

NATIONAL POST



AFTERSHOCKS

Six months after October 7

A 24-page retrospective

EDITOR'S NOTE

There are two dominant storylines in the post-October 7 world: The Israel-Hamas War and the shocking surge of antisemitism worldwide.

At the National Post, we have devoted ourselves to the stories behind the war: Why Hamas has no interest in peace, the larger aims of jihadism, the serious problems with the UN and the way it feeds conflict and hatred, the terrorists' use of sexual violence as a tool of war, and more.

But for the Post, the story is as much about the unrecognizable state of our streets and university campuses.

"Rallies in support of Hamas began in Canada within hours of the terrorists' horrific attacks becoming public," Michael Higgins wrote in an April 2 column. "These rallies were not protesting conditions in Gaza, they were openly celebrating mass murder and gang rape. The rallies quickly became widespread and just as quickly was the rise in antisemitism in this country with Jewish businesses being targeted in the most appalling way. Jewish schools have been attacked — one with gunfire — and Jewish institutions firebombed, including a synagogue, a deli and a community centre."

The Post's journalism post-October 7 has aimed to reflect, explain and contextualize our perilous new world.

This is among the most troubling events we've ever had to cover. I think it's also one of the most important.

Some of the best of our coverage and commentary has been assembled into this keepsake PDF edition that effectively sums up the last six months and hopefully helps make some sense of the stakes. Please share widely.

Rob Roberts, editor-in-chief



AMIR LEVY / GETTY IMAGES

Visitors walk past a site that is collecting cars that were damaged during the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel.

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Sabrina Maddeaux

Over the span of 43 minutes, I watched 138 humans be murdered or witnessed their corpses, many brutalized beyond recognition and others clearly tortured, in the direct aftermath of Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attacks on Israel.

That's 3.2 bodies per minute — and less than 10 per cent of the more than 1,400 people killed that day.

The Consulate of Israel in Toronto screened the footage, taken from a mix of body cameras, dashboard cams, CCTV tapes, and victims' cell-phones, some used by Hamas to record and livestream their sadism, for a small group of media. Not everyone made it through the full 43 minutes, with others moved to tears and outbursts of emotion.

There were babies. Toddlers. So many children of all ages. Young men and women dressed for a music festival, not the wanton slaughter that saw their bloodied bodies piled atop one another in scenes reminiscent of some of the Holocaust's worst images.

Parents. The elderly. A dad who, attempting to hide from Hamas attackers with his sons, all three of them still in their underwear, was blown up by a grenade in front of his children. The two young boys, covered in blood, crying, throwing themselves on the ground in grief, as a Hamas gunman raids the family's fridge and takes a swig of soda. One of the sons' panicked voice as he realizes he can no longer see out of one eye.

The man's wife as kibbutz security bring her to identify her husband's remains. The moment she literally collapses and has to be dragged away from the scene, thrashing wildly, her legs folding under her like every bone had simply vanished from her body.

I watched Hamas hack innocents to death

COMMENT



A family attempting to decipher whether the burned remains in front of them, skirt hiked up above bare genitals, is the loved one they're looking for.

The literal streams of blood, the hacked off arms and legs, the infant missing part of its skull, brain leaking out. The dog shot over and over again as its limbs splay in every direction until they don't anymore. Mickey Mouse pyjamas on a young corpse, skull fragments on floors, victims shot point blank. So much blood.

But none of what I've detailed so far was the worst part of those 43 minutes. The worst part was the glee.

The pure jubilation of Hamas terrorists as they filmed themselves killing and torturing; their excited voices bragging about their atrocities. The videos of them playing with victims' heads with their feet, and excitedly shooting out the tires of a kibbutz's ambulance before massacring its residents.

I'll never forget the gore, but it's the look of euphoria and pride in the terrorists' eyes, cheering for the cameras as if they were the ones partying at a music festival that day, that will haunt me.

In the videos, Hamas attackers did not behave as soldiers or freedom fighters. They hunted their victims in their homes like serial killers in a horror film, peering through blinds, slashing through screen doors with knives, following families wherever they tried to run or hide. If they couldn't find them, they'd use lighters to make sure fire did. They toyed with their victims' lifeless bodies. They kept trophies, both physical and digital.

It's unimaginable that anyone could watch this and still equate what happened on Oct. 7 to resistance or war. I've seen war footage; this was not that.

These were terrorist attacks targeted at civilians and mass shootings of innocents. Hamas was indiscriminate in their cruelty, killing not for cause, but for pleasure.

I don't know if the full footage will ever be made public, but if it ever is, every single Canadian should watch it to understand how far beyond any conceivable rules of engagement Hamas went, why this time was different, and why it must never, ever happen again.

National Post



Smoke billows over Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Jan. 2.

SAID KHATIB / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

COMMENT

Hamas death tolls can't be trusted, and here's why

Rahim Mohamed

A lot of numbers were thrown around recently when members of the House of Commons debated an NDP motion calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza — even as several of these numbers look increasingly to be totally disconnected from the reality on the ground.

The motion's sponsor, NDP MP Heather McPherson, for example, stated on the floor of the House that “more than 30,000 innocent civilians” had been killed since the onset of fighting between Israel and terrorist group Hamas in Gaza, “including more than 13,000 children.”

McPherson failed to mention, of course, that these figures include at least 13,000 Hamas fighters,

and were taken verbatim from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health Ministry (GMH), an entity whose reporting has been called into question from the earliest days of fighting.

A new analysis, published last month in *The Tablet*, in fact presents what may well be the strongest statistical evidence to date that the Gaza Health Ministry has been fabricating casualty data to fit Hamas's preferred narrative.

The analysis, conducted by Abraham Wyner, a professor of statistics and data science at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, identifies a number of glaring incongruities in daily casualty data released by the ministry between late October and mid-November of last year.

“Hamas hasn't provided detailed data since early in the war. And why should it?” Wyner told me via email last Wednesday. “You use what you can.”

The most glaring of these red flags is what Wyner calls in his piece an “almost metronomical linearity,” or maintaining a steady rhythm, in daily reports of the total number of deaths in Gaza, which averaged “270 (deaths) per day plus or minus about 15 per cent” through an entire 16-day sample.

For this trendline to be accurate, Israeli forces would have had to kill a near-identical number of Gazans each day for over two straight weeks, notwithstanding the inevitable variations in the day-to-day frequency of bombings and density of sites bombed.

The far more likely case, writes Wyner, is that “the Gaza ministry is releasing fake daily numbers that vary too little because they do not have a clear understanding of the behaviour of naturally occurring numbers.”

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Irregularities in the ministry-reported data also call into question the oft-repeated claim the 70 per cent of the dead in Gaza are women and children; again, Wyner argues, because reported daily death counts increase too consistently to be plausible — this time across age and sex demographics.

“ Hamas casualty figures mirror the population figures almost exactly,” Wyner told me (adult males make up about 25 per cent of Gaza’s population). Accounting for the fact that at least a third of the dead are Hamas combatants, “this implies that either all Gaza men are fighters — obviously false — or that many, if not the majority, of the reported child casualties are actually fighters.”

