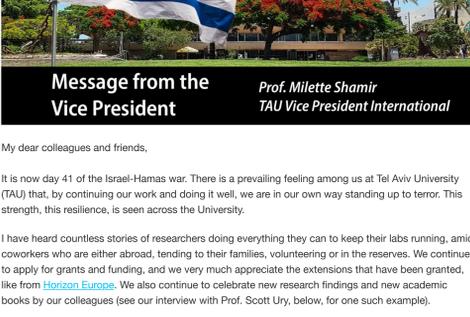




TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY  
The Lowy International School

# The Lowy Quarterly

News & updates from TAU's global home. Thursday, November 16, 2023.



## Message from the Vice President

Prof. Millette Shamir  
TAU Vice President International

My dear colleagues and friends,

It is now day 41 of the Israel-Hamas war. There is a prevailing feeling among us at Tel Aviv University (TAU) that, by continuing our work and doing it well, we are in our own way standing up to terror. This strength, this resilience, is seen across the University.

I have heard countless stories of researchers doing everything they can to keep their labs running, amid coworkers who are either abroad, tending to their families, volunteering or in the reserves. We continue to apply for grants and funding, and we very much appreciate the extensions that have been granted, like from [Horizon Europe](#). We also continue to celebrate new research findings and new academic books by our colleagues (see our interview with Prof. Scott Ury, below, for one such example).

We recognize, too, that we are indeed not alone in this. We have received offers from colleagues abroad who volunteered to teach in place of faculty members who are serving in the reserves. Some of our international partners offered to increase funding for collaborative research programs and joint projects. As we continue to grapple with October 7 and the war, your actions and your generosity have helped immensely.

At TAU, across our faculties and departments, we are sowing the seeds for a brighter future. Our focus extends beyond mere survival. This moment is about fostering recovery and growth, and emerging stronger than before.

Yours,  
Millette

## Informational Updates

- Update to the Start of Term** – While our international programs at TAU have begun, the start date for Hebrew programs are now [set to begin no earlier than December 24, 2023](#); this is in recognition of the many Israeli students and faculty who have been called up to reserve duty.
- Mourning our TAU Community** – Prof. Meir Ariel, from TAU's Faculty of Engineering, [in this moving speech](#) from the Smolzar Auditorium Memorial Service, tells the story of his son's death on October 7th and what life since then has been like.
- View from TAU** – Rona Yona (International BA in Liberal Arts) [highlights in this Newsweek article](#) how the public in Israel is focused on the return of hostages and the defeat of Hamas; Irwin Cotler (Irwin Cotler Institute for Democracy, Human Rights and Justice) [expresses in The Globe and Mail](#) that the world is once again being divided between liberal democracies and autocrats; and Uriel Abulof (School of Political Science, Government and International Affairs) [tells Voices of America](#) that peace between Israelis and Palestinians is still possible.
- Words of Support** – We continue to appreciate and support calls against terrorism and antisemitism, including [this one published in the journal Nature](#); as well as [this letter to universities from Israel's President Isaac Herzog](#).
- 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

### TAU Perspectives: Q&A



Prof. Scott Ury  
Department of Jewish History

Scott Ury is a professor in the Department of Jewish History and director of the Eva and Marc Besen Institute for the Study of Historical Consciousness at Tel Aviv University. Along with Prof. Guy Miron from the Open University of Israel, Ury is the co-editor of a new book, [Antisemitism and the Politics of History](#), published by Brandeis University Press.

Your new book, *Antisemitism and the Politics of History*, co-edited with Prof. Guy Miron, was just published. Can you give a quick summary of the book's main claims?

Originally published as a special volume of the Hebrew-language journal *Zion* in 2020, the seventeen chapters in this translated and revised collection explore how the key term, "antisemitism," is employed and understood by a diverse collection of scholars of Jewish history from antiquity till the present. By including a range of voices and perspectives, the volume raises an additional set of questions regarding how both academic and popular understandings and uses of the same concept, "antisemitism," have changed over time and place and in different contexts.

As someone publishing a book during this difficult time, are you able to continue to focus on your work and research?

Luckily, the area where I live has not been under direct, sustained attack in the current war and I've been able to continue my life of researching, advising graduate students and editing the peer-reviewed journal *History and Memory* together with an absolutely amazing staff. That said, the larger situation is trying and the news is oftentimes so difficult that there are moments or days when it is hard to focus on academic matters.

Given that your research and work on Jewish society and politics, have the events since October 7th shifted the way you are thinking about your scholarship at all?

There has been a great deal of debate regarding the various uses of the term "antisemitism" in the public sphere and in academic settings over the past few weeks and much of that debate is directly related to points raised by many of the volume's articles and also to the volume's larger message. In this sense, the volume feels much more relevant now than when we first began the original, Hebrew version of this project in 2017.

This intersection between the study of the past and the current crisis reaffirms my position that critical discussions of the past have much to contribute to our understanding of the world that we've inherited and inhabit.

Are there ways for academics from around the world to better support researchers such as yourself, who are directly affected by the Israel-Hamas war?

The response from colleagues from North America, Europe and other locations has been tremendous. For now, scholars are encouraged to keep reaching out to their colleagues in the region either to say hi, to discuss current research, or even to begin thinking about future collaborative projects.

As someone who has just published the second iteration of a co-edited volume that brought together some twenty scholars from Europe, Israel and the United States to explore the various meanings and uses of a key term in Jewish history and society, I am a firm believer in the importance of intellectual exchange and the wonders of academic collaboration.

## Campus Activities



- A Home for Evacuated Schoolchildren** – Hundreds of evacuated schoolchildren from Israel's north, from grades one to 12, are now [returning their studies at TAU](#) through classrooms on campus, and via the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History and the ANU Museum (pictured above).
- Students Bear Witness** – TAU international students recently met with the relatives of hostages in Gaza to hear their stories; the family members are gathering every day at the Tel Aviv Museum plaza to raise awareness and call for the release of their loved ones.
- Art in a Time of Need** – The team at the Genia Schreiber Art Gallery at TAU has been providing evacuee children with two activity booklets and an avenue for artistic expression in this difficult time.
- The Healing Magic of Movies** – The TAU student organizers of the Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival are now bringing their "Movie Bus" across Israel, to put on movie screenings for communities affected by the October 7th attacks (pictured below).



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What are your plans for the next academic year?

TAU is currently planning for the 2024-25 academic year as scheduled. This includes all academic programming, fellowships, calls for collaboration and more. We are fully committed to continuing the tradition of academic excellence at our University and have exciting new programs and projects that we will announce in due time.

### 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 greater details on approaches we would take should there be an emergency.

### What do I do if I hear a siren?

When a siren is heard in the "Iron Dome" system in Israel, which alert and protect us at approximately 15 minutes.

Sirens are heard in Tel Aviv (where the University is located), you have about 10 additional 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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