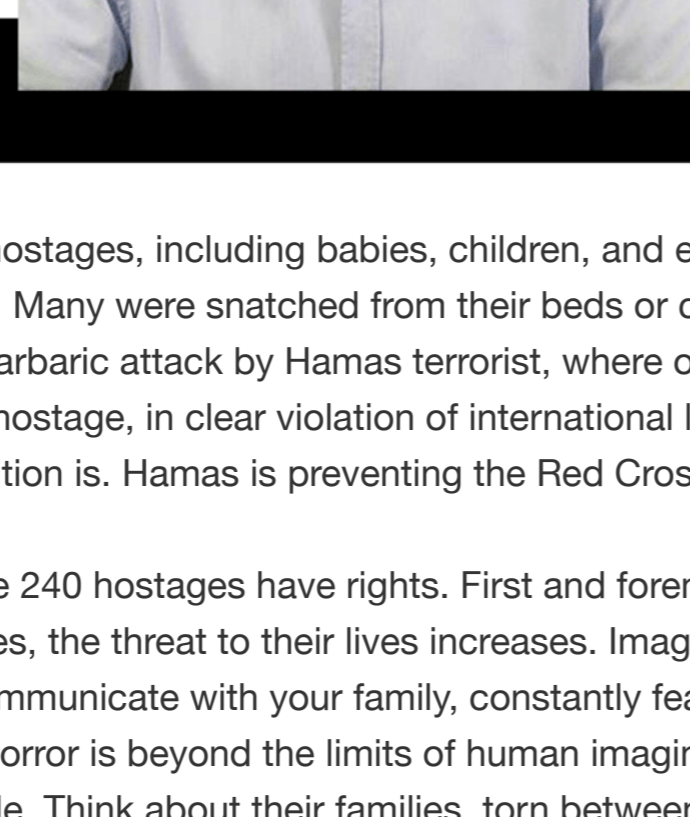


The Lowy Quarterly

News & updates from TAU's global home. Thursday, November 9, 2023.



Message from the President

Prof. Ariel Porat
President of Tel Aviv University

240 hostages, including babies, children, and elderly civilians are being held by Hamas since October 7, 2023. Many were snatched from their beds or captured in the midst of a pastoral music festival during the barbaric attack by Hamas terrorists, where over 1,300 Israelis were murdered. These people are still held hostage, in clear violation of international law. No one knows where they are, or what their condition is. Hamas is preventing the Red Cross from visiting them.

These 240 hostages have rights. First and foremost, they have the right to live; and with each day that passes, the threat to their lives increases. Imagine being held captive by a terrorist organization, unable to communicate with your family, constantly fearing for your life. No person can, and no person should; this horror is beyond the limits of human imagination. And yet this is the day-to-day reality of these 240 people. Think about their families, torn between hope and despair, having no information about their loved ones. We must help them.

Respective of one's opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the world cannot remain silent in the face of pure evil. This is not, by any means, 'legitimate resistance.' This is a clear crime against humanity, and one that we must condemn and fight. We ask that you don't stay silent. Demand their immediate release. Speak for the hostages, since they are deprived of the right to speak to the world. Be their voice. Now.

