



WAR, TERROR AND LIES

Untruths, half-truths and hate
speech in response to Israel's war
on Hamas

STATE OF WAR

How Israeli society is changing in the wake of October 7 and the battle it initiatedPAGE 23

"INTEGRATED WARFARE"

The new strategic doctrine underpinning the IDF's successes in GazaPAGE 25

HATE RALLY

Extremism on display at a pro-Palestinian demonstration in AustraliaPAGE 27

ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

How made-up jargon disguises the links between themPAGE 32



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EDITOR'S NOTE

December's *AIR* focuses on the lies, half-truths, misdirections and fabrications that have appeared in Australia and globally in the wake of Israel being forced into an all-out war with Hamas following the worst one-day massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, on October 7.

Historian Prof. Gil Troy carefully debunks nine of those lies and half-truths, while Alana Schetzer and Allon Lee correct the widely misrepresented record concerning the pre-war Israeli/Egyptian blockade of Gaza. Oved Lobel looks at myths and facts about Israel's efforts to end Hamas' widespread misuse of Gaza's hospitals – a serious war crime – while Israeli academics Eytan Gilboa and Lilac Sigan explain how media coverage of the Israeli-Hamas conflict has been distorted by Gaza-based media stringers operating under the thumb of Hamas.

Also featured this month is Amotz Asa-El's take on how the current war is redefining Israel, plus military correspondent Yonah Jeremy Bob reveals the hi-tech secrets behind the IDF's better-than-expected performance in its ground invasion of Gaza.

Finally, don't miss Ran Porat's exposé of the ugliness at one pro-Palestinian demonstration in Australia, Suzan Quitaz on witnessing the true horrors of October 7 and Jonah Goldberg on the absurdity of the claims anti-Zionists make to distance themselves from antisemitism.

We invite your feedback on any or all aspects of this edition at editorial@aijac.org.au.

Tzvi Fleischer

CONTENTS

FEATURE STORIES

NINE LIES OF THE GAZA WAR

GIL TROY

Palestinian terrorists and their enablers have taken lying to a whole other level. Yet, despite building so much of their case on a foundation of falsehoods, they keep conning the world **PAGE 12**

AROUND THE BLOCKADE

ALLON LEE & ALANA SCHETZER **PAGE 16**

GAZA'S HOSPITALS: MYTHS AND REALITY

OVED LOBEL **PAGE 18**

JOURNALISTS WITHOUT BORDERS

EYTAN GILBOA & LILAC SIGAN **PAGE 20**

STATE OF WAR

Israel's profound changes since October 7

AMOTZ ASA-EL **PAGE 23**

"INTEGRATED WARFARE": THE IDF'S SUCCESS

YONAH JEREMY BOB **PAGE 25**

HATRED AT A PRO-PALESTINIAN RALLY

RAN PORAT **PAGE 27**

STATES OF SOLIDARITY

JAMIE HYAMS **PAGE 29**

ESSAY: ANTI-ZIONISTS AND ANTISEMITISM

New words can't disguise old facts

JONAH GOLDBERG **PAGE 32**



ON THE COVER

Among the many provocative signs on display at a pro-Palestinian rally in Sydney, October 21, 2023 (Image: Richard Milnes/Alamy Live News)



REGULAR COLUMNS

FROM THE EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN

COLIN RUBENSTEIN **PAGE 4**

WORD FOR WORD **PAGE 5**

SCRIBBLINGS

TZVI FLEISCHER **PAGE 6**

DECONSTRUCTION ZONE

SUZAN QUITAZ **PAGE 7**

ASIA WATCH

MICHAEL SHANNON **PAGE 8**

EUROPA EUROPA

ALEX BENJAMIN **PAGE 9**

BEHIND THE NEWS **PAGE 10**

NOTED AND QUOTED **PAGE 35**

IN PARLIAMENT **PAGE 36**

MEDIA MICROSCOPE

ALLON LEE **PAGE 39**

THE LAST WORD

AVI MAYER **PAGE 40**

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EDITORIAL CHAIRMAN
COLIN RUBENSTEIN**

CEASEFIRE CALLS AID ONLY HAMAS

The Albanese Government has come under pressure from pro-Palestinian groups, the Greens and elements of the ALP to demand Israel accept an immediate, permanent ceasefire and end its war against the Palestinian Islamist terror group Hamas.

This is ostensibly out of a concern for rising civilian casualties in Gaza, which are indeed tragic and heart-rending to witness. However, it is worth noting the fact that many of these same groups demanding a ceasefire now were already pre-emptively condemning any Israeli response to the Hamas massacre of October 7 immediately after that attack, well before the IDF launched its ground invasion and surrounded Gaza City, Hamas' main power centre.

In other words, despite making false claims about Israel's tactics violating the laws of war, or even, absurdly, amounting to "genocide", most of those demanding an immediate ceasefire have never actually recognised any Israeli right of self-defence against Hamas' unprovoked acts of mass-murder, no matter what tactics it employed. Some Greens and UN officials like Francesca Albanese have made this explicit.

Yet that right to self-defence has been recognised by virtually every Western government. What does that right entail? Israel was the target of an unprovoked terrorist mass invasion, which led to the murder of more than 1,200 people and the kidnapping of 240 more, and a huge missile bombardment – which was still continuing into late November with more than 9,500 missiles fired – sponsored by the governing authority of a neighbouring territory. These were the clearest imaginable acts of war. So unsurprisingly, Israel launched a war of self-defence against that governing entity, as is its right under the UN Charter.

No country in the world, including Australia, would simply have accepted what happened on October 7 without fighting back in self-defence.

Self-defence does not mean retribution, but taking whatever military steps are necessary to end the ongoing perpetration of war crimes and continuing threat. In this case, with Hamas openly saying it wants to keep launching unprovoked attacks on Israel "again and again" until the Jewish state is destroyed, this can only entail dismantling both Hamas' military capabilities and its ability to rule Gaza.

US President Joe Biden recognised this on Nov. 15, telling reporters, "I think [the war is] going to stop when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder and abuse and just do horrific things to the Israelis."

Moreover, the Hamas threat is only heightened by its Iranian backing and the efforts of Iranian proxies to launch attacks against Israel from multiple fronts, including by Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen.

With Hamas having committed the war crime of turning most of the population of Gaza into human shields by building hundreds of kilometres of military tunnels under residential areas of Gaza, and using civilian buildings – including schools, hospitals, mosques and apartment buildings – as its headquarters, weapons depots and missile launching sites, such a war was always going to have heartbreaking costs for Gaza's civilian population. This remains true despite Israel's strenuous efforts to minimise civilian casualties, including by calling for the evacuation of battle zones and issuing millions of warnings, via phone calls and text messages, to civilians located at sites likely to be attacked.

It is notable that those calling for an immediate, permanent ceasefire offer no serious ideas whatsoever for what could happen afterwards. Their vague calls for negotiations with

Hamas, or imaginary scenarios whereby a two-state solution would suddenly be agreed to, or the UN could somehow come in and fix everything, are clearly the products of wishful thinking, wilful ignorance or both.

It should be more than obvious that a two-state vision for peace can never be realised as long as Hamas – a terror group committed not only to Israel’s destruction, but genocide against the Jewish people – maintains control over Gaza and holds offensive capabilities to threaten Israel’s population.

An immediate, long-term ceasefire would therefore cost, not protect, innocent lives in the longer term. It would only defer those casualties for Hamas’ promised future rounds of warfare against Israelis and Jews.

Meanwhile, hysterical allegations being bandied around that Israel is supposedly committing “war crimes” exhibit either a fundamental ignorance of the rules of war, and/or a wilful intent to invent a unique set of rules of engagement that apply only to Israel.

Numerous Law of War experts – including Australian law professor Greg Rose, Australian strategic analysts Anthony Bergin and Peter Jennings, American academics Prof. Matthew Waxman and Prof. Geoffrey S. Corn, Prof. John Spencer, chair of Urban Warfare studies at West Point, and British international law expert Lord Guglielmo Verdine KC have corrected the myths being spread about the Laws of War with regard to Israel’s conduct in Gaza.

Much of the recent hysterics have revolved around IDF operations around Gazan hospitals, including Gaza’s largest

hospital, Shifa. But when hospitals are used as cover for military activities – as Israel has proved Hamas is doing from evidence uncovered at that compound and others – they become legitimate targets. IDF spokespeople have stressed many times that the war is only against armed Hamas terrorists and their military infrastructure, not against the Palestinian people, and it is notable that the IDF’s recent raids into Shifa Hospital to look for terrorist infrastructure have led to exactly zero deaths or injuries to doctors or patients there.

Ultimately, what Australia says or does will have little impact on whether Israel – virtually all of whose citizens firmly believe it is fighting an existential war – attains its military objectives or not. But if Australia does not support

Israel’s efforts in self-defence to neutralise Hamas, it will be a huge blow to the friendship that has existed between Australia and Israel since H.V. “Doc” Evatt played a pivotal role in the UN Partition Plan in 1947 – as well as to any role Australia could play in future in helping encourage a two-state outcome.

For the sake of Australia’s long-standing policy goal of encouraging a negotiated two-state Israeli-Palestinian peace, Australia must continue offering support to the UK, US and Israeli position that the current war can only end when Hamas is left powerless to threaten the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Advocates of an immediate permanent ceasefire, regardless of their motives, should be marginalised as threatening to undermine Australia’s core national interests in the Middle East.

AIR

“” WORD FOR WORD

“I think it’s going to stop when Hamas no longer maintains the capacity to murder and abuse and just do horrific things to the Israelis... Hamas said they plan on doing the same thing again – what they did on the 7th... They’re not backing off. And so, I just asked the rhetorical question, ‘I wonder what we would do if that were the case?’”

US President Joe Biden asked when the Gaza conflict will end (Jewish News Syndicate, Nov. 16).

“Israel is a country that has no place on our land. We must remove that country... The Al-Aqsa Flood is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth, because we have the determination, the resolve, and the capabilities to fight. Will we have to pay a price? Yes, and we are ready to pay it... we are proud to sacrifice martyrs.”

Senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad (MEMRI, Oct. 24).

“Hamas has its own supply stockpile of fuel. If it cared a whit about the people of Gaza, it would make sure itself that it used that fuel to have the hospitals be able to operate the incubators, stay turned on, etc. But, of course, it doesn’t.”

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken testifying before Congress (NBC, Nov. 2).

“[Russia’s invitation to Hamas sends a] message to the entire world that Russia considers Hamas not a terrorist but a liberation movement that defends the rights of its people and wages a war for justice.”

Senior Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouk in Russia (Associated Press, Oct. 28).

“There is no more tenaciously evil race hatred than antisemitism... We believe we speak for the vast majority of Australians, of all faiths and of none, when we say we stand in solidarity with Jewish Australians at this time.”

Joint letter by six former Australian prime ministers (Sydney Morning Herald, Oct. 30).





SCRIBBLINGS

Tzvi Fleischer

ARAB-JEWISH RELATIONS IN ISRAEL SINCE OCTOBER 7

In the Israel-Hamas war of May 2021, Arab-Jewish co-existence inside Israel, which had been making major positive strides, suffered its worst shock in decades. Some Arab citizens of Israel in several mixed Arab-Jewish towns heeded calls from pro-Hamas religious sources and launched violent riots against the homes and synagogues of their Jewish neighbours. Groups of Jews then launched counter-riots. Ten synagogues were set on fire, and more than 1,000 Jewish homes were damaged or destroyed, along with a smaller number of Arab homes. More than a dozen Jews and Arabs were injured. Anger and fear stemming from those attacks likely contributed to the success of right-wing parties in Israel's election in November 2022.

The current Israeli-Gaza war, initiated by Hamas' mass terror attack of October 7, seems to have had the opposite effect – drawing Israeli Jews and Arabs together.

There has been no pro-Hamas inspired violence like what happened in 2021, and Israeli Arab leaders have been very clear that Israeli Jews and Arabs are in the current war together.

Mansour Abbas, of the Ra'am party, which took the landmark decision to serve in the previous Israeli government led by Naftali Bennett, said to his fellow Arab Israelis on October 7: "I call on Arab citizens and all Arab and Jewish citizens to maintain restraint and behave responsibly and patiently, and to maintain law and order." Referring to the "unfortunate, tragic, and reprehensible events" still in progress, he called on the leadership of the Palestinian factions in Gaza to "release the captives in your hands. Islamic values command us not to imprison women, children, and the elderly."

On Oct. 30, he added, "Wisdom, responsibility, the public interest, and the vision of a future for us as an Arab-Palestinian society, and also as citizens of the State of Israel, obligate us to do everything we can to counter the extremist and marginal elements that try to push us into confrontation... All of us – Arab and Jewish citizens – must insist on cooperation... so that we can overcome this crisis by peaceful means."

Even Ayman Odeh, the more radical head of the communist Hadash party, reacted angrily to Hamas calls for Israeli Arabs to rise up against Israel, saying, "Any call for militant actions and igniting a war between Arabs and Jews inside

Israel is something we will not accept."

A poll taken shortly after the massacre showed over 80% of Arab Israelis rejected Hamas' attack and nearly 70% supported Israel's right to respond in self-defence. Only 5% voiced support for Hamas' actions.

Both Jewish and Arab Israelis were directly afflicted by the murderous events of Oct. 7. Amongst the more than 1,200 Israelis killed that day, it is estimated that around 100 were Arab Israelis.

Some were murdered by the 3,000 rockets that were fired into Israel to cover the mass terror waves – including 18 residents of Bedouin towns in the Negev. Others were shot dead while working in the Israeli towns close to the border that were hit by Hamas terrorists.

In a widely-reported case, paramedic Awad Darawsheh was shot dead, along with over 360 other young people, while working at the Supernova music festival. Reports say he was murdered while heroically trying to help the wounded. October 7 also saw other stories of heroism by Arab Israeli medical personnel and first responders.

At least seven Israeli Arabs are also among the 240 people kidnapped into Gaza. Among them are 53-year-old Bedouin agricultural worker Yusuf Alziadna and three of his children, two of them teenagers and one aged 22, all kidnapped from Kibbutz Holit.

Jews and Arabs seem to largely feel they are in the current crisis together. A poll by the Israel Democracy Institute in early November found the number of Arab Israelis who said they feel part of the State of Israel was

at a 20-year high of 70%. That figure stood at just 48% in June. Backing this up, there has been considerable Arab participation in the volunteer groups which have sprung up across Israel to provide various services to those in need since October 7.

Israeli society was changed forever by the events of October 7. There is good reason to believe that the new

Israel that emerges from the current war will have very strong opportunities to build on the already much-improved integration between Israeli Arabs and Jews over the past few years, reversing the severe setback that occurred in May 2021.

BEIJING BLUES

Readers are presumably aware that there has been an explosion of global antisemitism, both on the streets and online, since October 7. It comes from many sources which are largely predictable, if still completely deplorable – Islamist extremists, Palestinian and Arab radicals, the far-right, campus adherents to identity politics, and left-wing "anti-Imperialists". But another source of this global explosion of hate seems much more surprising: China.



Israeli Arab politician Mansour Abbas (Image: X/ Twitter)

Both the *New York Times* (Oct. 28) and *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 29) have reported on an explosion of antisemitic attacks on Israel and Jews in both official Chinese state media and Chinese social media, including WeChat and TikTok – the latter of which is of course widely used outside China. More than any other international social media platform, the Beijing-controlled algorithms and censors of TikTok have promoted pro-Hamas and anti-Israel content, often with an antisemitic flavour.

Like Moscow, China has taken a pro-Hamas line in the current Israel-Hamas war, initially refusing to condemn the October 7 massacre. This apparently extends to promoting antisemitic content. For example, a program put out by *China Central Television* alleged Jewish control over the US, saying, “Jews, who represent 3% of the US population, control 70% of its wealth” while there have been widespread online denunciations of the Holocaust film *Schindler’s List*.

It appears the destabilising anti-Western alliance uniting Iran and its proxies with Russia and China is also becoming an alliance to spread anti-Jewish hate. 



Suzan Quitaz

WITNESSING THE HORROR

On Monday October 23, at the IDF Glilot military base in Herzliya, alongside at least 100 journalists, I was invited to a screening exclusive to international media. We were warned in advance that the materials we were going to see would be raw and unedited footage. We were also informed that we would not be allowed to bring phones or any other recording devices into the screening.

The extremely disturbing 45-minute video comprised footage from the body-cams and mobile phones used by Hamas terrorists, as well as material collected from civilian dash-cam footage, CCTV footage, video from rescuers and imagery posted to social media by both Hamas terrorists and their victims.

Never in my life have I attended a press briefing where journalists looked so shocked, in horror, tears streaming down their faces, some cries could be heard throughout the big auditorium, others shouted “please stop”. Some had to leave because it became too much for them.

In the video, terrorists looked content and proud as they committed sadistic atrocities. They were talking among themselves saying “I swear to Allah, I just killed the coward Jew dog who was hiding under the table.” That “Jew dog” was a young girl who was seen alive in the video hiding under table-desk. They shot her at close-range.

We saw homes soaked in blood, we saw beheaded people, people slaughtered with knives, young women who had been raped, and people burned beyond recognition. We saw CCTV footage of terrorists standing on roadways in southern Israel shooting at civilian cars as they speed away in fear. A car stops, terrorists surround it and continue shooting at close-range even when it’s clear the occupants are already dead.

We saw terrorists walking inside Jewish communities looking for people to kill, unsuspecting people, some still asleep or just woken up and having breakfast with loved ones. The terrorists peek into the windows to see if any Jews are there. They work their way through houses, shooting people trying to hide. We saw their terrified victims, people crying and begging the terrorists not to kill them. We saw a children’s room soaked in blood. We saw babies, their tiny bodies covered with bullet wounds and others slaughtered with sharp objects.

