

THE WEEKLY PRINT

Israel supporter Clay Fuller expected to replace MTG on Capitol Hill • Israeli nonprofits scale up care for a growing wave of wounded soldiers • UAE, more than Israel, absorbing bulk of Iranian strikes in war's early weeks • Canvas awards \$450,000 in inaugural grants to build bridges through arts • Will Iranian attacks push Qatar to expel Hamas leaders? • With Israelis displaced and stuck in bomb shelters, Social Delivery brings aid where it's needed • Trump official says tax code could be tool in fight against campus antisemitism • The Amodei siblings leading Anthropic clash with the White House over AI safety • Pro-Israel Muslim Democrat walks political tightrope in Philly primary

MARCH 12, 2026

Israel supporter Clay Fuller expected to replace MTG on Capitol Hill

Fuller has expressed strong support for Israel and for U.S. strikes against Iran

By Marc Rod

Clay Fuller, a veteran and district attorney, is expected to succeed former Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) in the House, bringing a pro-Israel voice to replace one of the House's most anti-Israel Republicans.

Fuller led all Republicans on the all-party primary ballot in Georgia's 14th Congressional District, winning 35% of the vote. Even though he finished narrowly behind Democrat Shawn Harris, a military veteran, the Republican vote is likely to consolidate behind Fuller in next month's runoff election.

Fuller has expressed support for Israel and for the U.S. strikes on Iran.

"President Trump tried the peace route with Iran not once, not twice, but THREE separate times — and they refused. He's the peace President, but you can't negotiate with a death cult," Fuller said in a post on X last month, emphasizing he had supported operations against Iran during his time in the military and that the regime and its proxies had killed many Americans. He

added, "This mission is not in vain. Victory through strength."

Fuller's Air Force career included work on counterterrorism operations, and he was deployed in 2024 to the Al Udeid airbase in Qatar supporting U.S. Central Command operations.

The day after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel, Fuller blasted the Biden administration for unfreezing \$6 billion in Iranian funds as part of an earlier hostage deal, highlighting Iran's support to Hamas.

In 2024, he praised Israel and the IDF for eliminating senior Hezbollah official Ibrahim Aqil, pointing to Aqil's involvement in the attack on the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut in 1983.

AIPAC congratulated Fuller on Tuesday's results.

"AIPAC also congratulates Clay Fuller for advancing to the April runoff to replace Marjorie Taylor Greene, who worked throughout her tenure to weaken the U.S.-Israel relationship," the group said in a statement. "Voters in Georgia's heavily Republican 14th District now have the

opportunity to elect a representative who reflects the values of thousands of pro-Israel Georgians and who understands the importance of the U.S.-Israel partnership."

Harris has his own history with Israel — he served as defense attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Israel starting in May 2021, at the rank of brigadier general, according to his National Guard biography and a Facebook post by the Georgia National Guard.

But that hasn't stopped him from taking a hostile stance toward Israel and its supporters.

"I'm not taking AIPAC money. I'm not taking money from outside groups trying to buy influence in this race," he said on X on Wednesday, responding to AIPAC's statement on Fuller. "No strings. No special favors. No backroom agendas. My loyalty is to the voters of Northwest Georgia. Always."

The post was accompanied by a graphic reading "in case anyone was wondering... AIPAC is supporting Clay Fuller."

Harris has also described the war in Gaza as a genocide, though he expressed

support for the “people of the region, both in Israel and Palestine, who want to work hard and live their lives in peace, and deserve better from their leaders.”

“I am one of the very few candidates or currently serving Members of Congress who have lived in the region and worked on extraordinarily complex issues within Israel and the Middle East,” he continued.

Harris said previously he would not accept support from AIPAC or the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

His tone has changed significantly since Oct. 7, 2023, when Harris said, “Just as America has the right to defend itself, we must always support Israel’s right to defend itself, and we also must continue working to

achieve a stable and just peace in the Middle East.”

He has also criticized the U.S. operations in Iran, citing the need for a “clearly defined mission and end goal” as well as consultation with Congress, and questioning whether the operation has “an achievable objective.” ♦

MARCH 13, 2026

Israeli nonprofits scale up care for a growing wave of wounded soldiers

By 2028, Israel’s Defense Ministry projects that some 100,000 patients will be treated through their rehabilitation department. Nonprofits like Belev Echad are supplementing that care

By Nira Dayanim

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

MIAMI — The first time Matan Fishman was hospitalized after a concrete wall collapsed on his leg while fighting in Gaza in November 2023, he was released within an hour. On the surface, it looked like there was nothing wrong, he said. But after a week of persistent pain, he learned a serious infection had festered beneath the surface. He was hospitalized again, this time for six months.

“None of the antibiotics killed the infection,” he told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. “I could not walk for three months. Then I started again, slowly, slowly.”

It was in the hospital the second time that he first encountered representatives from Belev Echad, a nonprofit that provides rehabilitation and medical care to wounded Israeli soldiers. At first, he turned them away, needing more time to process what had happened, Fishman said. But as Fishman moved forward in his recovery journey, the organization became a core support system for him.

“One day, they sent me a taxi just to come to the center and eat lunch,” he said. “Now, every Monday till today, I eat my lunch there at the center.”

Fishman spoke with eJP last month — some two years after his injury — while taking part in a “healing trip” to Florida for wounded soldiers organized by Belev Echad. During the trip, Fishman and seven other wounded combat soldiers spent time driving sports cars, riding jet skis and sharing their experiences with each other and with local donors.

But back in Israel, Fishman is part of a growing wave of Israeli soldiers trying to heal after sustaining injuries in the last three years of war. In January, Israel’s Defense Ministry described the increase in wounded IDF and security personnel as a “top-tier national challenge” and projected that by 2028, some 100,000 patients will be treated through the ministry’s rehabilitation department. The department currently handles around 82,000 patients, a quarter of which were added in the last two years, *The Times of Israel* reported.

According to professor Eyal Fruchter, co-founder of ICAR, a mental health umbrella organization in Israel, recently, the ministry has been receiving 3,500 applications for disability recognition a month, both mental and physical. They’re used to receiving about 4,000 files a year, he told eJP, “And the amount of files of people applying for handicap is rising all the time.”

When soldiers are injured during service, Israel’s Defense Ministry typically provides the first line of care, which private organizations then supplement with advanced treatments and emotional support. But with the number of wounded soldiers growing rapidly, public infrastructure and private philanthropy alike have been challenged to meet increased, and increasingly complex, care demands.

Since the war started, Belev Echad has transformed its Plotkin Family House in Kiryat Ono into a rehabilitation center. In 2025, its annual budget was \$18 million, compared to \$1 million in 2020. The number of soldiers relying on its support has also dramatically increased, from around 400 before Oct. 7, to some 2,000 now, Lauren Masuzzo, Belev Echad’s director of development in Florida, told eJP. The organization grew its staff and purchased an additional center in Jerusalem, she added, hoping to support an additional thousand soldiers.

“Belev Echad is seeing so much success, but it’s a sad success because the need has grown so much,” she told eJP.

Brothers For Life, another nonprofit through which Israeli war veterans support injured soldiers, has experienced similar growth. Founded in 2007 to support

veterans of the Second Lebanon War, the organization is used to growing by 100 soldiers a year, Yosef Abramson, BFL's external relations manager, told eJP. Now it's growing by about 1,000, he said, and in the process of building an additional location in the south.

