



Correcting the Narrative: NJA's Rebuttal to Yachad's Letter

In response to the letter published by Yachad on April 25, 2024, and addressed to Lord Cameron, the National Jewish Assembly (NJA) has crafted this detailed rebuttal to clarify and correct the numerous erroneous claims and misguided ideas put forward by Yachad.

It is imperative for our community to ensure that discussions surrounding the Israeli-Hamas war are both accurate and comprehensive - two attributes that the Yachad letter lacks. This response by the NJA addresses each point raised by Yachad, striving to rectify the inaccuracies and biases promoted in its letter.

This rebuttal is structured to highlight each claim in the Yachad letter, provided as a quote in italics, with the NJA's rebuttal below.

Yachad: *"We are writing to you as proud Jews including members of synagogues, Rabbis, leaders of Jewish youth organisations and Jewish student societies, Israelis living in the UK, parents of children in Jewish day schools and more."*

NJA: Yachad claims to represent the Jewish community, but in reality, they speak for a marginal, left-leaning fringe. Their latest letter, masquerading as a voice from a broad cross-section of our community, is misleading. At most, it represents only a narrow viewpoint of left-leaning Jews, distorting the true majority opinion among British Jews who are supportive of Israel's war against Hamas.

Yachad: *"Since October 7th, we have witnessed the horrors that the Israel-Gaza war has inflicted on Israelis and Palestinians alike. Many of us have friends and family personally affected by the atrocities that Hamas and other terrorist organisations committed on that dark day. We remain steadfast in our support for the people of Israel who, every day, live with the fear and trauma of what took place on October 7th. We are resolute in our support for the hostages and their families, who are living through a daily nightmare. We've been watching hostage families in Israel protest daily, begging the government to do anything they can – including ending the war – to release their loved ones."*

"We also look to Gaza and see devastating images of death and destruction. There are thousands of children that have been killed, thousands who have lost their parents and will be permanently scarred – physically and mentally – from living through the dystopian nightmare of this war. The people of Gaza are now facing the possibility of an entirely preventable and human-made famine."

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



NJA: Yachad's portrayal of the Israel-Gaza conflict markedly downplays the intense suffering and trauma experienced by Israeli families, particularly children, who have lost parents to Hamas's acts of terror. While their letter describes the harrowing situation in Gaza, it significantly shifts in tone when referring to Israeli victims, whose daily horrors and psychological scars seem to receive a lesser emphasis.

Furthermore, the claim of an impending famine in Gaza, described as "entirely preventable and human-made," demands scrutiny. This assertion is not only inflammatory but misleading. According to COGAT (the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories), substantial amounts of aid, including food, are continuously entering Gaza. However, there are credible reports that Hamas is appropriating these supplies, contributing to shortages and inflating prices to exacerbate the suffering of Gazan civilians. Such tactics by Hamas underline the complexities of the situation, which Yachad fails to acknowledge adequately.

Yachad: "Some of us will have personally experienced the rise in antisemitism and the way in which this conflict has been imported onto the streets of the UK. We know the same is true of Muslim communities in relation to Islamophobia. We know all too well how extremists hijack this conflict with the intention of causing further hatred and division. We are thankful for the continued support of both the government and opposition for their concern for the safety and security of Jews in the UK."

NJA: Yachad's commentary on the rise of antisemitism in the UK in relation to the Israel-Gaza conflict starkly misses the mark by failing to directly address the ongoing marches that have palpably heightened fears within the Jewish community. These protests, often orchestrated by groups like the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), not only predate any Israeli military response but are riddled with egregiously antisemitic chants and placards that aggressively target and intimidate Jewish individuals.

Yachad's omission of these critical details is not only disingenuous but dangerously negligent. Their brief nod to antisemitism lacks depth and fails to confront the virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric that permeates these demonstrations. This selective blindness undermines their claim of advocating for Jewish safety and displays a troubling disregard for the genuine anxieties experienced by Jews across the UK.

Moreover, their placid appreciation of government and opposition support is insufficient and inappropriate given the severity of the threat. If Yachad truly prioritises the security of Jews in the UK, their narrative must robustly challenge and denounce the specific elements of these protests that exacerbate Jewish fears. Anything less is a disservice to the

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



community they claim to represent and contributes to the perpetuation of an unsafe and hostile environment for Jewish individuals in the UK.

