

Every Second Counts For Freedom: Making Our Voices Heard

Facilitator Guide

What are the special obligations we have as global citizens to defend our American values of Justice and Freedom on the world stage and specifically for the hostages in Gaza?
How can we use our civic rights to influence our democratically elected officials?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we keep momentum going as the days of captivity for the Hamas hostages drag into months and months? What can we do as American citizens, with our democratic rights and privileges, to advocate on behalf of the hostages? What are the special obligations we have as global citizens to defend our American values of Justice and Freedom on the world stage and specifically for the hostages in Gaza?

FRAMING THE ISSUE

Every second counts in ensuring the safe return of the hostages. Reports from the hostages released in late November and early December have revealed how those in captivity suffer deplorable conditions including sexual and physical violence, psychological torture, and near-starvation.

The U.S. government must work with the international community and continue to vocally advocate for the release of all hostages. The US government is uniquely positioned to bring pressure on Qatar, which both hosts Hamas and enables them financially. Free people have all the time in the world; we make our own schedules, plan how much time to spend on each activity during the day. The hostages are captive to the terrorist's demands, must do what they want, when they want them to and they are literally running out of time to live.

Info For Facilitator

One of the gifts of living in a democracy is the ability to amplify even the smallest voice and make it heard in the most powerful halls of government. You can keep the plight of the hostages as top priority for American legislators by taking the time to call, write and visit your representatives. Urge Congress to work with the international community, and particularly Qatar, in securing the immediate release of all hostages. In this unit you can find ideas for political activism which can take as little as one minute and as much as a day. Any time investment is worthwhile! For a deeper lesson in civic activism, we give you some tools and encourage you to take your students on a trip to Washington, DC to advocate in person on behalf of the hostages.



Target Audience:

Middle School, High School, University Students, Adults, Community groups



Length Of Program

Study session and small actions should take 45-60 minutes. Planning and execution of a "Freedom Lobbying Trip" - takes advance planning time and preparation and at least a day in Washington, DC



Materials & Prep:

- Political advocacy websites (listed below), contact information for local representatives
- Quotes from the Quote Sheet file, printed on individual pieces (multiple copies of each quote)
- Masking tape
- Printed postcards
- Postcard stamps
- Markers/colored pencils
- Scrap paper, writing implements
- Smartphones

LET'S EXPLORE

Opening

- *Facilitator brings printed quotes from a variety of fields: political activism, Jewish quotes on justice or captivity and general quotes on captivity and freedom.*
- *Ask each participant to choose a quote they most identify with, is most meaningful to them and would spur them to action on behalf of the hostages.*
- *Invite participants to tape their chosen quote onto their back.*

- *Facilitator sets a timer for one minute. Participants are asked to walk around the room and find others who chose the same quote as they did and stand together in a group.*
- *Groups sit together and the facilitator notes what is possible to accomplish in one minute.*
- *Facilitator sets a timer for five minutes. Each group discusses for five minutes why they chose that quote.*
- *Facilitator asks each group to report back on why their quote is meaningful to them and how it spurs them to action.*
- *Facilitator opens up a discussion:*
 - **What can you do in one minute?** There are multiple entry points to political activism, each of which requires different time commitments.
Facilitator introduces www.oneminaday.com and each participant takes a minute to contact their representative through the site.
 - **In fifteen minutes**, you can find your representative's email/postal address and compose an advocacy postcard on behalf of the hostages.
Facilitator introduces the postcards and participants write and color postcards, and address them to their representatives.
 - A longer, more in depth activism opportunity is to actually go and lobby your legislators. **Facilitator introduces one day freedom trips** to lobby legislators on behalf of the hostages. One of the most powerful ways to foster effective, professional relationships with your federal, state and local legislators is to set up short, in-person meetings. These meetings have the most impact because legislators know that engaged constituents are more likely to vote. Make your voice heard through your representative.

TAKE ACTION!

You can effectively engage with your political representatives by taking a minute, fifteen minutes, half an hour or a whole day. **THERE IS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE** and every amount of time that you can dedicate will bring the captives closer to coming home.

ONE MINUTE:

- Go to www.oneminaday.com to find your representatives, get a sample text for what to say and call. Every day.
- [Write to the White House and make your voice and demands heard.](#)
- Go to: www.voicesforhostages.org to add your voice to the plea of Global Jewish Women.

FIFTEEN MINUTES:

- Download and print the postcards on this website, add a personal note and send them to your representatives (Can be colored in)
- [Learn more general information on calling, emailing and engaging on social media with your representatives, on any topic.](#)

ONE DAY FREEDOM TRIPS TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.:

- Practicing activism is a great life lesson for your students or members. By advocating for the freeing of the hostages, they will also learn about how the lobbying process works and how they can use their voices to influence their elected officials.
- Work with your local JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council) and/or Federation to coordinate an in-person trip to meet with Senators and Representatives to urge them to take action on behalf of the hostages.
- Use these excellent resources created by Hadassah, AIPAC, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and the National Council for Jewish Women, to find your representatives, learn how to schedule appointments, write appropriate speeches on the issue and find tips on how to act and what to expect:

1. [How to Schedule a Lobbying Appointment from AIPAC](#)
2. [Tips for Scheduling In-District Meetings from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism:](#)
3. [Legislator Meetings Guidelines from Hadassah](#)
4. [How to Write a Lobby Speech from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism](#)
5. [Tips for Having a Successful Advocacy Visit, from the National Council for Jewish Women](#)

CLOSING INTENTION

- Time is of the essence to save the hostages. As free citizens living in a democracy, we have at our disposal the time, the resources and the rights and privileges to help save them. Take one minute, take fifteen minutes, take a day to make your voice heard to American legislators and exercise your own precious freedom.