In one agonising moment, CCTV video show a father and two young boys dressed in underwear, running out of their home and into what appears to be a shelter. CCTV cameras outside the house show terrorists run to the shelter. They throw a grenade, the father collapses and dies. The younger boy is injured in one of his eyes and covered in blood. The two young boys wail in pain and shout “daddy”. They are dragged back to the house and forced into the open kitchen. The small boy cries in pain and says “I can only see with one eye.” One of the terrorists opens the fridge looking for food. He grabs a big bottle, some sort of drink. He drinks it front of the two boys.

The most emotional moment for me was when the older boy, not more 11 years old, crawls on the floor and wailing in pain, says in Hebrew, subtitled to English, “Daddy, daddy, God, why I am alive?”

Another harrowing video was taken at the Supernova musical festival near Re’im. Terrorists approach what appears to be a shelter, packed with many dead people. One terrorist walks in, checking if anyone is alive. He suddenly shouts in Palestinian Arabic, “there is a dog moving.” The “dog” was a young man, badly injured. On his face one can see profound fear and shock. He looks at the terrorist, tears streaming down his face, but he says nothing. The terrorist shouts to another “give me a knife,” a reply was heard “just shoot him”. Other terrorists came inside to check if more were alive. They find a few, their bodies covered in blood. Violently, the terrorists start pulling them out. I saw a guy with long hair. The terrorist pulled his hair and dragged him out. Terrorists were laughing among themselves, and hitting their victims while loading them in vehicles to be taken away.

As the video draws to the end and the lights are on, I see many of my journalist colleagues wiping their tears away. Prior to the screening, Maj. Gen. Edelstein said he wanted the world to understand the evil visited upon com-



munities in southern Israel, and why the IDF would now do “whatever is needed to bring back the sense of security to our people.”

AIR

Suzan Quitaz is a journalist at the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, having worked previously at the Qatari News Channel Al-Araby TV. © Fathom Magazine (Fathomjournal.org) reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

ASIA WATCH

Michael Shannon

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Among the denunciations of Israel currently emanating from major cities worldwide, some of the most vociferous have come from Malaysia, yet the zealousness carries a cost.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has refused to condemn Hamas’ attacks on October 7, labelling Israel an “occupier” and calling its actions in Gaza “barbaric”. Routinely attacked by his domestic opposition for insufficiently defending the rights of Muslims, Anwar has travelled to the region to show solidarity with the Palestinians, and conferred with Turkey and other governments in search of a ceasefire.

But diplomatic pressure from the US for Malaysia to label Hamas a terrorist group, followed by the introduction of a bill in US Congress to impose sanctions on countries financially supporting Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups, has prompted Anwar to double down.

While conceding that trade could take a hit if Washington were to sanction Kuala Lumpur under the proposed bill, Anwar said the act would not influence Malaysia’s policies. “We would continue our relationship with Hamas and we do not view Hamas as a terrorist organisation,” he said.

At the political level, Malaysia has hosted Hamas leaders Khaled Mashal and Ismail Haniyeh, while former PM Najib Razak met Hamas’ leaders in Gaza in 2013. Furthermore, Hamas has been active in Malaysia. US analyst James Dorsey, writing in *Modern Diplomacy*, noted that the Kuala Lumpur-based Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia (PCOM), which organises well-attended public events joined by prominent intellectuals, journalists, and civil society figures, also serves as Hamas’ “unofficial embassy” for public outreach and fund raising.

Palestinian engineer Fadi Mohamed Al-Batsh, alleged to be a key player in Hamas’ weapons development, was assassinated by suspected Israeli operatives in Kuala Lumpur in April 2018. Media reports said that Al-Batsh helped Hamas develop its rocket and drone arsenal and may have been negotiating an arms deal with North Korea.

Back in 2014, the Israeli military said that a captured Hamas commander had told Israel’s domestic intelligence service that he was one of ten fighters who trained in Malaysia in the use of motor-powered hang gliders – an ominous portent in light of the October 7 attacks.

Over recent weeks, Malaysians have expressed their solidarity with Palestinians through several rallies, including one that Anwar attended along with 20,000 people.

But not all expressions of solidarity have been universally welcomed. A viral video and series of photos showing Malaysian students and teachers brandishing toy firearms and wearing keffiyeh scarves while waving Palestinian flags, including a pro-Hamas banner, prompted accusations that the Ministry of Education was politicising schools by introducing a Palestine Solidarity Week (Oct. 29 to Nov. 3) at all educational institutions nationwide.

Civil society NGOs have warned of schools sowing seeds of hatred in the minds of impressionable students, citing a recent incident where young students stomped on an Israeli flag at their school, while on Facebook, activist and lawyer Siti Kassim said the solidarity week in schools had already gone out of control. “Are we training Jihadis now in our schools? What’s with the weapons and all?” she asked.

The father of an eight-year-old autistic child told *BenarNews* that he knew the event would not go well when he saw the school’s request that children wear white T-shirts and bring a toy gun with them. “The reason I did not speak out was because I did not want my son becoming a target. He needs to be in the school as it’s the only available school for him,” he said.

Meanwhile, calls for boycotts against companies with alleged links to Israel have been strong on social media platforms such as X, TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. High profile targets are American food franchises – including McDonalds, Starbucks, and Pizza Hut – due to the US Government’s pro-Israel stance.

Franchise owners often point out that the primary victims of these boycotts are local workers and their families. A manager of a McDonald’s outlet in Klang Valley told *Channel News Asia* on the condition of anonymity that the restaurants were seeing a huge reduction in business, especially among Malay consumers. He said that the firm has had to cut the working hours of their staff.

“The crew is made up of people of all races and religions. Some of them are disabled and need their jobs to survive. I can only hope this boycott ends soon,” said the restaurant manager, adding that he also felt for the Palestinian people.

Grab Malaysia, too, has been a target of the boycotts after screenshots of several Instagram stories posted by Chloe Tong – the wife of the ride-hailing company’s CEO Anthony Tan – circulated on social media. In the undated posts, Ms Tong had said that she had fallen “completely in love” with Israel because of her past visits there.

Grab announced on Nov. 6 a RM1 million (A\$333,000) donation to NGO Mercy Malaysia's Palestinian Fund, saying that it was deeply "saddened by the plight of the communities affected by the conflict in Gaza."

AIR



Alex Benjamin

HAMAS' USEFUL IDIOTS

Less than a week after the October 7 Hamas massacre, I was sitting opposite a senior Israeli diplomatic figure in Brussels. "Think of this as a traffic light," he told us. "Right now we are on green – the world supports us, feels sorry for us. In about a week or two from now, it will go to orange – the support will slowly slip away, and then it will turn to red, when we are in Gaza. And then we will lose support." That observation turned out to be prescient.

"I prefer to stay alive and be criticised than be sympathised," Golda Meir once said. Jews in Europe know this feeling very well. Time after time, operation after operation, we have seen spikes in antisemitism whenever Israel defends itself. But nothing could have prepared us for recent weeks.

My mother, who is in her eighties, remembers the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas with crystal clarity. For me, it was September 11. I was a press officer in the European Parliament watching CNN without comprehending what I was seeing, initially thinking the first plane was an air traffic control accident. Then the second plane struck.

I thought of this after the Hamas massacre. A mere 24 hours afterwards, the pro-Palestinians were out in force, decrying a genocide, as if Israel's September 11 multiplied by at least ten didn't warrant any response whatsoever. And I thought, what would the reaction have been in New York after September 11, or after Bataclan in Paris in 2015, or Madrid in 2004, if the supporters of terrorism had organised demonstrations in the street to condemn the victim nation? It would have been unthinkable.

"From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is chanted with impunity. Posters of hostages are ripped down. Jewish homes are being daubed with Stars of David.

"They are tracking flights from Israel and knocking on doors to identify Jewish homes;" "I must wear a bullet proof vest to take my children to school;" "Jew hate that I haven't witnessed since the Holocaust" – these are just some of the comments relayed to the EU Co-ordinator for Combatting Antisemitism Katharina Von Schnurbein from

senior Jewish leaders in the Netherlands and Portugal and a Holocaust survivor in Belgium.

Here at the offices of the European Jewish Association, we have had to hire extra security. On a wall opposite our office, they daubed "free Palestine" (curiously, with a hammer and sickle). At the hipster coffee place on the corner frequented by EU officials, the staff put a sign up saying "Dear EU workers, please do all you can to stop the genocide in Gaza" and, for good measure, added a Free Gaza sign beside it.

The Jewish Agency is reporting a huge rise in inquiries about *Aliyah* (immigration) to Israel. Some European Jewish leaders are advocating moving east to places like the Czech Republic or Poland to escape what they see as a Western Europe lost to the Jewish people.

Can this all be explained away by demographics? I'm not so sure. Let's take France – Jews represent 0.7% of the population and Muslims, 10%.

Reported antisemitism is everywhere up by huge amounts, some reports say as much as 1400% in some places. This is bigger than any demographic shift.

Less than a year ago, in a conversation with a senior EU figure, I decried the EU's position on Israel, which makes a sharp distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. The former, in their eyes, is legitimate political opinion, the latter beyond the pale.

The classification of anti-Zionism – the demand for destruction of a Jewish state that has existed for more than 75 years – into the political opinion box instead of the hateful prejudice box is one key reason why Jews find ourselves in the worst antisemitism crisis since the Shoah.

Are we surprised? A better description is deeply disappointed. After all, Article 30 of the Hamas charter is clear:

Jihad is not confined to the carrying of arms and the confrontation of the enemy. The effective word, the good article, the useful book, support and solidarity... all these are elements of the Jihad.

For Hamas, this anti-Zionism/antisemitism divide has been a veritable boon. And since October 7, business has

been booming. Politicians, the media, mass protests – the politics of anti-Zionism are in full swing.

Meanwhile, Jews, not Israelis or Zionists, are demonised throughout the Hamas Charter in classically antisemitic terms – including citing not only the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, but also an Islamic tradition which prophesises that the Muslims will murder all Jews before the Day of Judgement. There was never any anti-Zionism/antisemitism separation from the Hamas perspective; this has always been about Jews – full stop.

Hamas must see most of Europe as a bunch of useful idiots in its war against the Jews. I'm not necessarily inclined to disagree.



Protesters in London (Image: Shutterstock)



BEHIND THE NEWS

ROCKET AND TERROR REPORT

Since the Hamas pogrom of October 7, more than 9,500 rockets and other projectiles had been launched at Israel from Gaza as of Nov. 17, though the daily number of launches declined sharply by mid-November.

Israel's official death toll from the attack was revised down to approximately 1,200, after it was realised some suspected casualties were actually Hamas terrorists. As of Nov. 17, 237 people were reportedly being held hostage in Gaza, with four people released; one female soldier rescued by the IDF on Oct. 29; and three hostages confirmed to have been killed.

As of Nov. 20, the IDF had struck more than 15,000 targets in Gaza and suffered 66 deaths since the start of its ground operation.

In the West Bank, one soldier was killed and five wounded in a terrorist shooting at a checkpoint south of Jerusalem on Nov. 16. On Nov. 10, the Palestinian Authority claimed 182 Palestinians had been killed and 2,700 wounded in Israeli military operations since October 7. Most of these were terrorist operatives and those involved in clashes with the IDF. However, Israeli settler violence has reportedly been responsible for nine Palestinian civilian deaths.

ISRAEL AGREES TO HUMANITARIAN PAUSES

On Nov. 9, Israel announced it would initiate daily four-hour humanitarian pauses in its anti-terror operation in Gaza. The "tactical, localised" pauses support the already established humanitarian corridors allowing Gazans to evacuate from northern to southern Gaza and away from the most intense areas of conflict. The pauses occur in a different northern

Gaza neighbourhood each day, with residents notified three hours ahead of time. Residents can either choose to leave or restock food and medical supplies.

Meanwhile, more than 1,400 trucks carrying more than 20,000 tons of humanitarian aid entered Gaza from Egypt between the start of the war and Nov. 18. On that date, Israel said it would allow in as many aid trucks as the UN could provide.

ISRAEL ALLOWS FUEL INTO GAZA

On Nov. 16, Israel agreed to allow the entry of 140,000 litres fuel into the Gaza Strip every two days for use by humanitarian agencies to power water, sewage and sanitation systems, after previously embargoing all such fuel imports. The following day, 120,000 litres arrived for these purposes, as well as an additional 10,000 litres for generators keeping the local telecommunications systems running.

Israel and the US have alleged that Hamas has been hoarding a stockpile of up to one million litres of fuel, which it uses to keep generators operating for its underground tunnel network. Israel has also provided audio intercepts appearing to show Hamas fighters attempting to steal fuel from Gaza hospitals.

HAMAS AIMS EXPOSED

Evidence found on the bodies of Hamas terrorists killed during the October 7 massacre, and reported in the *Washington Post* (Nov. 13), exposed additional details about the aims of the operation. The invaders were instructed to kill and kidnap as many Israelis as possible and then attempt to occupy Israeli towns for weeks. The terrorists carried sufficient equip-

ment, weapons and food to carry this plan out. Maps and intelligence suggest their aim was then to launch a second wave penetrating much deeper into Israel, potentially strike larger Israeli cities, and then possibly link up with the West Bank.

Senior Hamas officials have also added information about the goals of the attack in statements to the *New York Times* – principally to create a major war with Israel to reignite Arab and global interest in the Palestinian cause. In a report printed on Nov. 9, Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya told the *New York Times* that the October 7 massacre "succeeded in putting the Palestinian issue back on the table," warning that "now no one in the region is experiencing calm." Taher El-Nounou, a Hamas media adviser, expressed his hope that a "state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us."

VIOLENCE ON ISRAEL'S LEBANON BORDER

In Lebanon, Hezbollah had lost more than 70 operatives to Israeli retaliatory strikes and shelling between October 7 and Nov. 17, while engaged in nearly 200 attacks against Israeli soldiers and civilians on the Lebanese border. Hamas has also lost several members in Lebanon. At least one member of the Shi'ite Amal militia was killed. Rockets and anti-tank missiles continued to be fired daily at Israel. Two Israeli civilians and six soldiers have been killed in the violence.

On Nov. 3, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah gave a keenly anticipated speech in which he praised the Hamas attacks, but said he had not been informed of them beforehand, and would not be sacrificing Lebanon for Gaza.

HOUTHIS CONTINUE ATTACKS ON ISRAEL



Fighters from Yemen's Houthis, who have now turned their Iranian-supplied missiles and drones against Israel (Image: Maad Ali/Alamy Live News)

The Houthis, Iran's proxy in Yemen, have launched several ballistic and cruise missile and drone attacks against Israel since Oct. 19. This necessitated the first operational use of Israel's Arrow 3 ballistic missile interceptor on Nov. 9, which shot down a Houthi ballistic missile in what is believed to be the first combat operation to take place in space. The US and Jordan also intercepted Houthi missiles fired at Israel.

On Nov. 15, the Houthis threatened to strike any Israeli ships traversing the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab Strait. On Nov. 20, the Bahamas-flagged cargo ship *Galaxy Leader*, which has an Israeli business-

man as one of its owners, was seized by Houthi forces.

US CLASHES WITH IRAN'S PROXIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

Following attacks by Iranian proxies against United States military bases and personnel in Syria and Iraq that began on Oct. 17, the US responded with airstrikes against Iranian proxies on Oct. 26, Nov. 8, and Nov. 12. There were at least 52 attacks by Iranian proxies on US forces up to Nov. 10, including 26 in Iraq and 26 in Syria, with 56 US personnel injured, and one contractor dying of cardiac arrest.

US strikes against Iranian proxy sites included two F-15 fighter jets dropping multiple bombs on a weapons storage facility in Deir el-Zour in eastern Syria known to be used by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, killing nine people affiliated with Iran-backed proxy groups.

HEZBOLLAH ATTACK IN BRAZIL THWARTED

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu revealed on Nov. 8 that Mossad, Israel's spy agency, along

with Brazilian security services, had foiled an attack against Jews in Brazil planned by Hezbollah. Two individuals were arrested on terrorism charges in Sao Paulo, with search and seizure warrants executed in multiple states.

NO STEPS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM ISLAMIC SUMMIT

An emergency Arab League and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation summit on the Israeli-Hamas war on Nov. 11 in Riyadh concluded with a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire, and condemning Israel's "crimes".

However, states with relations with Israel, most notably Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, blocked Iranian and Turkish efforts to impose aggressive punitive measures against Israel, such as cutting all relations, preventing transfer of weapons to Israel from US bases in the region, and using petroleum to pressure the West to take anti-Israeli steps.

Analysts pointed to this development as evidence of the strength of Israel's ties with its regional allies, specifically the Abraham Accords countries, and also indicating that Saudi Arabia is still seeking a deal to normalise relations with Israel.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

LOOKING OUT FOR THE "LITTLE PEOPLE"

Since the Hamas October 7 mass atrocity, "Kidnapped" posters have been appearing across the world. They have a photo and the name and age of one of the more than 230 victims of the Hamas kidnapping spree, some details of the overall attacks, and a plea to "Please help bring them home alive." Disturbingly, a parallel movement has emerged to tear down or vandalise these posters (see p. 40).

A normal, sane person might think people put up these posters simply to seek to draw attention to the plight of the

kidnap victims and put pressure on the international community to act to have them released.

However, leading US-based activist Linda Sarsour knows better. Sarsour is probably best known as a leader of the Women's March on Washington in 2017, until leaving the organisation over allegations she failed to prevent antisemitism and homophobia associated with it. She is also a BDS supporter.

According to Sarsour, the posters are actually a cunning trap by those dastardly Jews. They don't really care about the hostages, but only put them up because they want them torn down to make Pal-

estinian supporters look bad.