Informational Updates

- **Call for the Release of Hostages** – It has been just over one month since the 240 hostages were taken, and moments of silence and memorials were held across Israel on November 7, 2023. In honour of the kidnapped, hear this moving call to "Bring Them Home," featuring the partner of one of our employees at the Lowy School, as well as a TAU alumna. [And learn more about the memorial TAU held](#) on November 7.
- **Partnerships, Fellowships and Calls for Collaboration** – TAU is fully committed to continuing all existing partnership projects, fellowships and calls for collaboration, and is planning for the 2024-25 academic year as scheduled. Please note that the application deadline for the 2024-25 Azrieli International Postdoctoral Fellowships has been extended to May 9, 2024. You may contact the [Azrieli Foundation](#) with any questions.
- **View from TAU** – [This new study](#) by TAU and Ben-Gurion University demonstrates that Israelis are currently volunteering and donating at a rate never seen before; TAU is one of the many organizations partnering with the National Library of Israel to [preserve over 200,000 documents](#) related to the massacre and the war. Dr. Nimrod Kozlovski discusses the [use of wartime open-source intelligence information](#); and Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak (Moshe Dayan Center) talks future relations between Israel and Turkey [in this podcast episode](#).
- **Words of Recognition** – We've been grateful for the support from so many of you; including this [international petition from academics](#), started by Australian mathematicians.
- **Safety** – All members of the international community are instructed to follow the safety procedures in place. Currently, residents of greater Tel Aviv are asked to stay near secure areas. To view a list of safe areas on campus, see our [Safety, Health and Security webpage](#). For more information on safety protocols, see the [FAQ](#) below.
- **Mental Health** – TAU is significantly expanding the scope of psychological services available to the university community, including international students. There is a 24/7 mental health support line available, with services in English; if you or someone you know is struggling, please contact the Student Life Team, which is on call 24/7, at 052-5346188.

Spotlight on Campus

The TAU Perspective: Q&A



Neta Fibeesh is a neurobiology PhD candidate, researching Parkinson's disease under the supervision of Dr. Ben Maoz and Prof. Uri Ashery. She is advocating for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza.

You are involved in a project in the UK helping to raise awareness of the hostages. Can you tell me about it?

I have been one of the organisers of a grassroots initiative, which is advocating for the release of the hostages. Our website is [kidnapedfromisrael.com](#). The initiative began in America where two artists, Dede Bandaid and Nitzan Mintz, designed posters which could be printed and stuck up to raise awareness of the hostage crisis. Two Israelis in London, Yair Oshman and Eyal Biram, bought this initiative to the UK and since then the project has been exponentially growing. We currently have almost 2,000 volunteers in our WhatsApp group, who not only stick up the posters in the streets of London but also attend our solidarity rallies. To date we have organised three rallies, including: a human chain where volunteers held posters of the hostages in Trafalgar Square; a similar event outside the Qatar embassy; and, most recently, a huge event in Parliament Square where key speakers attended to call for the release of the hostages. The main goal of these initiatives are: most importantly to demand the release of the hostages, to increase international pressure and assistance with such, and also to gain global recognition that Hamas is a terrorist organisation that has kidnapped innocent children, women and elderly civilians.

Why did you decide to get involved?

I arrived back in London [from Israel] on 10.10.23, three days after the war began, because my parents and brother live in London. When I landed, I was completely devastated. I saw most of my friends and cousins either still in the IDF or recruited to military reserves, and I felt helpless.

On my first day in London, we went to visit a close friend of my parents, Michal Cohen-Sagi. Michal is married to Neam Sagi. They are Israelis who live in London and Neam is originally from Kibbutz Nir Oz. His 75-year-old mother, Ada Sagi, a Hebrew and Arabic teacher, has been taken hostage. The news about the hostages is heartbreaking whether you know someone who has been kidnapped or not. Whilst I sat with Michal, I was so unbelievably upset that my parents' dear friends were going through this. I had heard that Eyal and Yair were distributing posters in London that afternoon and, initially, I was unsure whether to go because I was a bit concerned about the antisemitism. But after seeing Michal, I decided I must do something to help, even if it is just to stick up posters and raise awareness.

When you were putting up signs, you were confronted by people trying to tear them down. What went through your mind at that moment?

I think the first thing I felt was shocked and scared. I was stunned by the aggression of the people tearing down the posters. They did not stop and ask a question or even attempt to engage in a meaningful debate about the situation; they were simply hostile and full of hatred. The complete lack of empathy and anger was just beyond my understanding... All we wanted was to raise awareness and advocate for the hostages in a peaceful and non-threatening manner, but – having been in Israel and (having) had friends and family personally affected by the situation – my emotional capacity was too low to argue with them any further, so we waited until they left and picked up the posters which had been torn down and stuck them up again. I did not expect the video I took to instantly become viral, but for the next few days news reporters across the world were interviewing me. I remember consulting with my parents whether to do the interviews or not because I was worried about the antisemitism, but I decided that this was precisely their aim: to stop us from voicing our opinions and sharing the terrible tragedy the Israeli nation has experienced. [I realized] that it is important to try to change public opinion and use these platforms to talk about the hostages.