"We've over doubled ourselves and looking to maybe even triple ourselves by the end of '26 We're doing our best to expand as fast as possible, also with our budget, also with our staff members," he told eJP.

Meeting a surge in rehabilitation needs

Last April, Yehonatan Maatuf, a 22-year-old soldier, had his right arm amputated after being mistakenly shot by a machine gun in a case of so-called "friendly fire" while cleaning and servicing a tank before Passover.

"I was lucky because I'm left-handed," he told eJP in Miami. "It sucked, you know, I lost a hand. But at the same time, I told myself, I wouldn't let it drag me down."

Receiving inpatient treatment and rehabilitation at Sheba Medical Center in Kiryat Ono for the next five months, Maatuf would often walk over to the Belev Echad house for entertainment, treatment — and to avoid hospital food, he joked. He started training with a jiu jitsu coach in the onsite dojo, he said. Training with a coach twice a week at the house, he has his eyes set on the Paralympics in a few years. "It's a really far, far-away dream," he said.

Maatuf didn't expect his army service to end when it did, so in addition to providing him with access to physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and other rehabilitation services when he didn't qualify for government-provided outpatient treatments, Belev Echad has also been a source of routine.

"Belev Echad was the only thing that kept me in shape, kept me, kept me busy," said Maatuf. "I had nothing to do. I was just thrown out of the army. You think, 'OK, I have a year and something to serve' ...then you get thrown into life with no planning."

In addition to expanding their rehabilitation offerings, both Brothers for Life and Belev Echad have provided more soldiers with access to medical care outside

of the country, and expanded their involvement in the process.

Belev Echad has also taken a more active role in providing medical care, Masuzzo told eJP, particularly for soldiers with specialized needs. On the sidelines of Belev Echad's trip to Miami, a soldier with a shrapnel injury to his eye met with an American eye doctor to get a second opinion. More generally, said Masuzzo, the organization has been sending soldiers on medical trips to the United States to access prosthetic care through a partnership it facilitates between NYU Langone Health's Center for Amputation Reconstruction and Tel Aviv's Sourasky Medical Center.

Since 2013, Brothers for Life's "medical project" has provided injured soldiers with access to second opinions from doctors abroad. Since the war started, demand for those services have increased significantly, Maayan Gottesman, the U.S. medical project coordinator for Brothers for Life, told eJP.

That increase is partly due to limitations of the Israeli health care system, particularly relative to amputations, said Gottesman. In the United States, amputations are a specialty, and surgeons factor cosmetic concerns as well as how a limb will fit into a prosthetic, into the initial surgery, said Gottesman. In Israel, however, treatment for amputees can be a more fragmented process. Through the public system, prosthetics are often more utilitarian, and harder to adjust should a patient's needs change.

But sometimes, said Gottesman, wounded soldiers just need to explore all possible options to move on from an injury. "It doesn't necessarily mean that there is not good care in Israel," said Gottesman. "I think that it's human nature to get a second opinion. To want to close that loop, and know that everything that could have been done for you was done."

Since the war started, Brothers for Life has also started flying top surgeons and other medical professionals from the United States to Israel to treat soldiers, train with Israeli physicians and discuss best practices. Last year, the organization hosted a conference on amputations, and in May, it

will have its second — focused on traumatic brain injuries

"They're actually operating with Israeli surgeons," said Gottesman. "That way, we're not only treating these soldiers individually, but also, the objective is to also change medicine in Israel in general, and help the Israeli surgeons gain new skills and experience that they just didn't have before."

A community for the wounded

For Fishman, and several of his peers, the realization that they had also received emotional injuries came months into their physical rehabilitation. Around 10 months after being injured, wanting to demonstrate to his family that he was OK, Fishman returned to work. "But nothing was OK with me," he told eJP.

Scared of getting stuck in traffic and becoming angry on the drive, Fishman changed his commute, driving the 30-minute route to work exclusively on back roads and through fields.

"I don't want to drive on the highway, and I don't want to get stuck in traffic," he told eJP. "I [was] afraid from the traffic, and I [didn't] want to get angry and then to come to work."

But even with his new route, he still felt himself losing his patience more quickly and frequently getting into conflicts with his co-workers. He left his job, and met with a psychiatrist, who diagnosed him with post-traumatic stress disorder. "Actually, I'm the most optimistic guy and happiest that I know," he told eJP. "I felt like I lost my magic power on that day. So I go back to the rehab, back to the Belev Echad house and keep working on it. And after one more year of rehab, actually, I feel better."

Of the several thousand monthly applications for disability status, said Fruchter, who previously served as both director of Rambam Health Care's mental health division and as the head of the IDF's mental health department, about 38% have been purely mental, 40% have been purely physical and about 18% have been a combination of the two.

Though mental health stigma is improving in Israeli society, it's still a major factor that affects both soldiers, and

funders, said Gila Tolub, executive director of ICAR. Often, a driving factor for soldiers towards private programs is to avoid possible repercussions of seeking help through the public system, she said. And for funders, it's often more straightforward to support initiatives targeted towards physical injuries than mental health, she said.

"They're thinking about, you know, I'm going to do a parlor meeting in my house. I'm going to convince my friends to also donate to the place that I'm supporting. Do I want to do a parlor meeting on suicide?" she told eJP. "Whereas, if you're helping amputees or or injured soldiers, I think it has way less stigma."

Another factor driving many soldiers toward private programs is a desire for brotherhood and emotional support as they

grapple with PTSD and other mental health challenges. Returning home after experiencing trauma can often be isolating for wounded soldiers, and taxing for the family unit, said Fruchter, but the length of this war has worsened that experience for many.

Elad Fadel, now Belev Echad's hospital visits coordinator, spent 305 days in reserve duty post-Oct. 7. During his service, his unit was hit by an RPG, and his leg was shredded by shrapnel. A medic, he removed the shrapnel himself, and continued his service for three weeks without telling his unit he was injured.

"I have my eruptions and my anxiety and my depression. But in the [Belev Echad] house, you feel equal. Everybody is crazy over here, everybody is wounded over here," Fadel told eJP. "It's a matter of

perspective, if I have a place that I can meet my 'cuckoo' friends. Let's call us 'cuckoo' because in a normal environment, we are 'cuckoos'. I'm normal with the 'cuckoos.'"

For Fishman, his own experience with injury inspired him to become more active in Belev Echad. When he spoke to eJP from Miami, he was leading a delegation of wounded soldiers for the first time.

"It's different after you [have] suffered," he told eJP. "You understand what's happened. It's not like you go to them and tell them, 'Hey, are you OK?' Because I know what happened with you. I understand you." It's easier to say, 'Yala, ani yoter dafuk mimcha' ['All right, I'm more messed up than you'], so don't feel shy with me."

Belev Echad provided eJewishPhilanthropy's travel and accommodations for the trip to Miami. ♦

MARCH 12, 2026

UAE, more than Israel, absorbing bulk of Iranian strikes in war's early weeks

Republican senators argued to JI that the war will ultimately be to the Gulf's benefit, even if they're feeling the pain now

By Matthew Shea

As Iran retaliates against the U.S. and Israel's joint military campaign, findings have revealed that the United Arab Emirates — not Israel — has thus far faced the majority of Tehran's missile and drone attacks.

