

21/10/23

Dear ICOM Management and Esteemed Board Members,

Subject: Urgent: Appeal for a Strong Stance by ICOM on Recent Events in Israel

Two weeks have passed since the horrific attack on Israel started, leaving a horrifying toll of over 1,400 dead, 3,500 wounded, and about 200 kidnapped. Hamas militants crossed the border and brutally attacked communities just inside Israel, resulting in the deaths of women, the elderly, children, and young families. Every day, thousands of missiles fall on Israeli cities, targeting Christians, Muslims, and Jews equally. France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States are among more than 40 nations that have categorically denounced Hamas and classified its strategies as terrorist. We value their unflinching denunciation of such acts of terror and their persistent support. Their unwavering statements are supported by deeds that demonstrate a change in the way the world views the circumstance, acknowledging the dramatic turn of events that has occurred since last week.

Although we are aware of the critiques aimed at Israel, it is crucial to stress that the horrific attacks carried out by Hamas, backed by Iran, have no excuse, and we vehemently oppose any effort at reasoning them out. Hamas's activities amount to nothing less than the heinous murder, rape, torture, and detention of defenceless civilians. We demand that ICOM condemn these acts of terror with the utmost fervour.

To be clear: This is not another episode in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hamas and Islamic Jihad have shown themselves to be brutal and inhumane organizations, akin to the Taliban and the Islamic State.

We also want to remind the ICOM community that Israel is a liberal democracy that protects freedom of expression, diversity, and the arts—values that the ICOM community shares, as shown by the most recent revisions to the definition of a Museum. These exact ideals are being attacked by Hamas in their assault on our cities and communities.

Since the attack, museum employees nationwide have acted in accordance with ICOM's regulations to safeguard the priceless artifacts, ethnological specimens, and archaeology under their care. The committed personnel at work face risks because of these efforts. In these trying times, Israeli museums also serve society by boosting people's spirits and offering space for contemplation. Their work is far from

complete, and we hope the ICOM community will continue to support us in defending these important principles.

We sincerely implore the ICOM community to condemn the massacre of defenceless citizens by Hamas and to declare a bold stance in support of humanity and liberalism.

With hopes for better times,

Board of ICOM Israel

Directors of Museums in Israel

Suzanne Landau, Director the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Tania Coen-Uzzielli, Director Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Ami Katz, Director Muza, Erez Israel Museum, Tel Aviv

Dan Tadmor, Director ANU-Museum of the Jewish People

Yotam Yakir, Director Haifa Museums

Eilat Lieber, Director, Tower of David Jerusalem Museum

Yossi Ani, Director The Israel National Museum of Science, Technology & space, Haifa

Maya Halevy, Director Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem

Alon Sapan, CEO, The Steinhardt Museum of Natural History

Orit Lev-Segev, Director Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein-Harod

Oded Shoham, Director of the Negev Museum of Art, Beer Sheva

Gilad Levian, CEO, Museum for Islamic Art, Jerusalem

Dr. Risa Levitt, CEO, Bible Land Museum Jerusalem

Dr. Aya Lurie, Director and chief Curator Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art

Reut Ferster, Director Petach Tikva Museum of Art

Nurit Asher Fenig, Director Wilfrid Israel Museum for Asian Art and Studies

Monica Lavi, Director Nahum Gutman Museum of Art, Tel Aviv

Ran Gwetta, CEO, Ramat Gan Museum of Israeli Art

Dr. Liat Ben David, CEO the Clore Garden of Science Museum, Davidson Institute

Maya Dvash, Chief Curator Design Museum Holon

Daniel Niv, Director U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art, Jerusalem

Yardena Wiesenberg, Director Kfar Saba Museum

Ofra Baram, Director, Beit Shturman Museum Ein-Harod

Ron Peled, Director Ramle Municipal Museum

Dr. Smadar Sheffi, Director Contemporary Art Center Ramle

Dorit Goren, Director Khan Hdera Museum

Tamar Shooval, Director Ein Dor Museum

Anat Nissim, Director Ussishkin Museum, Kibbutz Dan

Niv Nudelman, Director Man and The Living World Museum, Ramat Gan

Iris Groman, Director the Yzrael Vally Museum

Avi Ifergan, Director and Chief Curator the Bar-David Museum of Art and Judaica

Hagai Sason, Director of the Moshe Castel Museum of Art

Noga Efraim, Managing Director, The Sea Museum Marine archaeology& ecology,
Palmachim

Raz Samira, Chair, ICOM Israel