




October 10, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents, The University of Texas System

FROM: James B. Milliken 

SUBJECT: Travel Developments Related to Hamas's Attack on Israel and Israel's Declaration of War

It is likely that you are weighing impacts of the recent events in Israel to your medical, academic, and research missions, and travel.

After hearing of the attack on Saturday, international risk and safety contacts began conducting welfare checks on known travelers to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, and reported back to the Office of Risk Management (ORM). Thankfully, we are aware of only a few UT travelers in Israel, and they are reported to be safe.

The UT System medical and security assistance provider, On Call International, triggered security evacuation coverage in Israel effective October 9, 2023, which means any traveler arriving in Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza after this date will not benefit from security evacuation insurance coverage. This also initiated a 30-day clock for determining whether an institution wants to evacuate its travelers. After this window expires, there will be no security evacuation insurance coverage remaining for travelers in Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza.

Additionally, the situation is highly volatile and logistical obstacles for evacuation are increasing due to missile bombardments, airline suspensions, and flight cancellations. It is unlikely that flights with reputable commercial carriers will remain available during the 30-day window. Some overland border crossing options are still currently possible, but there is no guarantee of how long they will remain open. Several countries including Poland, Hungary, Albania, North Macedonia, Thailand, and Mexico are actively working to evacuate their citizens in Israel. Regionally, there is a credible risk of spillover violence or escalation.

I am confident that your International Oversight Committees (IOCs) are already taking prudent steps to address these concerns and restrict travel to affected areas. Given the circumstances and in a manner similar to our actions following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I must request each institution impose additional requirements to ensure consistent approach to any essential travel to these countries.

Effective immediately, travel to Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip is suspended until further notice. If your institution determines there is a mission critical business or research need that warrants an exception to the suspension, travel must be approved (or reapproved) by the IOC, as well as the President. If an exception is granted, the President must provide notice to the Executive Vice Chancellor (EVC) for Health Affairs or Academic Affairs as appropriate, and the Chief Risk Officer.

While not suspended, travel to Jordan and Lebanon now requires elevated approval by the President. Any travel ongoing or already approved by the IOC should be re-reviewed to confirm appropriate controls are in place. International contacts have been receiving updates from Jess Miller and travelers are receiving country and city specific alerts from On Call International. It is imperative that travelers remain aware of what may be rapidly changing conditions on the ground.

The safety of the University of Texas community is our top priority. Your vigilant support of your travelers is required in the face of these horrific events. Please contact Phil Dendy, Stacy Youngdale, or Jess Miller in the Office of Risk Management if you have questions.

cc: U. T. System Executive Vice Chancellors
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Mr. Phillip Dendy
Ms. Stacy Youngdale
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Institutional International Risk & Safety Contacts