While Hamas has been known to deploy child combatants as young as 12, meaning that the latter possibility can’t be ruled out entirely, Occam’s razor points to the likely case scenario that the ministry, from the conflict’s outset, assigned 70 per cent of total casualties to be women and children, extrapolating this trend over the past five-and-a-half months, though some of the children reported killed are likely to have been Hamas fighters.

Wyner conceded to me that, historically, Gaza Health Ministry fatality counts have been reasonably consistent with corresponding figures reported by Israel but also stressed that this has not always been the case. For instance, following 2009’s Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, Hamas initially claimed it lost only 49 of its fighters, before admitting almost two years later this number was between 600 and 700.

More recently, Hamas reported erroneously that 500 were killed in a blast near Gaza City’s Al-Ahli Arab Hospital — a figure that American intelligence estimate as between 100-



ABED KHALED / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Site of the explosion at al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, on Oct. 18.

300. The carnage, it turns out, was not even caused by Israel, but by a misfired Gazan rocket.

Addressing a December study published in the *Lancet* finding no evidence of inflated mortality reporting over the first month of fighting in Gaza (Oct. 7 to Nov. 10), Wyner noted that the study, which cross-referenced ministry totals with reported staff member deaths from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), “Relied on a crucial and unverified assumption (that) UNRWA workers are not disproportionately more likely to be killed than the general population.”

“That premise exploded when it was uncovered that a sizable fraction of UNRWA workers are affiliated with Hamas,” wrote Wyner.

Wyner freely admits that the evidence he’s marshalled does not, in itself, prove that the Hamas-reported numbers are bogus. “For some, no circumstantial evidence will ever be enough,” he told me, adding that he’s holding off submitting his statistical

findings for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal for the time being, as he is currently looking for “difficult to find” control data from other wars.

When asked to offer guidance on how public officials and members of the media should preface Gaza Health Ministry-reported data, Wyner says that the qualifier “ Hamas-controlled ” is “not enough.”

He suggests “they add also that ‘the GHM’s numbers are often contradicted by its own media office ... and that it has historically over-counted civilians and under-counted fighters.’ I would also report (them alongside) Israel’s estimates of the number of Hamas fighters killed.”

This may be a mouthful, but it underscores just how irresponsible so many have been in repeating the Hamas-reported death count verbatim. Wyner’s statistical analysis gives us yet another reason to treat this number with skepticism.

National Post

Associated Press compromises itself with ongoing anti-Israel bias

Carson Jerema

COMMENT

Since Hamas murdered 1,200 people in southern Israel nearly five months ago, The Associated Press newswire service has made the choice to amplify the perspective of the terrorist organization, while painting Israel in as negative a light as possible. Its coverage of the war that was ignited by the attack frequently treats Hamas as the more reliable source, doing a disservice to readers looking for objective, fact-based journalism.

The Associated Press (AP) is immensely influential, with its reporting appearing in hundreds of news outlets around the world, including in National Post, reaching, they claim, four-billion people a day, making its clear and unequivocal anti-Israel bias a unique problem.

A particularly egregious example is how AP covered the story of 112 Palestinians who were killed during the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza City on Thursday. According to the Israel Defense Forces, most of the deaths were due to people being stampeded or run over, as they crowded aid trucks.

According to a Times of Israel report, the IDF says troops were ordered to fire warning shots, followed by shots at the legs of Palestinians “who moved toward soldiers and a tank at an IDF checkpoint, endangering soldiers.” Israeli forces say they killed up to 10 people as a result, but did not fire on the crowd generally.

Hamas, which has an obvious interest in Jews being perceived as bloodthirsty war criminals, blames

all the deaths on Israel and called it a “massacre.”

The basic facts of the deadly aid run are not in dispute, specifically that over 100 people died and that, at one point, Israeli soldiers opened fire. Associated Press updates throughout Thursday contained much of the same details as reporting from the Times of Israel, the Jerusalem Post, the Wall Street Journal and the London Daily Telegraph. What was different in the AP’s telling of events was how they were framed and the headlines their stories carried.

While it seems obvious that the Israeli version of events is more plausible than the Hamas version, all AP needed to do, at a minimum, was to frame the story as one where the cause of the deaths were in dispute.

Instead, it took the Hamas version of events as the plain truth.

Here is the headline from AP’s first story at 4 a.m. ET: “Strike on Palestinians Waiting for Aid in Gaza Kills and Wounds Dozens.” The only sources cited for the claim that a “strike,” implying a targeted attack, was launched against civilians, was “local hospital officials,” who didn’t even speak to AP, but to the unapologetically anti-Israel Al Jazeera network. Even so, AP asserted, without qualification, that a “strike” against “Palestinians waiting for aid” had occurred.

As more details emerged, AP pro-

vided its own reporting, but didn’t improve the framing. Here is the headline for an update at 1:21 p.m. ET: “Israeli Troops Fire on Crowd Seeking Food From Aid Convoy, Killing More Than 100 Palestinians.”

The headline asserts, without attribution and without acknowledging that the facts are contested, that Israel fired on the crowd and that it killed over 100 Gazans.

Anyone reading that headline, assuming they believed it, would be left with the impression that Israel targeted innocent civilians and fired directly on people who were just trying to get food. Indeed, the body of the story itself didn’t do much to give readers a sense that there were competing versions of what happened.

The first line of the story, what reporters call a lead, read: “Israeli troops fired on a large crowd of Palestinians racing to pull food off an aid convoy in Gaza City on Thursday, witnesses said.”

While the lead did include attribution — “witnesses said” — AP’s reporting was still framed as if Israel had committed an unambiguous war crime. The Israeli perspective was not included until the sixth paragraph, the only line in the 29-paragraph story where the Israeli point of view was presented.

This isn’t journalism. This isn’t holding Israel to account. This is Hamas propaganda, plain and simple.

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HAMAS
PROPAGANDA,
PLAIN AND
SIMPLE

COMMENT

Associated Press editors may point to the fact that they moderated their story eventually, changing the headline to, “Palestinians Say Israeli Troops Fired at People Seeking Food. Israel Says Scene Was Deadly Stampede,” and moving the Israeli version of events higher up. But that wouldn’t explain why that update, which came more than 12 hours after AP started reporting the story, took so long, or why AP asserted the Hamas perspective as the truth to begin with.

Hours earlier, at 8:42 a.m. ET, the Times of Israel carried the headline, “Dozens of Gazans Said Killed in Stampede for Aid; IDF Opens Fire, Blamed for Deaths,” with a later headline noting, “IDF says its fire caused no more than 10 casualties.”

Dismiss the Times as having a pro-Israeli bias if you want, but it acknowledged that the IDF fired on civilians in the headline, and it included the Hamas perspective, blaming Israel for all the deaths in the early headline, as well as the second paragraph of the story. The Times of Israel also included witness accounts of Israeli troops firing at Palestinians, just like the AP story did.