Since the launch of the war on Feb. 28, Tehran has responded with widespread drone and missile attacks across the region, but it has been the UAE that has borne the brunt of the attacks. As of March 11, the UAE's Ministry of Defense reported that its air defenses had "engaged" 268 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles and 1,514 UAVs.

Iranian strikes have targeted American assets in the country, such as the U.S. consulate in Dubai, but also a range of civilian targets, including Dubai International Airport, where a drone attack wounded four people. Reports have indicated that Abu Dhabi has faced more than three times the number of Iranian

drones and missiles launched toward Israel. The attacks come as Gulf allies are running short on missile interceptors.

Two Senate Republicans argued to *Jewish Insider* on Wednesday that, ultimately, the U.S. campaign against Iran will be to the benefit of the UAE and other Gulf allies, even if they're feeling pain in the short term.

"It's always something that we need to be aware of, and it is not an item to be ignored, but at the same time, you have to measure it with what Iran has left, and whether our offensive capabilities will continue to degrade their ability to actually inflict damage in that region," Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD) said, referring to the attacks on UAE and other allies and their reportedly dwindling interceptor stocks.

Iran's offensive weapons "have limits as well," Rounds continued, "and we've just

got to do a better job of making sure that we go after their offensive capabilities."

"Unfortunately we're in the middle of a battle [that will decide if] the area [is] going to be safe or not," Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) said, adding that he believes the U.S.' allies are supportive of the action the U.S. is taking. "Everybody would like to make sure Iran doesn't have a nuclear weapon and they're sick and tired of Iran's antics. So I think it's part of what you have to go through."

Meanwhile, Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) pointed to the attacks on Gulf states as an argument against the war in general.

"These countries have limited interceptor stocks. This could get even uglier very quickly. Like everyone (except the White House) knew it would," Murphy said on X.

Experts told JI that the UAE's proximity to Iran, combined with its role as a global

financial and commercial hub, makes it a particularly attractive target for Tehran. Even limited strikes can rattle international markets, disrupt tourism and investment and raise the economic stakes for countries aligned with Washington and pressure it to end the war.

“Iran is deliberately and disproportionately targeting the UAE partially because it is easy, given the UAE’s proximity to Iran, and more importantly, because it is an easy target that Iran knows will exact a global cost financially, and a military cost for the United States and the region,” Rachel Brandenburg, a senior policy analyst at the Israel Policy Forum, said.

“The UAE is home to significant global financial capital flows, international corporations, and tourists from far and wide,” she said. “Hitting the UAE is a relatively easy way for Iran to show that it can harm not only American and Israeli interests and assets, but also global interests.”

Brandenburg said that the UAE had been “counting on its diplomatic and economic

relationship with Iran to insulate it from any retaliation against American or Israeli strikes” but “that, in fact, was not the case.”

Jonathan Ruhe, a fellow at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America, said that Tehran’s strategy is not only to broaden the conflict, but to interfere with the “Emirates’ success as a safe haven for economic activity,” in hopes that the UAE and other Arab countries “will pressure Trump to end the war as soon as possible.”

“Ironically, the UAE did such a good job creating a safe haven that now even the threat of a few drones can shock and scare away tourists, investors and shippers.”

Ruhe also noted that the UAE is an “easier military target” compared to Israel.

“Its [the UAE’s] air defenses are less battle-tested, and have less time to react to incoming projectiles than those in Israel, and, unlike Israel, it’s within reach of Iran’s short-range missiles,” Ruhe said. “Israel has already adapted to two-plus years of grueling conflict, so missiles and drones cause less disruption to normal life.”

However, experts noted that Tehran’s strategy could backfire, exposing the

military promise of Gulf allies while potentially pushing them closer to defense cooperation with the U.S. and Israel. David May, a senior research analyst at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, said that the missile defense systems of Arab allies have “performed admirably in real-world conditions.”

“While Iran might have hoped that Gulf countries would beg the Americans to end the war, the opposite has happened,” May said. “The Gulf countries have condemned Iran and intercepted most of the drones and missiles, and the shared experience of being subjected to Iranian aggression has reminded them of the need for a regional defense architecture in line with the Abraham Accords.”

Ruhe also argued that Iran’s strategy “has backfired,” and echoed sentiments that it could create the conditions for cooperation that were not present prior to the start of the conflict.

“However and whenever this conflict ends, it’s creating new opportunities that, frankly, didn’t exist until Iran attacked the entire neighborhood,” Ruhe said. ♦

MARCH 13, 2026

Canvas awards \$450,000 in inaugural grants to build bridges through arts

Jewish philanthropy gives 4% to arts and culture causes, but less than 0.3% to Jewish arts and culture

By Jay Deitcher

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

On the first weekend of May, Black and Jewish Baltimoreans are expected to flock to a formerly Orthodox synagogue-turned-community center, located in what is now a predominantly Black neighborhood, to absorb one another’s stories on the stage.

The performance is part of the Inheritance Theater Project’s Baltimore Place Project, which uses collaborative playmaking to build relationships between Black, Jewish and Black-Jewish

communities, and is funded by Canvas, a collaborative fund dedicated to supporting Jewish arts and culture organizations. In January, Canvas announced more than \$900,000 in grants, including \$450,000 for its inaugural Amplify Grants program, which uses art to bridge communities.

According to a 2021 Pew study, six of the 10 most popular ways American Jews engage with their heritage is through arts and culture, such as by reading books, watching movies and listening to music. But in the decade leading up to the survey, a staggering number of Jewish nonprofits

shuttered, including the most prominent — the Foundation for Jewish Culture, which closed in 2014 after allocating more than \$50 million over 50 years through 13,000 arts and culture grants. The impact was compounded as initiatives that shaped Jewish life in the aughts also ended, including JDub Records, the first record label to sign the formerly Hasidic-crossover star Matisyahu, in 2012, and Jewish digital storytelling company BimBam, in 2019.

This was the world Canvas was born into in 2020. It was organized by the Jewish Funders Network to assemble donors to

pool funds into the arts, based on the knowledge that the Jewish community yearns for arts and culture programs but struggles to fund them. It is estimated by Canvas that Jewish philanthropy gives 4% to arts and culture causes, but less than 0.3% to Jewish arts and culture.

Today, Jewish artists are cultivating a “Jewish cultural renaissance,” Sarah Burford, Canvas’ chief operating officer, told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. “For the past 25 years, there has been a growing community of Jewish artists all across North America doing cutting-edge work, and yet not a lot of investment from the Jewish philanthropic sector.”

Especially post-Oct 7, arts and culture provide “a sense of solace and community in times of trauma,” Burford said.

Amplify Grants fund initiatives using Jewish arts and culture to examine the perimeters of the Jewish community, building bridges and showcasing the richness of the Jewish experience, Burford said. “There’s an opportunity for art and culture to play a very important role in terms of soft diplomacy and fostering opportunities for cross-cultural understanding and connection.”

Canvas received 185 proposals for the Amplify Grants from 26 states and three Canadian provinces, choosing 10 initiatives to fund, including: BAMA, which brings community programs and performances by Mizrahi and Sephardi artists to Historically Black Colleges and Universities; Ragtag Film Society, which will host screenings of Sandi DuBowski’s feature documentary “Sabbath Queen,” about Lab/Shul’s Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie, in 20 Southern and Midwestern cities; and the Chocolate Church Arts Center, which will create cross-cultural immersive artistic experiences in Maine, including “Hanukkah Mexicana,” a concert blending Mariachi and klezmer music.

