



11 October 2023

26 Tishrei 5784

Dear members of the university community,

We are in the midst of one of the most difficult events that the State of Israel has ever experienced. As I write these lines, we already know that more than 1,200 people, most of them unarmed civilians of all ages, were killed by terrorists in a heinous attack from Gaza on Saturday. There is also a significant number of hostages who were kidnapped to Gaza, and their fate is unknown. Unfortunately, these are not final numbers. There is no other way to describe this - **it is a crime against humanity of the highest order.**

Actions of this kind cannot be justified, and therefore it is clear that the university will show zero tolerance for expressions of support from any of its community members for these horrific acts.

We also all understand that the State of Israel will respond with severity to these crimes, and we anticipate an extended period of a state of war. We are aware that many of our community members have been drafted, and there are no classes in the educational system at least this week. Therefore, we have taken several important steps:

- The opening of the academic year 2023-24 (5784) has been postponed to Sunday, October 22. We are closely monitoring developments and hope that it will indeed open on this date.
- Orientation days for new students, which were supposed to take place this week, have also been postponed for a week.
- For administrative staff members, we are allowing remote work for those who can, and work in the office on campus requires coordination with the direct supervisor. We want to emphasize that we greatly appreciate the impressive dedication of the administrative staff to working from home or from the office.
- As much as possible, research activities continue as usual.

The university's management is assessing the situation on a daily basis, listening to the needs arising from the field, and providing ongoing updates. Please pay attention to these updates.

We are also preparing to provide assistance and volunteering opportunities for both our community members and broader communities (details will be provided in a

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detailed message later this week). We promise to help students who are drafted or those who are affected in other ways to successfully integrate into their studies and make up for what they miss. Your departmental secretaries are at your service on these matters.

Together with the rest of the country's citizens, the Hebrew University mourns the abhorrent murder and the terrible loss of human life. We are worried about the fate of the hostages and pray for their safe return. We wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. We also extend our support to the IDF soldiers and security forces who are fighting on the front lines at this time.

Some of our community members have lost family members, and many more have lost friends. Our hearts are with them all. The reality we knew before October 7th will no longer be the same for many of our colleagues in the workplace and in the classroom. This is where the essence of our community is measured - we will support each other, show empathy, provide assistance, and be attentive.

We are experiencing difficult days, and unfortunately, the coming days are also expected to be challenging. The Hebrew University and the State of Israel have gone through difficult times in the past and emerged from them. We are convinced that we will also survive the current period and continue to work for a better and more just world.

Prof. Asher Cohen, President

Prof. Tamir Sheafer, Rector

Mr. Yishai Fraenkel, CEO