Video footage of a pro-Palestinian rally on Nov. 7 shows her telling the crowd, "There are provocateurs all across the city. And what they're waiting for



Linda Sarsour (screenshot)

you to do is to waste your energy ripping down their little posters so they can record you and try to get you fired from your job... They have their little people all around the city. Trust me, I know them. I got a radar for them. You think they're your people? You think they're ordinary people? Trust me when I tell you they are everywhere."

Who says antisemitism makes you paranoid?

COVER STORY

WAR, TERROR AND LIES

NINE UNTRUTHS ABOUT ISRAEL'S CONFLICT WITH HAMAS

Gil Troy

In 1917, California's isolationist senator Hiram W. Johnson captured the cynicism of politics – especially during wartime. “The first casualty when war comes is truth,” he said, echoing earlier sages, as America embarked on a “war to end all wars” – which we now call World War I.

While fabricating here and there may be every general's pastime, Palestinian terrorists and their enablers have taken lying to a whole other level. Yet, despite building so much of their case on a foundation of falsehoods, they keep conning the world. Everyone “knows” that Israel occupies Gaza – despite Israel disengaging from it in 2005; that “From the River to the Sea” envisions a democratic Palestine – when it envisions an exterminated Israel; and, most outrageously, that hundreds of innocent Israelis, young and old alike, deserved to be massacred, maimed, raped and terrorised – while others deny all the evidence that the atrocities happened at all.

This primer picks nine of the most popular Big Lies Palestinians and their enablers propagate.

“FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA, PALESTINE WILL BE FREE”

Give the Palestinians credit here: At least they're honest. Well, some Palestinians prevaricate. They claim the slogan imagines a secular democratic state with Jews and Arabs living together. In fact, the phrase's history is exclusionary and exterminationist.

In 1964, three years before the Six-Day War, the slogan was popularised by the Palestinian activists and terrorists who founded the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Their war aims were not to liberate the “occupied territories”, which Israel only secured three years later. They wanted – and still do – to liberate the world from Israel itself. Similarly, since Hamas emerged in the late 1980s, the slogan



Not a call for freedom, but for exclusion and expulsion (Image: Shutterstock)

has been a Hamas and Islamic Jihad mainstay.

October 7 offered at least one clear lesson: If your enemy calls for your destruction – your enemy is calling for your destruction. Jews should take the Palestinian death cries seriously, and Americans must start taking the Iranian mullahs' death cries seriously. It's actually bigoted not to take them at their word, to decide “they can't really mean that.” “From the River to the Sea” leaves no rooms for Jews – or the Jewish state.

“THIS IS WHAT DECOLONISATION LOOKS LIKE”

The world is a tough place. Over the centuries, powerful countries have colonised other places, sending explorers, then groups of settlers, away from the mother country to establish settlements, usually in order to extract resources. Inevitably, especially as national self-determination became a virtue, colonisation led to decolonisation.

On one level, decolonisation is simply a historical process, whereby people in the colonies rebel, or the empire

collapses. Over the decades, scholars defined decolonisation as a state of mind, too. Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), born in Martinique, helped make decolonisation trendy among some of the most settled and privileged people in the world's richest and most expensive universities.

As a psychiatrist, Fanon observed that colonised people often internalised a sense of inferiority. As a revolutionary, he wanted those colonies to break free – even violently. Considering violence cleansing, restoring some balance, some dignity to the powerless, he called violence “man recreating himself”.

For the colonised, Fanon preached, “there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonization and decolonization is simply a question of strength.”

Fanon remains remarkably influential today. Today's campus commissars have combined Marx's seesaw between the oppressor and the oppressed with Fanon's coloniser-decoloniser dynamic and deification of violence. The oppressive colonisers in this Manichean, black-and-white world are always guilty, while the oppressed are forever pure and innocent, no matter what they do.

Viewing the world through this distorting prism, Israel is always guilty, the Palestinians forever innocent. As a result, the October 7 barbarian bloodbath was exhilarating, joyous, justified.

To see the world this way requires much fanaticism, many simplifications, multiple distortions and, at the end of the day, a very, very bruised soul. But those blinders explain how so many feminists fail to see Hamas' rape culture and child abuse, how so many liberals fail to acknowledge the despotism, how so many humanists fail to cry out in shame and horror as Palestinian marauders crossed every civilisational red line.

“ISRAEL IS PRACTISING APARTHEID”

The Jews seem to have magical powers. Over the centuries, Jews attracted all kinds of labels: Jews were too rich and too poor, too capitalist and too socialist, too traditional and too modern, too anxious to fit in and too eager to stand out.

Today, the Jewish state has similar plastic powers. As trends change, Israel is deemed guilty of the most heinous of national sins. Today Israel is a white-supremacist or, even better, Jewish-supremacist state, and a settler-colonialist enterprise. In the 1990s, Israel was racist, colonialist, and imperialist, as well as guilty of “ethnic cleansing” once the Balkan mess introduced that phrase into the international vocabulary. But since the 1970s, as the international community justifiably turned away in disgust from apartheid South Africa, Israel has been called an apartheid state.

Apartheid was a system of racial differentiation – apartness – based on all kinds of racial classifications and perverse beliefs that whites and blacks and coloured people were not equal. The Apartheid Wall in Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum lists 148 laws sifting people into different racial categories to keep them apart and calibrate who deserved which privileges – and which restrictions.

Israel has never passed one law defining people by racial categories. Israelis and Palestinians are involved in a national conflict, not a race war.

Moreover, if Israel's goal was an apartheid state, it's done an awful job. Israeli Arabs enjoy equal rights and have served as Supreme Court judges, Knesset members, key members of the last coalition. With about 20% of the population, Israeli Arabs are overly represented in Israel's medical system: About 20% of the doctors, as much as 40% of the nurses and 43% of the pharmacists are

Israeli Arabs. Finally, if Israelis hate Arabs so much and see them as inferior, why was there so much excitement about the Abraham Accords, and why are Hamas and Iran trying to subvert a Saudi Arabian deal with Israel?

“ISRAEL IS CARRYING OUT GENOCIDE”

Genocide, literally tribe-killing, is defined as a systematic series of violent acts “committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.” For decades, Palestinians have been crying “genocide”, claiming Israel seeks to wipe them out. Yet the Palestinian population has at least quintupled since 1967, from just over 1 million to nearly five-and-a-half million people. Zionists are even worse at genocide than they are at apartheid.

Pure hatred often involves projection: You hate in others what you hate in yourself, you imagine your enemies would do to you what you would do to them if you had a chance. These false cries that Israelis are targeting Palestinians for genocide reflect the sweeping, categorical and thus genocidal tendencies in the Hamas charter, in the October 7 sadism, and in too many twisted corners of the Palestinian national soul.

“ISRAEL IS ENGAGED IN DISPROPORTIONATE BOMBING”

When terrorists attack your civilians, then hide behind their civilians, what can a serious military do? Inevitably, some of those human shields will die.

When an enemy attacks and then cowers in mosques and hospitals and kindergartens and schools, those protected places become military objectives. Complaining about a “disproportionate response” from a regular army when fighting terrorists embedded in a city is in essence

“For decades, Palestinians have been crying ‘genocide’, claiming Israel seeks to wipe them out. Yet the Palestinian population has at least quintupled since 1967”

complaining about any response from the army. When your enemy calls for your annihilation, acts on it, then vows to try again and again, it's unrealistic to expect no collateral damage.

Let's be clear: The moral onus for every death, every injury, every misfire, remains on Hamas for initiating this conflict. It's unfair to forget that ultimately war is a clash of powerful, ugly forces. If you want to win, it's logical – and moral – for your own side to mobilise as much force as it can, within the bounds of reason of course, while not being immediately criticised, as Israel is.

“ISRAEL HAS OCCUPIED THE WEST BANK AND GAZA SINCE 1967”

In June 1967, threatened by three Arab armies, Israel fought for its life and more than tripled its size. It won the Golan Heights in the north from Syria. It took over Gaza and the Sinai in the south from Egypt. And it reunited Jerusalem, while securing the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria from Jordan – which had, ahem, occupied what it called its “West Bank” territories, with no international authorisation, since the Jordanian Legion invaded to its west during the 1948-1949 Israel War of Independence.

While Israeli governments over the years wavered, using various legal theories including the laws of occupation to define Israel's relationship to all the territories, calling them “occupied” was triply problematic – especially to historians.

First, in defending itself legitimately, Israel seized territory from a hostile neighbour with no legal claim on it. From 1949 to 1967, the Jordanian conquerors ignored the UN 1947 Partition Plan's provision to make those areas an independent Arab state. The United Nations never recognised Jordanian sovereignty there, making the territories truly disputed, not occupied.

Second, this was no colonial expedition, going to some exotic locale in pith helmets and safari suits. Jews had international rights to the territories and a deep history there, especially the biblical territories of Judea and Samaria, which were deemed Jewish and open for Jewish settlement under the 1920 (often overlooked) San Remo conference and, subsequently, the British Mandate.

Today, alas, the occupation preoccupation has become the main launching pad not only for the Bash Israel First-ers, but those hyper-critical Jews who habitually doubt Israel. Moreover, Palestinians use the words “occupation” and “settlements” promiscuously, to delegitimise anything Zionist. Israel is “occupied”, all of Israel. Every Israeli is a “settler”. The plundered kibbutzim of the southwest Negev are “settlements”, despite lying in pre-1967 Israel, within the “Green Line” – the borders from the 1949 armistice with Jordan, hastily drawn in green pencil. This sweeping Big Lie helped legitimise Hamas' savagery, deeming every Israeli, every Thai volunteer, every tourist an “occupier” deserving of any violence Hamas and the other Palestinian murderers could mete out.

“ISRAEL'S SO-CALLED DISENGAGEMENT FROM GAZA JUST TURNED IT INTO AN OPEN-AIR PRISON”

In 2005, Israel disengaged from Gaza, uprooting more than 9,000 Israeli citizens living in 25 settlements scattered through Gaza and northern Samaria. Amid the anguish, military strategists lobbied intensely to keep a strip of land for defensive purposes – the Philadelphi corridor. The Duke of Disengagement, Ariel Sharon, resisted. He claimed that if Israel retained even one grain of Gazan sand, critics would claim it was still “occupied”. And he was confident that once Gaza was no longer occupied, Israel could live in peace as the Gazans prospered.

If there is one word that best explains Israelis' current frustration and fury, it is “disengagement”. Eighteen years ago, there were some weapons in Gaza, no tunnels and a limited terrorist infrastructure, because Israel still retained some control. Yet, almost immediately after the withdrawal from Gaza, primitive Qassam rockets started bombarding Israel – while critics kept bombarding Israel with the o-word, the occupation charge. The violence against Israel – and the criticism – intensified when Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007, killing fellow Palestinians brutally.

Under the gun, now facing an implacable foe vowing to exterminate the Jewish state and the Jews – see the Hamas

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charter – Israel tried blockading Hamas. As a result, a whole series of lies burst forth: that Israel is occupying the territory it withdrew from completely (in fact, note how little control it had and how ineffectual its blockade was as Hamas built its deadly arsenal); that Gaza is the “most densely populated place on Earth” (it doesn’t compare to Manhattan, Hong Kong, and other skyscrapered city centres); and that the Zionists have made it an “open air prison” or concentration camp (when you can see on a map that Egypt controls Gaza’s southern border.)

In short, Israel did everything it said it would when it disengaged. In doing so, Israel betrayed many of its own citizens. Nevertheless, Israel ended up with no peace, no peace of mind and a piece of territory that became Hamastan rather than the Mediterranean resort it could have been if its governing body had put its generous international aid to good use. Today, Israel has on its border a hostile, seething launching pad for tens of thousands of rockets and marauders, exporting so much trauma and misery – while those responsible treat their own people as cannon fodder too.

“ISRAEL MUST AGREE TO A HUMANITARIAN CEASEFIRE”

In the Middle East today, that phrase may be the ultimate oxymoron—like a moral terrorist, a pragmatic Hamasnik, a feminist jihadist, a healthy cancer. For 18 years the world has yelled “disproportionate bombing” and keeps demanding “humanitarian ceasefires” whenever Israel defends itself. For 18 years, much humanitarian aid has been diverted to Hamas itself. After Hamas invaded and raided and shattered so many lives, from an Israeli perspective, what would be “humanitarian” about a premature ceasefire?

Diplomats and pro-Palestinian demonstrators say “humanitarian ceasefire”. Israelis hear “a chance for Hamas to regroup” and “more of the same.” Many Israelis wonder: “When do the hostages get such a pause?” Until the hostages are released, Israel cannot relent.



Calls for an immediate ceasefire amount to calls for the hostages to stay imprisoned and for Hamas to be allowed to re-group (Image: Shutterstock)

Israel can move to ease the burden of the truly innocent stuck between Hamas and the IDF. Israel can set up field hospitals or temporary refuges in empty parts of Gaza, in Egypt, or even in isolated parts of the Negev. But let’s not kid ourselves: Hamas will take advantage of any break or kindness. At least one-third of the first wave of what was supposed to be wounded civilians evacuated to Egypt for treatment were wounded Hamas terrorists trying to sneak away. Fuel delivered by international organisations has long been hijacked by Hamas for its war machine.

Some claim Hamas is a small group holding the peace-loving Gazans hostage. But if Hamas is abusing people, a humanitarian pause giving the terrorists a break increases Palestinian misery, too. It delays the liberation they need. In fact, most Gazans, like most Palestinians, celebrated the carnage of October 7, and many zealously participated.

So, yes, try improvising ways to help, to minimise civilian suffering. But “humanitarian aid” without proper supervision would amount to resupplying Hamas, and “ceasefire” sounds like letting the killers regroup.

“ISRAEL MUST PURSUE A TWO-STATE SOLUTION”

In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181. It was epic, recognising the Jewish right to a national home – a right rooted in the Bible, promised in the Balfour Declaration and the 1920 San Remo conference redeemed through the blood, sweat and tears of Zionist pioneers who had already built an impressive infrastructure for the state that would be declared in May 1948. To treat – in the parlance of the time – the Palestinian Jews and the Palestinian Arabs fairly, the United Nations partitioned the area, envisioning a Jewish state and an Arab entity, while internationalising Jerusalem, the Jewish people’s forever capital.

The Jews found this compromise devastating. But Palestinian Jewry’s leadership, pushed by David Ben-Gurion, decided that half a loaf was better than none. Two years after the Holocaust ended, Ben-Gurion feared more bloodshed. The Jews needed a state. The day after the UN Resolution passed, as Jews finished singing and dancing, Arab rejectionists rioted, trashing Jerusalem’s commercial district.

That started an historic pattern. Again and again, the Jews – and after 1948 what became the State of Israel – offered compromises, were willing to split territory, to cede territory. Yet again and again, the Palestinian leadership rejected it. No wonder the leading historian Efraim Karsh titled his book about the era *Palestine Betrayed*, emphasising that Hitlerian extremists like the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem betrayed their own Palestinian Arab people.

In 1974, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution endorsing “two States, Israel and Palestine... side by side within secure and recognised borders.” Thus

began this diplomatic Holy Grail, pursuing a “two-state solution”. The most dramatic attempt to achieve it – the Oslo Peace Process of the 1990s – ended in bloodshed, when after the Camp David Peace Talks in 2000, Yasser Arafat rejected any compromise and led his people from negotiation right back to terror.

So yes, for decades there has been talk of a “two-state solution”, and many Israelis would love to see a territorial split. But, especially after October 7, the phrase stings. It reeks of three lies – the lies they tell us, the lies the world buys and the lies we tell ourselves.

First, when Palestinian diplomats and propagandists play the two-state game, they imply that once they have their territorial share, one of two states, the conflict will be solved. But the Palestinian leadership consistently refuses even to adjust its sweeping, all-or-nothing rhetoric promising to wipe Israel off the map. The Americans worked so hard in the 1990s to get Arafat to change the PLO charter calling for Israel’s destruction – and were so desperate to succeed – they overlooked what Arafat kept saying in Arabic, when he thought Bill Clinton and company weren’t paying attention. Again and again, especially Arafat in 2000, Mahmoud Abbas when he rejected Ehud Olmert’s compromise in 2008 and, most dramatically, Hamas in Gaza, showed no interest in a true “solution” that leaves Israel intact. Hamas’ charter is explicit about that.

Today, the phrase is even more misleading and infuriating because it’s usually used as code in the international community and certain parts of the Jewish community for “Israel, just do the right thing, give them their territory ‘back’ and we will have peace.” But, especially after October 7, most Israelis know that the call on the Palestinian side is a ruse. Gazans had the potential to make a state. Israel and the international community would have showered peaceful, constructive Palestinians with money. Instead, they turned their strip of land into a multi-layered stationary warship – and the international community still showered them with money.

Clearly, the Palestinians and their propagandists have developed a whole lexicon, a series of talking points and slogans that distort words, negate history and obscure Palestinian intentions. Israel went along with these lies for too long, often bullied into guilelessness by a gullible international community. October 7 was a nightmarish wake-up call. Israel must be moral – for its own sake, for its soldiers’ consciences and its national soul. The game of buying into Palestinian lies and international niceties ended when those terrorists swarmed the peaceful kibbutzim and villages, sowing death and destruction. The challenge now is creating a new reality – and a new lexicon to acknowledge that reality – and build a better, fairer and genuinely safer new Middle East from there.

AIR

recently, the editor of the three-volume set, Theodor Herzl: Zionist Writings, the inaugural publication of the Library of the Jewish People. Originally published in The Jewish Journal (jewishjournal.com) reprinted by permission, all right reserved.

AROUND THE BLOCKADE

Alana Schetzer & Allon Lee

Since October 7, many people have claimed that the 16-year blockade of Gaza was the root cause of Hamas’ barbaric acts of terrorist mass-murder against Israelis. Supposedly, the blockade pushed Hamas to a point where it had no alternative but to lash out.

