

## Joint 'Dores for Israel-Students Supporting Israel Hillel Statement

Hello Vanderbilt families,

Almost a year ago, we, as a Jewish community, experienced the devastation of October 7th. Now, nearly a year later, we are still facing the tragic loss of life for the hostages taken that day. The news that came to us last week, as well as the terror and reports we've been experiencing throughout this war, has burned a hole in the heart of our Jewish community. However, in the face of this immense pain and sorrow, our Vanderbilt congregation has brought light to our lives. We are more unified than ever on the Vanderbilt campus, and our vigil was a testament to the fervor and resilience of our community.

In the face of trauma, it was incredibly powerful and beyond reassuring to see the Vanderbilt Jewish community come together on Saturday night to honor the six lives cut short and find assurance together at our vigil. Student leaders from 'Dores for Israel, Students Supporting Israel, Hillel, and Chabad shared words to address a tragedy that struck at our shared humanity and core Jewish values. The losses of Hersh Goldberg Polin, 23, Carmel Gat, 40, Alexander Lobanov, 32, Ori Danino, 25, Almog Sarusi, 27, and Eden Yerushalmi, 24, resonate deeply with Jews across the world and in the Vanderbilt community. Over 100 Jewish students from across our organizations and networks gathered to process and heal together. We have demonstrated that even through the harshest times, our students seek to support each other even more. Our vigil has shown that though we are more vulnerable than ever, we are strong and unified too.

Speaking as Jewish student leaders, we must be vigilant against extremism and committed to fostering dialogue and understanding. Our support for Israel is not merely about aligning with a political stance but about standing for the fundamental Jewish values of human dignity and the right to safety and security. We believe in the intrinsic value of every human life and the importance of ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to live in peace and security. We are committed to engaging in constructive campus dialogue, challenging hatred, and countering misinformation with facts and empathy. Thank you for your support and trust as we continue navigating uncertain times. We are committed to our mission of ensuring the safety and support of the entire spectacular Jewish community.

- From Maya Robin and Luke Halpern, Presidents of SSI and DFI