The flood of organizations applying for the grant is a good omen, Burford said. “That felt like a very hopeful sign to see so many different organizations and artists invested in doing this work of reaching beyond the Jewish community and trying to build bridges through our culture.”

The Baltimore Place Project aims to bring the audience into the theater experience, Jon Adam Ross, executive director of the Inheritance Theater Project, told eJP.

“People typically think of theater as people in the dark watching people in the light,” he said. “What happens when you turn the lights on? What happens if you invite people into an opportunity to engage with and shape the stories that are being told about their own lived experiences, and what happens when they get to do that work with their neighbors whose own lived experiences are now being added to the mix.”

For the program, local artists, faith leaders and community leaders are working together to shape their narratives, which will be performed as a piece of original theater at the formerly Orthodox synagogue, now Third Space at Shaarei Tfiloh, and Baltimore Center Stage. It’s all led by process director Rain Pryor, legendary comedian Richard Pryor’s daughter, who is Black and Jewish,

“I absolutely understand the instinct among Jewish funders post-Oct. 7 to look inward and support the community in ways that, when a community is in crisis, you get in a crouch, that makes total sense,” Adam Ross said. “It is really exciting that Canvas is looking outward. It’s really exciting that Canvas is saying in this moment, ‘We want to be we want to double down on the opportunity to build and be in relationships.’”

By bringing Jewish art into non-Jewish and secular spaces, it “builds confidence and excitement among an ever-growing

group of secular arts institutions to present Jewishly specific work,” Eva Heinstein, Canvas’ board chair, told eJP. She believes these collaborations will bloom into future partnerships.

Heinstein is also director of the Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation, which has been part of the Canvas Funder Collaborative since its birth. Originally a collaborative of five partners, the number has doubled in the years since.

While some foundations have arts and culture as aspects of their strategy, others do not, instead seeing funding Canvas as fitting into leadership development, education and other goals. Heinstein believes that arts and culture is especially “a potent vehicle” for building a positive Jewish future in a time of rising antisemitism.

“A thriving, flourishing people needs a flourishing culture,” Heinstein said, “and the organizations that Canvas supports, the artists that they support, are part of that process of generating artistic work and culture for our communities today, and also what communities in future generations will inherit and be inspired by.”

While the Canvas collaborative is predominantly made up of foundations, this spring, alongside a second call for Amplify grants, Canvas will launch a new Amplify Fund open to individuals interested in investing directly into Amplify grants. Last year, Canvas granted \$1.33 million, with the goal of doubling its annual giving to \$2 million by 2030.

“Canvas is about work that feels very relevant to the Jewish community now, that is really about celebrating the dynamism and vitality and vibrancy of Jewish experience and culture,” Burford said. “That really has the potential to reach a lot of different communities and have real impact.” ♦

Will Iranian attacks push Qatar to expel Hamas leaders?

Experts were divided if Hamas' alignment with Iran as it attacks Qatar will cause Doha to reassess the value of hosting the terror group

By Matthew Shea

Despite Qatar's anger with Iran over the regime's continued attacks on its territory and civilian infrastructure, experts are divided over whether the conflict will ultimately force Doha to reconsider its long-standing policy of hosting Iranian-backed Hamas officials.

Qatar has hosted Hamas' political office and leadership, who have been reported to live lavishly and amass significant wealth, since 2012. Doha previously agreed to expel Hamas officials during hostage negotiations with Israel, but ultimately did not follow through.

Some experts told *Jewish Insider* that shifting regional dynamics amid the U.S. and Israeli conflict with Iran could be sufficient to change Qatar's calculus. In the days following the launch of the joint U.S. and Israeli military operation against Iran, Tehran has launched widespread drone and missile strikes at multiple Arab nations, including Qatar.

Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani condemned the Iranian strikes last week as a "flagrant violation" of Doha's sovereignty in a phone call with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and "categorically rejected" Tehran's claims that the strikes were directed only at American interests and not intended to target the Gulf state.

Hamas — which has received significant funding, training, arms and intelligence from Tehran for decades — has not denounced the Iranian strikes, instead placing the blame on the U.S. and Israel.

Anne Dreazen, vice president of the American Jewish Committee's Center for a New Middle East, told *JI* that while Doha has raised the possibility of expelling Hamas leadership in the past, the recent attacks and the group's lack of condemnation of the Iranian strikes signals

that "the situation is a little bit different now."

"These Iranian attacks across the Gulf have really forced many regional governments to reassess how much space they want to give the Iranian regime-aligned groups," Dreazen said. "I think Qatar probably perceives that Hamas is siding with the Iranian regime, and so that could create some additional pressure on Qatar to act."

Edmond Fitton-Brown, a former British diplomat and senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, echoed those sentiments, telling *JI* that the current conflict between the U.S. and Israel and Iran could challenge Qatar's long-standing balancing act between Islamist movements and Western allies.

"Before the current Iran war, it [Qatar] was pursuing a business model that had it as international mediator, media superpower, host of a U.S. military base and sponsor of the Muslim Brotherhood's global ambitions," Fitton-Brown told *JI*. "It was a tightrope act, reliant on neither Iran objecting to the U.S. military base nor the U.S. objecting to the Muslim Brotherhood angle."

However, Fitton-Brown said "the extent of the betrayal in the face of Iranian military aggression is on a different level from previous issues. "The comment made by Qatar about 'everything being ruined' strikes me as an acknowledgement that a return to the status quo ante is unlikely," he added.

Fitton-Brown said that Qatar "looks unlikely to offer a stable haven" for Hamas leadership, adding that the group could find itself "sandwiched between U.S. allies on both sides of the Gulf."

Meanwhile, other experts and former White House officials remained more

skeptical that current hostilities would push Qatar to finally expel Hamas.

"I will believe it when I see it," Steven Cook, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, told *JI*. Cook noted that while the "Qataris are angry about Iranian strikes on their territory," it would likely not change the dynamics of their relationship with Hamas. He added that "hosting Hamas has become an instrument of Qatar's regional power and global influence.

"Qatar has been playing both sides for decades — supporting Islamist groups including terrorist groups like Hamas, while housing the Al-Udeid base and spending billions in the U.S. to buy political protection," Elliott Abrams, the former U.S. special representative for Iran during the first Trump administration, said.

Abrams said it is "possible that this war has awakened them to the inherent contradictions in this game, where they protect Hamas — but Hamas doesn't side with them," however, he also expressed skepticism that such a move would ultimately be carried out.

Abrams said Qatar is "too used" to their current posture of playing both sides, adding that Doha receives "too many benefits from it."

Richard Goldberg, a former Trump administration official, also said he will "believe it when I see it." He noted that Qatar "appears to have intentionally shut down their liquified natural gas exports and hyped the market ... as a favor to Tehran and an attempt to pressure President Trump into backing down."

Earlier this month, Qatar halted liquefied natural gas production — which accounts for roughly 20% of global supply — after Iranian drone attacks targeted key operating facilities and infrastructure.

If the conflict does push Qatar to expel Hamas leaders, experts said Turkey could serve as a potential refuge.

“Turkey is the obvious refuge for Hamas: a powerful and self-confident Sunni Islamist state that also functions as the headquarters in the region for the International Organization of the Muslim

Brotherhood,” Fitton-Brown added. “The Hamas leaders may move there soon, or may wait until the U.S.-Israel-Iran outcome is clear.”