For instance, UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese epitomised this naïve and dangerous view, telling *ABC TV* on Nov. 9 that “Hamas is a political party” and “it’s very easy to dismantle Hamas [militarily]. End the blockade.”

Similarly, the Australian Greens responded to the massacre by calling “for an immediate end to the blockade” while refusing to concede Israel has any right of self-defence against Hamas.

In reality, claiming that Iran-backed Hamas are ‘freedom fighters’ driven to desperate acts by the need to end the blockade flies in the face of both history and what Hamas itself says motivated its murderous and barbaric actions.

Hamas’ founding charter states that its primary goal is the destruction of Israel and the annihilation of Jewish people, both which it says are religious obligations.

Notwithstanding Hamas’ periodic talk that it might accept a temporary truce (*hudna* in Arabic) with Israel, negotiations, a two-state solution and peaceful co-existence are not in its lexicon.

In 2017, Hamas issued a revised “Statement of Principles and Policies” which many said proved it had moderated. However, the 2017 document – which does not supersede the original charter – has a bottom line that is completely uncompromising, rejecting “any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea” and saying “armed resistance [is] the strategic choice” for achieving this.

The strongest rebuff to the view that Hamas was forced into extremism by the blockade is its own spokespeople’s statements since October 7. Initial statements termed the massacre the “Al-Aqsa flood” and said it was a response to Israel’s supposed desecration of Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On Nov. 8, Hamas media adviser Taher El-Nounou cited a different goal to the *New York Times*: “I hope that the

state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us.”

The *NYT* article made the critical point that Hamas officials decided “governance” of Gaza was [a] “distraction from their original, military mission.”

On Oct. 24, senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad dispelled any notion that the massacre was a one-off, telling Lebanese TV: “We must remove... [Israel]... we will do [October 7] again and again... [this] is just the first time, and there will be a second, a third, a fourth.”

See any sign Hamas says it would stop its terrorism if the blockade were lifted?

The blockade’s critics also ignore the circumstances that led to its imposition – Hamas’ steadily increased terror attacks after Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from the entire Gaza Strip in August 2005.

This marked the start of Hamas firing tens of thousands of rockets from Gaza into towns and villages in southern Israel – each one a war crime. Then, in June 2006, Hamas launched a cross border raid into Israel, abducting Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit back into Gaza using an underground tunnel.

No blockade was in place at the time – so it could not have “forced” Hamas to carry out these acts of aggression and war crimes.

The circumstances that led to the blockade developed in the months following the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections – in which Hamas won more seats than the ruling Fatah party.

Growing tensions between the two groups erupted into violent conflict in Gaza in June 2007, and Hamas gained total control of the strip. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah had his rule restricted to the West Bank.

It was only three months afterwards that Israel and Egypt imposed their respective blockades – designed to limit Hamas’ ability to gain money, arms, technology and dual use items to further upgrade its unprovoked attacks on Israel across the Gaza border.

Hamas could have ended the blockade there and then. But it rejected the international community’s conditions, expressed through the “Quartet” (UN, US, EU and Russia), for diplomatic recognition of it – that it renounce terror, recognise Israel, and honour the agreements the PA had signed with Israel.

Later, the blockade became another weapon in the propaganda war against Israel, with the original reasons for it forgotten.

Human rights groups and the UN bodies said the block-

ade was illegal. It wasn’t. The 2011 Palmer Report, commissioned by the UN Secretary-General, determined that Israel was legally entitled to impose a blockade because “Hamas... is firing... projectiles into Israel” and International Law recognises Israel is “entitled to take reasonable steps to prevent the influx of weapons into Gaza.”

Israel was accused of imposing a “siege” on Gaza, when the blockade was only ever limited and selective. Restrictions applied only to “dual-use” items with potential military applications.

The UN’s own data shows “before the [current] war,

around 500 trucks, including humanitarian assistance but predominantly commercial supplies, entered Gaza every day.” Moreover, Gaza also has a border with Egypt that Israel does not control, thus ruling out any sort of “siege”.

Similarly, before October 7, thousands of entry permits were issued each month by Israel to Gazans needing medical treatments not available in the Strip, while

18,500 Gazans worked in Israel with their earnings going back into the Gazan economy.

The accusation that the blockade has impoverished Gaza is also false.

Much more significant in causing Gaza’s poor economic situation was Hamas’ cynical decision to start five major wars with Israel, and several smaller ones. It did this while using Gaza’s civilians and civilian infrastructure as human shields by firing rockets from densely populated residential areas, knowing Israel’s counter response would destroy infrastructure and kill civilians. This was all part of Hamas’ successful propaganda campaign, which damaged Israel’s reputation, and caused pressure on Israel to limit its actions against Hamas’ military capabilities during each war.

Also impacting Gaza’s economic outlook has been the effect of Hamas stealing foreign aid – including thousands of tons of concrete intended for constructing housing and other civilian infrastructure – to build its huge network of tunnels where it stores weapons, fuel, food, and medicines for its war against Israel.

At the time of writing, Israel’s campaign to prevent Hamas carrying out its plans to repeat October 7 “again and again” is incomplete. As the death toll of Palestinians in Gaza rises, Jerusalem is facing pressure to agree to a ceasefire that would leave Hamas in control of Gaza, free to rebuild and attack again.

While every Palestinian civilian death is a tragedy, it should be obvious that the only way to ‘free’ Gaza from both the blockade and further conflict is to free Gaza from Hamas. It’s as simple – and complex – as that.



Trucks line up to enter Gaza: Before the current war, some 500 a day entered Gaza – hardly a “siege” (Image: Alamy Live News)

MYTHS AND REALITY REGARDING GAZA'S HOSPITALS

Oved Lobel

As of November 20, the IDF has released substantial proof that Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, was a Hamas headquarters. This includes weapons caches; security camera footage of hostages being brought in, Hamas fighters milling around, and captured IDF vehicles being driven to the complex; a booby-tracked pickup truck filled with weapons and explosives; and at least one very substantial tunnel with a blast door at the end to block IDF entry into underground bunkers. More footage of weapons, tunnels and other evidence is likely to emerge.

That such a Hamas command and control centre likely exists on the hospital grounds had been confirmed by US officials, including National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby, who recently told reporters:

"We have information that Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad use some hospitals in the Gaza Strip, including Al-Shifa, and tunnels underneath them to conceal and to support their military operations and to hold hostages. Hamas and... Palestinian Islamic Jihad – PIJ – members operate a command-and-control node from Al-Shifa in Gaza City. They have stored weapons there."

The US reportedly based this information on intercepted communications from Hamas terrorists inside Shifa as well as other hospitals, something also revealed through Israeli interrogations of captured Hamas operatives.

Israel has uncovered or revealed evidence of the military use of multiple hospitals by Hamas, including tunnels, rockets, weapons caches, underground areas that may have been used to hold hostages and footage of armed fighters firing from hospitals.

INTERNATIONAL LAW AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

It has long been known that Hamas uses hospitals and ambulances for military purposes, thus negating their protected status under International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

Article 19 of the Fourth Geneva Conventions, for instance, clearly states that "The protection to which civilian hospitals are entitled shall not cease unless they are used to commit, outside their humanitarian duties, acts harmful to the enemy." This protection stops "after due warning has been given, naming, in all appropriate cases, a reasonable time limit, and after such warning has remained unheeded."

Customary International Law also states that "Medical

transports lose their protection if they are being used, outside their humanitarian function, to commit acts harmful to the enemy."

Yet there has been pervasive misinformation about the nature and legality of Israel's conduct, including from Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, with claims that essentially amount to saying international law gives immunity from retaliatory Israeli military action when Hamas deliberately and illegally uses hospitals and ambulances for military purposes.

Below is an overview of the long and well-documented history of Hamas' exploitation of ambulances and hospitals in Gaza as well as the steps Israel has taken to ensure the safety of civilians.

HOSPITALS

The first reports of Hamas using Shifa for military purposes are from Operation Cast Lead in 2008, with a *New York Times* report describing armed Hamas agents in civilian clothing roving the hospital to kill suspected collaborators. In 2009, the Palestinian Authority asserted that "Hamas un-



Booby-trapped pickup truck loaded with weapons found beside a terror tunnel in Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital complex (Image: IDF)

fortunately used several facilities, mainly a large number of hospitals, as stations for summons, interrogation, torture and detention," specifying Shifa and Nasser, among others. Amnesty International released a report in 2015 accusing Hamas of torturing and otherwise mistreating detainees in the Shifa complex. The IDF claims one of the October 7 hostages, Cpl. Noa Marciano, was executed on Shifa's grounds.

A Gazan civilian who was a patient at Shifa recently interviewed anonymously as part of a joint project between the *Free Press* and the Center for Peace Communications said, "When I went to Shifa Hospital, I found Qassam fighters all around us. Every Palestinian knows Shifa is full of them, but nobody can talk."

A British doctor who once worked at Shifa testified that there were areas of the hospital he was warned not to go to or he would be shot and that there was a general air of terror over Hamas' presence in the hospital.

In 2014, during Operation Protective Edge, the *Washington Post*'s William Booth reported that Shifa had "become a de facto headquarters for Hamas leaders, who can be seen in the hallways and offices." The hospital's parking lot was also reportedly used to fire rockets at Israel, as attested to by a Finnish reporter.

It's not just Shifa that Hamas exploits. In 2014, the IDF released footage of Hamas operatives firing on it from the Al-Wafa Hospital, which was subsequently destroyed in a strike, followed by what seemed to be secondary explosions from munitions in or near the hospital.

This year's ground operation inside Gaza has uncovered more evidence at more hospitals. For instance, the IDF released footage of a weapons cache in the basement of the Al-Rantisi paediatric hospital. There was also an area of the basement separate from the rest of the hospital, which contained evidence that hostages may have been held there. A tunnel exposed by the IDF in the nearby house of a Hamas commander allegedly led into the hospital.

Meanwhile, the IDF also alleged, during a briefing based on satellite imagery, that Gaza's Indonesian Hospital was built right on top of and adjacent to a Hamas tunnel complex, and showed how rocket launching pits dotted the area of the hospital. According to the Israeli army, approximately 100 Hamas operatives also made a last stand there.

The IDF also showed a tunnel entrance directly connected to the Sheikh Hamad Hospital and Hamas operatives shooting at them from that hospital. Similarly, geolocated footage shows a Hamas operative with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher right next to Al-Quds Hospital.

AMBULANCES

Hamas not only routinely misuses civilian ambulances, but according to Israeli interrogations of captured operatives, actually has its own fleet of ambulances, designed to look like civilian ambulances, to use for military purposes. One Hamas detainee says in footage Israel released:

Ambulances play a critical role [for Hamas] during combat, not only evacuating fighters but also transporting supplies, food, cargo, and weapons. They are deemed the safest way to transport these items."

In 2009, during Operation Cast Lead, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on Mohammed Shriteh, an ambulance driver registered with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, who said that Hamas was threatening Palestinian medical personnel and using ambulances to transport fighters, including several attempts to hijack the entire ambulance fleet of Al-Quds Hospital.

Shriteh also told the *Herald*, "We would co-ordinate with the Israelis before we pick up patients, because they have all our names, and our IDs, so they would not shoot at us." Hamas terrorists, however, threatened him at gunpoint to endanger everyone by transporting them in ambulances during battles.

Dave Harden, a former United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission director in the West Bank and Gaza, recently tweeted that during his tenure, Hamas was using ambulances to move its fighters, information he gleaned from conversations with the then head of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, an intercepted communication released by the IDF features a Hamas operative boasting he can use "any ambulance" in Gaza to move around.

FUEL

Despite widespread allegations to the contrary, Israel is not responsible for Gaza's hospitals running out of fuel.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken testified before Congress in October that Hamas was refusing to share its fuel with hospitals, saying, "Hamas has its own supply stockpile of fuel. If it cared a whit about the people of Gaza, it would make sure itself that it used that fuel to have the hospitals be able to operate the incubators, stay turned on, etc. But, of course, it doesn't."

Not only has Hamas been hoarding fuel for rockets and vehicles and to run ventilation and lights for its tunnel network, it has also allegedly directly stolen fuel from hospitals, as detailed in two IDF audio intercepts. Worse, Hamas also allegedly blocked Shifa from receiving an emergency ration of 300 litres of fuel hand delivered by IDF soldiers on Nov. 12, with a spokesperson saying this "would give Israel credit for allowing fuel into Gaza."

The US State Department spokesperson lamented on Nov. 13:

We would love to see Hamas take some of the fuel reserves it's sitting on and use that to supply hospitals in northern Gaza. We would love to see Hamas have taken the fuel that Israel offered it yesterday – that they declined – for use at al-Shifa Hospital.

IDF EFFORTS TO PROTECT AND EVACUATE CIVILIANS

The pernicious myth that Israel indiscriminately targets medical facilities is belied by the fact that tens of thousands of Palestinian civilians have taken shelter near various hospitals because they know they will not be targeted by Israeli airstrikes. This is the reason dozens to hundreds of civilians were killed in the widely misreported Al-Ahli Arab Hospital car park explosion on Oct. 17, caused by a misfired Palestinian rocket.

Israel is targeting Hamas military assets in and around hospitals, but doing so in ways designed to minimise harm to doctors, patients, and refugees sheltering there.

The IDF has helped evacuate all the northern Gaza hospitals mentioned above, repeatedly communicating and co-ordinating with hospital staff either before strikes or when there was fighting in the area – on top of weeks of general evacuation warnings. The same was true in 2014 with the

Al-Wafa Hospital, when the IDF released recorded phone calls with staff repeatedly checking no patients or staff were inside, before striking it, as discussed above.

At Shifa, the IDF designated a safe evacuation route and has been in constant contact with the staff. The IDF offered help evacuate babies from the paediatric unit to a safer hospital out of the combat zone.

After the IDF entered some of the complex, it began delivering incubators for the NICU as well as baby food and medical supplies. When announcing the start of the operation at Shifa, the IDF explained that its “forces include medical teams and Arabic speakers, who have undergone specified training to prepare for this complex and sensitive environment, with the intent that no harm is caused to the civilians being used by Hamas as human shields.”

Meanwhile, at Al-Rantisi Hospital, the BBC verified a phone call involving an IDF officer explaining to hospital administrators detailed evacuation instructions and routes for civilians, while the head of the hospital told the *New York Times* that the IDF had delivered maps of evacuation routes to them.

AIR

JOURNALISTS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

Eytan Gilboa & Lilac Sigan

Those who watched live TV reports on the gruesome atrocities Hamas committed on October 7 in southwestern Israel may have witnessed a Gazan “journalist” speaking to a camera while documenting and explaining the atrocities inside kibbutzim, villages, and towns. One had to wonder who he was and what he was doing there, but the horrifying scale of the massacre left these questions unnoticed.

It turns out that Gazan photographers accompanied the invading Hamas terrorists almost from the beginning of the attack, disseminating real-time videos and images to news agencies like AP and Reuters and media outlets like the *New York Times* and CNN.

An investigation by Honest Reporting, a media watchdog that monitors reporting on Israel in Western media, raised serious ethical and professional questions about the conduct of these photographers. Did they know in advance about Hamas’s intention to conduct a massacre? If not, how did they arrive there with Hamas terrorists? Did they report to their editors about crossing the border and entering civilian communities? Did the editors authorise them to accompany and film the acts of murder, lynching,

and kidnapping? After receiving the images, did the media outlets make sure to reveal that they were obtained from Gazan photographers accompanying Hamas terrorists?

The investigation is important because it reveals the truth about Gazan “journalists” who serve as de facto spokespeople for Hamas, and because this “journalistic” material is routinely marketed to leading media channels worldwide, which then publish it under a normal credit or byline. Western audiences have no way of knowing that this material is produced under strict Hamas censorship.

The relevant outlets must immediately conduct an in-depth investigation of the activity of the photographers whose images they use, and announce their findings, as the Israeli National Information Branch and the Israeli Association of Journalists in Jerusalem have demanded.

During the war in Gaza, there were other puzzling blunders. The most flagrant was the immediate adoption of Hamas’ false report on Oct. 17, about “an Israeli air strike on Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza killing 500 civilians.” It was an explosion caused by a failed rocket launched by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad that fell in the hospital’s parking lot and caused a much lower number of casualties. The *NYT* was the first in the row of dominoes that echoed Hamas lies around the world, leading to riots in Arab countries and cancelling a summit in Jordan with President Biden. Where were the newspaper editors who believed the spokespersons of a terrorist organisation with a long history of lies and misleading the media?

On April 16, 2017, the *NYT* published an opinion piece by Marwan Barghouti while omitting the fact that he was sentenced to five consecutive life sentences plus 40 years in prison for acts of terror, in which many Israelis were murdered and wounded. The *NYT* admitted the important omission and published a clarification.

On April 25, 2019, the same newspaper published an antisemitic cartoon depicting Donald Trump as a blind man led by a dog with Netanyahu’s face. A Star of David appeared on the dog’s collar. The *NYT* dismissed the cartoonist and apologised, only after strong protests from many Jewish organisations and a demonstration against the *NYT* outside the newspaper’s building.

On Nov. 16, 2021, Patrick Kingsley published a long and laudatory article about a professor in Gaza, Refaat Alareer, who teaches his students works by Israeli poets and presented him as a cultural moderate bridge-builder. On his social media accounts, however, the “peace-seeking” professor regularly posted extremist filth about Israel, Zionists, and Jews that would not embarrass an SS Nazi officer. Kingsley was negligent in publishing a misleading story, and the *NYT* had to publish an “editor’s note” to correct the significant error.

