

# An Open Letter to President Robbins, of the University of Arizona

By Joshua Nichols

Dear Dr. Robbins,

In your latest attempt at public effacing in light of “tragedy,” you express “compassion and support” for those affected by the Hamas bombings of Israel on October 7th, 2023. You spend a great deal of time playing politics with statements such as “Terrible and tragic stories have continued to emerge from the region, where innocent civilians have lost their lives and many are now caught in an escalating conflict.”

You spend a great deal of time doling out easy sympathy, encouragement, and resources to help those hurting cope. You mention resources such as UArizona Hillel Foundation, CAPS, ComPsych, and Hillel Arizona’s facilities for “students, faculty, and staff to gather during this *difficult* period” (emphasis mine).

Yet, this sorry excuse for politically-correct placating—a limp-wristed and breathless acknowledgement of “tragedy”—shows a side of yourself and the University that I do not understand and that desperately needs to be revealed to common-sense individuals.

If this letter is all I had read about the events of this past weekend, I would have gathered that something bad happened in Israel, that there are students affected by it, that some might be grieved by it at the university, and that there are resources for them. Also, I would have learned that the university stands for “core values” such as compassion, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-prejudice.

Yet, it is so very clear, Dr. Robbins, that you failed to include the important details of this issue: On October 7th, 2023, early in the morning, Hamas, in coordination with Iran, launched a massive surprise attack and offensive on Israel in multiple strategic areas. They killed hundreds of Israelis, injured thousands, took hundreds of hostages (including some American citizens), and leveraged the Gaza strip, full of

“innocent civilians” (as you would call it), as a human shield, testing Israel’s defense response. The U.S. not-so-long ago bartered human life for six billion dollars in fungible assets, setting the horrifying precedent that, “yes, we negotiate with terrorists; and yes, human lives are a commodity.” Despite this, you couldn’t mention any of these details.

Yet, it remains a farcical mystery as to why, amidst what is so clear, you couldn’t muster the courage as a public leader to call out anti-semitism as racism—a variety which manifests itself in Hamas’s public platform of *destroying every last Jew*— Naming Jews as an object of this attack, the perspicuous timing of this event (the 50 year anniversary of the Yom Kippur War), and the hostile nature of outright prejudice that still lingers with the horrifying stench of the Holocaust, and the rise of anti-semitism in the 1870s in Germany.

You did not forget, though, to directly name the O’odham and Yaqui in a land acknowledgement.

So, I would like to ask that, upon the next “tragedy” of this magnitude—and, unfortunately, there will always be another one—you have the integrity and fortitude to name the intractable evils and evildoers, to shed light on what actually happened, and to show true compassion for those you purportedly care for through true solidarity. If you are a true doctor, one who calls an infection an infection, an illness an illness, or a disease a disease, then you should have the courage to stand up and declare the humanitarian blights of this world we live in. Have a backbone to call out true racism, prejudice, and inequality, even if it means drawing harsh criticism.

I would personally hope that if you were my doctor, father, or leader you would have the heart to tell me the truth, even if it means I do not want to hear it, or my community does not want to acknowledge it.

Sincerely,

Joshua Nichols