“It would not be the end of Hamas” if they were expelled from Doha, Dreazen said. “Hamas has extensive operational infrastructure still in Gaza, and it has

networks throughout several countries, Turkey being one of them. In terms of Hamas’ ability to carry out operations in Gaza, I think the impact would actually probably be limited.” ♦

MARCH 13, 2026

With Israelis displaced and stuck in bomb shelters, Social Delivery brings aid where it’s needed

The small logistics nonprofit serves as a bridge between those who have things they don’t need and those who need things they don’t have

By Rachel Gutman

The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.

The idea is straightforward: Some people have things they don’t need; other people need things they don’t have.

The Israeli nonprofit Shinua Hevrat (Social Delivery) steps into the gap between the two, helping remove unwanted items — a clothing company with an unsellable surplus of merchandise; a relocating startup getting rid of its office furniture — and delivering them to people in need: families in poverty or a teen afterschool program.

As Israel enters its second week of missile and drone strikes across Israel, displacing hundreds of people and exacerbating financial struggles, Social Delivery is stepping in to fill those growing needs.

Families whose homes have been damaged by rocket fire or who have been forced to evacuate are receiving donations of clothing and toys, delivered to evacuees from Tel Aviv, Beit Shemesh, Beersheva and Tirat HaCarmel in the north, and to patients and displaced persons at Ichilov Hospital. On an even larger scale, as one-third of Israelis lack fortified rooms in their homes — many of whom are elderly or have special needs — they are spending long hours in public bomb shelters, often in the

middle of the night, which cannot only be stressful but physically uncomfortable.

“When there are frequent sirens, people need to stay in the shelters. So we provide mattresses, bed sheets, pillows, blankets — things that make it easier for them to stay,” Medi Nachmias Baruch, Social Delivery’s manager of resource development and strategic development, told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. Even as Israeli children spent the Purim holiday in shelters last week, Social Delivery brought them special care packages to lift spirits. “To date, we have distributed thousands of items of clothing and hundreds of mattresses, pillows and blankets.”

“We identify the needs on the ground, whether it’s clothes, hygiene products, infant products. And one of our biggest advantages is that we have our own logistical infrastructure — our own trucks and drivers — so we can respond really rapidly, within 24 hours, with the products that might be needed,” Nachmias Baruch said.

Current delivery locations include Hatzor HaGlilit, Rishon LeZion, Akko, Haifa, Kiryat Shmona, Tzfat, Beit She’an, Tiberias, Kibbutz Manara, Maalot-Tarshiha, and the Arab cities of Majd al-Krum and Shefa-Amr — with more being added. So far, the organization has provided support to some 2,000 people evacuated from their homes.

“What moves me every time,” founder Tomer Shemesh said, “is the ability to fill the gap from the surplus that already exists. The circle closes.”

Yitzhak Katz, the community director of the Ron Arad school in Rehovot, sent a video thanking the assistance given to his school, which turned into a community response center for citizens 65+, in coordination with the Rehovot municipality. In the video, Katz thanks Social Delivery and the corporation for the distribution of pillows, mattresses and bedding, as well as warm clothing.

Tali Lidar, the Israel representative for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, which supports Social Delivery, said the organization tends to fly under the radar. “Why doesn’t everyone know about Social Delivery? Because they’re busy doing the work — and not talking about it,” Lidar told eJP. (The organization did feature prominently in a recent episode of the popular Israeli economics podcast “Hayot Kis.”)

Social Delivery was founded in 2018 by Shemesh, a social and environmental entrepreneur whose instincts were shaped, in part, by growing up within the Noar Oved youth movement — Israel’s socialist Zionist youth movement. Before founding the organization, he served as a campaign manager at Leket Israel, the country’s largest food rescue organization. Watching

Leket redirect surplus food from producers to people in need, Shemesh asked a simple question: Why couldn't the same principle apply to everything else?

"He basically said: Leket does it for food — why can't we do it for other products?" said Nachmias Baruch. "And from there it expanded."

The group's logistics platform matches supply to the specific need of the moment, wherever in the country that need exists. "They'll respond to the need. So if they get computers, they'll work with the places that need computers. If you have mattresses and you're absorbing immigrants, they'll get the mattresses," said Lidar.

Social Delivery describes its model as win-win-win. For the corporate side, the organization provides a single address for in-kind donations — eliminating the legal and logistical burden of managing surplus — while offering a recognized tax deduction. Companies don't have to pay to dump the goods; they can write off the donation and know that it went somewhere meaningful. For nonprofits and welfare agencies, the model eliminates what is otherwise a constant drain: time and budget spent sourcing equipment. For the environment, it diverts hundreds of tons of usable goods from the landfill annually.

The corporate partnerships range across sectors. The garment industry — Israeli brands including Delta and Golf — generates production overruns and excess inventory. The high-tech sector, where companies relocate or renovate offices every two to three years, contributes furniture, computers and equipment at scale. Microsoft, Wix and IBM are regular partners. When Wix moved its offices to Herzliya, the brand-new furniture in its previous location had nowhere to go. Social Delivery came in, packed everything out and redistributed it.

Among the most trust-intensive partnerships is the one with Fox, the Israeli retail chain. Social Delivery is the only organization with permission to use Fox's surplus garments — the company will otherwise not allow its unsold inventory to be resold or reenter the market. According to Lidar, that kind of exclusivity reflects something Social Delivery has built carefully: the confidence of Israeli business that their surplus will be handled with integrity.

Operating out of three warehouses covering the north, center and south of the country, the organization employs dedicated staff for each geographic zone to manage requests from nonprofits and municipalities.

For many in the Jewish world, Social Delivery first came into view during the wave of Ukrainian Jewish immigration to Israel following Russia's 2022 invasion. Working in partnership with the Jewish Agency, the organization created physical stores in municipalities across Israel that were absorbing large numbers of Ukrainian refugees, offering things like baby clothes and formula, diapers, mattresses, light fixtures, kitchen items.

"Instead of giving them handouts, they [refugees] could choose what they needed," said Lidar. "So it was also keeping their dignity and their ability to choose, sustaining their resilience."

This model of needs-based logistics is what positioned Social Delivery to respond so efficiently when Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Already stocked with emergency reserves, and experienced in disaster response, the organization was able to quickly support those civilians immediately impacted by the war.

The geographic reach was national, extending to the north, the south and the center of the country as well as multiple hospitals receiving evacuated patients.

The organization's logistical center near the town of Pardes Hanna also features an added dimension that goes beyond mere logistics and focuses on community-building and environmental sustainability: a hands-on repair workshop for people recovering from trauma — including veterans dealing with PTSD — who need purposeful physical work as part of their rehabilitation. Donated items that arrive broken or worn are brought to the workshop: a cracked stove repaired and made functional again; old benches reupholstered and returned to donation-ready condition. The repaired goods go to yet another nonprofit for redistribution.

Social Delivery is funded mainly by North American Jewish philanthropy — the federations of Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, St. Louis, Atlanta, Chicago, San Diego and Cincinnati are among its partners, along with Jewish Federations of North America, which committed emergency funding post-Oct. 7 — as well as in-kind corporate support from leading Israeli corporations including the fashion label Fox, Panda Mattresses, Phoenix Insurance and Taavura Holding (transportation and logistics).

