



## *Washtenaw County Media Release*

### **Washtenaw County Public Safety Leaders Joint Statement on the Crisis in the Mideast and the Safety of Washtenaw County**

11/3/2023

As the world watches the ongoing conflict and tragic loss of life in the Middle East, and as those who call Washtenaw County home are impacted daily by what is happening abroad, the public safety leaders of Washtenaw County are diligently working to ensure Washtenaw County is safe for those who live, work, or visit during these uncertain times.

Over the last several weeks, we have met with numerous Jewish, Muslim, and Arab leaders so that we might listen, learn, understand, and be more attentive to the various needs around community safety and wellness.

What we heard from everyone regardless of the differences in religious teachings, ethnic backgrounds, or political beliefs was concern for the safety of our community. Many are worried about sending their children to school, taking their families to worship, or simply leaving home. And to a person, each expressed their concern for the lives lost and the humanity which connects us.

What's clear, is that despite the historical challenges abroad, we in Washtenaw County are not against one another. Our common humanity, our diversity, and our giving nature is what makes our community special and what unites us in these tumultuous times.

We cannot control what happens abroad, but as public safety leaders we do have the authority and commitment to ensuring the safety for the people of Washtenaw County.

**Your voice matters.** In these difficult times, we all have an obligation to understand the impact our words and actions have on others and the potential those words and actions have to incite violence or hate. Public Safety in Washtenaw County will vigorously protect your right to free speech. This includes all forms of written, illustrated or spoken speech. However, we do not support speech in any form that incites hate, intimidation, or physical violence. We will diligently work to hold perpetrators of these harmful and unlawful behaviors accountable.



**There is zero tolerance for ethnic intimidation.** We stand against antisemitism and Islamophobia and are united in our commitment to vigorously investigate and aggressively prosecute hate crimes and all other associated unlawful behavior committed in Washtenaw County.

**There will be extra patrols.** Police agencies across the county will be working collaboratively with each other and each of you, paying particular attention to schools and religious institutions during this time. You may see additional presence as a precautionary and deterrent measure.

**See something, say something.** Be the one to speak up. If you see something suspicious, report it to us. Your tip could save a life. As a reminder, police agencies in Washtenaw County all have the same protocol for immigration enforcement. We don't ask about your immigration status. This means that when we respond to your call and during the subsequent investigation, we will not inquire as to your immigration status, unless the requested information is directly germane to the reported incident.

**Report all hate crimes.** If someone is being harmed, dial 9-1-1 to get immediate help. If you believe you are the victim of a hate crime or believe you witnessed a hate crime, contact your local law enforcement agency and contact the Michigan Attorney Generals Hate Crime Unit at [HateCrimes@michigan.gov](mailto:HateCrimes@michigan.gov) or 313-456-0180.

**Report discrimination.** The Michigan Department of Civil Rights does not investigate hate crime, but they can investigate acts of discrimination in Employment, Education, Housing, Public Accommodation, Public Service, and Law Enforcement. The alleged discrimination must be based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, genetic information, marital status, familial status, height, weight and/or arrest record. [File a Complaint](#)

Please consult your local officials or local public safety agency with questions regarding this release.