The main difference being, the Times sought to report what happened, including that facts were in dispute, whereas AP appeared keen to present the most anti-Israel version of events it could muster.

Other publications tried to offer as neutral a framing as possible. “Israeli Forces Fire on Palestinian Civilians Amid Aid Delivery Chaos,” read a truthful headline from the Wall Street Journal, for example.

It would be bad enough if the AP was just one among many news outlets covering the war, but its accounts are among the most widely read in the world. Hamas couldn’t ask for a better public relations team.

National Post



ARIS MESSINIS / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Why it feels safer to move my family to Israel

Joe Roberts

In the comforting safety of my own home, I sat down with my wife for our morning coffee recently. As our children played happily across the room, the atmosphere between us was sombre; the weight of the events of the past few weeks was palpable. Our conversation, though whispered, seemed to resound through the centuries, echoing the fears and uncertainties of countless Jewish families before us.

A shooting in Winnipeg the night before was a nightmare come to life. A Jewish home, just like ours, was singled out only because of the mezuzah on its door. The randomness of the whole thing smashed our sense of safety, leaving us afraid to be Jews in Can-

ada. It followed weeks of escalating antisemitism.

In the wake of the nihilistic violence perpetrated by Hamas on Oct. 7, we had expected an outpouring of support — of calls and texts from friends asking if we, and our loved ones in Israel, were OK. Instead, our friends, people we had shared laughs and memories with, were silent. On social media, some were even justifying and glorifying the atrocities.

Since that morning coffee, every day has brought more reasons to be concerned. At a Vancouver rally, Natalie Knight, a lecturer at Langara College, received a roaring applause for calling the murder of Israeli civilians “amazing” and “brilliant.”

Continued on the next page

Then came the horrific scenes of an attempted pogrom at a Russian airport. It was a stark reminder that anti-semitism isn't limited to a particular geography. Even Canada feels unsafe.

In a community that is within living memory of the Holocaust, the fear is palpable. A rabbi told me of a 90-year-old congregant who refuses to open his door to sign for deliveries for fear that pogromists have come for him. Some friends have kept their kids home from Jewish day school. A colleague's driveway was defaced with antisemitic graffiti. The list goes on and on.

Over coffee, my wife and I grappled with haunting questions: Is it safe for us here? Is it time to leave?

These are questions no one should ever have to ask, especially in the place they call home. Yet, for Jewish families, this isn't a new question. It's one that has echoed through the corridors of time, whispered in hushed tones by parents fearing for their children's future.

In that moment, it struck me that we were linked across space and time to generations of Jews.

Iraqi Jews of the late 1940s and early '50s, having faced the Farhud, and witnessing the mass expulsion of Jews from Arab countries, faced this dilemma.

So did the German Jews in the '30s, who were living in the shadow of the looming threat of Nazism and the Nuremberg laws

Russian Jews, whose ancestors witnessed vicious violence at the hands of the Cossacks, had to deal with waves of pogroms and state-sanctioned violence in the 19th century.

Spanish Jews in the 16th century, fearful of the Inquisition, surely had the same conversation.

This cycle of fear, hate and displacement seems as old as the diaspora itself, stretching back to when the Rom-

ans cast our ancestors out of the Land of Israel. This ancient hatred cruelly binds us to previous generations.

Even in 2023, in Canada, a nation celebrated for its diversity and tolerance, we find ourselves wrestling with the same anxieties and fears. The tapestry of our shared Jewish experience is woven with threads of resilience and determination, but also with the darker strands of persecution and hate.

Yet the calculus for modern Jews is altogether different than it was in the past. After millennia of exile to the far corners of this world, Israel is once again the homeland of the Jewish people.

History has taught us to be vigilant, to be prepared. While the violence of Oct. 7 remains fresh in our memories, many, like us, find solace in the thought that Israel might offer a safe haven.

Our young sons, both toddlers and oblivious to the world's complexities, radiate with pride in their Jewishness. Yet as parents, we are forced to wonder: how will the world treat them as they grow? Do we stay and fight for a better, more inclusive Canada for us and for them? Or do we seek safety in Israel, ensuring our children never have to hide their identity or be shamed or threatened for who they are?

According to a spokesperson for Nefesh B'Nefesh, a non-profit that facilitates Jewish immigration to Israel (aliyah), there has been "an unprecedented increase of over 100 per cent in aliyah applications since Oct. 7 in comparison to this same period in 2022." We are sadly one of them.

Everyone I've ever known who has made aliyah has done it out of love for Israel or to start a promising new life, not because of fear. But this too is the promise of Israel — a refuge for the Jewish people in a hostile world. Never

did I think that we'd be faced with making this kind of move out of fear for our safety, but Canadian Jews are afraid and we have every reason to be.

Having spent my life dedicated to building and championing the Jewish community in North America, I find myself vacillating wildly between staying to fight for it and fleeing to Israel — a country where safety is by no means guaranteed, as recent events have proved.

Jewish-Canadians are dealing with a double trauma: the horrors of Oct. 7, which left many of our friends and family members dead or taken hostage, and the betrayal by so many of our countrymen in Canada in the aftermath.

Our safety, our trust and our feeling of belonging has been shattered. But we cannot fight the evil of anti-semitism on our own. Even as the fourth-largest Jewish community in the world, our numbers total a mere 400,000 in Canada. We are simply not big enough to stand alone. We need all Canadians of moral fibre to stand with us.

When you see or hear something that feels antisemitic, it probably is. Say something. Call it out. Check in on your Jewish friends and neighbours, they are going through a lot right now and it's comforting to know there are people we can trust. Be proud and open about your support for our community. It feels so lonely at the moment. We need our allies to stand with us, in word and in deed.

We're in the process now of digging up old documents and filing out endless forms to give us the choice to leave if need be. Whether we ultimately decide to board a plane to Tel Aviv or stay to champion the Jewish future in Canada is uncertain, but one thing is clear: we will be ready, come what may.

National Post



A protester waves a Palestinian flag from a window of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

@MELISSALANTSMAN

COMMENT

How October 7 — and the left's reaction — made me a Zionist

Allan Stratton

Before Oct. 7, I was a typical '60s social democrat. Born shortly after the Holocaust, I grew up with Israel as a fact, not a dream, and considered ongoing Zionism an extremist project and the chief obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

Surely, Israel could return the territories it won during the Six-Day War in 1967. Surely, the Palestinians' homemade rocket attacks and recurring intefadehs (infinidades?) were a legally authorized resistance to occu-

pation. And surely, the grotesquely disproportionate civilian death tolls when Israel struck back were a stain on the conscience of humanity.

Oct. 7 changed that. It is a day and demarcation as seismic as 9/11. It wasn't just the gleeful depravity of the Hamas murders, rapes and burnings that changed the world. Or Hamas's barbarous use of Palestinian women and children as human shields and corpse propaganda. It was also the celebration of savagery by far-left intersectional apologists.