"They're very lean," said Lidar. "It's a small organization that's only growing and maximizing the work it's doing and really reaching more and more people."

And possibly most important to the current moment is the organization's ability to be nimble and highly responsive, Lidar said. Social Delivery does not wait for funding before acting. Lidar connects this to Shemesh's Noar Oved roots — a movement that instilled the idea that showing up to help is not a strategy or a brand exercise, but something closer to a reflex. "I think it's imprinted on [Tomer Shemesh's] soul. He needs to go out there and help." ♦

Trump official says tax code could be tool in fight against campus antisemitism

The Education Department's Noah Pollak argued at an antisemitism conference that IRS regulations could force nonprofits to increase transparency about funding and staff

By Gabby Deutch

The next frontier for the Trump administration's war with higher education might be the U.S. tax code, a senior Education Department official said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a conference about antisemitism organized by the Republican Jewish Coalition and *National Review*, Noah Pollak, a senior advisor to Education Secretary Linda McMahon, said that making changes to American tax policy could be a useful vehicle to fight antisemitism on campuses.

His argument was a wonky one, suggesting that changes to IRS rules regulating nonprofits could increase transparency — and require the organizations fomenting antisemitism at U.S. universities to reveal much more information about their operations and staff.

Pollak called for the federal government to create limits on fiscal sponsorship, a tool by which an existing nonprofit incubates a new one. This allows a new nonprofit organization to launch quickly, with donations passing through a larger, more established organization. The idea is that once the new nonprofit has a steadier foundation, it will eventually incorporate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the IRS, after which point it must meet certain federal requirements and make information about its finances and activities publicly available.

But there is currently no legal requirement that a nonprofit ever spin off from the organization where it is fiscally sponsored. That allows organizations seeking to avoid the spotlight to stay in the shadows, and to avoid having to file a Form 990, the IRS-mandated document that nonprofits must file yearly laying out the state of their finances, activities, senior staff and top board members.

“Over the past 15 years or so, particularly on the left and on the far left, they realized that there were really no restrictions on this, and you could just run whole organizations via fiscal sponsorships,” Pollak said. “It means you can raise money — tax deductible money, which is much easier to raise than non-tax deductible money — and never have to disclose who the money's going to, what it's funding [or] how much money.”

Pollak argued this transparency gap benefits organizations like Students for Justice in Palestine, which played a key role in fomenting anti-Israel sentiment on campuses after the Oct. 7 terror attacks.

“Changing the fiscal sponsorship rules to compel disclosure of who's being funded via fiscal sponsorships would basically be a neutron bomb going off in the world of radical, left-wing, kind of criminal activism,” said Pollak. “You all know what Students for Justice in Palestine is. Go try to find their EIN [Employer Identification Number]. Go try to find a 990 for them. You can't. They're not a real organization. They're not incorporated.”

“Things in the tax code, they may sound boring,” Pollak added. “But they would be very effective in creating some disclosure.”

Pollak said changes to the tax code might also force universities to cut back on spending on left-wing priorities.

“Over the past 40 or 50 years, the tax code has actually been tweaked and rigged and modified in so many different ways that creates a lot of advantages for universities, to the point where the universities now have so much money that they can spend on essentially luxury goods,” Pollak said. “For a university, the luxury goods they spend on is the gender studies department, and it's DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] bureaucracies.”

Pollak pointed to those “luxury goods” — left-wing programs in the humanities, for instance — as a key factor in the growth of antisemitism at elite universities. He did not offer a specific policy fix but said he thinks that the solution might be found in the tax code.

“If you actually look at adjustments to the tax code, that will translate into less antisemitism, because the universities would be compelled to sober up to get back to the core mission of education and the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence,” said Pollak. “They would actually have to drop a lot of the kind of insane nonsense departments and fake academic programs.”

Universities' status as nonprofit organizations should also come into play when the State Department determines how many foreign students should be allowed to enroll at those universities, Pollak said.

The Trump administration has sought to limit the number of foreign students at universities and deport those who are flouting American values; Pollak argued that the number of foreign students at elite institutions is so high that they push the campuses toward an anti-American sentiment.

“There's so many of them, and many of them are from cultures that, frankly, are not particularly compatible with the type of values that we want on a campus, on a Western U.S. campus, and they get our kids spun up on third worldist-type causes and radical causes,” said Pollak.

“Universities in America are actually supposed to — they are charities. They're 501(c)(3)s, and they are actually supposed to be operated for the benefit of Americans, and not just be kind of sold out to whoever wants to come from all over the world.” ♦

The Amodei siblings leading Anthropic clash with the White House over AI safety

Dario and Daniela Amodei, who are Jewish, are heading the AI giant as it sues the Department of Defense over its 'supply-chain risk' label

By Gabby Deutch

Siblings Dario and Daniela Amodei are like countless other Americans who have built a family business together. Except that the business they have built is artificial intelligence giant Anthropic, one of the fastest-growing companies in America — and in the five years since they left cushy jobs at rival OpenAI to start it, they have each amassed billions in wealth.

From the beginning, the Amodeis have said the principle driving their approach to Anthropic is safety. They think other AI companies are not paying enough attention to safety risks as the technology's capabilities grow each day. Until now, that ethos has been a point of curiosity for the consumers playing around on the company's Claude chatbot, and a selling point for the businesses spending large sums of money to employ Claude in enterprise settings.

But a dispute over Anthropic's stated commitment to safety has now put the company squarely in conflict with the Trump administration. On Monday, Anthropic sued Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and several other Trump administration officials over Hegseth's decision to designate Anthropic a national security "supply-chain risk" last month, after the company told the Pentagon that it would not allow its technology to be used for mass domestic surveillance or in fully autonomous weapons.

"I believe deeply in the existential importance of using AI to defend the United States and other democracies, and to defeat our autocratic adversaries," Dario Amodei said in February. "However, in a narrow set of cases, we believe AI can undermine, rather than defend, democratic values. Some uses are also simply outside

the bounds of what today's technology can safely and reliably do."

Amodei now finds himself facing off against President Donald Trump — an uncomfortable position for the CEO of a company that actively has hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts with the federal government, and that has said it wants to continue those working relationships. The complaints allege that the federal government's actions targeting Anthropic go beyond what is legally allowed according to the supply chain statutes, and that the Trump administration is ideologically motivated in targeting Anthropic. (A Department of Defense spokesperson has said the organization does not comment on ongoing legal matters.)

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is "within his right to cancel the contract. But I think that the people in the Department of War, they're trying to turn the screw. They're trying to make it tough for Anthropic to survive," Will Rinehart, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who researches tech policy, told *Jewish Insider*. "It's one thing to say, 'Hey, we no longer want to work with Anthropic.' But it's quite different to basically use this supply-chain risk designation and to then go after Anthropic, because that [designation] was developed to be basically weaponized against China."

Dario and Daniela Amodei grew up in San Francisco with parents who wanted them to be engaged with the world. Their mother, Elena Engel, is Jewish, and she worked to build libraries in the Bay Area. Their father, Riccardo Amodei, was a leathersmith from Italy.

"They gave me a sense of right and wrong and what was important in the world," Dario Amodei told journalist Alex

Kantrowitz in 2025. They "imbu[ed] a strong sense of responsibility."