Yachad: “It is not always easy to hear the plurality of voices within minority communities and, at the grim milestone of six months of war, we want to make sure you hear our perspective on what we believe should happen next.”

“Firstly, we wholeheartedly support calls that both the Conservative and Labour Party have made for a bilateral cease-fire. Only a ceasefire will ensure that the remaining hostages come out of Gaza alive and that enough aid can enter Gaza to prevent a complete humanitarian catastrophe. Hamas cannot be eliminated purely by military force, not least because it is an ideology. Indeed, our fear is that the devastating impact of the war will breed the next generation of extremists.”

NJA: Yachad's call for a bilateral ceasefire, premised on the notion that Hamas's ideology cannot be militarily eliminated, fails to address the pre-existing radicalisation within Palestinian territories prior to October 7th. Their statement overlooks the necessity of deradicalisation efforts alongside military and diplomatic actions. Drawing an analogy to Nazism—an ideology that, while militarily defeated, required extensive post-war efforts to eradicate from mainstream society—underscores the complexity of truly overcoming extremist ideologies.

Additionally, Yachad's perspective on ceasefire as a solution to facilitate the release of hostages and aid delivery oversimplifies the ongoing challenges. Historical attempts at negotiation mediated by countries like Qatar and Egypt have repeatedly failed, often because Hamas either refuses to release all hostages or claims ignorance of their whereabouts. This reality casts doubt on the effectiveness of a ceasefire alone without robust mechanisms to ensure accountability and concrete actions towards deradicalisation.

Thus, while a ceasefire might provide temporary relief, it is not a panacea. Without addressing the underlying radical ideologies and ensuring a framework for sustained peace and security, such pauses in conflict risk becoming mere interludes between rounds of violence. A comprehensive approach that combines military, diplomatic, and educational efforts is essential for a lasting solution that can secure the safety of civilians in both Gaza and Israel.

Yachad: “Secondly, the international community must work relentlessly to prevent this nightmare from repeating itself. Israelis must be protected from the possibility of Hamas ever again being able to commit the atrocities of October 7th, and Palestinians need freedom and

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



security in a state of their own. The only way to ultimately resolve this conflict is through a political, and not a military resolution.”

NJA: Yachad's call for a political resolution, while noble in intention, does not sufficiently address the practical realities faced by Israel and the persistent threat posed by Hamas. The claim that a political solution can alone resolve this conflict overlooks the crucial need for the elimination of Hamas, an organisation committed to the destruction of Israel and responsible for repeated acts of terror, including those on October 7th. Hamas's repeated commitments to carry out further attacks highlight the necessity of a strategy that goes beyond diplomacy.

The reality is that Palestinian freedom and security can only be fully realised once Hamas is dismantled and prevented from re-forming. A strategy relying solely on political negotiations, without addressing the need for deradicalisation and the dismantling of terrorist infrastructures, is incomplete and likely ineffective. History has shown that peace agreements are unsustainable if they leave terrorist organisations intact and capable of undermining new accords.

Moreover, policy decisions must resonate with the Israeli public's wishes, who live under the constant threat of such attacks, and cannot be dictated by international perspectives that may not fully grasp the existential threats Israel faces. The safety of Israeli citizens and the security needs of the state must drive any resolution process, underscoring the importance of a combined military and political strategy to ensure lasting peace and stability in the region.

Yachad: “We support the UK government, and any future government, taking robust action to set the region on the path of a political process aimed ultimately at ending, not just this war, but the conflict. This work can and must begin now, regardless of who is in power in the region.”

NJA: Yachad's support for initiating a political process via UK intervention, while optimistic, overlooks the complex history of such efforts in the region. Previous political processes involving the UK and other international actors have consistently failed, primarily due to Palestinian intransigence. The refusal of Palestinian leadership to prioritise peace over their long-stated goal of eliminating Israel, coupled with their persistent avoidance of direct negotiations, has been a significant barrier to progress.

Given the historical context, the suggestion that another political process could end not just the current conflict but resolve the broader regional dispute seems overly ambitious. With

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



deep-seated mistrust between Israel and the Palestinian leadership entities—both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas—the likelihood of a political resolution seems slim. The Palestinian factions themselves are divided on fundamental issues, including the recognition of Israel's right to exist.

