

American Jewish Committee (AJC), the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, is offering guidance to business Employee Resource Groups, companies, and organizations on how to best prepare for the one-year anniversary of 10/7 with suggestions on conducting a remembrance program and anticipating the needs of Jewish employees, including safeguards, resources, and thoughtful messaging.

AJC recognizes that every organization and business is different and has distinctive needs. We are here to help you thoughtfully address any issues or concerns with sound counsel and strategic guidance. Please [contact us](#) to discuss how we can assist.

BACKGROUND

Monday, October 7, 2024, marks the one-year anniversary of the October 7th terror attack on Israel, in which Hamas terrorists brutally murdered 1,200 people, and took 251 hostages into Gaza. At the time this document was written, over 100 people still remain captive, including 7 Americans. October 7th was the deadliest terror incident in Israel's history, in which not only Israeli Jews, but also Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Israeli Arabs, and citizens of over 23 countries, including 45 Americans, were targeted and killed. For the worldwide Jewish community, October 7th also marks the most significant loss of Jewish life in one day since the Holocaust, and remains a painful open wound that may still directly impact Jewish employees in your organization.

AWARENESS

The 10/7 attack occurred at the end of the 2023 Jewish fall holiday season on the holiday of [Simchat Torah](#). This year's fall Jewish holiday season, which begins with Rosh Hashanah on the evening of Wednesday, October 2, will be a challenging time for the Jewish community.

Be alert to the concerns of Jewish employees at a time when synagogues and other Jewish spaces face added risk and need increased security. It is now routine for synagogues to be protected by armed guards; it is important not to minimize the genuine security concerns that Jews face when attempting to live their lives openly as Jews. Employers must ensure that the security needs of Jewish staff are being met and that they remain safe and free from harassment when attending Jewish events or gatherings in their place of work, including virtual programs.

Be aware that many Jews have faced increasingly hostile rhetoric because of their real or perceived connection to Israel and Zionism. Some of that rhetoric has included deeply problematic messaging about 10/7 that denies or minimizes the terror attack, or dehumanizes Israeli victims of 10/7 (e.g., "no innocent Israelis"; tearing down or vandalism of hostage posters; denial of sexual assault committed against Israelis). It has also included attempts to reframe the violence and terror of 10/7 as justified resistance, decolonization, or liberation.

ACTION

Review your company's codes of conduct to ensure it covers employee behavior and harassment, and clearly outlines the consequences of violating any of the policies. While inflammatory or hateful speech may be permitted according to your company's speech codes, language that minimizes or denies the impact of 10/7, or vilifies Israel and Zionism, or engages in victim-blaming for the atrocities committed on 10/7 will resonate painfully for many Jewish employees, especially when such rhetoric appears in the spaces where they work.

Ensure that your business has resources in place to address the wellbeing and mental health of Jewish employees at this stressful time. Make those resources known to your entire professional staff, and that all staff, including Jews and Israelis, have unfettered access to the support services they need with no gatekeeping or litmus tests.

GUIDANCE FOR COMPANIES, BUSINESSES, AND JEWISH EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERG'S) ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF OCTOBER 7TH (CONT.)

COMMUNICATION

In official and unofficial communications with employees, board members, or shareholders about the 10/7 anniversary, avoid using contested or vague language that may unwittingly distort your messaging or dilute your support for Jewish employees at this difficult time.

There have been devastating civilian Israeli and Palestinian casualties as a result of the 10/7 attack and the Israel-Hamas war that followed. However, it can be painful and triggering to Jews when 10/7 victims are not given due recognition on their own terms, separately and distinctly from the casualties resulting from the ensuing war. Avoid incorrectly referring to those killed on 10/7 as victims of war, military incursion, or occupation. These designations misread the sequence of events that resulted in the deaths of innocent civilians in southern Israel, and can inadvertently promote the narrative that there are no innocent Israelis. For similar reasons, messaging about 10/7 should avoid comparative accounts of Palestinian deaths that have ensued during the subsequent war. These deaths also deserve acknowledgment on their own terms, and should be addressed separately from messaging about the October 7th terror attacks. We suggest finding a different occasion to acknowledge civilian victims of the war in Gaza.

LEARN MORE

Understanding the impact of 10/7 on the Jewish community begins with being mindful of Jewish lived experiences and the history of anti-Jewish violence. AJC offers expert-led educational programming on this history and its impact on Jewish collective memory. We also offer in-person educational programming on navigating working together in community, including guidance on fostering respect for Jewish history, traditions, and identity. Consider learning more about the Jewish community by attending an in-person event this year outside of the workplace.

AJC can help! [Contact us](#) to learn about opportunities in your region, request a workshop or presentation, or if you need sound counsel or strategic guidance.

Suggestions for a One-Hour Remembrance Program:

- Welcome and Framing from Jewish ERG Leader (5 min)
- Welcome from Company CEO (3-5 min)
- Introduction of Speaker (2 min)
- Invited Speaker, potentially a family member of a hostage or victim (20-25 min)
- Musical Interlude / Video (3-5 min)
- Names Reading (10 min)
- Prayer Reading (2 min)
- Closing Thoughts and Thank You (3-5 min)