



24<sup>th</sup> October 2023

To: **ETH – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich**

Professor Dr. Joël Mesot – President  
Prof. Dr. Günther Dissertori – Rector

**RE: ETH Department of Architecture's letter Concerning the Recent Events in Israel and Gaza**

We, members of [BaShaar](https://www.bashaar.org.il) – Academic Community for Israeli Society\*, have just read the ETH Department of Architecture's letter to its colleagues in Israel and Palestine.

We appreciate your intention in writing this letter, and share your concerns for the need for humanitarian aid (which by now is already ongoing) and the safety of the abducted!. However, there is a major thing we cannot accept: **the equivalence or symmetry between the two sides implied in your letter**. There is no mention of Hamas nor explicit condemnation of Hamas heinous atrocities.

What has happened on October 7th is not another clash in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas. Hamas terrorists butchered and slaughtered more than 1300 civilians: old people, men, women, pregnant women, elderly, children and babies. Parents were tortured in front of their children, babies and children were tortured and their bodies mutilated. They were shot, beheaded, burned alive, women raped and then murdered, families burned and corpses then triumphantly displayed to cheering ecstatic crowds – all in the inhuman ISIS tradition. 250 Israelis were taken hostage, amongst them elderly sick people, men, women, children and babies and Hamas is cynically using them together with Gaza civilians as human shields. **This is PURE EVIL and one cannot and should not stay within the realm of "politically correctness" vis-a-vis these atrocities.**

What Hamas has done is in line with the atrocities committed by ISIS, not to mention the the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis against the Jews during the Holocaust. **Therefore, we find the absence of any explicit condemnation, as well as the symmetry implied between both sides morally wrong.**

There is a profound and moral difference between Israel's efforts to avoid harming civilians, and Hamas's deliberate strategy of targeting and inflicting terrible suffering upon as many civilians as possible in Israel as well as in Gaza. We deeply regret the loss of Palestinians innocent civilian lives in Gaza. We support a peaceful and just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; however, **one can support Palestinian rights and at the same time firmly denounce in a clear voice the inhuman brutality of Hamas.**

We urge you to re-think, rectify, take a morally clear stand and explicitly condemn Hamas' inhumane crimes.

Hoping for Better days,

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron  
Chairperson BaShaar

Prof. Shimon Yankielowicz  
Chairperson of the Forum  
for Higher Education, BaSahaar

Dr. Vered Ariel Nahari  
CEO, BaShaar

Copy - all signatories: Prof. Tom Avermaete Prof. Rosa Barba Prof. Philippe Block Prof. Arno Brandhuber Prof. Adam Caruso Prof. François Charbonnet Prof. Maarten Delbeke Prof. Jan De Vylder Prof. Benjamin Dillenburger Prof. Tom Emerson Prof. An Fonteyne Prof. Teresa Gali-Izard Prof. Patrick Heiz Prof. Anne Holtrop Prof. Momoyo Kaijima Prof. Hubert Klumpner Prof. Matthias Kohler Prof. Silke Langenberg Prof. Sacha Menz Prof. Christian Schmid Prof. Philip Ursprung

\***BaShaar – Academic Community for Israeli Society** is an Israeli registered non-profit and non-government organization, established in 1999 by academic leaders amongst them the Ex- Presidents of the Technion and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. BaShaar lists over 2,000 senior faculty members from all institutions of higher education in Israel, including former presidents and rectors, Nobel Laureates, laurates of the Israel Prize and other prestige awards. BaShaar operates both as an Educational Framework and a as a platform for critical discussion and free debates on issues of higher education and the Israeli society.

<https://www.bashaar.org.il/about-bashaar/>