

Heartache, Worry and Helping Hands: Jewelry Industry Weighs In on Israel-Hamas War



When terrorist organization Hamas attacked residents of Israel’s Kibbutz Be’eri on October 7, it upended the lives of many, including in the jewelry world.

There are deep roots connecting Israel and the international jewelry community, not least because Israel is a major diamond-cutting center. Be’eri was one of multiple Jewish communities on the Gaza border where Hamas gunmen slaughtered and kidnapped innocents and set houses on fire — vicious moves that reached far beyond the boundaries of southern Israel.

One of those murdered at the kibbutz was [Grandview Klein manager Isaac Siton](#), who was on vacation with his family. His wife, son and sister-in-law also perished that day. In a phone interview this week, company president Moshe Klein was understandably shaken, calling Siton’s death “an open wound.”

“We call ourselves a family business because all our employees are literally like family,” he said.

Voices of solidarity

Many trade groups were quick to denounce the violence. Among the first to do so were the [American Gem Trade Association](#) (AGTA), the [Diamond Manufacturers & Importers Association of America](#) (DMIA), the [Diamond Dealers Club](#) (DDC), and the [Indian Diamond & Colorstone Association](#) (IDCA). The groups released a joint statement condemning the “horrific acts of violence perpetrated on the citizens of Israel,” and applauding “any actions they take to assure that acts like this can never happen again.”

[Jewelers of America](#) (JA), the [World Jewellery Confederation](#) (CIBJO), and the [Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030](#) (WJI 2030) issued similar statements of support.

“Our hearts are with all our industry colleagues who are affected by this ongoing tragedy,” said JA.

“Families feel each other’s pain, and the jewelry and gemstone family feels yours,” CIBJO shared in its release.

Meanwhile, the [Responsible Jewellery Council](#) (RJC) chastised Hamas for the attack and issued sympathy for all unintended victims in Israel and Gaza. “As violence follows violence, we stand with all innocent Israelis and innocent Palestinians who are suffering from loss, grief, the unknown and the horror.”

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STANDS WITH
ISRAEL



CALLED UP TO FIGHT

OF COURSE, THE CONFLICT HAS DIRECTLY AFFECTED JEWELRY COMPANIES IN ISRAEL. ITAY HENDEL, CEO OF LOSS-PREVENTION AGENCY [ISPS](#) IN RAMAT GAN, HAS BEEN CALLED INTO SERVICE ALONG WITH HIS BROTHERS AND SOME EMPLOYEES.

&LDQUO;I REALLY CAN&RSQUO;T WORK, AND CANCELED FIVE BUSINESS TRIPS FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS,&RDQUO; HE EXPLAINED IN AN EMAIL INTERVIEW LAST WEEK. &LDQUO;WE ARE ALL ON STANDBY NOW.&RDQUO;

ISAAC LEVY, FOUNDER OF JERUSALEM-AREA JEWELRY MAKER [YVEL](#), SAYS

THAT COMPANY EMPLOYEES AS WELL AS THEIR CHILDREN HAVE BEEN CALLED TO THE ARMY, AND HE'S TEMPORARILY SHUTTERED HIS ISRAELI BOUTIQUES. BUT HE'S NOT SITTING IDLE. INSTEAD, HE HAS COLLABORATED WITH [YONDOR DIAMONDS](#) OF THE ISRAEL DIAMOND EXCHANGE (IDE) TO RAISE MORE THAN NIS 2.5 MILLION (\$615,790) TO BUY CERAMIC VESTS FOR ISRAELI SOLDIERS. IN ADDITION, [MEGEMERIA](#) — THE JEWELRY SCHOOL HE ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT THE ETHIOPIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY — IS CREATING "I STAND WITH ISRAEL" DESIGNS TO SELL, WITH 100% OF PROCEEDS BENEFITING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE HAMAS MASSACRE.

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SERVING IN OTHER WAYS

[FREIDA ROTHMAN](#) OF THE EPONYMOUS NEW YORK-BASED JEWELRY FIRM WAS IN ISRAEL WITH FAMILY FOR THE HOLIDAY OF SUKKOT WHEN THE ATTACKS HAPPENED. THE ROTHMANS WERE IN JERUSALEM WHEN THEY HEARD AIR RAID SIRENS, NOT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THEY MEANT UNTIL A HOTEL EMPLOYEE TOLD THEM TO &LDQUO;GET TO A SHELTER &MDASH; WE&RSQUO;RE AT WAR.&RDQUO;

THIS HAPPENED RIGHT BEFORE THEIR FLIGHT HOME, WHICH ENDED UP DELAYED BY A WEEK. DURING THAT TIME, ROTHMAN WATCHED SOLDIERS AND RESERVISTS ARRIVE FOR DUTY AT A MEETING POINT RIGHT OUTSIDE HER HOTEL, AND SHE AND HER CHILDREN QUICKLY MOBILIZED TO VOLUNTEER WITH LOCALS IN ANY WAY THEY COULD. THEY ENDED UP HELPING THE GROUP [ONEFAMILY](#), WHICH PROVIDES AID TO ISRAELI TERROR VICTIMS. THEY HELPED PACK FOOD FOR DONATIONS AND HONORED A MURDERED SOLDIER WHOSE FAMILY WAS IN FRANCE. YOUNG MEN &MDASH; INCLUDING HER SON &MDASH;

WERE ASKED TO HELP BURY BODIES.

TO AID THE CAUSE FURTHER, ROTHMAN IS NOW DONATING 18% OF SALES FROM HER WOMEN OF STRENGTH JEWELRY LINE TO ONEFAMILY. &LDQUO;THE NUMBER 18 IN HEBREW IS THE EQUIVALENT OF [THE WORD] &LSQUO;LIFE,&RSQUO;&RDQUO; SHE EXPLAINS. THE PIECES FEATURE MESSAGES SUCH AS &LDQUO;STRENGTH,&RDQUO; &LDQUO;FAITH&RDQUO; AND &LDQUO;HOPE.&RDQUO; (CLICK [HERE](#) TO VIEW THE COLLECTION.)

WHEN IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE, GOODBYES WERE BITTERSWEET: HER 19-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, WHO HAD JUST GOTTEN MARRIED IN ISRAEL WEEKS PRIOR, WAS REMAINING BEHIND WITH HER HUSBAND TO SUPPORT THE COUNTRY.

&LDQUO;I TOOK HER DIAMOND NECKLACE THAT I MADE FOR HER, TELLING HER SHE COULD HAVE IT BACK WHEN SHE CAME HOME TO ME,&RDQUO; SAID ROTHMAN.

MAIN IMAGE: THE JEWELRY CREATED BY FREIDA ROTHMAN. (FREIDA ROTHMAN)