Anyone who doubts the Jewish

need for Israel, and the elimination of the death cult on its doorstep, is delusional. Look at the mobs attacking Canada's Jews, along with their gathering places and businesses. Listen to the words of union leaders, academics and politicians. Imagine being a Jew in a Canadian university, union or NGO, much less one wearing a yarmulke or a Star of David.

These aren't Israelis being targeted — they're Canadians. If Jews can't feel safe in a country as diverse and progressive as Canada, where can they feel safe? How can they not have a state devoted to their protection?

A Zionist believes in the necessity of a Jewish homeland. That necessity became obvious after millennia of global pogroms and ethnic cleansings that climaxed with the Holocaust. This included the purging of 900,000 indigenous Jews from their homes in Arab and Middle Eastern countries, who had been persecuted by Islamist movements like Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.

It is impossible to forget that history when we see Jew hate on our streets today. How can anyone fail to support Israel's fight for its existence, knowing what we know and seeing what we see? How can a decent person not be a Zionist?

After the Holocaust, Jews said, "Never again." Yet Hamas says, "Yes — again. And again and again for as long as it takes to wipe Jews from the face of the Earth." In this context, a call for a ceasefire that leaves Hamas in charge is a call to legitimize human shields and hostage-taking. It is support for genocide on an instalment plan.

Oct. 7 was a life-changing gut punch to liberals like me. It turned many of us into Zionists, including those once sympathetic to the Palestine Liberation Organization of Yasser Arafat.

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Protesters gather outside Ottawa City Hall just one day after the Oct. 7 attacks on Israel.

DAVE CHAN / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The sadistic bloodletting of Jews in the land of their birth shoved the horrors of the Holocaust in our faces.

Jews have a historic understanding of persecution and the inconstant nature of acceptance. It is therefore no surprise that they have played such an outsized role in the left's fight for social justice, participating in every major rights battle of the 20th century.

The lyrics to "Strange Fruit," the 1930s standard recorded by Billie Holiday that confronted America with its history of lynching, were written by Abel Meerpol, a Jewish writer from the Bronx. And during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, young Jews died as Freedom Riders.

Similarly, Jews like Betty Friedan, Bella Abzug and Gloria Steinem were at the forefront of the women's rights movement. And Jews like Frank Kameny, Larry Kramer and the martyred Harvey Milk led the fight for gay liberation.

That's what makes the betrayal by today's intersectional feminists, union leaders and "queer" movements disgusting. They're happy to erase Israel, the one Middle Eastern nation that defends gay rights, in fa-

vour of the theocratic despots who throw us from their rooftops. By the way, 93 per cent of Arabs in East Jerusalem prefer the area to be governed by Israel, rather than the Palestinian Authority.

The overt antisemitism of the illiberal woke ought to shame anyone in Alphabetland who knows their history. We share a bond: Jews and LGBs and Ts have been hated around the world for millennia and made the subject of blood libels involving children.

Sometimes we have been lulled into complacency. Before the Second World War, there were thriving Jewish and LGBT communities in Berlin. That ended under Nazi persecution: Jews were forced to wear the Star of David; gay men were forced to wear the pink triangle. We died together in the gas chambers.

That horror ended, but the hate didn't. Decades into my lifetime, our communities were both denied housing and jobs. (Outside the West, we continue to be forced to live in the shadows, or risk beatings and murder.)

On Halloween in the late 1960s, I was corralled by my housemates in university residence to see the drag

queens entering St. Charles Tavern, a gay bar in Toronto. We ended up behind police barricades in a mob that threw eggs and screamed obscenities and death threats. It was traumatic. So was being chased down Toronto's Bathurst Street in the 1970s by a gang wielding hockey sticks.

Consequently, it takes little imagination for me to know how terrifying it must be for Jews to hear crowds chant, "From the river to the sea," and to face a wave of antisemitic attacks that could strike any of them at any moment.

I urge non-Jews to show the same empathy we would expect for ourselves. How would we like to be denied the right to self-defence? How would we like to be falsely accused of genocide? How would we feel, and what would we demand, if not a single country in the history of the world had ever provided us sanctuary?

Put yourself in the shoes of the Jewish diaspora and you may discover the Zionist within.

National Post

Allan Stratton is the internationally award-winning author of Chanda's Secrets and The Dogs.

THE UNSHAKABLE TRAUMA OF THE KFAR AZA MASSACRE

Vivian Bercovici
in Kfar Aza, Israel

Chen Kotler stands before a group of six visitors, twisting. Her hands turn nervously around her forearms, as if she's unscrewing a bottle top.

Kotler stands in a shady area at the entrance to the kibbutz where she was born and lived until Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists ravaged her community. Sixty-two of the approximately 750 residents of Kibbutz Kfar Aza were murdered. Eighteen were taken hostage.

A sprite of a woman, Kotler is anxious. I'm assuming that she is utterly transformed from the person she was on Oct. 6, when she was in Portugal enjoying a short holiday with her sister.

She awakened early on Oct. 7 to the incomprehensible news of a form of madness that no one quite understood. Hamas bombarded Israel with thousands of rockets and breached the border at approximately 30 points.

It is believed that up to 3,000 terrorists fanned out across southern Israel in an orgy of murder, torture, gang rape, arson, looting and hostage-taking. It took the Israel Defense Forces nearly three days to clear Kfar Aza of all the terrorists. In some areas, the battles carried on for longer.

Kotler's home is next to the kibbutz armoury. Had she not been abroad, she would surely have been among the dead. The very first, in fact.

Hamas terrorists knew exactly



ROB ROBERTS / NATIONAL POST

COMMENT

where the weapons were stored and made that their first stop at every kibbutz they attacked. They were also well-informed as to where kibbutz security officers resided and targeted them next. Then they were able to make their way through the kibbutz, methodically and sadistically slaughtering helpless civilians.

In one besieged home, the mother of 10-month-old twins dashed from the family's safe room to warm up formula bottles. She was shot dead by a Hamas sniper. Moments later, her husband emerged to help. He, too, was murdered.

For the next 10 hours, the baby girls wailed. The Hamas terrorist seemed to enjoy his perch, from which he murdered all who dared to attempt to rescue the babies. Eventually, it was understood that anyone who tried to save them would die.

Meanwhile, the sniper's comrades spread out and headed to the area where young adults lived.

"We call this 'Death Alley' now," Kotler explains, gesturing towards rows of simple homes, cordoned off with hazard tape and spray painted with various codes and symbols. The information indicates the dates on which the dwelling had been inspected by the military.

The fate of the occupants is also noted. Murdered. Missing. Taken hostage.

One woman, 30-year-old Doron Steinbrecher, has been held hostage by Hamas since Oct. 7. In a recent video, she sat alongside two young women who have also been held captive for four months now. In an interview that aired on Israeli television, Steinbrecher's mother said that it was so reassuring to see her daughter alive, but devastating to see her condition.

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Steinbrecher appeared gaunt and pale, likely having been caged in an underground tunnel with no light. Hostages have been starved, given little water, no medicine and kept in unsanitary conditions. We know from multiple testimonies given by the hostages released in November that the young women are raped, repeatedly.

