

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2023

Daisy Veerasingham
President, Chief Executive Officer
Associated Press
200 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10281

Dear Mrs. Veerasingham,

We write to express our concerns regarding the updated Israel-Hamas Topical Guide recently published by the Associated Press (AP).¹ We are deeply disturbed by the AP's failure to accurately label Hamas a terrorist organization.

We are acutely aware of the challenges and complexities inherent in covering this protracted conflict and commend the AP for its longstanding commitment to accurate and unbiased journalism. However, we believe it is essential to address the potential dangers that may arise from the guidance you provided in regard to the term terrorism.

In the topical guidance, you note that "calculated use of violence, especially against civilians, to create terror to disrupt and demoralize societies for political ends." Yet after utilizing this definition at the beginning of the guide, you fail to correctly label the events of October 7 and the individuals who perpetuated this heinous act for what they are, terrorism and terrorists. Your own description of the attacks, states that Hamas "killed hundreds of civilians" yet you incorrectly label these assailants as militants, seemingly in opposition of your own definition.

The decision by the AP to avoid using terms such as "terrorism" and "terrorist" due to their perceived politicization is deeply unsettling. Under U.S. law, and even noted in your own topical guide's background on Hamas, since 1997 the organization has been a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

Hamas not only terrorizes Israelis, but also the Palestinian people in Gaza. They continue to operate inside hospitals and schools,² and as Israel began its ground offensive, Hamas instructed civilians to ignore lifesaving evacuation orders³ by Israel, and in some cases had actively blocked the ability of Palestinians civilians to flee.⁴ Mislabeling Hamas undermines journalistic integrity and confuses the public as to the nature of events transpiring in Israel and Gaza. By not accurately labeling Hamas and its continued terroristic actions, we believe the AP inadvertently provides cover for these heinous acts to be accepted.

Failing to accurately describe Hamas as a terrorist organization can result in significant consequences for public perception, online discourse, and even the safety of communities. The ADL's (Anti-Defamation League) research⁵ shows, that between October 7-December 7, there were 2,031 antisemitic incidents in the United States, an average of nearly 34 antisemitic incidents a day since Hamas' brutal attack. This represents a nearly 337% increase in incidents over the same time period last year. 400 of the antisemitic incidents took place on

¹ [AP: Israel-Hamas Topical Guide](#)

² [Reuters: Israeli military says Hamas hiding tunnels, operations centres in Gaza hospital](#)

³ [AP: Palestinians flee northern Gaza after Israel orders 1 million to evacuate as ground attack looms](#)

⁴ [Times of Israel: IDF: Gaza resident says Hamas preventing evacuations; thousands return north](#)

⁵ [ADL Reports Unprecedented Rise in Antisemitic Incidents Post-Oct. 7](#)

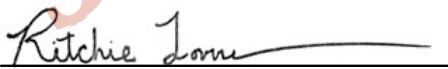
college campuses since Oct. 7, compared to only 33 incidents over the same time period last year. At least 1,411 of the total incidents have been linked to the current conflict between Israel and Hamas. ADL has also tracked nearly 905 anti-Israel rallies since Oct. 7, at least 200 of which ADL found explicit or strong implicit support for Hamas and/or violence against Jews in Israel. Finally, ADL recorded a nearly 1,000% increase in the daily average of violent messages mentioning Jews and Israel on the messaging platform Telegram in the days following the massacre by Hamas. As a reputable news source, by mislabeling Hamas and its actions, you are contributing to an extremely concerning trend, where the continued targeting of civilians by Hamas is legitimized in the eyes of many and ultimately contributing to a worrisome phenomenon of antisemitic vitriol being directed at the global Jewish community as a whole, based on a skewed understanding of the conflict.

We understand that the AP is committed to precision and serving your audience well. However, we urge you to consider the potential implications of the stated guidance within the topical guide and how these assertions can negatively affect the discourse on this issue. We believe that adopting a more nuanced and context-sensitive approach to terminology, rather than an outright avoidance of "terrorism" and "terrorist," may better serve your mission of accurate and responsible journalism. Why was the topical guidance written in a manner to avoid following current international designations of Hamas as a terrorist organization? And if a change is not imminent, can you explain the rationale as to why?

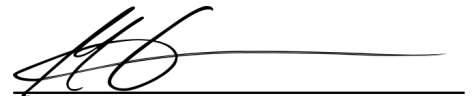
We look forward to a continued dialogue on this issue and greatly appreciate you taking into consideration our concerns, especially with a distinct understanding of the significant impact the AP's guidance has on the larger journalistic community.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress




Brad Sherman
Member of Congress


John R. Moolenaar
Member of Congress

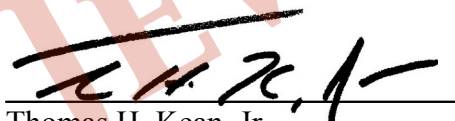

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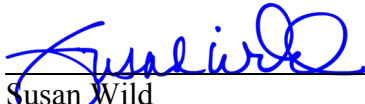

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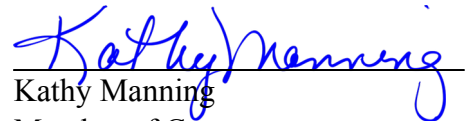

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