What makes Yachad believe that a new political process would achieve what decades of intense diplomatic efforts have not? It is crucial for any peace initiative to be rooted in reality and based on the willingness of all parties to negotiate in good faith. Unfortunately, there has been little evidence to suggest that the current or previous Palestinian leaderships are prepared to make the significant compromises necessary for peace. Thus, promoting another political process without addressing these fundamental issues is unlikely to yield a different outcome.

Yachad: *“Some of these actions could include:”*

- *“The UK playing a leading role in convening an international contact group that would support the international community in driving forward a political process.”*

NJA: Yachad’s suggestion for the UK to lead an international contact group aiming to advance a political process in the Israel-Palestine conflict fails to consider the historical ineffectiveness of similar initiatives. Past efforts have not succeeded primarily due to Palestinian intransigence and a refusal to prioritise peace over the objective of eliminating Israel. Given these precedents, there’s little to suggest that another UK-led initiative would yield different results. Effective peace efforts require genuine willingness from all parties to engage in direct negotiations and make substantial compromises. Without addressing these core issues, particularly the recognition of Israel and cessation of hostilities by Palestinian factions like Hamas, any externally driven political process is likely to be ineffective.

Yachad:

- *“Aiding and supporting the security guarantees the international community will need to make to Israel to secure its borders.”*
- *“Working to strengthen and support reform in the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a moderate governing force and as a legitimate alternative to Hamas.”*

NJA: Suggesting that the PA could become a moderate entity is problematic and highly doubtful given its well-documented engagement in practices that not only incite but also incentivise violence against Israelis. Programs like 'pay for slay', which financially rewards individuals and their families for acts of terrorism, directly contradict any claims of

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



moderation. Furthermore, the PA's educational programs often promote narratives that incite hatred and violence, rather than peace and reconciliation.

International efforts, including sanctions from various governments, have repeatedly sought to curb these harmful policies. However, the PA has consistently ignored international concerns and continues with its troubling programs. These actions not only undermine the peace process but also endanger lives by perpetuating conflict. Therefore, any effort to strengthen and support the PA without first ensuring significant and verifiable reforms in these areas is likely to be counterproductive. The PA needs to demonstrate a genuine commitment to peace, which includes ceasing all forms of incitement and taking concrete steps towards internal reform, before it can be considered a viable partner in the peace process.

Yachad:

- *“Supporting international efforts to reconstruct Gaza – a reconstruction plan that is tied to a political process resulting in independence and statehood for Palestinians is essential for the region.”*

NJA: Yachad's proposal to tie Gaza's reconstruction to a political process aiming at Palestinian statehood overlooks critical issues with past reconstruction efforts and the role of Hamas in Gaza. Historically, substantial international funding for Gaza's reconstruction has repeatedly seen misuse by Hamas to fortify its military capabilities rather than rebuilding civilian infrastructure. This misuse directly contributes to the cycle of violence, as reconstructed facilities are often utilised to support further conflict against Israel.

Moreover, the suggestion that reconstruction should be linked to a pathway towards statehood under the current governance fails to address the support Hamas enjoys within Gaza. Polls have consistently indicated substantial backing for Hamas in Gaza, even following the widespread destruction their actions have precipitated. This support underscores a challenging reality: without a significant shift in governance that prioritises peace and genuine welfare for its people over militancy, any investment in reconstruction is susceptible to perpetuating conflict rather than fostering peace.

Therefore, while the idea of reconstruction is commendable, it must be approached with a strategy that ensures accountability and transparency, specifically designed to prevent the diversion of resources to militant activities. International efforts must focus on creating conditions that genuinely promote peace and stability, which includes addressing the influence and operations of Hamas, ensuring that any move towards statehood is contingent on the establishment of a governance structure committed to non-violence and coexistence with Israel.

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



Yachad:

- *“Assisting Israel in its efforts to rebuild communities destroyed by Hamas in the south of Israel.”*

NJA: The NJA strongly supports the rebuilding of Israeli communities in southern Israel that were destroyed by Hamas, as well as the communities in northern Israel, who have suffered greatly from Hezbollah rocket attacks. The NJA visits these sites during our solidarity missions and has been vocal in supporting greater efforts to displace the thousands of internally displaced people who still can not return to their homes in southern or northern Israel.

