean hundreds of shelters and alert the municipality to closed shelters. The organizers also operate projects to spread positive stories, combat fake news, and reduce tension.

“The activity got people out of the house, away from the news and from their phones,” says Abed. ‘Right now it’s not about politics, but community solidarity.’”

Content Warnings: None

“There are people who want to come together and reject the violence that we are seeing”:

Stories of Volunteers and Changemakers



ISRAELI BEDOUIN HOTELIER HOSTS 3,000 DISPLACED BY HAMAS WAR

124 | 124 NEWS | 10.24.2023

At his own expense, Sami Alkarnawi, provided free accommodation at his hotels in Mitzpe Ramon for evacuees from Gaza Strip border communities. In this interview, he discusses his decision.

“I wrote a message on Facebook saying: come and take refuge with us for free, we have 5 hotels.”

Content Warnings: None.



JEWISH-ARAB PATROL ESTABLISHED IN JAFFA: ‘WE STAND READY AND UNITED IN PARTNERSHIP’

YANIV SHARON | DAVAR | 10.13.2023

The article describes an unofficial joint Jewish-Arab civil community watch in Tel Aviv-Jaffa that accompanies Arab and Jewish Israelis who feel unsafe, sends supplies to those in need, and mediates and documents in the event of unrest. The volunteers discuss the unique challenges and opportunities of mixed cities like Tel Aviv-Jaffa and why they chose to participate in the initiative.

“On Sunday afternoon, I posted a message about the initiative to calm tensions between Jews and Arabs, and within three hours, there were already about 600 inquiries. By Monday, there were already 1,500 applicants.”

Content Warnings: None

“What if I’m in the wrong place at the wrong time?”:

Challenges and Opportunities in Jewish-Arab Relations Today

Despite widespread fears of intercommunal violence emerging akin to what occurred in May 2021, thus far there have been no major incidents. However, October 7th and its aftermath have heightened three major areas of concern in Jewish-Arab relations within the country: 1) Increased fear and mistrust affecting daily life and relationships in workplaces, on campuses, and social media. 2) Fear that escalations and provocations could ignite intergroup violence within the country. 3) Economic distress among Arab citizens due to shifting labor market and terminations.

These resources may not be right for younger learners or communities still in the initial stages of processing the events and coping with their grief. However, they could be highly relevant to learners who are grappling with questions regarding Israel’s wartime responsibilities or are eager to discuss how a society functions in a time of crisis and what “the day after” holds.



A TURNING POINT FOR ARAB ISRAELIS

ELA LEVY-WEINRIB | *GLOBES* | 10.22.2023

This article describes how October 7th led many Arab citizens to feel a stronger Israeli identity and solidarity with the country. Interviewees also express the complexity of their identities and concerns about how fear during the war will impact Arab citizens. It includes comments from Nusier Yassin (Nas Daily), Yosef Haddad, Lucy Harish, Mohammad Darawashe and others. *“Our voice will be sharp and clear, unapologetic, unhesitant, unfaltering, without proportionality, with no ifs, ands, or buts. There are no dilemmas in the face of atrocities!”*

Content Warnings: Non-graphic descriptions of death and a racist encounter.



‘WE’RE IN THIS TOGETHER.’ TO HAMAS, ALL CITIZENS ARE TARGETS, SAY ARAB ISRAELIS

GIANLUCA PACCHIANI | *TIMES OF ISRAEL* | 10.15.2023

This article offers a broad overview of Jewish-Arab relations following October 7 and touches upon many of the issues and initiatives discussed in other articles in this library. It features leaders in Arab society sharing their horror over Hamas’ violence and their concerns for the safety and wellbeing of Arab citizens in a wartime environment. There are descriptions of Jewish-Arab initiatives in the Negev and mixed cities.

“We are in this together. Arabs have been shocked as much as Jews at the astonishing number of people killed, including small children, and of hostages taken. We have also been asking ourselves who could humanly be capable of such an act. We are speechless.”

Content Warnings: Non-graphic descriptions of violence and fears of inter-communal violence.



“ANYONE WITH A WEAPON CAN KILL ME, THINKING I’M A TERRORIST SIMPLY BECAUSE I’M ARAB”

DEIAA HAJ YAHIA | HAARETZ | 10.26.2023

In this article Arab citizens share racist comments and experiences they faced in the aftermath of October 7th. Interviewees share their fears for their physical safety as more people have access to weapons and concerns about loss of income due to losing their jobs or being afraid to go to work.

“Many Israeli Arabs are afraid to leave their home. They tell of attacks, threats of murder, humiliations and racist slurs, as well as termination or suspension of employment in Jewish cities.”

Content Warnings: Stories of racist encounters and threats, including violent incitement.



BEDOUIN COMMUNITIES IN ISRAEL’S SOUTH LEFT UNPROTECTED FROM ROCKETS, TURN OFF SIREN

EDEN SOLOMON | HAARETZ | 10.15.2023

This article describes the experiences of unrecognized Negev Bedouin villages during rocket fire, focusing on their lack of access to shelters. Since these villages are not recognized municipalities by the Israeli government, they do not have access to government infrastructure, including shelters.

“We thought about hiding in the mosque when there’s a siren, but how many people could get into that little place? Besides, it’s a place of worship, not a bomb shelter,’ said one resident.”

Content Warnings: Written stories of fear among adults and children.



THE “THESE LAST AWFUL DAYS THROUGH THE EYES OF A PALESTINIAN” EDITION

THE PROMISED PODCAST TEAM | *THE PROMISED PODCAST* | 10.17.2023

Sally Abed speaks with Noah Efron about what the early days of the war were like for her as an Arab citizen of Israel. Topics include the duality of grieving, experiences inside of Israel, the conversations abroad, personal and communal fears, Jewish-Arab solidarity and more.

“It’s an impossible thing to hold together. Because our grief, and our pain and fear as Israeli citizens is very real. However, we are also instantly the enemy unless we prove our loyalty, right? Which is a very weird experience, because I really am experiencing this as an Israeli.”

Content Warnings: Sally Abed cries throughout the podcast. Non-graphic discussion of death, hostages, incitement, racism, violence in West Bank. Mentions Sally’s fear of “another Nakba” (catastrophe).

IATF BRIEF FOR FURTHER LEARNING



ARAB CITIZENS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR | IMPACT ON JEWISH-ARAB RELATIONS

IATF | NOVEMBER 10, 2023

In this time of war, Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel are grappling with how the October 7 attacks and their aftermath affect Israel’s social fabric and how to prevent further deterioration in Jewish-Arab relations.

In the brief, IATF summarizes concerns and efforts that have become priorities for Arab society and Jewish-Arab relations. Less visible in the headlines, we hope it may be a source of important information, insight, and inspiration as American Jewish communities grapple with losses, tensions, and concerns for Israel and its future.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *The situation remains evolving and more information on deaths and hostages is still being released. These numbers represent our best estimation from compiling current sources. Last updated 12.22.23.*
- 2 *Druze men are drafted into the IDF, with a majority serving. A small minority of other Arab citizens elect to join the military, particularly from the Bedouin community.*