



19th November 2023

To: **The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)**

Prof. **Lynn Pasquerella** - President, AAC&U
Prof. **Mary Ann Villarreal** - Chair, AAC&U Board of Directors
Prof. **Timothy K. Eatman** - Vice Chair, AAC&U Board of Directors
Prof. **David Wilson** - Treasurer, AAC&U Board of Directors
Dr. **Mary Dana Hinton** - Past Chair, AAC&U Board of Directors

RE: AAC&U Statement on the Israel-Gaza War

We, members of '[BaShaar](https://www.bashaar.org.il) – Academic Community for Israeli Society*', have just read [your statement](#) on the Israel-Gaza War.

We appreciate your intention in writing this statement, however, there is a major issue we cannot accept: **the equivalence or symmetry between the two sides implied in your statement.** There is no mention of Hamas nor an explicit condemnation of Hamas heinous and unspeakable 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, fetuses cut brutally of their living pregnant mothers, women and young girls raped and then murdered, families burned and corpses then triumphantly displayed to cheering ecstatic crowds – all in the inhuman ISIS tradition. 240 Israelis were taken hostage, amongst them elderly sick people, men, women, children and babies and Hamas is cynically using them together with Gazan 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 innocent civilians, and Hamas's deliberate strategy of intentionally 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, BaShaar

Dr. Vered Ariel Nahari
CEO, BaShaar

***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, laureates 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/>