Far-Right Extremists Exploit Israel-Hamas War to Mainstream Bigotry in the U.S.

The antidemocratic far-right extremist movement in the United States is exploiting the war in Israel and Gaza to mainstream xenophobic, antisemitic, and anti-Muslim rhetoric, further discriminatory policies, and inspire violence. Promoted by mainstream and fringe influencers, they threaten the safety of our communities and our democracy.

Mainstreaming bigoted narratives and disinformation

Politicians, public figures on the far right, and extremists are using the current conflict to promote anti-Jewish bigotry and using rhetoric that stokes fear of Palestinian refugees and others from Muslim-majority countries. They use disinformation to denigrate Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities and revive age-old antisemitic conspiracies.

- Two days after Hamas's attack, former President Donald Trump falsely suggested that Hamas militants were "pouring" over the southern U.S. border. Members of Congress repeatedly echoed this fearmongering.

- On November 1, Representative Brian Mast (FL-21) deliberately conflated Palestinian civilians with Hamas terrorists, saying "innocent Palestinian civilians" is a phrase comparable to "innocent Nazi civilians."

- In response to Hamas's attack, Charlie Kirk, CEO of the Christian Nationalist organization Turning Point USA claimed "the vast majority of Muslims" are living "in the 1300s," and warned his show to arm themselves against terrorist Muslim immigrants.

- White supremacist Nick Fuentes and far-right conspiracy theorist Stew Peters—who hosted far-right members of Congress on their platforms—are leveraging the conflict to further antisemitic tropes that Jews control the world. Fuentes suggested Israel lied about the attack and Peters suggested it was Israel's own "false flag" attack.

Rep. Brian Mast suggested all
Palestinians are Hamas terrorists

Furthering Xenophobic Immigration Policies

Politicians and public figures on the far-right are using the war and the hate it has animated to push for bigoted and discriminatory immigration policies in the United States. These severe, permanent changes to the U.S. immigration system would harm refugees, asylum seekers, and all immigrants.

- Former President Trump renewed his pledge to reinstate the Muslim ban—which was reversed because of its discrimination and stigmatization of Muslim communities—and extend it to Gaza.

- Representative Tom Tiffany (WI-7) introduced legislation barring Palestinian refugees from entering the U.S., claiming an influx of Gazan refugees would be "cultural suicide"—a reference to the "great replacement" conspiracy.

- In the week following the Hamas attack, Charlie Kirk said it should be a "wake-up call" that leads to more aggressive border enforcement. Kirk promoted baseless disinformation linking Islamist terrorism to migration on the southern border.

Rep. Tom Tiffany would bar Palestinian refugees from the United States.

Inspiring Harassment, Hate Crimes, and Violence

Extremist rhetoric and disinformation is contributing to a nationwide increase in harassment, hate incidents and crimes, and related violence targeting Jewish, Muslim, Arab—specifically Palestinian —communities, including Members of Congress. While definitions of bias incidents and crimes vary across organizations compiling data, hate-motivated events in the United States have increased dramatically in response to the war.

- FBI Director Christopher Wray testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee that the Bureau has opened, "sixty percent more hate crimes investigations post-Oct. 7, than compared to the comparable period pre-Oct. 7." The majority of those cases targeted Jewish Americans.

- The Center for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) logged over 700 complaints of anti-Muslim incidents in two and half weeks following Hamas's attack, the highest rate in nearly ten years.

- In Chicago, a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy was stabbed to death and his mother critically injured by a man influenced by far-right media disinformation on the war.

Photo: CAIR Chicago.

Palestinian-American six-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume
was murdered in an anti-Muslim hate crime.

How to take action

There are many ways to support Jewish, Muslim, Arab, and other communities and to push back against extremist narratives and xenophobia.

Reject extremist narratives:

The antidemocratic far-right's most effective weapon is disinformation. To counter it, refuse to let its purveyors whitewash extremism and monopolize public discourse. Conflating civilians with governments and entities, including terrorists, collapses identities and dehumanizes communities.

Name hate, fearmongering, and disinformation wherever it is present, whether online, in your community, from public officials, or in the media:

- Intervene online and in-person.
- Debunk misinformation and other false claims.

Support inclusive policies and reject discriminatory policies:

Advocate for policies that support immigrant, Jewish, Muslim, Black, Brown, and other targeted communities. Oppose bigoted policies such as those undermining U.S. asylum law, blocking refugees or asylum seekers, or preventing immigrants from utilizing public services or resources. For example:

- Advocate against the current asylum ban, which prevents many from accessing their legal right to seek asylum in the United States.

- Contact your local elected officials on city and state legislative bodies to oppose policies that further xenophobia and support inclusive policies. You can also influence policy by organizing your community and attending town halls and hearings.

Learn about resources in your community:

Difficult times can lead to feelings of isolation, heightened stress, and even a lack of safety. Federal and local resources and organizations can help by providing spaces for cohesion and healing.

- **Hate crimes:**

  If you have witnessed or are the survivor of a hate crime, report it to your state or local police. Follow up by reporting the crime to the FBI. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police station.

- **Hate incidents:**

  If you have experienced a hate incident, report it to the civil rights division at the Department of Justice (DOJ). For additional resources, call DOJ's victim assistance specialists who can help find local support services at no cost. They can be reached at **1-855-484-2846** or by chat.

- **Finding Community:**

  Regardless of race, background, or faith, all people deserve to feel safe and welcome in their communities. There are many national networks and local Jewish, Muslim, Arab, interfaith, and non-religious organizations across the country that offer support, provide resources to combat hate, create safe spaces for dialogue, and provide connection. One is Interfaith Alliance Partnering Against Hate.

- **FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP):**

  NGSP funds physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations at high risk of terrorist attack, integrating nonprofit preparedness activities with state and local efforts. It promotes coordination and collaboration in emergency preparedness activities among public and private community representatives, as well as state and local government agencies.

Mission

We work to create a just world in which every person's intrinsic human rights are respected and protected, to build societies that value and invest in all their people. To reach that goal demands assisting victims of injustice, bringing perpetrators of abuse to justice, and building institutions that ensure universal rights.

To learn more about our work, please visit humanrightsfirst.org or email ExtremismInfo@humanrightsfirst.org