Do you have a message you would like to share with the world about the hostages?

I would like to remind the world that this inocent was initiated when Hamas committed crimes against humanity on 07.10.23. To kidnap innocent civilians of all ages – women and men, Israelis and non-Israelis – is a barbaric atrocity. Try to imagine the anguish that the affected families are experiencing. Even though all of us in Israel are consumed by this, there are times of the day where we may stop thinking about it for a few minutes. These families cannot stop thinking about it. It is their 24/7. They do not know if their children are being looked after. They do not know if their elderly family members are receiving their medications. They do not know if they will ever see their loved ones again or find out what happened to them. There is no greater disaster and tragedy than this constant unknown. We cannot even begin to comprehend how these families feel, let alone what the hostages are going through. People in the world who care about human rights, who claim to be progressive liberals, who are loving family members or friends, must not forget this and we must continue to demand that the hostages are released.

Campus Activities

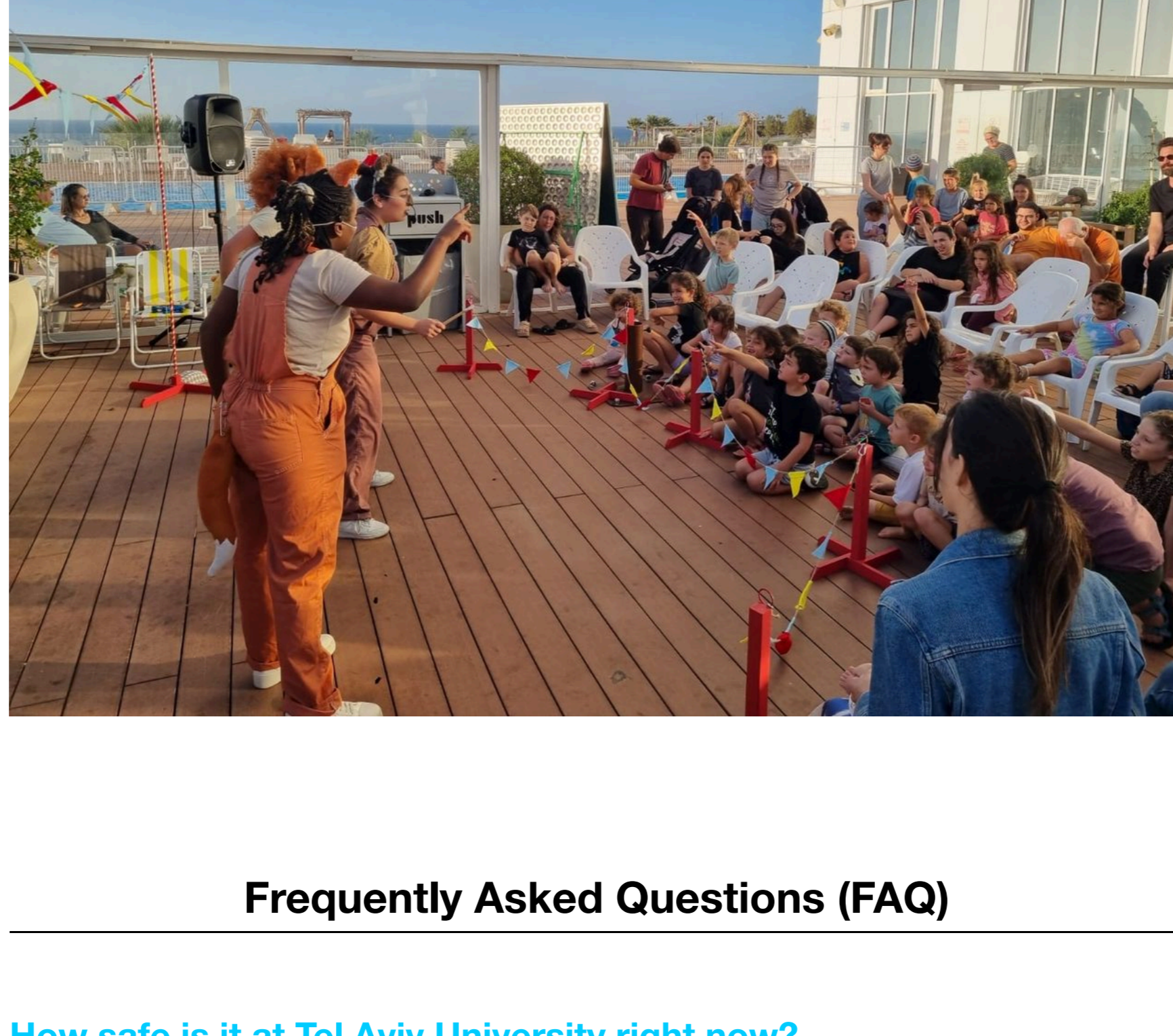


- **African Students in Solidarity** – Two current TAU students and three TAU graduates have joined the [African Students Union \(ASU\)](#) in a variety of volunteering efforts in Israel, including at the Expo Center in Tel Aviv, on a kibbutz near Herzliya, and with farming near Hod Hasharon (pictured above).

- **From Sderot to TAU** – [Read about the experiences of Zhi Li](#), an international student who is pursuing her master's at The Lowy International School, and who was visiting her aunt in Sderot on October 7, 2023.

- **Emergency Training for Students** – Organized by the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management, and with support from Magan David Adom, [the session gave TAU students a three-hour refresh](#) on how to handle a variety of emergency situations.

- **Setting the Stage for Better Days** – In just 48 hours, [TAU students and faculty wrote four plays](#) to bring some cheer to children from the north and south of Israel who have been evacuated (pictured below).



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How safe is it at Tel Aviv University right now?

Our top priority is the safety and wellbeing of our students and international community. We are vigilantly monitoring any changes in circumstances within the country and are in frequent contact with government agencies; our procedures and instructions are in alignment with wider governmental protocol and recommendations.