Testifying recently before a Knesset committee, former hostage Aviva Siegel — whose 64 year-old husband, Keith, remains in captivity — spoke of a woman who was held captive with her. After a trip to the bathroom, the young 21-year-old returned sullen and withdrawn. When Siegel tried to comfort her, the guard — who had raped her — forbade it.

Such occurrences were common, Siegel testified, saying that the young women are treated like puppets by the Hamas guards. They brought “inappropriate” clothing for them to put on, lingerie and the like. They pulled all the strings and had them do whatever they pleased.

Another young hostage who was released in November, 21-year-old Maya Regev, spoke of the Hamas guards taking everything from her, including her identity. Speaking to a group of United Nations ambassadors visiting Israel last week, she told them that the terrorists ripped her clothes off. They tore out her earrings and gave her a new, Arabic name. And sometimes, for laughs, they would beat her badly injured foot. They seemed to enjoy watching her writhe in pain.

Earlier this week, I was speaking with a friend who met with the parents of a young female hostage. Should their daughter not be released imminently, they are terrified that, on top of all the existing horror and trauma, if she is pregnant, an abortion may not be possible. Based



ALEXI J. ROSENFELD / GETTY IMAGES

A house left in ruins by Hamas in Kfar Aza, Israel.

on testimonies, it is believed that several female captives are pregnant.

Kotler invites our small group to the expansive covered porch outside her home. She is elsewhere, for a moment, smiling and recalling better days when she hosted large gatherings there.

The day before, she says she spent hours cleaning and scrubbing the porch and bathroom, trying to “get rid of them.” We sit down, briefly, and everything feels ugly.

I wonder how one can ever return to live in such a place. But I dare not ask.

Yet Kotler begins to explain, unbidden, that she wants to return to her home. She has been living in a lovely condo in the central city of Herzliya that was provided by a friend. “I have been in more eleva-

tors in the last few months than in my entire life and I hate it,” she says.

But she is afraid to sleep in her own home, surrounded by silence and death. Trying to scrub Hamas from her porch was a step. She thought it might help. But nothing can blot out the horror of the savagery.

As our small group says goodbye to Kotler, she begins to get flustered. She has spent too long with us and another group is waiting. It is also her birthday. Upon receiving well wishes, she says, “I don’t know what it is to be happy anymore. That feeling. I don’t know if I ever will.”

National Post

Vivian Bercovici is a former Canadian ambassador to Israel and the founder of the State of Tel Aviv.



An Israeli tank on the Gaza border on March 19.

ARIEL SCHALIT / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COMMENT

Israel must stop gambling and start winning

Barbara Kay

The bitter harvest of then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's fateful 2004 decision to send 55,000 soldiers to remove 8,000 settlers from Gaza, Israel's largest military operation since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, has achieved full bloom. The toll of Hamas' deadly incursion into Israel amounts to some 700 dead (far exceeding America's death-to-population ratio of 9/11), 2,300 injured and an estimated 100 kidnapped. Images of the invaders freely wreaking havoc for hours stunned the world, eliciting unprecedented sympathy and support for Israel from world leaders, including, thankfully, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

How could such a monumental intelligence failure occur? Israel's security services have reliable informers in Gaza. Every call there from a mobile phone is routed through an Israeli network. The barrier separating Israel from Gaza — a costly mixture of concrete slabs and metal fencing with implanted sensors — was apparently easily breached or paraglided over without alarm bells ringing. Given the still-haunting experience of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, this security cropper is unfathomable. Particularly since trustworthy experts, such as Yigal Carmon, the founder and president of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), predicted the gruesome scenario in precise, evi-

dence-based detail back in August.

But these are questions for the commission that will be struck when this war is over. It cannot be — hopefully won't be — a war like the others. There must be a definitive end to Hamas' rule. There can never be peace with committed jihadists.

Ariel Sharon was convinced that withdrawal from Gaza was a gamble worth taking. In 2004 he told the Knesset, "I am firmly convinced and truly believe that this disengagement ... will be appreciated by those near and far, reduce animosity, break through boycotts and sieges and advance us along the path of peace with the Palestinians."

Continued on the next page

He took the gamble in good faith that the occupation was the problem, but Israel lost, because the occupation wasn't the problem. Jews, whether they lived inside or alongside Gaza, were the problem.

Israel's first and biggest mistake was accepting the election of Hamas to power in 2005. Over the next 15 years, Israel would find that defence against Hamas' aggression worked to increase the terrorist group's prestige amongst Palestinians and their allies in the West, while restraint in responding, taken by Arabs (not to mention Iran) as a sign that Israel was scared, also increased its stature.

In none of the subsequent wars — Cast Lead, 2008; Operation Pillar of Defense, 2012; Operation Protective Edge, 2014; border protests (featuring children) 2018-19; Operation Guardians of the Wall, 2021 — did Hamas respect ceasefires Israel was pressured into accepting. Israel lost the PR battle, failing to elicit sympathy or understanding in all but a few western media and governments, mainly the U.S. and Canada, and even there, with diminishing enthusiasm. Israel was routinely accused of “disproportionate” response in killings, (i.e not enough Jews died), even when they gave advance warnings of air attacks, and even when it was known that more Gazans than Israelis die in such conflicts because the concrete Gaza receives in “humanitarian” aid is used for terror tunnels rather than the bomb shelters to which every Israeli has rapid access.

An Israeli sodleir prays stand-

ing in front of a Merkava tank on the outskirts of the northern town of Kiryat Shmona near the border with Lebanon on Oct. 8, 2023.

And yet, stubbornly, leftist Israeli politicians never abandoned the delusion that somehow they would “manage the conflict,” until an accommodation could be found with terrorists who have no interest in peace or a two-state solution, and whose openly stated objective has always been delegitimation of Israel (and worse to Jews). The delusion could be sustained when Hamas only

had primitive five-kilogram rockets with a five-kilometre range at its disposal. But it cannot when, in spite of the Iron Dome, whose capacities are not limitless, all Israel is targeted, with warheads of up to 100 kilograms.

Indeed, as Martin Sherman, founder of the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies and veteran of the Israeli defence establishment, writes, “(O)ne can hardly dismiss as implausible the spectre of Israel being subjected, in the not-too-distant future, to attack by a swarm of drones armed with explosive, or worse, unconventional charges. Disturbingly, if the terrorist infrastructures in Gaza are left intact, there is little reason to believe that such a scenario, or an equally harrowing one, will not materialize.”

Another consideration is the strong possibility that this extra-

ordinary trauma will be the final straw for stalwart residents who have endured 20 years of “ordinary” trauma, retreating from the already thinly populated Negev. The choice is stark, but at least, finally, clear. In Sherman's words: “(A)t the end of the day, (Israel) must face a regrettable but unavoidable dilemma: Eventually there will either be Arabs in Gaza or Jews in the Negev. In the long term, there will not be both.”

