



Dear Governors, Friends, and all members of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem community,

As you are aware, yesterday, the Sabbath and holiday morning, Israel was criminally attacked from the south by rockets and infiltrators, and we found ourselves in a surprise military conflict which as of now has been declared a war. The scale of injuries, deaths, and kidnappings of civilians and soldiers in one day is both unprecedented and unfathomable, and the fighting continues.

Our foremost responsibility is for the safety and wellbeing of the University community, and many have been called up to reserve duty, or have children or spouses in combat, or have friends and loved ones otherwise in danger or directly touched by the conflict. To that end, the University leadership is meeting daily and making decisions according to the developing situation. For today, the first day that the University was to be open after the holiday, we felt it was appropriate to let people make their own decisions as to whether to come into the campus to work in areas it was considered relatively safe (Jerusalem), and to close the campus except for emergencies where it was considered less safe (Rehovot). We postponed all exams scheduled for today. We have also postponed the beginning of the semester by one week, and we plan to open the academic year on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. However, even now, our academic and administrative faculty are at work and our special programs such as mechinot and those for students from abroad have begun, and exams are underway. We already have students on campus, and we are offering counseling and special support services to those who need them. We are advising students and staff regarding protected spaces as needed.

*As the situation develops, our goal is to keep the community safe and to provide support as needed, while enabling vital research and teaching to continue where possible, in an atmosphere of calm and tolerance.*

Our hearts go out to all those who have lost loved ones, or who are missing loved ones, and to those who have suffered injuries. We are deeply concerned for those in captivity, and we fervently hope for their release. We give thanks and support to those still fighting to protect their fellow citizens, and those on the front lines of medical and emergency care. We pray that this conflict will end with minimal casualties.

I especially want to thank you for the many expressions of support we have received from so many of you – please know that it means a lot to us to know that you are thinking of us and standing with us in these tragic times.

We will continue to update you as things develop here.

Yours,

Asher