For those of you at TAU or who will be joining us, our focus is on taking care of you, keeping you safe and getting you the support you need. We are following the government safety recommendations for those in Tel Aviv, which currently involves ensuring proximity to a secure area. There are many safe and secure areas across TAU, including in the campus dorms. In the Einstein dorms, there is a secure area between building A and B; in the Broshim complex, there is a secure apartment (whose number starts with 01) on each floor of each building. A list of safe areas can be found [here](#).

Additionally, while we will be continuing with all academic programs, we have implemented a hybrid format for the beginning of term to prioritize safety and provide a flexible learning environment. Once safety and circumstances allow, we will resume more extracurricular activities.

What is day-to-day life like?

While we are limiting extracurricular activities and focusing on safety, we are also doing our best to support the wellbeing of our students on campus. For any students joining us, housing options in the dormitories remain unchanged, and students have 24/7 access to the Student Life Team to help with any questions or adjustments to day-to-day life. There are also mental health supports available.

We are currently organizing small gathering opportunities in accordance with current official guidelines and protocol. The term for international students began on October 22 in a hybrid format, and we will resume planned extracurricular activities and in-person classes when appropriate.

While Israel has experienced an unprecedented tragedy, we are also all very touched by the ways in which the TAU community has rallied together to support each other and Israel. Now is a time for care and kindness, and this sentiment is also very much felt on campus.

Are there currently restrictions on educational or extracurricular activities?

Currently there are restrictions on both educational and extracurricular activities.

The term for international students began on Sunday, October 22 and classes will continue to be offered through a hybrid format to prioritize safety and provide flexibility.

Regarding extracurricular activities, all gatherings are following current governmental protocol (no more than 50 people gathered inside and 10 people outside) and are taking place in secure areas. In general, any excursions organized by The Lowy International School are cleared by the Israeli National Security Center and the Ministry of Education and coordinated with appropriate authorities (including Israeli police and army); we do not allow trips to any areas prohibited or deemed unsafe.

