

LA Jews for Peace Policy Statement

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Israeli Government-Supported Right-Wing Vigilantes Are Destroying Shared Values

The United States' strong commitment to Israel is based on shared democratic values including the rule of law and respect for human rights, bolstered by American shame for not stopping the Nazi Holocaust sooner than they might have. But Israel's government mistreatment of Palestinians from the Nakba in 1948 to the current genocide or war of extermination in Gaza, has prompted many Americans to question how shared those values actually are.

The viability of shared values may be approaching a tipping point. For more than a decade, settler thugs and other right-wing, messianic Israelis have increased attacks of Palestinian lives and property without being held accountable by the government for their illegal acts. Sometimes they would attack police enforcing the law. Now they are attacking the Israeli army for attempting to enforce the law.

Here is what just happened. Sde Teiman is an Israeli military base used to imprison thousands of Palestinians captured after Oct.7. [Sde Teiman has become notorious](#) for abysmal conditions including sexual abuse, torture, and starvation of Palestinian prisoners, many of whom are innocent civilians not associated with Hamas. Over 25 prisoners have died under interrogation; others have lost limbs and suffered permanent physical damage.

Finally the Israel government took some action to stop the torture at Sde Teiman. On July 29, military police arrested nine soldiers accused of "substantial abuse" (gang raping) of one prisoner. The next day a military court held an initial hearing.

But [right-wing thugs met the military police](#) with protests and scuffles, forced their way through the gate into the military base, and demanded the soldier's release. More troubling, [members of Israel's Knesset](#), including at least two government ministers, actively supported the thugs, claiming that Israeli soldiers "are not criminals and this despicable pursuit of our soldiers is unacceptable."

Israel's far right-wing government has intensified Israel's mistreatment of Palestinians. The current government not only allows right-wing thugs to oppress Palestinians with physical threats and by destroying Palestinian land and property, but actively supports them by arming them with military-style weapons and not holding them to account for their illegal acts. These actions by the Israeli government are destroying Israel's shared values of humanitarianism with the United States.

LA Jews for Peace supports the Israeli legal system in its effort to stop mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners. The present arrests must be just a start because the mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners is systematic and not just a case of nine soldiers torturing a single Palestinian.

The U.S.-Israel relationship has deep roots, but if Israel continues to mistreat Palestinians in violation of international law, its shared values rational will surely disintegrate.