Amodei initially went into the hard sciences. He went to college at Caltech, where he authored a memorable op-ed in the campus newspaper calling on his fellow students — including in the sciences — to be more engaged with world politics, and in particular to speak out against the Iraq war.

"We are distracted not by the sex scandals and sensationalism of the rest of the world, but by problem sets, computer games and bizarre arguments about the availability of donuts. We, who have so much power to influence the future, have bafflingly renounced our right to it," Amodei wrote in 2003. "We have the privilege and duty to preserve the ethical integrity of our community, our nation and humanity."

It's an ethos he brought with him when he transferred to Stanford, and then to Princeton, where he earned a PhD in physics. Early in his career, he began working on AI technology. He worked as a deep learning researcher at Google, before spending nearly five years at OpenAI, rising to become its vice president of research.

Daniela Amodei, meanwhile, did not come from the STEM world. She worked in politics for a period, first on the campaign and then in the congressional office of former Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA). Then she worked for the payments company Stripe before joining OpenAI two years after her brother.

Over time, after raising concerns about the likely impacts of AI, Dario Amodei decided that the leaders of OpenAI were not taking his critiques as seriously as he hoped. So he and Daniela left the company to start Anthropic, where he is CEO and she is president.

Since then, Anthropic has been wildly successful. It launched Claude a year after OpenAI launched ChatGPT, which was the first time most people outside of the tech world began to use and understand generative AI. And while Claude has a fraction of the active users as ChatGPT, the company primarily focuses on selling its technology to businesses.

Even as Claude has grown, the Amodei siblings still talk about the potential dangers of AI. Dario Amodei famously said in 2025 that the tool could erase half of all

entry-level white collar jobs in the next five years.

“I’m incredibly optimistic about the technology,” he said in December. “But nothing that powerful doesn’t have a significant number of downsides.”

Anthropic has framed itself as an advocate for greater safeguards on the technology. Amodei came to Washington in September to speak about the topic as the company doubles down on its lobbying efforts. The group plans to donate \$20 million this year to congressional candidates who want to regulate the AI

industry — via a political group that was created in direct opposition to fundraising efforts being supported by OpenAI.

“We’ve seen lots of bad things: We’ve seen teenagers being driven to commit suicide by LLMs,” Amodei said. “We can imagine much larger-scale catastrophe. So the thing we’ve always advocated for is basic transparency requirements around models.”

For a company that is so upfront about its values, a test of those battles was inevitable. But no one expected the foe to be the Pentagon. ♦

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Pro-Israel Muslim Democrat walks political tightrope in Philly primary

State Sen. Sharif Street supports continued U.S. aid to Israel but calls Israeli PM Netanyahu a war criminal

By Marc Rod

Sharif Street is walking a unique political path.

The Pennsylvania state senator running for a House seat in the heart of deep-blue Philadelphia is Black and Muslim, and has staked out positions largely supportive of Israel.

He traveled to Israel with the American Jewish Committee in 2017 “to gain some understanding” of the complexities facing Israelis and Palestinians.

He has indicated that he would not support conditions on U.S. aid to Israel, saying that the two allies need an “open dialogue,” yet he refers to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a war criminal.

Street’s nuances on Israel — he backs a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, while also urging a compassionate approach to the Palestinians — offer a sharp contrast with his most prominent rival in the Democratic primary for Pennsylvania’s 3rd Congressional District, who is a strident antagonist of Israel.

Street’s friends and allies in the Jewish community insist his stances aren’t a matter of political convenience or calibrated to win

him a congressional seat, but rather are borne of years of study on the issue, personal conviction and decades-long ties to members of the Jewish community.

The nuances Street evinces on Israel extend to his reading of the Muslim community, too. While political analyses over the past two years have seen the Jewish and Muslim communities as generally at odds over the war in Gaza — including the three current Muslim members of Congress who regularly stake out anti-Israel stances — Street argued in an interview with *Jewish Insider* that doesn’t tell the full story of his community.

“The Muslim community is much more diverse than I think the American press tends to think,” Street told JI in a recent interview. “I’m an African American. We have had, historically, pretty good relationships with the Jewish community. ... There are over 2 billion Muslims in the world, a third of the world population. And American Muslims are from South Asia, they’re from Europe, they’re from Africa, they are from the Middle East.”

“I think the perspective of the press is always just Middle Eastern Muslims who

come to this country with a very long, recent history of ... concerns about Israel in the Middle East. That’s not all Muslims,” he said.

Muslims from other parts of the world “have various perspectives and their issues are diverse.” And he said the African American Muslim community of which he is a part “does not have [that] kind of entrenched negative history.”

Many African American Muslims, he said, are converts, and grew up in Christian communities, with different perspectives on Israel and the Jewish community. Of the nearly 500,000 Muslims in the Philadelphia area, 80% are African American, according to Street.

“Every time they want to talk about Muslim-Jewish relations, they just focus on a very small sector — probably less than 10% of the Muslim community, which happen to be Arab American,” Street said. “And their perspective is important, but it doesn’t represent all Muslims.”

Speaking to JI, Street cast himself as a supporter of the U.S.-Israel relationship, while also urging a compassionate approach to the Palestinians and a concerted effort to aid in the reconstruction of Gaza.

“Israel is one of the United States’ most important allies in the world and certainly in the region, and we need to make sure that we keep that relationship strong,” Street said. “We also need to understand that we have to rebuild Gaza for Palestinians.”

He argued that a failure to properly rebuild Gaza and provide it with the necessary resources will only fuel radicalization and help Hamas and other extremist groups grow. “That makes both Palestinians and Israelis less safe,” he said.

He said the U.S. should invest in rebuilding and use its influence to bring along Israel and a multinational coalition, including Arab states, to assist the reconstruction and ensure the security of Gaza and the region, which would improve trust and the chances of success.

“By investing in those communities, we increase the safety and security for Israelis and Palestinians,” he reiterated. “At the same time, we have to recognize their immediate challenges, and the United States has to continue to make sure Israel can deal with the immediate challenges, while we increase the long term safety and security for both Israeli and Palestinians as well.”

He also indicated that he wouldn’t support conditions on U.S. aid to Israel, saying that the two allies need an “open dialogue.” He said that the U.S. should “encourage peace and prosperity in the region,” something best done through a “partnership” rather than by “dictating to Israel.”

He emphasized that all sides suffered in the war, and said he believes both Israelis and Palestinians want change.

Street takes a more critical stance toward Netanyahu.

He was quoted by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as saying, “Guess what? Benjamin Netanyahu is not the only leader of a major country in the world that’s committed war crimes, because Donald Trump has done the same thing. But none of us would talk about getting rid of the United States of America as a country.” He said at a recent candidate forum that Netanyahu should be prosecuted for war crimes.

Asked about the comments quoted by the *Inquirer*, he told *JI* that it is “possible” that Netanyahu was responsible for war crimes “and I certainly think that that needs to be investigated.” He highlighted that many

Israelis are also concerned with and dissatisfied with Netanyahu’s leadership throughout the war, and want to see him out of office.

“Ultimately — and I think the Israeli people will do the right thing — but I think that the Israeli courts have to have a chance to really hear that and oversee those issues, and that’s not likely to happen while we’re still in an armed conflict,” he said.

About his trip with AJC to Israel alongside other Muslim leaders in 2017, Street said, “So often we oversimplify what’s going on in the Middle East,” Street said. “I don’t think Americans fully understand the depth and complexity of the issues. So I wanted to gain some understanding.”