I need help with arranging travel/ordering food/getting mail or other day-to-day arrangements. Whom can I contact to help?

The Student Life Team is on call 24/7 and is here to assist regarding all day-to-day matters. The team can be contacted at 052-5346188.

What security measures are in place at the university?

The Lowy International School maintains frequent contact with government security agencies to stay informed of any potential escalations or risks on the horizon. In preparation for an emergency situation, all students receive safety training during orientation, a welcome kit with safety information, as well as regular communications. TAU maintains 24/7 security and staffing on campus and in the dormitories. For security reasons, anyone entering campus is required to show a student ID card or other form of ID and have their bags searched. Additionally, no one is permitted to enter a dormitory without a clearance chip (FOB).

Regarding the current circumstance in Israel, we are following the government safety instructions for those in Tel Aviv, which includes ensuring proximity to a secure area. There are many safe and secure areas across TAU, including in the campus dorms.

When an emergency situation arises, our priority is on contacting everyone promptly. The steps we take depend on the type of emergency; our school requires that all students carry a working mobile phone with an Israeli number, and we maintain student social-media groups such as a WhatsApp group. We also employ a buddy system.

Our [Safety, Health and Security](#) webpage provides frequent details on approaches we would like to take should there be an emergency.

What do I do if I hear a siren?

Sirens are part of the "Iron Dome" system in Israel, which alert and protect us at any given time.

When a siren is heard in Tel Aviv (where the University is located), you should have approximately 1.5 minutes to make your way to a secure area. Once the siren stops, you should spend 10 additional minutes within the secure area. We also recommend that all members of our international community download the Home Front Command app, which will send push notifications in case a siren goes off around your location.

There are secure areas across TAU's campus and in the dorms. In the Einstein dorms, there is a secure area between building A and B; in the Broshim complex, there is a secure apartment (whose number starts with 01) on each floor of each building. A list of safe areas can be found [here](#).

I'm feeling anxious and scared. What should I do?

We want to emphasize that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It takes courage to acknowledge when you are struggling and to ask for help. We are here to provide you with the resources you need to prioritize your mental health. If you are struggling, please contact the Student Life Team at 052-5346188. They are on call 24/7. There is also a TAU mental health support line available 24/7. In the morning, you can contact psychological services at 03-6408505, or otherwise, at any time, leave a short WhatsApp message with your name and number at +972-50-2787037 and a psychotherapist will contact you.

In addition to seeking support, we encourage you to practice self-care, maintain a healthy lifestyle and connect with others. We recognize this may be a difficult time and we are here to help you.

I'd really appreciate meeting and being with other people right now. How can I do this?

We understand the need to be with people at this time, and the Student Life Team is organizing small gatherings in secure areas, in accordance with guidelines. Please reach out to the Student Life Team at 052-5346188. You are not alone.

What happens if things escalate in Israel?

Our top priority is the safety and wellbeing of our students and international community. We are vigilantly monitoring any changes to the circumstances in the country and are in frequent contact with government agencies. Should circumstances in Israel escalate and should there be a need for a change in protocol, we will communicate this to our international community. News updates regarding how the current situation in Israel is impacting The Lowy International School can be found on the [Important Updates in Light of the Security Situation](#) webpage.

While we will always reach out to our international students and researchers directly, subscribing to this newsletter is otherwise one of the best ways to receive any updates on changes in protocol for The Lowy International School.

What should I do if I don't want to be at TAU?

We want to emphasize that we respect and support any decision made regarding your time with us at Tel Aviv University. Whether you decide to stay, return home temporarily or leave indefinitely, we will cooperate and assist with the necessary arrangements. We recommend contacting the Student Life Team for further assistance.

What should I do in case of an emergency?

In the case of an emergency, The Lowy International School will be in direct contact with international students about next steps.

Please visit our [Safety, Health and Security](#) webpage on the steps that should be taken should there be an emergency. Additionally, key emergency and mental health contacts can be found on this page.



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