

# **Durbin Reflects On Horrific Violence In The Middle East And Need For Long Term Peace Between Israelis And Palestinians**

October 25 2023 9:05 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict. During his speech, Durbin remembered the victims of the October 7<sup>th</sup> horrific Hamas terrorist attack on Israel and commended President Biden’s emergency supplemental request to provide security aid to Israel, as well as the recent provision of humanitarian aid for Palestinian civilians caught in the conflict.

“The wanton slaughter of more than 1,000 Israelis and an estimated 200 hostages still being held is hard to fathom. One fact tells the grim story: more Jews died on this day than any time since the Holocaust. It was not just another bad day in the Middle East. It was a premeditated slaughter of historic proportion,” Durbin said.

During his speech, Durbin also spoke on two Illinois hostages—Natalie and Judith Raanan—who were recently released from Hamas terrorists. Durbin called for all remaining hostages to be immediately released.

Durbin then praised President Biden’s recent remarks about the conflict—urging Israel not to make the same mistake the U.S. did after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

“I have long supported U.S. assistance to help Israel defend itself from those bent on its destruction... And I will strongly support the President’s proposed supplemental request to help Israel, Ukraine, and other urgent humanitarian needs. The Hamas attack, which had nothing to do with solving problems between and Palestine, was not advancing a two-state solution or seeking long term peace. It was a reminder that there are still those in the region who refuse to accept Israel’s right to exist and will take any actions to destroy it. But in acknowledging Israel’s understandable rage and pain, I believe President Biden also gave wise counsel to learn from America’s mistakes made after the similarly traumatic attacks on 9/11... Yes, Hamas, just like Al Qaeda, must be destroyed. But Israel should be wary of the kind of overreach in which we found ourselves in Iraq post 9/11,” Durbin continued.

“You do not want an ill-thought occupation of Gaza to become your Fallujah. You do not want to dehumanize the innocents on the periphery who are not your enemy and will have to be your neighbors in the future. Hamas is a terrorist organization that has a long and cynical history of hiding its military assets among and around civilians. They dare their enemies to attack and realize that the collateral damage is going to be devastating. That makes any effort to root it out and rescue hostages extraordinarily difficult. But let us be clear that the Palestinian people are not Hamas. As a democracy, Israel must follow the rules of war and not target civilians or conduct disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks,” Durbin said.

Last week, Durbin and Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) led their Senate colleagues in a [letter](#) urging the Biden Administration to lead the international community in contributing to the United Nations’ emergency appeal of \$294 million to address the immediate humanitarian needs in Gaza and the West Bank. President Biden announced significant humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people in those areas.

Durbin also condemned the brutal murder of six-year-old Palestinian-American Wadea Al-Fayoume who was killed in Plainfield Township, Illinois. And he reiterated that antisemitism, Islamophobia, and anti-Arab hate have no place in the United States following a slew of events and threats across the country that target these groups.

Durbin then spoke on the need for a peaceful two-state solution.

“In Congress, I have been an advocate for a two-state solution—one that provides safe and secure nations for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. There have been attempts at peace and two states that offered some hope—Israeli peace with Egypt and Jordan, and the Oslo Accords. Some leaders, such as former Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and Egyptian President Sadat paid with their lives for pursuing peace. But for too long, spoilers on both sides have undermined a peaceful two-state solution. They’ve pursued narrow, selfish political goals, too often determined to stay in power above all else. Settlements have expanded, as have continued eruptions of violence. Regional powers have claimed to care about, but only paid lip service to the Palestinian people, and the Palestinian Authority has been mired in corruption and a lack of new leadership or vision too often at the expense of the Palestinian people,” said Durbin.

Durbin concluded, “I know it will be hard, but I hope out of the ashes and pain of this current crisis that there will be a renewed focus on a two-state solution. Out of the devastating Yom Kippur War came an historic peace treaty that still endures. So, with the right leaders on both sides, it can be done. And we here in the United States have a responsibility for a renewed push towards finding a solution that allows Israeli and Palestinian children to once and for all live together safely in peace and dignity.”

Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).

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