The iron is hot. The strike must be as well. Gaza should be viewed through the same lens as Japan in the Second World War: a nation in thrall to a regime of fanatics prepared to sustain endless combat and innumerable deaths rather than surrender or even negotiate terms with a hated enemy. Thankfully, Israel has no need of the nuclear option to vanquish Hamas. A massive conventional operation will achieve that objective.

Above all, Israel must disregard the famous Arab “street” (now more active in North America and Europe than in the increasingly muted Arab world) which gives the false impression that ordinary Palestinians approve of Hamas' debilitating, hysterical reign. During Cast Lead, former Israeli ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren writes, “After grilling me for minutes about alleged Israeli war crimes, a Palestinian

reporter for an Arabic-language station pulled me aside and whispered, ‘Whatever you do, don't stop until you've annihilated Hamas.’” That was in 2009. Stop gambling. Start winning.

National Post

ISRAEL'S BIGGEST MISTAKE WAS ACCEPTING THE ELECTION OF HAMAS TO POWER

GAZA SHOULD BE VIEWED THROUGH THE SAME LENS AS JAPAN IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR



The site of the Nova music festival.

OHAD ZWIGENBERG / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The shocking toll of October 7 sexual brutalities

Adrian Humphreys

In normal times, said Orit Sulitzeanu, the work she does as executive director of the Association of Rape Crises Centers in Israel means fighting frustrating silence about sexual violence.

“When you work in rape crisis centres your job is to see and acknowledge horrific things done to people and, without acknowledgment, these people live and suffer horribly because society around them prefers to close their eyes and not see these horrific things.

“To break the code of silence, you must say yes, it happened, and you

acknowledge and help the survivors, you put the blame on the perpetrators. This is the regular work when you work in the field of sexual violence.

“But since the 7th of October, we found ourselves in another world.”

In the aftermath of the deadly Hamas terror attacks in southern Israel, Sulitzeanu said, she unexpectedly sees that struggle against silence reflected on the world stage, with people ignoring or denying that sexual violence was an integral part of the attacks.

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In the aftermath of the deadly Hamas terror attacks in southern Israel, Sulitzeanu said, she unexpectedly sees that struggle against silence reflected on the world stage, with people ignoring or denying that sexual violence was an integral part of the attacks.

“What Israel is now facing is what a woman usually is facing,” Sulitzeanu said. “Usually a woman faces she-said, he-said. What Israel is now facing is people saying it never happened.”

Ahead of International Women’s Day, marked on March 8, a renewed push by prominent women offers a deeper analysis and assessment of the evidence of sexual violence in the surprise attacks in Israel, despite the strain of uncovering truth in two of the most challenging circumstances: war and rape.

“Everybody in Israel and all the media around the world wants to find survivors. It’s like an obsession in Israel. What happened in this hor-



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Protesters accuse the UN of ignoring sex crimes by Hamas at a protest in New York in December.

rible massacre was the Hamas terrorists were very efficient. They managed to kill most of the women they abused and raped,” said Sulitzeanu.

“However, there are (rape) survivors in Israel. There are survivors, I know that. I don’t know how many, I know about a few and there are probably more than I know. The survivors are undercover. They don’t want to be known and they really want to take care of themselves.

“It will take time. Maybe it will take a year, maybe five years, maybe 10 years. One day, maybe, someone will be able to tell a story that they can’t tell now.”

The crisis is hardly over. There are 19 women missing after Hamas took hostages back into Gaza, 14 of them are believed to still be alive in captivity. There are grim fears about what they are facing. Some of their families, the Israeli government, and others make clear they fear the worst. Evidence suggests it might be.

Sulitzeanu’s association released its report on Feb. 21, called “Silent Cry.” It catalogued, categorized, and analyzed both first-hand information and previously published accounts.

“When you see the big picture,” Sulitzeanu said of the attacks, “you see it was intended, planned, directed sexual abuse. It was not sporadic. My job is not to be political. We do not represent the official authorities of the country. I don’t have to do propaganda,” she said.

Ruth Halperin-Kaddari is an Israeli lawyer specializing in international women’s rights who spent 12 years on the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. She said evidence of sex crimes by Hamas in the attack on Israel is mounting, despite a campaign of denial.

“I believe the world has not given enough attention ... to this part of the Hamas attack and the atrocities and the crimes against humanity that were committed against Israel,” she said.

A woman holds a poster of an Israeli woman hostage during a rally by the Rome Jewish community in support of Israeli women, on the eve of International Women’s Day, on March 7, 2024.

Halperin-Kaddari said she has had access to investigative materials by the Israel Defense Forces and Israeli police.

“I can say that there is ample evidence and indications based on firsthand eyewitness testimonies, based on first responders testimonies, and footage and pictures that were taken in collecting the bodies, based on the workers at the morgue, based on conversations that I have had with therapists who treat survivors of sexual assault, and based on information that has been given from hostages that returned from Hamas captivity — based on all this — I can say that sexual violence and gender atrocities were a systematic part of the attack on October 7.”

Continued on the next page

There were patterns to the violence in multiple locations that were attacked by Hamas and other fighters, she said, which dismiss the idea that sexual abuse was isolated or incidental to the attack.

“When taken together it is proof, in my perspective from a legal point of view, that it could not have been sporadic incidents initiated by unorganized attackers. It could not have taken place had it not been part of a preconceived plan.”

She also said some women survived sex attacks during the raids but are living in pain and uncertainty.

“(Hamas was) successful in leaving little living evidence, in the sense of murdering their victims. That was part of their plan to silence them forever.

“I do know that there are a few survivors. They are totally unable to speak, as yet, and there’s no way of knowing whether they will ever be able to speak, but the fact is that right now we do not have women or men who come forward and testify for themselves as survivors.”

Another challenge, they said, was the scale and chaos of the scenes.

Irene Nurith Cohn is a volunteer with ZAKA, a national, non-governmental emergency victim recovery organization in Israel. Its mandate is to ensure Jewish victims are buried in accordance with Jewish religious law. Almost all members are men and most Orthodox Jews. Cohn is a rare woman in the organization, mainly because she has special skills as an experienced scuba diver. Usually she deals with tragedy underwater.

“We are always on the scene after something really bad happens — car crashes, earthquakes, terrorist attacks,” she said. “According to Judaism, it is very important to recover every part of the body, even the blood, and to bury people as quick as possible.”

Cohn came south to help in the recovery about a week after the Oct. 7 attacks, and joined a team that was still collecting body parts and clearing houses. The first pass through the kibbutzim and other areas that were attacked was a desperate search for victims, to identify bodies of the dead for burial, and to help determine who was taken hostage.

ZAKA workers then made a second pass through the houses and cars to collect any remaining body parts, tissue or blood, she said.

“We went through the houses, which was a very complex mission, and the scenes were horrific,” Cohn said. “You had time to think and learn what had happened there, and each house had a story.

“You could see, you could see what had happened there, even after the bodies were removed and you know it was horrific. They were in situations where it was impossible for your mind to get around the cruelty. It was terrible. I’ve seen heads. I’ve seen a leg, an arm. I found in one of the cars some front teeth. I found a piece of a skull.

