

April 21, 2024

Statement from President Joe Biden on Passover

Tomorrow night, Jews around the world will celebrate Passover, recounting their miraculous Exodus story from hundreds of years of enslavement in Egypt and their journey to freedom. This holiday reminds us of a profound and powerful truth: that even in the face of persecution, if we hold on to faith, we shall endure and overcome.

As Jews mark Passover with storytelling, songs, and rituals, they will also read from the Haggadah how, in every generation, they have been targeted by those who would seek to destroy them. This year, those words carry deeper resonance and pain in the wake of Hamas' unspeakable evil on October 7th – the deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. More than 1,200 people were brutally massacred. Women and girls were subjected to appalling sexual violence. More than 250 innocents were taken hostage, including Americans. We can never forget the horror of Hamas' despicable atrocities.

Jews around the world are still coping with the trauma of that day and its aftermath. This Passover falls particularly hard on hostage families trying to honor the spirit of the holiday – a story centered on freedom – while their loved ones remain in captivity. Our hearts are with all the victims, survivors, families, and friends whose loved ones have been killed, taken hostage, wounded, displaced, or are in harm's way.

My commitment to the safety of the Jewish people, the security of Israel, and its right to exist as an independent Jewish state is ironclad. My Administration is working around the clock to free the hostages, and we will not rest until we bring them home. We are also working to establish an immediate and prolonged ceasefire in Gaza as a part of a deal that releases the hostages and delivers desperately needed humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians. We will continue to work toward a two-state solution that provides equal security, prosperity, and enduring peace for Israelis and Palestinians. And we are leading international efforts to ensure Israel can defend itself against Iran and its proxies, including by directing the U.S. military to help defend Israel against Iran's unprecedented attacks last weekend.

The ancient story of persecution against Jews in the Haggadah also reminds us that we must speak out against the alarming surge of Antisemitism – in our schools, communities, and online. Silence is complicity. Even in recent days, we've seen harassment and calls for violence against Jews. This blatant Antisemitism is reprehensible and dangerous – and it has absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country. My Administration will continue to speak out and aggressively implement the first-ever National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, putting the full force of the federal government behind protecting the Jewish community.

This year, let us remember the central Passover theme that even in the darkest of times, the promise of God's protection will give us strength to find hope, resilience, and redemption. To all those celebrating this Festival of Freedom: Jill and I wish you a Happy Passover, Chag Sameach.

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