On Nov. 27, 2022, the *NYT* published a lengthy story by Raja Abdulrahim in which she claimed that the siege on Gaza destroyed its fishing industry. After the story was

published, official Palestinian data showed that the truth was exactly the opposite; the fishing industry in Gaza had in fact doubled in recent years, not decreased. Again, the *NYT* published an editor's note to correct the false claim, but the story still appears in the *NYT* archives, making more or less the same claim. In addition, the *NYT* employed two Gaza-based "freelancers", Fadi Hanona and Soliman Hijji, who in their social media accounts turned out to be Hitler enthusiasts. Both were fired, but the *NYT* recently rehired Hijji and he contributed no less than 13 articles about the fighting in Gaza. Can any reasonable reader believe his reports?



Former CNN photographer Hasan Eslaiah with Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar (Image: X/Twitter)

Media outlets are not inclined to admit their embarrassing errors and only acknowledge them after being exposed, as happened with the cases described above. The correction the *NYT* published of the false report about the explosion at the Gaza hospital came only after the White House had rebuked it. It is likely the paper publishes errors and false news that no one exposes.

The tendency to focus on one failed case and describe it as an exception is misleading. As demonstrated above, these are much broader professional and ethical failures. There are two main reasons for these failures: The first is the employment of Palestinian "journalists" or stringers in Gaza who are Hamas supporters or forced to report according to Hamas guidelines. The Hamas regime in Gaza is autocratic, there is no freedom of press or of expression. The editors do not properly examine reports from Gaza and refrain from proper disclosure of the conditions under which the reports are made.

The second reason is the political and ideological attitudes of many reporters, especially the younger ones. They see the world through the conception of oppressor-oppressed, that leads them to interpret any event against Israel and in favour of the Palestinians, even when it involves the vicious terrorist organisations that lead them.

The question is what will happen next, after the depth of the Western media failure starts to be exposed. An in-depth study needs to examine the professional and ethical failures described here, both in the period preceding the massacre, and during and after it. AP and CNN rushed to comment that they did not know of the massacre in advance, CNN said it will no longer employ Hasan Eslaiah, one of the photographers.

But the questions run much deeper than terminating relations with spokespersons for Hamas masquerading as journalists. How did the editors communicate the fact that they received information from Hamas assistants who penetrated the heart of Israel's kibbutzim, villages, and towns? Are the audiences exposed to video clips, images, and

information from Gaza aware that they all actually come from Hamas, its spokespersons, and assistants?

Recently, the *NYT* published an extensive investigation into Hamas' planning ahead of the October 7 massacre.

Why has it never conducted a thorough investigation into Hamas' Nazi-fascist ideology, its harsh despotic control over Gaza residents and its genocidal attitude toward Israel? Why has it consistently referred to Hamas members as "militants," a loose term, and not "terrorists" as they really are, and as Hamas is defined by the US government and many other countries?

Events have been unfolding extremely fast, they are dynamic and multiplying at a dizzying pace. We are frequently exposed to more jaw-dropping details about reputable Western institutions of information and knowledge becoming captive to Hamas' industry of lies and fabrication. Anyone who believes in freedom of the press and Western democratic values must continue to expose these failures because as they surface, it becomes inevitable to acknowledge them and effectively cope with them.

AIR

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State of War

Israel's profound changes since October 7

Amotz Asa-El

This war's impact will be more profound than the Yom Kippur War's effect," said Maj-Gen (res) Gershon Hacohen.

A fellow at the Begin-Sadat Centre and a former commander of Israel's military colleges, the 67-year-old Hacohen has earned a reputation as one of the most original thinkers the IDF has produced. His initial impressions of what Israel sustained during the Black Saturday Massacre of October 7 and its aftermath are thus meaningful.

As the fighting in Gaza entered its second month, the retired general's early impressions were shared by practically every pundit in Israel.

The comparison to the Yom Kippur War begs to be made, not only because of the recent massacre's date – 50 years and one day since the 1973 war – and not only because both wars were timed to overlap with Jewish holidays, but also because the current war is, like 1973, shaking Israeli society to its foundation.

The current war is still young. No one can guess how long it will last – some military experts expect as long as a year – or how wide it will spread. At this writing, the daily skirmishes along the Lebanese border with Hezbollah and allied groups already amount to a war of attrition, which can slide into full scale war at any moment.

A series of missiles fired by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthis raises the prospect of an even wider war. In addition, chances are that the fighting will sooner or later, one way or another, reach the paymaster, armer and trainer of Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis – Iran itself.

Still, some things can already be said about the unfolding war, and their implications are indeed profound – militarily, politically and regionally.

Militarily, the surprise Israel sustained was comprehensive. Unlike the Yom Kippur War's surprise, which was mostly about misreading the enemy's intentions, this one was about the enemy's capabilities as well. No one knew, or even imagined, Hamas could carry out a complex attack deploying thousands of men according to a detailed plan that combined motorised paragliders, drones, boats, bulldozers, mass rocket and mortar fire and detailed intelligence.

In addition, the number of casualties Israel sustained on October 7 alone was almost half of what Israel sustained during the whole of the Yom Kippur War's 19 days. In fact, that day's fatalities are more than the Zionist enterprise has suffered on any single day since modern Jewish settlement began in then-Turkish-controlled Palestine more than 140 years ago. Worse, most of the massacre's casualties were civilians, whereas the 1973 losses were all soldiers.

The answer to the main technical question all this raises – where was the IDF when the massacre began? – is today clear: it took the IDF several hours to piece together the full picture of an assault for which it had never prepared, and another few hours to fully deploy the kind of force that the situation demanded.

In the strictly military sense, the Hamas plan of attack was foiled – it did not achieve its planners' goals, which were to penetrate much further into Israeli territory and hold on to several towns for weeks, while possibly linking up with the West Bank. By the evening of October 7, more



Scenes of devastation post-October 7 at Kibbutz Kfar Aza (Image: Shutterstock)

than 1,000 of the attackers had been killed, and, except for a few lingerers killed over the next few days, the rest were chased back into the Gaza Strip.

Also on the plus side, the flaws in the IDF's defensive thinking before October 7 have been offset by its offensive performance since then. The IDF counterattack has revealed well-prepared troops, well-maintained materiel and high-quality tactical coordination as well as an original stratagem – allowing troops to arrive by surprise at the enemy's nerve centre in Gaza City, after successfully removing most of the civilian population in which that headquarters was deliberately encased.

Even so, the defensive failure of October 7 is widely agreed to be the worst day in Israeli history in general, and the IDF's annals in particular.

Though its impact on the IDF will take years to assess, several military conclusions already emerge from this debacle, besides the immediate imperative – from Israel's viewpoint – to eradicate Hamas as a military force.

The first conclusion is that Israel's intelligence services – along with all their Western equivalents – were wrong to



assume that a large-scale military attack can only be waged by a conventional army. It turns out that such an attack can be launched by several thousand people with nothing resembling tanks, jets or helicopter gunships.

This misconception partially explains why Israel failed to permanently station the kind of substantial battle-ready military units along the Gaza border that could have intercepted the invasion at its outset. Clearly, the invasion's planners were aware of this absence, which was a prerequisite for their plan's success.

The second conclusion is that Israel's defensive stance opposite Gaza suffered from an overreliance on technology.

Israel's military planners were lulled into a false sense of security by the utility of cameras, drones, sensors, cyber warfare and underground detectors along the tall border fence. These planners thought their task was to detect the infiltration, at most, of a few small squads of terrorists, and to have a few platoons and helicopter gunships ready to greet them on short notice.

The third military conclusion stems from the first two, and it is that the IDF will have to reverse its previous doctrinal downgrade of numbers of military personnel as a measure of military strength. Men's military service will likely return to its original length of three years, after having been trimmed to 32 months; military spending will rise; deployments along the borders will grow, and combat training will change to reflect the new type of threat Israel has suddenly discovered it faces.

Drastic though these conclusions are, they will pale in comparison with the massacre's impact on Israel's political governance and Israeli society's very definition of leadership.

The defensive failure of October 7 has already led to the Chief of Staff, Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi, publicly apologising and assuming personal responsibility. Similar statements were made by the head of the Shin Bet security service, Ronen Bar, and by the head of military intelligence, Maj.-Gen. Aharon Haliva. All three are believed to have already decided to resign once the fight-



Defence Minister Gallant, PM Netanyahu and IDF Chief of Staff Halevi – there is strong pressure for all three to step down once the current war ends (Image: GPO/ Flickr)

ing subsides. The same applies to the head of the IDF's southern command, Maj.-Gen. Yaron Finkelman.

Though these resignations may take a year to arrive, they will collectively create an expectation for a similar dynamic among the politicians, beginning with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. However, Netanyahu and the rest of the leaders of his Likud party have yet to publicly assume responsibility.

In several TV appearances, Netanyahu has denied having adopted a policy of cultivating Hamas as a counterweight to the Palestinian Authority, as many critics are now charging, citing his systematic approvals of money transfers to Hamas-controlled Gaza from Qatar.

Moreover, Netanyahu appeared to try to blame the army and Shin Bet for having failed to warn him of the impending attack. The accusation, made by the prime minister in a late-night tweet, stirred a public outcry and Netanyahu soon removed the tweet and apologised for having made it.

In an even more provocative tweet, Netanyahu said that after the fighting ends there should be an investigation of the relationship between Hamas' decision to attack and the intense pre-war controversy over his Government's judicial reform proposals, including specifically the threat by several dozen IDF reserve pilots, among others, to suspend attending voluntary training duty in protest over the proposals.

Analysts conclude from all this that Netanyahu may seek to shift the blame onto others and cling to office, even though polls suggest a clear majority of the Israeli public wants him to be replaced. If elections were held now, the Likud and its conservative and ultra-Orthodox coalition partners stand to plunge from their current 64 Knesset seats to 43, according to polls. Meanwhile, 52% of voters say they want National Union leader Benny Gantz to replace Netanyahu – who is backed by only 26% of those polled – according to a survey by the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* published on Nov. 10.

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Even if Netanyahu volunteers to clear the stage, but certainly if he does not, a critical mass of mainstream Israelis will almost certainly demand the emergence of new political leaders who will rebuild the western Negev communities severely damaged on October 7, while also displaying the political humility that most feel Netanyahu does not possess, and cultivating the sense of social solidarity he did not inspire.

Whatever its new shape, Israel's political arena is likely to be profoundly affected by the Black Saturday Massacre in ways even more deep and enduring than the IDF.

It is not at all clear the same can be said about the war's regional impact.

The most obvious regional conclusion that should emerge from this war is that the Middle East's major destabilising force is Iran.

While the extent of Teheran's direct role in the massacre of October 7 remains for now a mystery, it clearly helped finance Hamas, train and equip its troops and inspire the attack. Similarly, the mullahs' command over Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen is unambiguous, and so is Iran's responsibility for the rocket attacks on Israel from both Lebanon and Yemen that have accompanied Israel's war with Hamas.

That is why there was concern in Israel that a joint conference of the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation held in Riyadh on Nov. 11 would be used by Iran to damage Israel's position in the Arab world.

The effort was indeed made, but it yielded no substantive results. Jordan and Bahrain recalled their ambassadors before the conclave convened, but neither they nor any of the other three Arab governments at peace with Israel severed, or even downgraded, diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, despite pressure orchestrated by Iran and its allies to demand they do so.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, ignored Iran's demand that the kingdom cancel its license for Israeli planes to overfly the Arabian Desert. Israel's growing commercial ties with Morocco and the United Arab Emirates remain intact and seem likely to continue expanding.

While all Arab governments have been attacking Israel's war in Gaza rhetorically, the reality is that they are split between the American-backed axis led by Cairo and Riyadh, and the anti-American axis that runs from Iran to Yemen through Syria and Iraq, and up to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Analysts say the governments of the so-called Sunni coalition of moderate Arab states, which shares a fear of religious fanaticism and Iranian imperialism, actually hopes to see Hamas routed and Teheran humbled, even if they dare not say so. The Black Saturday Massacre did little to assuage their fear of Iran. If anything, it may well have intensified it.

“INTEGRATED WARFARE”: THE SECRET TO THE IDF'S GAZA SUCCESS

Yonah Jeremy Bob

Since October 7, the *Jerusalem Post* has visited four different IDF locations on the southern front, and two air force bases, and embedded with a navy fast boat off the coast of Gaza; several of these visits took place in recent days.

What emerged from all this begins to explain some of the IDF's failures on October 7. More importantly, though, it establishes an understanding of how the IDF's revolutionised and integrated approach to warfare kicked it into high gear in its offensive, and effectively changed the narrative in the war with Hamas.



Due to the integrated intelligence picture being provided to field command centres, Israeli soldiers in Gaza are suffering fewer casualties than originally predicted (Image: IDF)

Field command centres are handling real-time targeting decisions, and intelligence command centres are providing human spying, signals intelligence, satellite intelligence, cyber intelligence, and other items to the targeting centres.

During one of the targeting command centre visits, an interview was interrupted for 30 seconds. During that time, the targeting commander integrated new field intelligence and seamlessly passed it on to another field or air unit – within minutes, Hamas targets were destroyed.

And on the fast boat, intelligence came through that IDF Unit 401 was about to be ambushed by Hamas. This information came from an intelligence centre, through a targeting centre, and then to the navy, which fired around a dozen shells from a missile boat, killing the targets.

A senior air defence official presented a picture of how IDF air defence monitors look during a “normal” volume of rocket attacks – as opposed to the 3,000 rockets that were fired in a four-hour timespan on October 7.

The difference lay in a series of quantifiable and not-too-hard-to-follow arrows or streaks across a screen, versus the entire screen being filled with streams until it seemed unintelligible to human eyes, and only the IDF automatic air defence aspects could fully follow it.

Still, that automatic system responded and, with some delay, the human interpreters responded as well and were also able to analyse and rapidly share the data with other critical units.

Between signals and cyber intelligence Unit 8200, air force surveillance Unit 9900, and human spying Unit 504, the IDF has always passed around intelligence to assist with targeting and defence, both in the field and on the home front.

The rapid pace and incredible integration have reached new levels in this war.

In some ways, none of this should come as a surprise. For years, the IDF talked up a new level of integration between different intelligence units and sea, air, and land forces.

In one pre-war visit, the *Post* met with a commander of the IDF’s secret artificial intelligence target bank, where sharing intelligence and operational targeting has moved to almost light-speed.

Yet given that much of the latest revolution was post-2019, this was only really used by the air force, and statements about using the new systems, capabilities and speed for the land forces were speculative.

It was worse than speculative, because given Hamas’ capability to fight from a massive network of underground tunnels, operate out of civilian sites like hospitals and mosques, and booby-trap any spot where IDF troops might try to find shelter or take a rest, there was every reason to believe that Hamas could neutralise the IDF’s

technological advantages.

If all you need to do is booby-trap a house, then light-speed satellites, drones, ultra-networked land vehicles, artillery and tanks do not help.

That is the first premise of asymmetric guerrilla warfare, and is the reason why the Vietnamese and Afghans, for example, were able to defeat far stronger forces such as the US and Soviet militaries.

Some might say that the US had threaded the needle of urban guerrilla warfare in its fighting against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. But in those cases, there were also significant

local forces on the ground to fight ISIS, and the entire globe supported overwhelming uses of firepower, even in the face of enormous civilian casualties there.

There are no agreed-upon estimates of civilian casualties in Iraq, but the lowest number tends to

break 100,000 and the higher number could reach several hundred thousand.

This means that the US and its allies had far more “rope” with which to inflict “collateral damage” in fighting ISIS than Israel has against Hamas. In Gaza, a Hamas-run health ministry estimate of 11,000 Gazans (as of Nov. 15), including untold numbers of Hamas terrorists, is sufficient to bring global pressure on Israel for a ceasefire.

As of Nov. 20, 66 IDF soldiers had been killed in the invasion of Gaza compared with a 2014 estimate that IDF losses would hit 500-1,000 soldiers if a deeper ground invasion was implemented.

Instead, the IDF has managed to achieve a mix of new tactics, intelligence collection, speed, and distribution of intelligence, which allows air, sea, artillery, and tank forces to eliminate 150 Hamas forces in one extended battle, without a single IDF loss, as was the case recently.

This new integrated warfare, reducing IDF casualties by several orders of magnitude, has also allowed the IDF to continue the ground invasion, much as the Iron Dome has allowed the IDF to continue airstrikes even in the face of rocket attacks on the home front.

Speaking to a wide range of IDF officials at all levels, it is clear that they know they have created a new kind of integrated warfare, which has transformed the battlefield with Hamas.

But whether the impressive gains of this new kind of warfare are sufficient to deter Hezbollah, Iran, and other Shi’ite proxies from crossing certain Israeli red lines is still unclear.

AIR

Yonah Jeremy Bob is the Jerusalem Post’s senior military correspondent. © Jerusalem Post (www.jpост.com), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.

“Speaking to a wide range of IDF officials at all levels, it is clear that they know they have created a new kind of integrated warfare”

WITH COMPLIMENTS

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SURVEYING THE HATE AT ONE PRO-PALESTINIAN RALLY

Ran Porat

There have been numerous pro-Palestinian rallies across Australia since Hamas unleashed the current Gaza war with its unprovoked wave of mass-murder and mass-kidnapping against Israelis on October 7. One in Sydney on Oct. 9 made international headlines with chants of both “f..k the Jews” and “gas the Jews”.

Most subsequent protests have caused less controversy. However, a detailed look at just one such rally suggests that at least some of these rallies may still pose a threat to the fundamental principles of Australian multiculturalism – coexistence and tolerance.



Poster for the “Stand for Palestine” rally in Sydney

On Oct. 22, a few thousand people gathered at Paul Keating Park in Bankstown, NSW for the “Stand for Palestine” protest. The event showcased a long list of speakers representing various Australian Muslim groups, some of which have a history of making anti-semitic statements and of propagating conspiracy theories and extremist anti-Israel content.