“And a lot, a lot, a lot of blood. A lot of blood. One of the houses, I remember that we walked in and you could see a river of blood, like somebody

had dragged somebody across the floor. Maybe he was kidnapped, or she, I don’t know.

“There were many bodies of the terrorists, and we also took care of those bodies. I saw one of the bodies of the terrorist and he was naked from the waist down. You can only imagine why he would be without his trousers when we speak of what they did to the women.”

Sulitzeanu said rape crisis workers wish the civilian volunteers of ZAKA had the time and resources to gather evidence as they gathered the bodies.

“They didn’t understand what they were seeing. They didn’t see the big picture and so it was total chaos at the time. They didn’t treat this as a crime scene, only as a terror attack place. Therefore, none of the things were done that are usually done when there’s a crime scene, like take photos, try to collect evidence.

“In war, who deals with rape kits?”

Halperin-Kaddari, the lawyer, agreed the scale of devastation and priorities of first responders make it harder to gather evidence.

“There is no forensic evidence in the traditional sense of the word, in terms of examinations,” Halperin-Kaddari said. “This adds to this campaign of denial ... the extremely sinister and sophisticated denial campaign by Hamas, with its allies Russia and China.”

Halperin-Kaddari was in Canada this week, attending a conference hosted by the Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism.

While she was in Toronto, a meeting was being convened at the United Nations in New York, on Monday. Pramila Patten, the UN’s Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, publicly revealed her findings after an official mission to Israel.

Continued on the next page

“THEY DIDN’T
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Patten and nine technical specialists spent 17 days gathering information about the Oct. 7 attacks and the aftermath. The team included a forensic pathologist and others with expertise in medical and forensic information, analysis of open source and digital information, and ethical interviewing of victims and witnesses of sexual violence.

They met with health and social services officials, military, police, and intelligence officers, and interviewed 34 other people, including survivors and witnesses of the terror attacks, released hostages, first responders, and families and relatives of hostages still held in captivity. The UN team visited sites and reviewed about 5,000 photos and 50 hours of video footage of the attacks, Patten said.

Patten faced the same hurdle as Sulitzeanu and Halperin-Kaddari. Despite making a public plea on her first day in Israel for survivors to speak with her, none came forward, and she too left without a first-hand survivor account. But Patten confirmed there are living rape victims.

“A handful of them were receiving specialized trauma treatment and were too traumatized to speak,” Patten said.

Even so, there was enough evidence for the UN to make several findings. Her 23-page report uses various standards of proof, like in the court system, to evaluate the level of evidence supporting her conclusions.

“There are reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across Gaza periphery, including rape and gang rape, in at least three

locations,” the UN report says.

“Across the various locations of the 7 October attacks, the mission team found that several fully naked or partially naked bodies from the waist down were recovered — mostly women — with hands tied and shot multiple times, often in the head. Although circumstantial, such a pattern of undressing and restraining of victims may be indicative of some forms of sexual violence.”

There were “reasonable grounds to believe” that victims at the Nova music festival were killed after — or while — being raped or gang raped, the UN report says.

“On Road 232, credible information based on witness accounts describe an incident of the rape of two women by armed elements. Other reported instances of rape could not

be verified in the time allotted. The mission team also found a pattern of bound naked or partially naked bodies from the waist down, in some cases tied to structures including trees and poles.

“In kibbutz Re’im, the mission team further verified an incident of the rape of a woman outside of a bomb shelter and heard of other allegations of rape that could not yet be verified.”

There was “circumstantial evidence” to support sexual violence at kibbutz Kfar Aza, “as female victims were found fully or partially naked to the waist down with their hands tied behind their backs and shot.

“In the Nahal Oz military base, the mission team reviewed reports of sexual violence including a case of rape and genital mutilation, neither of which could be verified. With respect to the latter instance, while the

forensic analysis reviewed injuries to intimate body parts, no discernible pattern could be identified, against either female or male soldiers. However, seven female soldiers were abducted from this base into Gaza.”

The UN team found some incidents previously reported were “unfounded due to either new superseding information or inconsistency in the facts gathered,” including an account from kibbutz Be’eri of a pregnant woman having her womb opened and her fetus stabbed while still inside her.

The strongest level evidence supporting sex abuse by Hamas fighters related to the hostages taken during the attacks.

“The mission team found clear and convincing information that some have been subjected to various forms of conflict-related sexual violence including rape and sexualized torture and sexualized cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and it also has reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing,” the report says.

Patten said she could not provide more details on sexual abuse of hostages for privacy reasons.

Hamas has denied involvement in sex assaults during its attacks and of mistreating female hostages. It also rejected the findings of the UN report.

Patten’s report, including confidential information that is not in the public report, was submitted to the UN Secretary General, António Guterres.

Sulitzeanu, Halperin-Kaddari, and Cohn all said they hope the world will listen to the evidence.

“They still can condemn our politicians, you know, that’s OK,” said Sulitzeanu, “but don’t erase the sadistic brutalities of what the Hamas did.”