David Hyman, a longtime attorney in Philadelphia who was an ally of Street’s father, former Philadelphia Mayor John Street, watched him grow up since he was a teenager. He said he remembers having a conversation with Street along similar lines following that trip.

“He said that what he really came away with on the trip [was] that slogans and simple answers are not what will help matters,” Hyman recounted.

Kevin Greenberg, an attorney who said he’s been friends with Street for 30 years, said he’s seen Street’s views on the Middle East grow and evolve over time, and the two had — prior to Street’s AJC trip — discussed visiting Israel together.

“I’ve seen a lot of politicians decide to be pro-Israel, pro-Jewish for contributions, and I’ve seen a lot of people be anti-Israel, pro-BDS ... because you think there are votes there. That just doesn’t enter into his calculus on this issue,” Greenberg said. “It’s a core belief of who Sharif is. And he stands for the little guy in any situation.”

Hyman, a board member of AJC’s Philadelphia chapter, offered similar praise.

“He’ll speak about his support for Israel in a setting, in a context where there’s no political upside,” Hyman said. “For me, that’s the litmus test, because there’s so little political courage these days to say anything other than what’s politically expedient. He’s very upfront.”

Hyman said that, while Street may disagree with some of the Israeli government’s decisions, “in terms of standing behind the basic tenets of Zionism and the right for Israel to exist and defend

itself, he distinguishes himself at a time where [other supporters are] peeling off.”

And he emphasized that Street will be accessible to groups across the Jewish community, who already have existing relationships with him. “When issues come up, it’ll be natural for us to talk to him and take his temperature.”

Robin Schatz, the director of government relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, also said that Street has “always been a friend” well before his run for Congress, and that he has always been accessible to her and the Jewish community.

At the beginning of their friendship decades ago, Greenberg said Street did not know much about the Middle East but wanted to learn more, growing up in a household more focused on the needs of Philadelphia residents. “Sharif has evolved from a curious, but unknowing person, to somebody who has a deep understanding, and respect for Jews qua Jews.”

Greenberg also said that Street has always maintained a diverse group of friends, and that both his social and professional circles have included many Jewish people, and that he was a prominent participant in both of Greenberg’s daughters’ bat mitzvahs.

Hyman noted that Street worked for a time at a historically Jewish law firm, and said that he has been active in a local AJC initiative bringing together Jews and Muslims.

Street condemned those in the United States who have turned their grievances over the war in Gaza into violent action against Jewish Americans.

“I think one of the things that happens is silent complicity. When people don’t speak out against the antisemitism that exists, that fuels it,” Street said. “We also can’t allow people who are having concerns to then turn into calling for violence in the U.S. ... I will use my voice, as I have done as a state senator, as a congressperson to speak out against this and use the platform to do it.”

He additionally emphasized the importance of hate crimes legislation and pointed to his support for legislation in Pennsylvania to provide funding to protect houses of worship, which he noted helps Jewish, Muslim and other communities. He said he would support similar efforts at the federal level.

Schatz said that having a devout Muslim lawmaker like Street with strong ties to the Jewish community in Congress could be good for the Jewish community, especially given tensions that have appeared between the two communities.

"I think it's good for the Jewish community to hear that somebody from a different faith group, especially from Islam, where people have been somewhat leery because of terrorism and Israel, to see that we do have true allies," she said. "He's consistently there for the [Jewish] community."

Street's friends and allies praised him for consistently being among the first leaders to speak out against antisemitic incidents, with more than one highlighting that he was the first elected official to condemn a recent pro-Hamas rally in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square last month.

"In 2024, when some of the far left were making antisemitic attacks on Josh Shapiro, when he was up to be nominated for vice president, Sharif basically went on a virtual tour of Black Muslims all over the country, saying, do not do that," Greenberg recounted. "Josh is a perfectly good candidate. He doesn't hate us. He's great with us. He's a great leader for us, and do not let people attack him because he's Jewish. You don't like him? You don't like him. Say that."

Street, at the time, was the chair of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party. Greenberg said that Shapiro had backed another candidate for the post, but said Street maintained no ill will towards him and was insistent that attacks on Shapiro for his religion were unacceptable.

Speaking to JI before the U.S. went to war with Iran, Street said that Iran shouldn't be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons, and that the U.S. needs to work with all of its allies and partners to prevent that from happening, "but ultimately we want to [get there] in a way that avoids war, if possible."

After the war began, in a statement shared on Facebook, Street condemned the Iranian regime and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in an Israeli strike, but said that the "chaotic situation in Iran is perilous for the Iranian people and the world" and that Trump lacks the capacity to "successfully manage this situation."

He also emphasized that the Constitution gives Congress the authority to declare war, not the president. "I am calling on Congress to immediately return to vote on a more narrowly tailored measure that will allow the US to defend its interests while exercising its oversight over this President to stop him from unilaterally starting wars all over the world," Street said.

He told JI was similarly concerned that the administration failed to brief Congress, particularly Democrats, about the strikes it carried out on Iran last summer. He said he couldn't judge whether those strikes were the right decision because of the administration's failure to explain and provide intelligence about them to Congress or the public.

"Democrats and Republicans have worked in a bipartisan way under Democratic and Republican administrations to deal with the threat of Iran," Street said. "President Obama was very strong on this issue. I would be strong on this issue, but the president can't act unilaterally without congressional oversight. That's the problem. It shouldn't be partisan. ... The leaders in Congress have to have the right intelligence to make those decisions."

Street's main competitor in the primary race is far-left state Rep. Chris Rabb. A Rabb win would likely cause significant concern among the district's sizable Jewish community, given his record of anti-Israel activism and accusations of genocide against Israel.

At a recent candidate forum, several major candidates offered criticism of Israel and AIPAC. "F— AIPAC. They are a racist

organization and I will not meet with them," Rabb said, accusing the group of "destroying candidates' lives." At another forum, Rabb said he would vote to block further U.S. aid to Israel, while other candidates avoided weighing in specifically on the legislation.

Another candidate, Ala Stanford, a physician and activist, said that she supports a two-state solution but that the U.S. should not support wars "that harm and kill children and families." State Rep. Morgan Cephias indicated she would meet with AIPAC but suggested she disagrees with the group's positions. David Oxman, a physician, called Netanyahu the worst Jewish leader in millennia and accused AIPAC of conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism.

Schatz, the Federation official, said that Cephias is also "very good with the community," Stanford is "learning about the community" and would likely be an ally and Oxman is Jewish himself. Rabb, she said, has been at odds with the Jewish community..

Street led the field in fundraising as of the end of 2025, with \$701,000 raised and \$527,000 on hand. He was followed by Oxman who has raised \$498,000 and had \$357,000 on hand; Stanford, who has raised \$467,000 and had \$392,000 on hand; and Rabb, who has raised \$384,000 and had \$99,000 on hand.

A Street campaign poll conducted by Lake Research Partners in mid-November found Street in the lead with 22%, followed by Rabb at 17%, Stanford at 11%, Cephias at 7% and Oxman at 2%, with 36% of voters undecided.

Street, a former chair of the state Democratic Party and the son of a former Philadelphia mayor, is seen as the establishment favorite, with an endorsement from former Gov. Ed Rendell, as well as endorsements from numerous labor unions and local elected officials.

Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA), the retiring incumbent, endorsed Stanford. ♦