

*Like any state, Israel has a responsibility to protect its citizens. In this light, the destruction of Hamas's governing ideology is a justifiable war objective. Achieving this objective will require a complex, multi-dimensional strategy that cannot be furthered by reducing Gaza to rubble. The core of Hamas's governing ideology is the establishment of an Islamic state over the entire region. According to its 1988 Charter: "There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals, and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors." While the need to destroy Hamas's military capabilities may be unavoidable, the objective of destroying Hamas's governing ideology will be unattainable unless paired with the political goal of full citizenship for Palestinians in either a Palestinian state or Israel.*

*We pray that, if the IDF launches a campaign of urban warfare, it will conduct its operations in accordance with the principles of non-combatant immunity and proportionality. Non-combatant immunity means that only those directly involved in the war effort can be targeted. It does not differentiate between Palestinian and Israeli non-combatants and, therefore, obligates the IDF to treat Palestinian non-combatants as if they were Israelis. Proportionality means that the IDF uses minimal force to achieve its objectives and refrains from "creating a severe humanitarian crisis" as a stated war objective.*

*Urban warfare is, no doubt, bloody and difficult. Nevertheless, we find alarming statements that seemingly renounce these important principles of restraint (Israeli defense minister, Yoav Gallant: "We are fighting human animals. These will be no Hamas; we will eliminate everything"). In the heat of combat, these principles are put to the test, and their occasional violation may be unavoidable. When violations occur, they must be publicly confessed and sincerely lamented. Recognizing this, we encourage the IDF to explain publicly why these violations were either necessary or unavoidable. That Hamas has not respected non-combatant immunity and proportionality does not lessen the IDF's responsibility to act with moral restraint.*

*We encourage the United States to initiate a new round of diplomatic efforts focused on attaining citizenship for Palestinians. For years, efforts to negotiate a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have failed. A focus on attaining citizenship for Palestinians cuts through these deadlocks by placing the decision for one state or two states at the forefront. Either choice presents severe risks for both Israelis and Palestinians that cannot and should not be*

*minimized. Nevertheless, refusing to address the question of Palestinian citizenship only ensures that future atrocity will occur.*