GAZA CONFLICT SPREADING HATE AROUND THE WORLD

See **first.news/ IsraelGaza** for all of our coverage on the conflict and a background to the history.

THIS week, we take a look behind the headlines at some of the problems that are occurring around the world due to the conflict in the Middle East, and find out what you think can be done to promote respect between people with different beliefs.

An increase in hate crime

The effects of the conflict in Gaza are reaching all around the world, with verbal and physical attacks on Jews and Muslims on the rise, including against kids in the UK.

Posters of the hostages taken by Hamas have been a focus of protests worldwide, with Palestinian supporters openly tearing them down or scrawling graffiti on them

The war is between Israel and Hamas, the group that took control of Gaza by force in 2017, but Muslims and Jews in many other countries, including the UK, have been targeted purely because of their religion, even though the war is nothing to do with them.

The Community Security Trust (CST) logs anti-Semitic (hatred against Jews) incidents in the UK, and says that there were 893 cases of abuse between 7 and 31 October. The CST says that's the highest ever 25-day total since the group started recording data in 1984. Some reports involved schoolchildren being abused or chased on the way to school, and a sticker of a Palestinian flag in London had the words "Jews are the scum of the Earth" written across it.

Tell MAMA, which works to fight anti-Muslim abuse in the UK, says that it received 515 reports of abuse from 7-29 October, which is seven times more than in the same period last year. Some of these were online, including one post calling Muslims an "infestation", while some were physical, including a petrol can with pro-Israel graffiti on it that was thrown over the wall of a mosque in Oxford.

In other countries, a Palestinian boy was stabbed to death in the US, while in Germany a synagogue was fire-bombed, and the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* says that the country "has been gripped by a new wave of anti-Semitism". In France, a Jewish woman was stabbed on her doorstep, and a swastika graffitied on her door.

Working against hate

Stop Hate UK is a leading anti-hate organisation. It says that hate crimes "divide us, create fear and mistrust, and can lead to devastating consequences for individuals and families". A hate crime is any criminal offence motivated by unkindness and unreasonable opinion towards a person's identity, including their race or religion.

It's important to report hate crimes when they happen, and it's also very important to promote respect and mutual understanding. In 2014, the UK Government published a document, *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC* [social, moral, spiritual and cultural development] *in schools*. It said that schools have to promote the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty (freedom), mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

It should be possible for us to talk about the conflict in Gaza politely, and to not get angry if somebody disagrees and sees the situation in a different way.

What do a Palestinian girl and Israeli boy say?

Last week on *FYI*, our partner weekly news show from Sky Kids, the team spoke to a Palestinian girl, Rand, and a Jewish boy, Yaar, who both live in Israel. Before the latest conflict, they worked with a charity called Jerusalem Peacebuilders, which brings young people from both Palestinian and Jewish communities together to promote peace and reconciliation (becoming friendly again). Here's what they said:

Rand: "I created memories I will never forget and I had the chance to hear the same story from the other perspective and that's really changed some of my thoughts."

Yaar: "I'm very proud to say that it brings everyone together, not just to have a great time, but to have a real serious dialogue about what's going on."

Yaar and Rand told *FYI* they want peace for their country, but has this latest conflict affected their hopes for future?

Yaar: "I still see peace, I still see Palestinians and Israelis working together to become one. It's just so hard when no-one's listening."

Rand: "Both communities should be aware this land belongs to both of us. We must accept this fact, accept one another and treat one another on an equal basis."

This protester in Poland tried to inject some humour into a horrible situation, but his sign has a serious message. Hamas runs Gaza but is classed as a terrorist group by the UK and other nations. Hamas is open about its desire to destroy Israel, and many Jewish people say the difference between supporting Palestinians and supporting Hamas isn't always clear. Supporting Palestinians doesn't mean supporting Hamas, but supporting Hamas is a criminal offence

This pro-Palestine protester in Germany has a sign that reads "Humanity is not anti-Semitism". There have been lots of arguments over whether protests are simply pro-Palestine or have tipped over into being anti-Semitic

YOUR SAY!

WE asked you, our *First News* readers, to share your thoughts on respect and mutual understanding. Here's what you said…
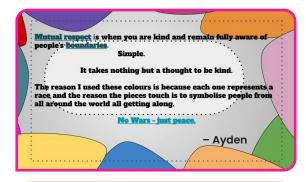
"Listening to others and respecting differences in beliefs and opinions is key to a healthy society. It's important to learn to think before you speak and consider your language and tone. Finally, treat people the way you want to be treated" – Reggie

"The greatest gift is to accept people for who they are" – Ceara

"Respect is all about being kind, listening to one another, working together, being helpful and doing a good deed every day" – Amelia and friends

"Listen, and try to understand each individual's needs and concerns, help where we can in deeds or words" – Tom

"It's important to listen to each other and think about what each other says" – Charlie

Mutual respect is when you are kind and remain fully aware of people's Boundaries.

Simple.

It takes nothing but a thought to be kind.

The reason I used these colours is because each one represents a race and the reason the pieces touch is to symbolise people from all around the world all getting along.

No Wars - just peace.

– Ayden

We'd love to hear what respect means to you. Send in your comments, photos, images or posters and we'll feature them in the coming weeks. Send any contributions to **yournews@firstnews.co.uk**