

Why Would You Strike?

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · 15 October 2026

A reporter says a protester hit him at the Capitol on 10 October 2026. The claim is unconfirmed. The question it raises is not.

By Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren

On Saturday, 10 October 2026, hundreds of people rallied outside the United States Capitol. The organizers, the Palestinian Youth Movement and allied groups, called for an arms embargo and sanctions on Israel, marking three years since October 2023, according to Anadolu and AFP photographs from the day.

Charles Downs, a conservative reporter who covers Capitol Hill, filmed among the crowd. That afternoon, at about 15:51 Washington time (22:51 Israel time), he posted a video and wrote that a protester "in a Hamas headband hit me as I exposed that he was wearing an Islamic terrorism headband." In an earlier post the same day he said several marchers held pre-printed signs reading "Impeach Trump for war crimes."

What we know and what we don't. The rally is confirmed by more than one outlet. The alleged blow rests, so far, on Downs's own account and his video. I found no public statement from the U.S. Capitol Police or the Washington, D.C., police about the incident as of Tuesday, 13 October 2026, and Downs's post does not say whether he reported it. The man accused has not been identified and has not given his side. Until more is known, it is an allegation.

Because it is an allegation, I will not draw a conclusion about the man. But the principle doesn't wait for the facts.

In Shemot 2:13, Moshe sees two Hebrews fighting and says to the one about to hit: "Why would you strike your fellow?" The Talmud learns from the wording that a person who merely raises his hand against another is already called wicked, even before the blow lands (Sanhedrin 58b).

That standard cuts every way. A free country runs on arguments, signs, cameras and votes. A demonstrator may hate a reporter's questions. A reporter may provoke on purpose. Neither of them may answer with a fist. And a camera held in someone's face is still not a fist.

It also cuts against the easy headline. Downs wrote that the marchers were "the Democrats' Hamas sympathizers." Downs says one marcher wore the symbol of a terror organization; the organizers' stated demands were about arms policy. A crowd is not one person. If a protester hit a reporter, that protester is responsible, not every person who stood near him, and not a party of millions.

Three years after 7 October 2023, Jews have every reason to watch closely when Hamas symbols appear on American streets. Watching closely means insisting on the facts: who did what, on camera, confirmed. That is how a claim becomes a case, and how a republic stays one.

May G-d give our hands the strength to build, and the discipline never to strike.

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All glory to the Ribono shel Olam · Errors are mine.