



BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL

RYAN DORSEY- 3rd District

KRISTERFER BURNETT- 8th District

PHYLICIA PORTER- 10th District

ODETTE RAMOS- 14th District

City Hall

100 N Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

JOINT STATEMENT: Abstention from Voting

Condemning the Hamas Terrorist Attack on October 7, 2023 and Antisemitism

On Monday, December 4th at the Baltimore City Council meeting, Councilmembers Ryan Dorsey, Kristerfer Burnett, Phylicia Porter and Odette Ramos abstained from voting on a draft resolution titled “*Condemning the Hamas Terrorist Attack on October 7, 2023 and Antisemitism*”.

First and foremost, we unequivocally condemn the actions of Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by numerous countries and international entities. It is essential to emphasize that our condemnation of Hamas should not be misconstrued as a lack of support for the Palestinian people. We stand in solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis who yearn for a peaceful and prosperous future. Both, the people of Palestine and Israel, like any other, deserve to live in dignity, free from violence, and with their rights protected. As legislators, it is important for our legislative body to use our influence to truly honor the Israelis and Palestinians' lives lost and both communities experiencing the brutal conflict taking place in the Middle East.

The concern lies with whether the Baltimore City Council should have suspended the normal procedural rules to allow a last-minute introduction of a resolution, outside of the submission process. Moreover, the urgency to immediately adopt this resolution without meaningful conversation on its content was deeply troubling, as it failed to mention the discrimination against the Islamic community, which is equally disheartening. Council members represent diverse constituencies across Baltimore City, including vibrant Islamic communities. Failing to explicitly include the discrimination of the Islamic community in the resolution not only neglects a significant segment of our population but also risks perpetuating injustices that should have no place in our democratic society.

Per the resolution sponsor's own admission, it was a nearly exact copy of a resolution passed four years ago, condemning a terrorist attack that took place in New Zealand. However, this resolution was placed on the desks of council members minutes before the start of the meeting and against our City Council rules/Parliamentary procedure—without any prior mention on our agenda or discussion in the City Council luncheon early in the day. It's important to note that all members of the City Council stood in solidarity, and conducted a moment of silence for the innocent victims of the attacks in Israel and Gaza at our October 16, 2023 meeting. Our stance was sincere and acknowledged the impact that this geopolitical conflict has had on the Jewish and Islamic communities, both here in Baltimore City and those living abroad.

Additionally, we want to make it clear that we do not condone the killing of innocent civilians in any form. We condemn antisemitism, Islamophobia, and all forms of hate. The reason for our abstention from yesterday's vote was because the resolution did not acknowledge the millions of Palestinians and individuals from the Islamic faith who are impacted by indiscriminate violence and oppression.

We stand by our decision to abstain in voting for an incomplete resolution that is not inclusive of all the communities and nuances of this global conflict.

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