

# COMMUNITY FORUM: THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

## *Perspectives & Constructive Dialogue on Recent Events*

**WHAT & WHY:** We will bring together members of the community in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia to improve understanding of the recent and unprecedented escalation of violence between Hamas and Israelis. The objectives are to learn how Israelis and Palestinians perceive these current events; to participate in a constructive dialogue; and to consider follow-up engagement. Panelists will discuss their perspectives on the context, underlying issues, causes, and possible effects (medium to long term) of the current Israeli-Hamas war; relate how the respective parties on the ground understand the situation; and consider constructive ways participants can engage on this issue.



**WHEN:** Thursday, November 16, 2023; 7–8:30 pm

(followed by some tasty Middle Eastern finger foods & sharing)

**WHERE:** Shepherd University's Student Center, Storer Ballroom,

3rd floor, 210 N. King Street, Shepherdstown (parking nearby)

**WHO:** 4 Panelists (see bios below) and community members  
(with participant support by numerous community organizations)

**Seating Limited to 150, please RSVP by November 14**

**Zoom option available** (link emailed day of event)

[isc.shepherdstownrotary.org/forum](https://isc.shepherdstownrotary.org/forum)



**Adina Friedman (Israeli)** is a scholar-practitioner of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, with decades of experience working on peacebuilding endeavors in the United States and internationally. She leads immersion travel to the region, particularly to Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Morocco. Friedman teaches at the Carter School of Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University, Virginia, and is also the founding director of ILLI Initiatives. She holds a PhD in conflict analysis and resolution, an MA in history of the Middle East and Africa, and an MS in peace and development.

**Philip Farah (Palestinian)** recently retired after 35 years at the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Philip's family became refugees in 1948. He was born in Jerusalem, where he later taught at several schools in Jerusalem and at Birzeit University before emigrating to the US. Philip holds a PhD in environmental economics. He speaks and publishes on Middle East peace and justice issues, and is a founding member the Palestinian Christian Alliance for Peace. Philip's relatives in Gaza were killed in the bombing of the Gaza Church of St. Porphyrius on October 19th.

**Moien Odeh (Palestinian)** is an international human rights lawyer, and a PhD candidate at the Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. In Jerusalem, Odeh represented Palestinians in leading public interest cases in Israeli courts. He founded and managed the legal clinic in East Jerusalem neighborhoods behind the Wall. He was a fellow at the State Department's Leaders for Democracy program and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Odeh holds a BA in accounting and bachelor and doctor of laws degrees. He writes for and speaks on Middle Eastern and US media.

**Ronnen Paytan (Israeli)** is a scholar-practitioner and a senior executive in the defense sector with decades of operational and business experience, working on security programs. Ronnen is also active in the DC chapter of UnXeptable, an Israeli-American grassroots movement fighting for democracy, equal rights, and social justice in Israel, and in local efforts to bring the kidnapped Israelis home. He holds a doctoral degree in business administration, a master's degree in innovation management, and master's and bachelor's degrees in biomedical and electrical engineering, respectively.

This forum is made possible by the participation of our four well-informed panelists and of the following diverse community and academic organizations based in the tristate area of West Virginia (Martinsburg, Charles Town, Shepherdstown), Maryland (Frederick and Hagerstown), and Virginia (Winchester and Northern Virginia): Shepherd University (also the venue host), including its Political Science Department; the Stubblefield Institute; Covenant Church; Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church; Ezekiel's Place (Justice and Peace Academy); Rotary District 7360, with its various Rotary clubs; Rotary Club of Shepherdstown; local high schools in West Virginia (Jefferson, Washington, Martinsburg); and other organizations. Above photos: Courtesy of Hand in Hand Schools ([handinhandk12.org](https://handinhandk12.org)).