

Joseph D. Labarbera
Chairman

Sussex County Republican Committee

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October 20, 2023

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Attn: Selaedin Maksut – Executive Director
CAIR-NJ
4475 S. Clinton Ave., Suite 202
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
(via email to info@nj.cair.com)

Dear Director Maksut:

A couple of weekends ago, more than 100 innocent noncombatants were abducted by Hamas and taken to Gaza, where they are being held against their will. Hundreds of other civilian noncombatants were murdered and/or sexually assaulted by Hamas paramilitary units. As a career military officer, I know this to be unacceptable behavior contrary to international law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. In a word, these acts are war crimes and crimes against humanity.

CAIR-NJ (the Council for American Islamic Relations) is a powerful lobby group in New Jersey. CAIR-NJ has been graciously received by Republican organizations and office holders in New Jersey. I understand that every Republican member of the New Jersey Senate voted in February to confirm CAIR-NJ's Chairwoman as a Superior Court Judge.

CAIR-NJ is now repaying our party's graciousness by issuing statements that ignore the criminal actions of Hamas and lay blame entirely with the nation of Israel. On October 11, 2023, CAIR-NJ issued a press release in which their executive director stated: "*Israel and only Israel bears responsibility for the calamities that we have been witnessing for that is the natural result of their oppression.*"

The rape and murder of civilians by a paramilitary organization is not a "*natural result*" of anything other than the institutional barbarism of that paramilitary organization. It is an *unnatural* crime against the law of arms.

In the same press release, CAIR-NJ states: "*The American Muslim community expects support from our elected leaders and hope to see that in the days to come.*"

Let's not conflate "the American Muslim community" with Hamas. The former are our fellow citizens and neighbors, the latter have committed acts of terror and war crimes against civilian noncombatants. Acts that are contrary to every reading of mainstream Muslim morality.

As such, I call on CAIR-NJ and its leaders to immediately denounce Hamas and to become part of humanity's solution by acknowledging the crimes of Hamas instead of defending them. I further call on CAIR-NJ to ask Hamas to safely return the civilian noncombatants that they abducted.

Joseph D. Labarbera
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