The rally, intended to express solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, effectively transformed into a two-hour long display of extremism and animosity toward Israel and Jews. Fuelled by the incitement of the imams on the podium, the crowd chanted slogans against Jews and the West, endorsed martyrdom and called for Islam’s global dominance.

“ALLAH LOVES THE MARTYR”

Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammad, the Grand Mufti of Australia, opened the rally. A few days prior (Oct. 10), Mohammad, as reported by MEMRI, posted on his social media account that Jews “came from all corners of the earth to occupy a land [Israel] that is not theirs, driven by a religious myth about the Promised Land.” In that post he also praised martyrdom, asserting that: “everything around him [the martyr] participates [in his struggle]: the earth, the sky, the water, the air and even the remains of graves will now and forever continue to stand up to the occupier’s arrogance and the brutality of his military machine. Until Palestine is finally free.”

No wonder the crowd erupted in cheers, chanting, “the Martyr is Allah’s loved one” upon Mohammad’s arrival on stage at the rally. He extended greetings to the Palestinians in Gaza who “stand firm before the greatest forces fighting him at that moment, and I pray to God to accept the martyrs and heal the wounded.”

Contending that the Palestinians “have been wronged” for 75 years (since the creation of Israel), Mohammad called out that “Palestine is bleeding [by] gangsters [who] kill people, destroy villages, and displace families out of the country, out of their land.”

Mohammad argued that Palestinian terrorists such as Hamas should be labelled “resistance movements”. He then assured the audience: “the victory of Allah is near... The enemy will be defeated.”

The chanting welcoming the next speaker, Shiekh Abd al Salam Zoud, was the infamous “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” – a call to wipe the Jewish state off the map. Zoud is the spiritual leader of one of Australia’s most extremist Salafi fundamentalist movements, *Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah*.

Zoud urged supporters of the Palestinian cause to use their voices across various media platforms to form “a lump in the throat of every usurping occupier,” instructing the audience to “take your position according to your field [of expertise], with money, by demonstrating, by writing posts on social media sites and by bringing down the frivolous Zionists.” He also condemned the firing of *Guardian* cartoonist Steve Bell, “only because he criticised the criminality of the prime minister of the occupation with a satirical drawing” (Bell had depicted Netanyahu seeking the “pound of flesh” demanded by the Jewish character Shylock in Shakespeare’s play *The Merchant of Venice*, employing a classic antisemitic trope).

FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA

Following the crowd’s chants of “From the river to the sea” and “with blood and spirit, we will redeem you Gaza,” Shiekh Mahmoud al Azhari, who is affiliated with the Sydney Northwest Muslim Community and a senior member of the Australian National Imams Council (ANIC), took to the stage. In Arabic, he told listeners that Muslims “have owned this world for centuries,” and called out to “bring out Islam! Arise as a sincere, free, and honest youth who refuse to be humiliated or belittled.”

In English, al Azhari called out to the audience: “The people of Palestine are seeds of dignity, are seeds of victory! And by Allah... the battle is ours! And the land is ours! And Palestine is ours! And the masjid [mosque] al Aqsa is ours!”. He then listed the places, many of which are within Israel, that will be “liberated by Allah”: “al Quds [Jerusalem], Gaza, Jenin, Haifa, Yafa [Jaffa], Tul Karem, Be’er Saba [Be’er Sheva], Safad [Safed], Ramlah, Ramallah, Nablus, Khalil [Hebron] – all of the cities still in Palestine

will be free!” The crowd responded with fervent cheers, echoing slogans like: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!” and “the next Salah al-din [12th century Muslim general who conquered Jerusalem from the crusaders], will liberate Falastin!”

Umm Jamaal ud-Din, a teacher of Islamic culture, spoke about the “ethnic cleansing and genocide that Israel is planning for the Palestinians of Gaza, all while its army and government gaslight the world with its fake facts and propaganda in order to get away with their crimes.” She then lamented how, in her view, “Israel has led the way for the world to dehumanise the Palestinians by their political leaders openly referring to Palestinians as human animals, or even barbarians.”

After her speech, the imam led the crowd to chant: “One ummah [Islamic nation] without the West... until Islam there is no rest!” He later reiterated praise for the martyrs and the slogan “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!”

COME AND KILL AN ISRAELI

Shiekh Yahya Saffi, the Imam of Lakemba Mosque, reminded the audience of the infamous Islamic *Hadith* [saying attributed to the prophet Muhammad and his early followers] which prophesies that: “At the end [Judgment day] everything will talk, even the tree, even the stone, will say: Oh Muslim! Come, there is an Israeli behind me, come and kill him! [the host called out and the crowd cheered: Allah akbar!] This is going to happen!” [The *Hadith*’s language actually refers to Jews, not Israelis. Saffi was apparently attempting to obscure the overtly racist nature of this call for genocide.]

Saffi then argued, quite ahistorically, that throughout history Muslims have never killed women and children, even of the enemy, because this is not allowed in Islam – thus hinting that Hamas’ heinous murdering of women, children and whole families never happened.

In his fiery speech, Palestinian speaker Isma’il Sirdah, the Director of the Granville Youth Association, vehemently proclaimed, “you [Zionists] might be able to spread lies, [and] corruption on Earth, but you will never take away my love for a free Palestine.” After evoking the anti-semitic trope alleging that Jews spread corruption, Sirdah lauded martyrdom, shouting: “You will never ever be able to kill my readiness and willingness to die for a free [al] Aqsa!”

Rania Sultan, a Sydney-based Palestinian lawyer, accused Israel (“an apartheid state”) of committing “a massacre, a genocide, ethnic cleansing... collective punishment

of an entire indigenous population” in Gaza. Using language evocative of the Holocaust, Sultan said that Gaza has become “a concentration camp”.

MUSLIM ARMIES SHOULD ‘RESCUE GAZA’



Palestinian solidarity rally in Sydney, October 2023
(Image: Shutterstock)

One of the organisations represented at the rally was Hizb ut Tahrir – an international fundamentalist Islamic organisation, banned in numerous countries, which calls for the recreation of the Islamic Caliphate and the destruction of the Jewish state.

Responding to the war in Gaza, on Nov. 10 Hizb ut Tahrir Australia published an open letter to the embassies of Muslim countries in

Australia, urging these nations to sever all ties with Israel and unleash their armies on it: “Reverse your betrayal of the *Ummah* by immediately cancelling all peace agreements, permanently expelling their representatives, ending security and intelligence collaboration, ceasing economic cooperation... cease recognising international law which is used as a tool in the hands of the colonialists, and open your borders to allow a united military front of neighbouring Muslim countries to surround the Zionist entity.”

At the rally, prominent Hizb ut Tahrir Australia preacher Wassim Doreihri spoke on how in the aftermath of WWI Australian ANZACs along with the British and the French “occupied our land [Palestine] and handed it over to the *Yahud* [Jews].” Referencing the historical European conquest of Australia, Doreihri yelled, “Go to hell with your civility! Go to hell with your wars! Go to hell with your human rights! Go to hell with your institutions! Go to hell with your dirty money!”

The war crimes of Hamas on October 7 were praised by Doreihri as an event in which “the Muslims in Palestine again lit the flames! Shown that we can break free! Shown that the enemy is not strong!” The response from the world, he argued, “is to figure out how to ensure that the Muslims don’t carry those flames and ensure those flames don’t burn those who need to be burnt.”

And how will Palestine be liberated, asked Doreihri rhetorically? His answer was centered on the action of Arab armies who “have in [their] possession... tanks, missiles! For what reason do we carry them if not to rescue the Muslims of Palestine!” The crowd echoed the sentiment, chanting, “Muslim armies where are you? Gaza calls for your rescue.”

Lebanese-born preacher Mohammad Hoblos gained attention in 2021 when he suggested on social media that rape and murder are lesser sins than missing prayer. At the Sydney rally, Hoblos ridiculed those who call on Muslims

to condemn Hamas terror and the massacre of Israelis, stating, “don’t forget that Israel is the oppressor” and adding that he doesn’t know how to move forward from this “but we can start by you leaving, Israel.”

AIR

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STATES OF SOLIDARITY

Jamie Hyams

As mentioned in November’s *Review*, as well as occupying much debate in the Federal Parliament, the horrific October 7 atrocities and their aftermath were also covered in all the state parliaments, with a number also passing motions. Below is a summary of how the six state legislatures dealt with the issue, with some of the more notable among the many contributions.

NSW

On Oct. 10, Premier **Chris Minns** (ALP, Kogarah) said, “The New South Wales Government clearly and unequivocally condemns the acts of violence and hatred conducted by members of Hamas on citizens of Israel. This is an abhorrent attack... We stand with the people of Israel and the Jewish community in New South Wales.”

Opposition Leader **Mark Speakman** (Lib., Cronulla) said, “The Opposition stands with the Government in condemning this barbaric episode in history... It is completely understandable that Israel would want to defend itself, and we acknowledge, respect and uphold the right to defend itself...”

The same day, Government Minister and Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council **Penny Sharpe** (ALP) and Shadow Treasurer and Leader of the Opposition in the Council **Damian Tudehope** (Lib.) also both strongly condemned the attack and expressed solidarity with Israel.

On Oct. 11, in the Legislative Council, Government Whip **Bob Nanva** moved a motion:

“(1) That this House condemns the horrific and coordinated attack by Hamas on Israel...”

(4) That this House calls for an end to the attacks and the immediate release of all hostages.

(5) That this House recognises Israel’s right to defend itself.”

Damian Tudehope said, “In the face of this murderous, barbaric attack on Israel, all of us should stand in solidarity

with the State of Israel... Israel has the unequivocal right to defend itself against further attacks by doing whatever is necessary to disarm and cripple Hamas so it can never again repeat these atrocities.”

Penny Sharpe said, “There is no justification or excuse for the indiscriminate murders, taking of hostages or the firing of rockets into cities that Hamas has engaged in... The New South Wales Government stands with Israel and the Jewish people.”

Treasurer **Daniel Mookhey** said, “The images and reports are haunting. The number of victims is appalling. The circumstances in which they were attacked are horrifying... The Government extends its solidarity to the people of Israel.”

Deputy Opposition Leader **Natalie Ward** said, “reports of what has taken place because of the terrorist organisation Hamas and its supporters are horrific... the carnage is so brutal and bloody that we cannot fathom it... It was committed on these victims for... one reason only: because they were Israeli and Jewish.”

Abigail Boyd (Greens) referred to “the atrocities committed by Israel against Palestinian civilians over the past many decades of this conflict,” adding, “the actions of the State of Israel, and the root cause of this conflict through actions by Israel as a nation state, cannot be minimised or ignored.” She then moved an amendment that denounced “the air strikes, bombing of Palestinian civilians and taking of hostages by Israel,” added a reference to “the dropping of bombs,” changed “calls for an end to the attacks” to “calls for a ceasefire,” and changed paragraph 5 of the motion to “That this House acknowledges that to achieve peace the occupation of Palestine must end.”

The amendment was defeated with only the Greens supporting it, and the motion was then passed by the same margin.

VICTORIA

On Oct. 17, Premier **Jacinta Allan** (ALP, Bendigo East) moved that the House

“(1) unequivocally condemns the attacks on Israel by Hamas...”

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(2) stands with Israel and recognises its inherent right to defend itself...

(4) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages...

(6) acknowledges the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life and that innocent civilians on all sides are suffering as a result of the attacks by Hamas and the subsequent conflict ...”

She said, “I unequivocally condemn the terror and violence we have seen these past ten days in Israel... Hamas... have consigned every single person [in Gaza] to live in terror because they hate their neighbours’ children more than they love their own.”

Opposition Leader **John Pesutto** (Lib., Hawthorn) said, “Israel has a right to defend itself. Israel has a right to take such action to deter future attacks... Hamas is not only an enemy of Israel, it is an enemy of the people of Gaza. The world and the Palestinian people will be better off when Hamas is completely removed, root and branch.”

Deputy Premier **Ben Carroll** (ALP, Niddrie) said, “This was not an act of war against the army of an enemy. It was a slaughter of innocent people... There should be zero attempt to justify this evil. These were evil acts by a terrorist organisation – an organisation which had its founding charter and mission statement to obliterate Israel, to fight Jews and kill them.”

National Party Leader **Peter Walsh** (Murray Plains) said, “Hamas is the enemy of all peace-loving Palestinian people and all Jewish people... We unreservedly support Israel’s right to defend itself and protect Israeli citizens and the Jewish people from further brutal attacks.”

Deputy Opposition Leader **David Southwick** (Lib., Caulfield) said, “the Israeli government must do whatever it can to protect itself. It has an obligation to protect itself, just like we would have an obligation if we had a similar attack happen here in Australia” noting Hamas “use innocent Palestinians as human shields.”

Sam Hibbins (Greens, Prahran) said his party supported the vast majority of the motion, but felt Israel was not defending itself within the parameters of international law, so moved an amendment that replaced paragraph 2 of the motion with a paragraph condemning “war crimes perpetrated by... Israel,” calling for an immediate ceasefire, and recognising that for peace “Israel’s illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories” must end.

The amendment lost, with only the four Greens supporting it, and the motion then passed with the same margin.

The same motion was moved simultaneously in the Legislative Council by Attorney-General **Jaclyn Symes** (ALP, Northern Victoria), who noted that “Hamas’s own charter makes its extremist and genocidal agenda crystal clear.”

Greens Leader **Samantha Ratnam** (Northern Metropolitan) accused Israel of “a form of collective vengeance” and

moved the same amendments as in the lower house.

David Ettershank (Legalise Cannabis, Western Metropolitan) said, “So this has not happened in a vacuum. Civilians will continue to pay a heavy price until Israel dismantles the system of apartheid against Palestinians, including its illegal blockade and now siege of Gaza.”

The amendment lost, with the Greens, Legalise Cannabis and the Animal Justice Party voting in favour. The motion then passed with only the Greens opposing.

On Oct. 19, **Gabrielle de Vietri** (Greens, Richmond) said, “The violent colonisation of Palestine started 75 years ago. For decades Israel’s extremist government has murdered Palestinians and denied them their basic rights.”

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

On Oct. 17, Premier **Peter Malinauskas** (ALP, Croydon) moved that the House

“(a) unequivocally condemns the attacks on Israel by Hamas, which are the heinous acts of terrorists...

(b) stands with Israel and recognises its inherent right to defend itself...

(f) acknowledges the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life and that innocent civilians on all sides are suffering as a result of the attacks by Hamas and the subsequent conflict...

(g) supports justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike...

i) reiterates Australia’s consistent position in all contexts is to call for the protection of civilian lives and the observance of international law...”

The Premier said, “we condemn Hamas for their acts of indiscriminate violence and murder... The attack on Israel was unprovoked and undoubtedly necessitates a response from the state of Israel, but there is an opportunity for Israel in its response to be proportionate and contemplate the humanity that I think exists at the heart of the Israeli state generally.”

Opposition Leader **David Speirs** (Lib., Black) said, “I want to make it extremely clear that through this motion this house seeks, in a bipartisan fashion, to condemn what happened... in Israel and make it abundantly clear that we are with our Jewish community at this time.”

Shadow Attorney-General **Josh Teague** (Lib., Heyson) said, “Israel has every right to remove Hamas. We stand with Israel in taking action to defend Israel to remove Hamas.”

The same motion was also moved that day in the Upper House. **Tammy Franks** (Greens) condemned “the war crimes of Hamas” but also accused Israel of war crimes, and called for an immediate ceasefire. She moved only a minor amendment – to add “in accordance with international law” to paragraph b. This was supported and the motion as amended was carried.

TASMANIA

On Oct. 19, Premier **Jeremy Rockliff** (Lib., Braddon) moved that the house

“(1) unequivocally condemns the attacks on Israel by Hamas, which were the heinous acts of terrorists...

(2) calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages...

(4) acknowledges the devastating loss of Israeli and Palestinian life”

He said, “the terrorists’ incursions, the brutality and violence... were chilling to all of us... Tasmania also condemns these terrorist attacks and all forms of violent and extremist activity... We condemn antisemitism in all of its forms, just as we condemn Islamophobia or any other form of religious hatred, discrimination or intolerance.”

Opposition Leader **Rebecca White** (ALP, Lyons) condemned Hamas, adding, “There is no question that Israel has the right to defend itself against a terrorist organisation and to take strong action against it, but we join the calls of President Biden and other partners for Israel to cooperate and operate by the rules of war.”

Greens Leader **Rosalie Woodruff** (Franklin) said, “We have appropriately, as a country, condemned the war crimes of Hamas, and the Greens strongly support that condemnation, but we have not, as a country, condemned the crimes of war that are being practised now by Israel against civilians in the bombing and the siege of Gaza... The Israeli government’s commitment to enacting revenge on civilian populations is chilling.” She sought to amend the motion by adding to paragraph 4, “and condemns Israel’s targeted bombing and siege of innocent Gazan civilians, including children.”

Only the two Greens and an independent voted for the amendment. The motion was then agreed to.

QUEENSLAND

On Oct. 10, Premier **Anastacia Palaszczuk** (ALP, Inala) made a ministerial statement, saying, “The Queensland government condemns in the strongest possible terms the horrendous Hamas attack on Israel... the invasion was an act of terror. The killing of civilians... and the taking of hostages is abhorrent... this was an horrific attack and Israel has the right to defend itself.”

There were no motions or other speeches directly on the topic, but a few MPs took the opportunity to condemn the Hamas attack and express support for Israel while addressing a bill on hate crimes.

On Nov. 14, **Michael Berkman** (Greens, Maiwar) asked the Premier during Question Time, “Israel has now killed more than 11,000 Palestinians, mostly women, children and elderly people, since its siege on Gaza began... Will the Premier join the hundreds and thousands of people across Australia who are calling not for a pause or for steps towards ceasefire but for an immediate ceasefire?”

