88S40636 KSM-F

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R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, On October 7, 2023, Hamas militants based in Gaza attacked southern Israel, murdering approximately 1,200 people and seizing over 230 hostages; the cruel assault was met with worldwide condemnation; and

WHEREAS, The international community also deplores the increasingly catastrophic response by the Israeli government; its relentless campaign of air strikes has laid waste to entire neighborhoods, including homes, schools, hospitals, and places of worship; more than two-thirds of the population is displaced and over 11,100 Gazans have died, among them 4,500 children and thousands of women and seniors; this terrible death toll surpasses the number of children killed in conflict zones around the world each year since 2019, according to humanitarian organization Save the Children; and

WHEREAS, Over 28,000 Gazans have been injured and the health care system is collapsing; conditions in the region are growing ever more dire, with dwindling access to food, clean water, electricity, fuel, and communications; many Texans are wracked with worry for relatives trapped in Gaza, and compassionate people the world over fear for their plight, as well as for Israeli hostages held by Hamas in dangerous locations; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities, as the Abrahamic faiths, are impacted and devastated by the recent conflict in the Palestinian Territories of Gaza and the West Bank, and Israel; and

WHEREAS, The State of Texas encompasses one of the most socio-demographically diverse regions in the country, with thriving Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities, and is home to hundreds of synagogues, mosques, and churches; the coalition between Muslims, Jews, and Christians plays a fundamental role in joining diverse communities and leveraging their strength to deal with this conflict through extensive interfaith and community engagement efforts; and

WHEREAS, Tensions in the Middle East have provided fuel for those who would stoke prejudice and division, particularly among communities that are connected to this ongoing conflict; and

WHEREAS, In Texas, local Arab, Muslim, and Jewish communities are facing increased physical and verbal assaults and intimidation due to heightened Islamophobia and antisemitism; these threats have been made clear in recent years through such incidents as the murder of a Muslim South Asian pediatrician in Conroe and the mass shooting in Allen by a Nazi sympathizer; and

WHEREAS, Governor Greg Abbott and other officials have spoken out forcefully against antisemitism and in support of Israel's right to defend itself; Arab, South Asian, and Muslim communities are increasingly frustrated and dismayed by the Abbott administration's muted reaction to Islamophobia in Texas and by the failure to call for a cease-fire in Gaza; these communities have become more civically engaged in our democracy, as acceptance of diversity has expanded, but silence in the face of mass civilian casualties in Gaza and rising bigotry in our state leaves members alienated and disheartened; and

WHEREAS, Governor Abbott has demonstrated his influence in addressing the ongoing conflict, as evidenced by his assertive measures, including the allocation of funds to 31 Jewish organizations with the purpose of security enhancements and his personal visit to the region; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas Legislature, 4th Called Session, hereby:

1.  Urge Governor Greg Abbott to utilize all available means to achieve a cease-fire in Gaza;

2.  Mourn the lives lost and the destruction, both physical and emotional, in the region known as the Holy Land, which holds religious significance and reverence in all three Abrahamic faiths;

3.  Grieve for our community members and all those throughout the United States who are emotionally connected to this conflict or have family and relatives in the Holy Land;

4.  Condemn the rising antisemitism, Islamophobia, and objectionable rhetoric and rising hate in our communities;

5.  Believe that the diversity of our state is our strength but the social bonds we create and nourish are our power; and

6.  Seek understanding, respect, and recognition of our pain through peaceful and civil discourse to set an example for other communities to follow.