Yachad:

- *“Taking more robust action on extremist violent settlers who act with impunity, destabilising the West Bank and destroying the hope of Palestinian statehood. Settlements are considered to be illegal under international law and the UK has already sanctioned, and travel-banned a number of violent settlers, but this could be expanded to include many more individuals and entities that build settlement outposts and incite violence. This would also help to strengthen the PA who are seen as weak in the face of violent extremism.”*

NJA: Yachad's narrative is blatantly biased, focusing solely on extremist Israeli settlers while completely whitewashing the rampant violence and extremism perpetrated by Palestinians over decades. Their glaring omission of the Palestinian Authority's (PA) notorious 'pay-for-slay' scheme—where terrorists are financially rewarded for attacks, with greater payouts for more brutal acts—is not just an oversight; it's a deliberate distortion of the conflict's realities.

Moreover, Yachad's silence on the PA's widespread human rights violations, including the systematic torture of dissidents like students and journalists, is appalling. Their one-sided demand for action against Israeli settlers, while ignoring these egregious abuses by the PA, is hypocritical and perpetuates a dangerous narrative that undermines any path to peace.

A genuinely balanced approach to peace must confront extremism wherever it exists. This means not only addressing Israeli settler violence but also demanding radical reforms within the PA to halt their incitement and financial backing of terrorism. Anything less is a disservice to the cause of peace and blatantly ignores the complexities of a deeply rooted conflict.

Yachad:

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



- *“Recognition of Palestine, on 1967 borders – alongside an understanding that the precise shape of the final borders will be subject to the mutual agreement of Israelis and Palestinians – would help give confidence to Palestinians that there is something to be gained from a diplomatic process. It would also serve to weaken Hamas who do not accept the legitimacy of the State of Israel within 1967 borders.”*

NJA: Yachad's proposal for recognising Palestine based on 1967 borders oversimplifies and misrepresents historical and current geopolitical realities. The term "1967 borders" often refers to the armistice lines, which were never intended as permanent national borders. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has historically been ambiguous about accepting these lines as definitive, with their actions and rhetoric often contradicting any commitment to such borders.

The idea that recognition of these borders would simultaneously bolster Palestinian confidence in diplomacy and weaken Hamas is overly optimistic. Hamas's charter and actions have consistently demonstrated a rejection of Israel's right to exist, within any borders. Suggesting that changing border recognition would alter Hamas's fundamental stance ignores the group's ideological basis.

Furthermore, the Israeli public's willingness to revert to these armistice lines, which would involve significant territorial concessions including potentially dividing Jerusalem, poses a significant domestic challenge. The complexities of such a decision involve national security concerns, historical claims, and the demographic realities of densely populated urban areas that have grown since 1967. The feasibility of this proposal must be critically examined in the context of what Israelis are willing to accept and the security needs of the nation, not merely as a gesture to potentially shift Palestinian perceptions.

Yachad:

- *“Continuing to provide support for peace builders in the region who are working from the ground up to build support for conflict resolution amongst both populations.”*

NJA: The NJA finds peace building to be a noble enterprise that should not come at the expense of Israel's security and safety.

Yachad: “As people who care deeply about Israel's survival as a Jewish and democratic state, we hope that you will do all that is in your power to ensure the UK plays a key role in bringing peace and prosperity to Israel, Palestine and the wider region.”

NJA: Yachad's plea for the UK to aid in bringing peace to the Middle East, while laudable in its intentions, critically omits the fundamental issues that continue to destabilise the

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk



region. The primary challenge to peace and prosperity in the Middle East isn't merely a territorial dispute between Israel and Palestine; rather, it's the pervasive influence of radical Islamist terror groups such as Iran-backed Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, along with ISIS, Al Qaeda, and others. These groups not only perpetrate violence but also propagate an ideology that is fundamentally opposed to peace and democratic values.

By failing to address the role of these groups, Yachad's approach sidesteps the core drivers of sectarian violence, underdevelopment, and the illiberal institutions plaguing the region. These entities have a history of using violent extremism to achieve their goals, and their impact reaches far beyond Israel and Gaza, affecting the entire Middle East and global security. Any efforts by the UK or international community to bring about lasting peace must confront and address the destabilising actions and ideologies of these groups directly. Ignoring these elements will only perpetuate the cycle of violence and hinder any meaningful progress toward peace and prosperity in the region.

National Jewish Assembly Ltd
Suite 12, 116 Ballards Lane, London N3 2DN

0207 289 2323 | office@nja.org.uk