The question was ruled out of order, so wasn’t answered.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

There were also no motions on the conflict in the WA Parliament. However, on Oct. 10 Opposition Leader **Shane Love** (Nat., Moore) as a preface to an unrelated question to the Premier, said, “Before I ask my question to the Premier, on behalf of the opposition, I extend my thoughts to the people of Israel and the Jewish community... following the horrors of the Hamas attack... We join the Premier in providing our support to those who are suffering.”

Premier **Roger Cook** (ALP, Kwinana) replied, “Our hearts go out to the people of Israel, indeed everyone affected by this conflict in Gaza and the West Bank... I think we all are appalled and shocked by the violence that we are witnessing unfolding in Israel today, and look forward to a de-escalation of the circumstances and peace coming to this troubled area.”

On Oct. 12, **Shane Love** asked the Premier whether he would block a pro-Palestinian rally. In his answer, **Roger Cook** replied, “We all stand in solidarity with the people of Israel and are all shocked by the impact that those horrible attacks have had on their community and their nation. Indeed, we look now in horror at the loss of life across civil populations right across that region.”

Some members also made speeches about the conflict.

On Oct. 12, Parliamentary Secretary **Simon Millman** (ALP, Mount Lawley) said, “I stand today to unreservedly condemn the abhorrent and brutal acts of terror carried out by Hamas in Israel. It seems that each new media report carries details of an even more unspeakable horror, prompting international condemnation.”

AIR

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ESSAY

Anti-Zionists and antisemitism

New words can't sanitise old facts

Jonah Goldberg

Let's chat for a moment about anti-Zionism.

I think the Chinese Communist regime is objectively evil and tyrannical. If we could topple it at no significant cost in blood or treasure, I'd be all for it. But we can't. The regime has a stranglehold on power domestically, and possesses a significant nuclear arsenal and an increasingly formidable conventional military. So, we have to deal with the China we have, not the one we want. Problems without solutions aren't problems, they're just facts of life.

But for all my issues with the Chinese state and the Communist Party that runs it, it really wouldn't occur to me to say that the nation of China shouldn't exist. I mean, I do think several historic nations – or peoples (it gets complicated) – oppressed by China should be allowed to have self-determination. But I don't think anybody who calls for a free Tibet thinks Tibetan sovereignty would need to come at the expense of the Chinese nation.

Well, of course not, you might say. China is ancient. Indeed, Xi Jinping has sparked a kind of cultural pissing match with Egypt over which has claim to the title of oldest player on the block.

Israel is a "new" and "artificial" country that was a "mistake," anti-Zionists insist. It's true that modern Israel was founded in 1948. As far as

modern nation-states go, that makes it sort of middle aged. Sure, it's two years younger than Jordan, but it's six decades older than South Sudan. Indeed, as an actual modern nation-state, Israel is older than a lot of countries in its broader neighbourhood, including Qatar, Libya, Syria, Bahrain, Tunisia, and UAE. As you go further south into the African continent, Israel looks almost like an elder statesman, given how many nation-states became independent in the early 1960s. Heck, there are more than a few European states that are younger than Israel.

Anyway, my only reason for going through all of this is that if I were to say, "China shouldn't exist" you'd think I'm a crank. Same if I were to say, "Kuwait was a mistake," or "Jordan is an imperial creation and has no legitimacy." Normally, if you talk about your desire to erase a people, nation, or culture, you'd get accused of bigotry or even genocidal designs.

Not so with anti-Zionism.

Indeed, anti-Zionism is not only a widely accepted term: It's a widely celebrated *concept*. It's taught in universities, formally and informally. Anti-Zionists claim the moral high-ground and often take great offence at any suggestion they are antisemitic.

But that's the amazing thing.

We spend so much time on *that* debate, everyone thinks it's just normal to say, "I don't think Israel should ex-

ist." Because that's what anti-Zionism means. Zionism is the idea that Israel should exist as a Jewish homeland. It's not more complicated than that. Anti-Zionism is the idea that Israel shouldn't exist as a Jewish homeland. Forget the debate about whether the slogan "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" is genocidal (it certainly is when used by groups favouring, you know, *genocide*). Merely saying you think the country should be "returned" to Palestinians is saying that Israel shouldn't exist.

A lot of anti-Zionists insist they don't want to see Israelis slaughtered to rectify the "mistake" of Israel – though it's very hard to credit the sincerity of those who say this when they also celebrate or refuse to condemn what Hamas did on October 7. Still, I know committed anti-Zionists who sincerely don't want to see Jews slaughtered. I know fewer anti-Zionists who have a plausible argument for how, exactly, they could avoid such a thing. When you ask them, they just fall back on declarations that Zionism is bad and needs to go. The details can be worked out later.

Think about how weird that would sound about any other country. You don't have to try very hard. That's what Vladimir Putin and his crowd say about Ukraine, and most enlightened people think that's outrageous. That's true of even the opponents of US support for Ukraine. (Only Putin lickspittles and trolls say they're *glad* Putin is trying to erase Ukraine from the map.) They just argue that Ukraine isn't our problem, or we're to blame because we "provoked" Russia to do this terrible thing. I disagree with them, but they aren't "anti-Ukraine" the way anti-Zionism is anti-Israel.

Or consider Taiwan, whose current government is about the same age as Israel. Most people I know think Taiwan has the right to exist as an independent country. Some people think that if China chooses to invade, we shouldn't get in the way. But this idea doesn't have an equivalent theoretical

construct to “anti-Zionism.” As wrong as I think the appeasers are, I am not aware of any who just cavalierly talk about how it would be not merely acceptable, *but morally desirable* to see an independent, democratic nation-state violently crushed under China’s authoritarian heel.

punished on a college campus, but celebrating the bigoted murder of Jewish people is considered fair comment or legitimate discourse, then that school is structurally antisemitic – regardless of intent. They’re also wild hypocrites, since the whole concept of “structural racism” is one of the defining projects of the campus left.



Anti-Zionists often preen about their supposed moral superiority and historical literacy for subscribing to the idea that Israel shouldn’t exist. Yet does anyone say Russia or China should not exist? (Image: Shutterstock)

But with anti-Zionism, people are free to preen about their moral superiority, historical literacy, and analytical seriousness by simply subscribing to the idea that Israel shouldn’t exist. And if you suggest, antisemitism might be involved, *you’re the thug and bully.*

Again, I don’t think all anti-Zionists are conventional, Jew-hating bigots. It’s certainly the case that many of them don’t think they are bigoted, and that should be acknowledged in its own right. (Say what you will for the gang at the *Daily Stormer*, they own their bigotry.)

I think this stuff is very often objectively antisemitic. If you have one standard for every other nation in the world, and another for the *only Jewish nation in the world*, whether you realise it or not, you’re open to the charge of antisemitism. For instance, if celebrating the bigoted murder of black people can get you expelled or

Or take a more relevant example. If you aren’t disgusted and outraged by Russia’s open and egregious violations of international law, the laws of war, or basic decency, I’m going to need to know why Israel’s crimes – real or alleged – justify so much outrage that you think Israel should be destroyed. Even if you credit the most incendiary accusations against Israel, most of which I think are false, what Russia has done in the last two years is worse. They bomb hospitals, maternity wards, schools, playgrounds, daycare centres, constantly. There are no credible allegations that Ukraine hides troops or weapons in such places, the way Hamas openly does as a matter of policy. One reason why Ukraine doesn’t do that – other than the immorality and illegality – is that the Ukrainians *know that Russia wouldn’t care.*

If your response to these obvious facts is that Israel is different because it’s a “settler-colonial project” you’re

still going to have to explain to me how Russia’s project isn’t settler colonialism. They’ve been moving Russians into captured lands since 2014. Actually, they’ve been moving Russians into conquered lands since 914 or thereabouts.

I’m coming around to the view that the whole “settler colonial” indictment of Israel is a post hoc rationalisation. During the Cold War, there was plenty of anti-Zionism – egged on by the Soviets – but the settler colonial argument really only took off after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Sure, there were intellectual antecedents in the writings of Frantz Fanon and others. But the intellectual project really only took off after anti-Zionists needed a new excuse for their pre-existing hostility to Israel. In other words, the popular view that anti-Zionism is the product of hostility to settler-colonialism gets the causality backwards. The concept of settler-colonialism is the product of hostility to Israel. When the Israelis captured Adolf Eichmann in 1960 (when Israel was inside those pre-1967 borders) the leading Saudi government newspaper headlined their story, “Arrest of Eichmann, who had the honour of killing six million Jews.”

Again, non-antisemitic anti-Zionists can insist that anti-Zionism has nothing to do with antisemitism. But it sure seems like a lot of anti-Zionism gets the causality backward, too. As a historical matter, the concept of anti-Zionism is the product of antisemitism, just as the concept of antisemitism was the product of Jew-hatred.

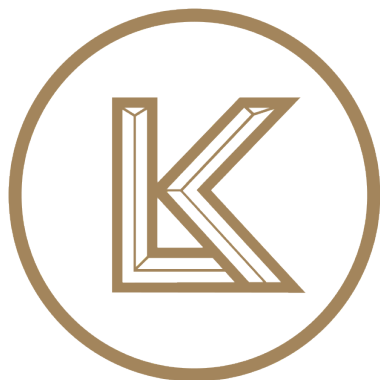
It’s almost as if people just want to come up with new words and ideas to sanitise some very old ones about Jewish people, wherever they find them.

AIR

Jonah Goldberg is Editor in chief & co-founder of the Dispatch, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, an LA Times columnist, CNN commentator, and author of three NYT bestsellers. © The Dispatch (www.thedispatch.com), reprinted by permission, all rights reserved.



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NOTED AND QUOTED

THE MONTH IN MEDIA

VERY POOR VISION

An appalling, ahistorical account on ABC *Radio National* “Rear Vision” (Oct. 22) of the Oslo peace process which started in 1993 appeared to seek to “contextualise” Hamas’ October 7 massacre as Israel’s fault.

The program’s less than subtle message was a claim that Israel didn’t fulfil Oslo’s end-goal of creating a Palestinian state, and this is the source of the violence.

Former Palestinian Authority official Khaled Elgindy said, “It felt inevitable... we were moving toward a Palestinian state,” but “the process basically didn’t go anywhere” after Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin’s assassination by a right-wing Israeli in 1995 and Binyamin Netanyahu’s “very right-wing, intransigent government” was elected in 1996.

Host Annabelle Quince then said, “in 2000, a second... intifada erupted.”

Journalist and author Nathan Shachar “explained” that the Second Intifada “was the product of a deep disappointment in Palestinian society,” adding, incorrectly, that “according to... Oslo... there would have been a five-year transition period... to a Palestinian state.”

The program failed to mention the fact that between the Netanyahu Government’s election in 1996 and the Second Intifada’s outbreak in 2000, Ehud Barak served as PM.

Or that in July 2000, at the Camp David summit, three months before the Second Intifada, Barak famously offered to create a Palestinian state that included all of Gaza, most of the West Bank and a capital in east Jerusalem. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat rejected that plan, along with even more generous offers in December 2000 and January 2001.

The program also failed to mention the statehood offer Israeli PM Ehud Olmert made in 2008.

MUST BE STATED

In the *Australian* (Nov. 3), AIJAC’s Colin Rubenstein dismissed accusations “the lack of a Palestinian state alongside Israel... fuelled Hamas’ Islamist ideology and caused this attack.”

He said, “This is completely upside down – this attack was the clearest demonstration possible as to why it has proven impossible to create a Palestinian state despite sincere and repeated Israeli peace offers.”

“Hamas-run Gaza has for the last 17 years been the closest thing to a fully-fledged Palestinian state that has ever existed... Yet it is precisely in Gaza where terrorism flourished, presenting a mortal threat to Israel’s citizens.”

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER

Australian columnist Henry Ergas repeatedly hammered the point that Hamas’ actions on October 7 showed it is beyond the pale.

On Oct. 20, he wrote, “they weren’t hunting for Israelis, much less for soldiers; they were hunting for Jews... Civilian casualties... were the objective... maiming babies, butchering children, raping women and defiling corpses... [the] Nazi[s]... tried to hide their crimes... Hamas’s killers... videoed their atrocities and posted them – to howls of joy that echoed from Gaza to Lakemba.”

On Nov. 3, Ergas said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine “is a war of subjugation; Hamas’s is a war of extermination.”

OTHER PERSPECTIVES

On ABC’s “Religion & Ethics” website (Oct. 24), Monash academic Suzy Killmister warned against “condemnation of Israel’s retaliation... slip[ping] into retrospective justification of Hamas’ terrorist attack.”

Killmister said “maintaining silence about Hamas’ attacks can itself speak volumes about whose lives we value, and whose we don’t.”

AIJAC’s Justin Amler in the *Courier Mail* (Oct. 25) criticised the speed with which Hamas’ “atrocities... have been almost forgotten and replaced with a laser-like focus on the plight of Palestinians in Gaza instead.” He asked “why is it so hard for people to remember and understand” that Israel must defend itself against “a genocidal extremist group listed as a terrorist organisation in Australia and around the world” that perpetrated one of the worse massacres in modern times?

UN-BELIEVABLE

In the *Daily Telegraph* (Nov. 1), AIJAC’s Justin Amler denounced the United Nations for not supporting Israel after the October 7 massacre.

Amler noted the UN Human Rights Council held a minute’s silence two days after the massacre, not for Israelis but “the loss of innocent lives in the occupied Palestinian territory and elsewhere,” and a UN General Assembly resolution calling for a ceasefire failed to mention Hamas.

Meanwhile, former UN Assistant Secretary-General Ramesh Thakur in the *Australian Financial Review* (Oct. 29) backed Israel’s war against Hamas, arguing that “calls for ceasefire, de-escalation and restraint play into Hamas’ hands.”



A SENSE OF PROPORTION

In the *Canberra Times* (Nov. 3), AI-JAC's Oved Lobel argued that international humanitarian law (IHL) is being "abused" to attack Israel.

Lobel explained that proportionality "has absolutely nothing to do with comparing the overall scope and deadliness of a military response with the scope and deadliness of the terror provocation." It is about determining whether the incidental loss of civilian life and injuries caused "would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated."

He said because Hamas uses civilian

facilities in Gaza — including hospitals, UN schools and mosques — they become legitimate military targets under IHL.

He also dismissed accusations that Israel is guilty of genocide, which involves killing done "with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

"Genocidal countries do not plead for civilian evacuations or give prior warning before individual strikes," he noted.

DO BETTER SBS

An article on SBS's website by

Gavin Butler (Nov. 13) argued the slogan "From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be Free", frequently heard at pro-Palestinian rallies, isn't calling for Israel's destruction or the genocide of Jews.

Butler, a signatory to the #dobetteronpalestine open letter urging the media to emphasise the Palestinian side when reporting on the conflict, wrote it is a "show of solidarity for the tormented people of Gaza."

Sydney University lecturer Martin Kear said the slogan wishes Jews and Palestinians could live "side-by-side" as they did before "Israel was estab-



IN PARLIAMENT

Greens Leader **Adam Bandt** (Melbourne) — Nov. 13 — "How many more children must die before Labor will... [call] for a ceasefire?"

Prime Minister **Anthony Albanese** (ALP, Grayndler) — answering: "Israel does have a right to defend itself... the way that it does matters... Hamas has contempt for international law—they're a terrorist organisation."

Foreign Minister Senator **Penny Wong** (ALP, SA) — Nov. 13 — "What occurred on 7 October was horrific... Hamas is... dedicated to the destruction of... Israel... they are still holding hostages... in affirming Israel's right to defend itself, we also emphasise the importance of international law." In a separate statement the same day Senator **Wong** said, "The dismantling of Hamas will be required as part of any enduring peace."

Shadow Foreign Minister Senator **Simon Birmingham** (Lib., SA) — Nov. 14 — "The response by Israel to seek to rid Gaza and the region... of Hamas... seeks to ensure peace is possible in the future. Those who utter... 'ceasefire now' are ignoring the reality that a ceasefire now, short of a release of hostages, a surrender by Hamas and a handing-over of terrorist capabilities... would only perpetuate the type of tragedy that we have seen."

Dai Le (Ind., Fowler) — Nov. 16 — "By focusing exclusively on addressing antisemitism, we are prioritising one group and overlooking an entire community. It is impossible to condemn the attack against Israel and ignore the horrors in Gaza."

Senator **Jacqui Lambie** (JLN, Tas.) — Nov. 14 — "There is no point whatsoever in calling for a ceasefire when one side is intent upon wiping out the other. Hamas is calling for the destruction of Israel..."

Senator **Janet Rice** (Greens, Vic.) — Nov. 14 — "75 years of oppression of the Palestinian people and occupation of lands by... Israel. What has happened... since 7 October is not self-defence... These are crimes of collective punishment, crimes

against humanity."

Senator **Rice** — Nov. 7 — "Ten thousand Palestinians... have been brutally killed just for being Palestinian."

Greens Deputy Leader Senator **Mehreen Faruqi** (NSW) — Nov. 14 — "Can you not see that depravity by Israel in continuing to carpet-bomb Gaza and continuing to annihilate Gaza?... Just call this for what it is—which is collective punishment, which is war crimes, which is apartheid."

Senator **James McGrath** (Lib., Qld) — Nov. 14 — "Over 200 hostages are being held by Hamas. Here are their names:..."

Senator **Susan McDonald** (Lib., Qld) — Nov. 10 — "Israel is... going to great lengths to prevent harming Gazan non-combatants."

Shadow Assistant Foreign Minister Senator **Claire Chandler** (Lib., Tas) — Nov. 8 — "[Hamas] has promised to carry out such terror attacks again and again, and yet they still find support in Australia... They dug tunnels and shelters for themselves and forced civilians to act as human shields."

Senator **David Pocock** (Ind., ACT) — Nov. 7 — "Israelis are not Benjamin Netanyahu. Palestinians are not Hamas... call for a ceasefire now."

Senator **Penny Allman-Payne** (Greens, Qld) — Nov. 7 — "Deliberately carpet bombing hospitals and schools and ambulances is not self-defence."

Senator **Nick McKim** (Greens, Tas.) — Nov. 7 — "How many people need to die while you still stand with Israel? How many babies need to be slaughtered...?"

Greens Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Senator **Jordon Steele-John** (WA) — Nov. 6 — "Mechanised murder... has become the response of the Netanyahu government."

Senator **Hollie Hughes** (Lib., NSW) — Oct. 24 — Environment and Communications Legislation Committee — Estimates Hearings: "There were a lot of concerns expressed after comments... by your reporter in the Middle East, Tom Joyner, and his reference to the beheading of babies being 'BS'... can... Australians have faith that Mr Joyner is capable of fairly reporting...?"

lished in 1948.”

Deakin University’s Andrew Thomas, who signed a recent petition accusing Israel of committing genocide, was quoted saying, “for a lot of people it is simply about Palestinian solidarity against Israeli occupation.”

The piece did quote the US-based Anti-Defamation League’s statement condemning the phrase as “an anti-semitic charge denying the Jewish right to self-determination, including through the removal of Jews from their ancestral homeland,” but Butler’s commentary basically dismissed this claim as wrong.

NON-DISCLOSURE CONFLICTS

On ABC Radio “PM” and ABC Radio “Drive” (Nov. 9), barrister and anti-Israel activist Greg Barns spruiked a petition on behalf of lawyers calling on the Australian Government to back a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel and ensure international law is upheld.

On “Drive”, Barns admitted, “I’m no expert on the laws of war,” which didn’t stop him asserting “this is a disproportionate use of force... by Israel. There seems to be no doubt about that.”

“Drive” host Andy Park called Barns a “barrister and National Criminal Justice spokesman for the Australian Lawyers Alliance.”

In fact, Barns has a long history of pro-Palestinian activism, including establishing “Tasmanians for Palestine” in 2018 and serving as patron of the Palestinian Film Festival in Tasmania in 2018, ties which were not disclosed.

I KIDWA NOT

On ABC RN “Breakfast” (Nov. 15), former Palestinian Authority (PA) Foreign Minister Nasser al-Kidwa blamed everyone but Hamas for the October 7 massacre.

Al-Kidwa said Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu “ke[pt] the division between Gaza and the West Bank,” which “de-

prived” Gazans and Hamas of “any potential, serious economic development.”

He also claimed that in previous wars Netanyahu targeted civilians but not Hamas, making “sure that it remains at the helm,” for which Israel is now “paying a huge price.”

Kidwa also said PA President Mahmoud Abbas has no credibility with Palestinians but has remained leader for 18 years because of the “unreasonable support” of the US and Netanyahu.

PENNY’S HOSPITAL HANDPASS

In the *Australian* (Nov. 13), Anthony Bergin challenged Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong’s claim on ABC TV “Insiders” (Nov. 12) that Israel cannot target Gaza’s hospitals because “these are facilities protected under international law.”

Bergin wrote, because Hamas uses hospitals as “military facilities and [for] operations,” they lose their protected status.

Israel, he said, is complying with the Geneva Convention’s requirements to “endeavour to remove the civilian population... from the vicinity of military objectives” by offering to “assist with moving vulnerable patients and get them to medical facilities.”

In the *Australian* (Nov. 8), Bergin and international law expert Greg Rose corrected false claims being made about how to determine if “civilian casualties caused by Israel have been excessive.”

BREAKFAST INDIGESTION

ABC RN “Breakfast” host Patricia Karvelas issued a trigger warning to listeners after her Nov. 10 interview with Palestinian-Canadian Mansour Shouman.

As a dual passport holder, Shouman was eligible to leave for Egypt with his wife and children when Gaza’s border opened but he chose to remain, saying, Israel “killed my ancestors and took my land in 1948

and 1967. I will not allow them to do the same here.”

Asked why the family returned to Gaza from Canada in 2021, Shouman said, “unfortunately, the education system in Canada got overwhelmed with leftist agenda, LGBTQ propaganda. We couldn’t raise our children by the social norms and the religious values that we believe in.”

Insisting he doesn’t “support the killing of women, children or anyone who doesn’t use force against Palestinians,” Shouman said, “Israeli[s] at the age of 18... become part of the military... And those people [killed on October 7] were all occupying settlers around the Gaza Strip.”

Without identifying what she meant, Karvelas said of the interview, “I’d like to acknowledge that many [listeners] would have found some of the things said distressing.”

CAMPTALK

On Nov. 6, *Canberra Times* columnist Mark Kenny lambasted Israel “for rain[ing] vengeance on Hamas-controlled Gaza, firing rockets into a refugee camp and even an ambulance, peaceful co-existence seems further away than ever.”

Presumably Kenny was referring to Jabaliya camp Israel targeted on Nov. 1 and an Israeli hit on an ambulance on Nov. 3.

Hamas spun these two incidents as callous Israeli war crimes.

But as AIJAC’s Jamie Hyams noted in the *West Australian* (Nov. 15), “Israel’s recent attack on the Jabaliya refugee camp was labelled a war crime, but Israel struck a legitimate military target — a military command centre with numerous terrorists including a senior Hamas commander responsible for various atrocities.” Hyams also said “Israeli forces attacking Hamas at Jabaliya were confronted with a line of 100 women and children pushed out by Hamas to protect its fighters,” also a war crime.

Both *SBS TV* “World News” and the

ABC website (Nov. 4) reported Israel's claim the ambulance was struck because Israel had received intel Hamas was using it to transport fighters and weapons.

HAMAS' CHEER LEADERS?

ABC TV "News" decided that Israeli Ambassador to Australia Amir Maimon's appearance at the National Press Club on Oct. 25 had to be balanced with an interview-cum-analysis from reporter Nicole Johnston.

A former Middle East correspondent for Al Jazeera English and TRT, a Turkish state-run news service which has a history of broadcasting antisemitic content, Johnston sounded like a Hamas apologist.

Questioning Maimon's claim Hamas uses human shields, she said, "I covered the 2012 war and the 2014 war...and we never found it to be correct. It is true though, that Hamas, Islamic Jihad...do fire rockets from...behind schools...mosques." Clearly, Johnston didn't realise those are textbook examples of using civilian buildings as "human shields".

She said because Gaza is so small and has "two and a half million people packed inside," Hamas is forced to fire rockets from near civilian areas.

Gaza actually has plenty of open spaces and farmland.

Asked to comment on Ambassador Maimon's long list of Hamas' atrocities on October 7 – rape, torture, torching families – Johnston focused on claims Israeli babies were decapitated.

"Some people...say that the issue of dozens of Israeli children being decapitated still hasn't been verified," she said.

She also claimed that in previous wars with Hamas, "if Israel was going to bomb a house, often the owners of it would get a call and be told to get out" but "that's no longer happening."

In fact, as *ABC TV* has reported, Israel has dropped more than 1.5 million fliers telling Gazans to leave for

their own safety. Moreover, Israel has made more than five million automated phone calls and sent more than four million text messages to Gaza civilians urging them to evacuate a target area.

HACKTIVISM

ABC Triple J's "Hack" (Nov. 13) looked at pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel protests, but focused overwhelmingly on the virtues of the former.

Reporter Shalailah Medhora summarised ugly scenes on Nov. 10, when hundreds of highly agitated pro-Palestinian demonstrators descended on Caulfield in Melbourne, a heavily Jewish suburb. The protesters positioned themselves in a park opposite a synagogue that was holding a Friday night service that had to be evacuated by police.

Medhora's version was "even-handed", saying, "on Friday night, police in Melbourne had to take pretty drastic measures to rein in a fight between 200 pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli protesters."

Guest historian Effie Karageorgos offered romanticised parallels between the anti-Vietnam war movement and Gaza ceasefire protesters, suggesting the latter are more virtuous, because Australian troops aren't involved.

Host Dave Marchese read out exclusively pro-Palestinian texts.

A "Hack" report on Nov. 16 pointedly dismissed IDF video evidence claiming to show Hamas had misused Gaza's Shifa Hospital as "not independently verified". Hack does not make similar qualifications for Palestinian claims, including Hamas-supplied civilian casualty figures.

ABC SUPPORTS RECYCLING

During the first five weeks of the Hamas-Israel war, the ABC seemed to follow a pattern of relying repeatedly on a small number of favoured experts

who would make the same points in numerous appearances – especially if highly critical of Israel.

Médecins Sans Frontières Executive Director Jennifer Tierney repeatedly made the case for a ceasefire on *ABC TV* "News" (Nov. 14), *ABC TV* "News" (Nov. 10), and *ABC TV* "Q&A" (Nov. 6).

A warning by Holocaust studies academic Professor Omer Bartov that Israel may be on the verge of committing genocide in Gaza saw him invited to talk on *ABC RN* "The Minefield" (Nov. 16), *ABC RN* "Breakfast" (Nov. 14), and *ABC News Radio* (Nov. 13).

On *RN* "Breakfast", he said, "my own view is that it is not yet genocide, but especially because there's been such a vast displacement of population that is ethnic cleansing, which is by the way, not clearly defined, and there's no clear law against it, but... it can come under crimes against humanity". There was no counter voice heard.

International law expert Ben Saul – recently appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-terrorism – appeared on *ABC TV* "News" (Oct. 10), *ABC RN* "Drive" (Oct. 24), *ABC RN* "Breakfast" (Nov. 1), and *ABC Radio Triple J* (Nov. 6).

Saul's explanation of proportionality on *RN* "Breakfast" was vague to the point of obfuscating the actual law, saying, "You can't launch attacks which would cause excessive civilian casualties."

SPEAKING TRUTH TO IRAN

On *ABC TV* (Oct. 30), Sydney Peace Prize 2023 recipient Nazanin Boniadi, an Iranian-born human rights activist, called on the Albanese Government to "remove the road-blocks" it says prevents Australia from proscribing Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation.

Boniadi said the "root cause" of the "havoc" in the Middle East is the backing Hamas and Hezbollah receive from the IRGC.

MEDIA MICROSCOPE

Allon Lee

RAPPORTEUR WRAP UP

During her recent visit to Australia, the outlandish statements and bombastic style of UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese seemed to catch even hardened media professionals by surprise.

On Nov. 3, Albanese told *ABC RN* “Breakfast” Israel’s intention is “the erasure of Gaza.” Host Patricia Karvelas demurred, saying, “I’ve listened very carefully to many statements and [Israel has] consistently called for the erasure of Hamas, not of the Palestinian people.”

Asked by Karvelas if she believed Hamas’ October 7 massacre was an act of genocide, Albanese said she did not but her explanation was incomprehensible.

On *ABC TV* “Q&A” (Nov. 6), Albanese agreed that Hamas must release the 240 plus hostages abducted on October 7, and expressed her sadness that so many of the hostages “are people who have been also fighting against apartheid... It’s a tragic moment,” referring to the fact that some of the abducted Israelis were affiliated with the left.

Fellow panellist Nasser Mashni, the controversial President of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network, and Albanese were in furious agreement that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza. Albanese said, “when I hear Hamas leaders speaking and I hear Israeli military and political leaders speaking these days, I do not hear much difference.”

Nine Newspapers’ Matthew Knott’s interview with Albanese (Nov. 12), quoted her saying Israel “needs to make peace with Hamas in order to not be threatened by Hamas, which means that it needs to give freedom to the Palestinians.”

Knott’s article said the Executive Council of Australian Jewry’s (ECAJ’s) Alex Ryvchin labelled her “deranged” in calling on Israel to make peace with Hamas, given the terror group vowed it will make “perpetual war” against the Jewish state. AIJAC’s Colin Rubenstein was also quoted by Knott, saying Albanese had “ultra-extreme views about Israel, both before and during her current UN role.”

Speaking to *ABC TV*’s Joe O’Brien (Nov. 13), Albanese said, “Hamas is not just a military wing... Hamas is a political party,” and, nonsensically added, “it’s very easy to dismantle Hamas. End the blockade.”

Albanese’s speech at the National Press Club on Nov. 14, where she seemed to belittle many of those asking questions, was widely picked up in the mainstream media and

on social media.

After Albanese’s appearance, the ECAJ’s Peter Wertheim was quoted by the *Australian* (Nov. 14) disparaging her claim that Israel has no right to self-defence against Hamas because the UN considers Gaza to still be under Israeli occupation. Wertheim said, “both the UN Charter and cus-

tomary international law clearly affirm the inherent right of a State to use force in response to an armed attack, whether that attack emanates from another State or a terrorist organisation like Hamas.”

Following Albanese’s Press Club appearance, *Sky News*’ Jack Houghton, was quoted in the *Australian* (Nov. 17) calling her “dangerous”, and labelling her comments “appalling”. Houghton called the Press Club’s decision to “book... her as a speaker... absolutely insane.”

Sky News’ Peter Stefanovic repeatedly challenged Albanese (Nov. 14), disputing her assertion that Israel’s military operation was designed to “wipe out Gaza”.

Stefanovic retorted, “That’s not what they’re saying. The leadership is not saying that,” but instead that the operation is about the “destruction of Hamas”.

On *Channel Ten*’s “The Project” (Nov. 15), co-host Waleed Aly asked Albanese “what Israel should have done in response to the massacre.” She answered, “It could have relied on the United Nations to demilitarise Hamas.” A sceptical Aly replied, “So, to be clear, are you saying Israel should have asked the United Nations to send in its own force to demilitarise Gaza and to remove the military capacity from Hamas, and that the United Nations would have undertaken that task?”

Albanese said Israel should have followed France’s response to the devastating ISIS attack on the Bataclan Theatre in 2015. “It emanated from... a terrorist group in Belgium. Has France... resorted to... bomb entire civilian neighbourhoods in Belgium? No, it used law enforcement operations.” The interview ended fairly abruptly after this clueless statement.

The softest interview Albanese participated in was with *ABC RN* “Late Night Live” host Phillip Adams on Nov. 14. Adams asked Albanese if she believes, like Nasser Mashni, that the two-state solution is dead.

Albanese acknowledged that the “international consensus, wall to wall” is for a two-state solution, but added “once there are the conditions for the two people to live together harmoniously under one state, why not?”

THE LAST WORD

Avi Mayer

WHY THEY TEAR DOWN HOSTAGE POSTERS

In the weeks since October 7, a new phenomenon has swept through the streets of major cities around the world: posters bearing the faces of the 240 Israelis held hostage by Hamas in Gaza have been plastered by Jews and their allies on walls, lamp posts, and bulletin boards, only to be torn down by an assortment of bigots from a variety of backgrounds.

Social media platforms have been flooded with videos of confrontations between the vandals and those who have caught them in the act.

A blond student at the University of Southern California can be seen giggling as she carefully removes the hostage posters from a campus bulletin board. A woman in Paris says, “It’s all propaganda.”

A man with oversized headphones walking away with a wad of crumpled posters explains that they are “perpetuating the narrative of the victimisation of the Israelis, which is completely false.”

A young woman in a green hoodie peeling posters off a New York City wall simply says, “They’re fake.”

At the same time, activists have been claiming that photos of the blackened bodies of Israeli babies were generated by artificial intelligence and the events of October 7 were staged.

Attendees at a Los Angeles screening of a 45-minute video of Hamas atrocities (see p. 25) were physically assaulted by protesters; activists tried to dissuade invitees from attending the event, calling the footage “propaganda”.

The irony, of course, is that it is Hamas that made a point of documenting and broadcasting its savagery. The number of videos from that day is staggering; TikTok, Telegram, and other platforms have been awash with graphic depictions of the carnage.

In at least one case, the terrorists used an elderly woman’s phone to upload a video of her murder to her Facebook profile, which was how her family learned of her death.

What is happening here?

Professor Israel Charny is one of the world’s foremost Holocaust and genocide scholars. He is also

a prominent psychologist and has written extensively about the psychology of Holocaust and genocide denial. In a 2001 article, Charny described the motives that drive those who deny genocides and other atrocities.

“Denials of known events of genocide must be treated as acts of bitter and malevolent psychological aggression, certainly against the victims, but really against all of human society, for such denials literally celebrate genocidal violence and in the process suggestively call for renewed massacres – of the same people or of others,” he wrote.

“Such denials also madden, insult, and humiliate the survivors, the relatives of the dead, and the entire people of the victims, and are, without doubt, continuing manifestations of the kinds of dehumanization and disenfranchisement that we know are the basic psychological substrates that make genocide possible, to begin with,” he noted.

Like Holocaust denial, the minimisation, erasure, and denial of Hamas’s atrocities target both the dead and the living, seeking to perpetuate their pain with breathtaking cruelty. They are, as Charny says, acts of utter dehumanisation.

Those who tear down posters bearing the faces of 10-month-old Kfir Bibas or 84-year-old Ditzia Heiman, 13-year-old Alma Or or 59-year-old Michel Nisenbaum cannot countenance the notion that Jews can be victims – or that others might see them as such. To them, Jews are invariably evil, always the aggressors. There is no such thing as an innocent Jew.

“Perpetuating the narrative of the victimization of the Israelis,” as the bigot cited above said, cannot stand – facts be damned.

The response to these acts of malicious vandalism should be obvious. We should plaster our abducted loved ones’ faces everywhere. We should make them impossible to avoid. Every poster that is torn down should be replaced with ten. Our message is simple: These people are real. They are innocent. They are being held against their will. And they need to be brought home now.

AIR

Avi Mayer is Editor of the Jerusalem Post. © Jerusalem Post (www.jpost.com) reprinted by permission all rights reserved.



What is behind the global campaign to tear down posters of kidnapped Israelis? (Image: Twitter)



Australia \$7.95 (inc GST)