“A HANDFUL
OF THEM
WERE ... TOO
TRAUMATIZED
TO SPEAK

COMMENT

The UNRWA teachers who killed Jews have fans in Canada

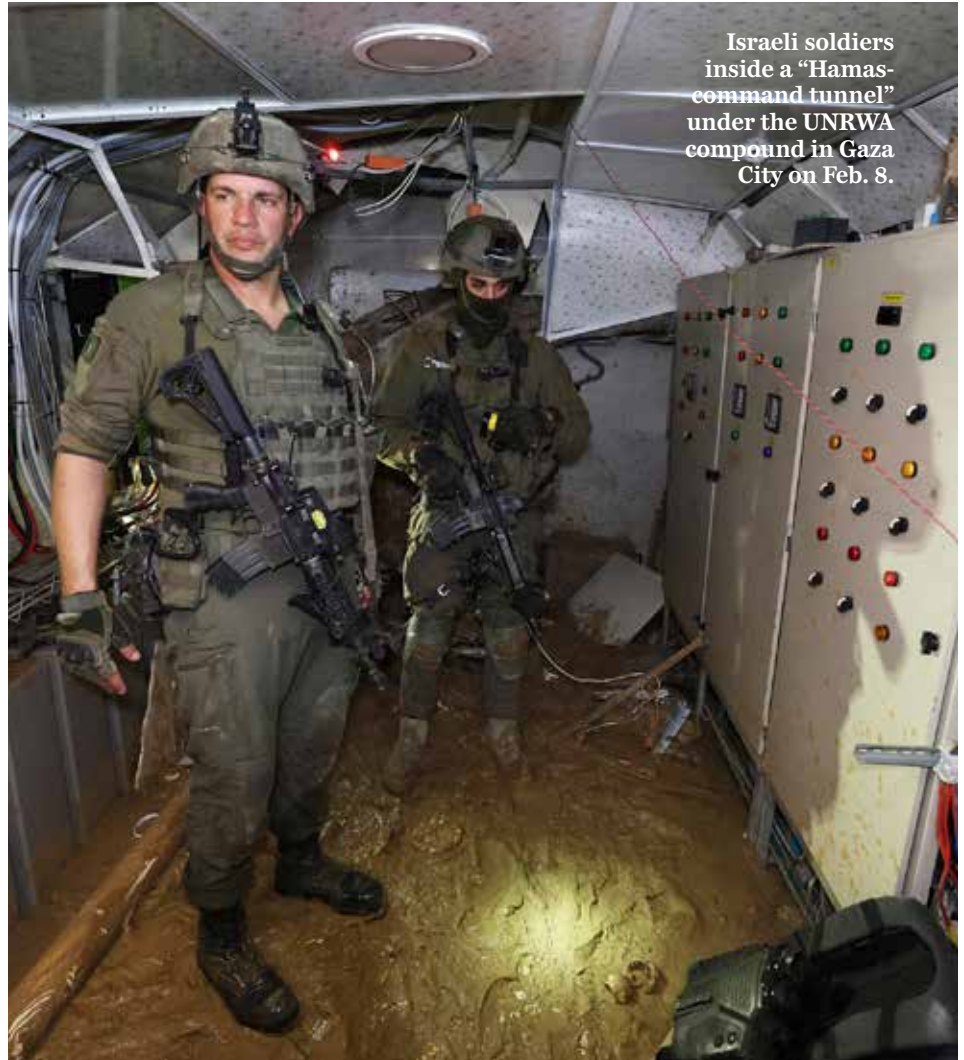
Jesse Kline

The Israel-Hamas war has exposed an education system that promotes hate and glorifies violence — not only in the Palestinian territories, but right here in Canada.

In late January, UNRWA, the United Nations agency responsible for ensuring Palestinians remain in a perpetual state of refugeehood, announced that it had fired several staff members after Israel provided credible evidence that they had participated in the Oct. 7 massacre. This prompted numerous countries, including Canada, to pause funding to the agency.

Subsequent reporting revealed that 12 staff members are under investigation, nine of whom work for UNRWA schools, including seven teachers. Unfortunately, this should not come as a surprise.

The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) — a non-profit with offices in Israel and the United Kingdom that analyzes textbooks and curricula from around the world to judge their adherence to values expressed by the United Nations — has been exposing the hateful content taught in UNRWA schools for over 20 years.



Israeli soldiers inside a “ Hamas-command tunnel” under the UNRWA compound in Gaza City on Feb. 8.

JACK GUEZ / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Part of the problem is that UNRWA teaches the Palestinian Authority’s hate-filled curriculum in the West Bank and Gaza. But UNRWA teachers and staff do produce their own supplementary teaching and study materials, which IMPACT-se found to be rife with antisemitism, along with “calls for martyrdom, violence and jihad.”

Examples include an Arabic reading assignment for Grade 9 students that references a bus bombing, calling it a “barbecue party ... with fire-bombs on one of the buses of the colonial settlement,” and a Grade 5 Arabic language summary that venerates terrorists as “heroes.”

In a March 2023 report, IMPACT-se documented 133 UNRWA staff who had posted antisemitic statements and incitements to violence on social media.

Its latest report on UNRWA schools, released in the wake of Hamas’s terror attack, details how “13 UNRWA staff members have publicly praised, celebrated or expressed their support for the unprecedented deadly assaults on civilians on 7 October.”

The results speak for themselves. “By Hamas’ own admission,” writes IMPACT-se, “more than 100 UNRWA graduates have become active Hamas terrorists.”

Continued on the next page

Given the well-documented history of UNRWA teachers inculcating their students with hate, it's amazing that Canada and many of its allies continued to fund the agency for as long as they did. And whether the withheld funds will be used to pressure it into making substantive changes, or if the money will be quietly restored once the controversy dies down, very much remains to be seen.

Yet it's not only in the Palestinian territories that instructors have been promoting hatred against Jews, glorifying violence and teaching skewed accounts of history. It's happening right here at home.

In November, a high school principal in Brampton, Ont., reframed a story about rising antisemitism as "anti-Zionism" having "skyrocketed in the wake of the Israel-led genocide in Palestine."

In December, Jewish educators told the National Post about a culture of antisemitism within Ontario's Peel District School Board. This included a principal who was tweeting anti-Israel messages that were displayed in the school foyer and a union representative assigned to help Jewish teachers who also made false claims about Israel being an "apartheid state" and committing "genocide."

And the problem only gets worse in our institutes of higher learning. On Oct. 7, as Hamas terrorists were indiscriminately slaughtering civilians in their homes and violently raping partygoers at a music festival, Safia Aidid, a professor at the University of Toronto, tweeted her "solidarity with the Palestinian people, today and everyday."

Her colleague, Prof. Uahikea Maile, also dismissed the bloodshed and called for people to "stand behind" Hamas's act of "anticolonial resistance." The next day, another U



MUSA AL SHAERMUSA AL SHAER / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

The UN also runs schools in the West Bank, including this one near Bethlehem.

of T professor, Girish Daswani, characterized "what is happening to Palestine" as a result of "settler colonialism, genocide and fascism."

Later that month, a professor at the University of British Columbia encouraged students to skip class to "participate in the global protest against the Palestinian genocide."

This stream of false anti-Israel and anti-Jewish narratives from university professors, students and education unions has not let up ever since.

Natalie Knight, an instructor at Langara College in Vancouver, was suspended in November for publicly calling the Oct. 7 massacre an "amazing, brilliant offensive" at a pro-Palestinian rally. She was later reinstated by the college, only to be fired earlier this week for violating the school's stipulation that she "take care to ensure any future remarks could not reasonably be interpreted as celebrating violence against civilians."

Last week, a working group within CUPE local 3903, the union repre-

senting contract and part-time faculty at York University — a school with such a heavy Jewish presence that it used to close on the high holidays but has now morphed into an epicentre of antisemitism — circulated a "tool kit" to teaching assistants, calling on them to hijack classes of all disciplines to teach a biased account of the Israel-Palestine conflict and denounce the "Zionist Israeli state."

On Sunday, Ghada Sasa, a teaching assistant and PhD candidate at McMaster University, put out a lengthy tweet suggesting that countries were halting funding to UNRWA because "Zionists vaguely linked it to Oct. 7," an event she celebrates as the "day that Palestinians broke through their open-air prison."

The list goes on, but I'm sure you get the point. It should be clear to all that there is an anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias within our education system, particularly in our institutes of higher learning.

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JACK GUEZ / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

It's little wonder that numerous polls have found sharp divisions over Middle Eastern politics between older and younger people. A Mainstreet Research poll in November, for example, found that only 10.6 per cent of Canadians over the age of 65 disapprove of Canada's support for Israel, but that number jumps to 26.4 per cent among those aged 18 to 34.

An Angus Reid poll similarly found that while nine per cent of Canadian women over 55 say their "sympathies rest more with" the Palestinians, that number jumps to 35 per cent among women aged 18-34, who now dominate our universities.

It's not a stretch to suggest that this division is happening because of the biased narratives that are being taught in schools. To their credit, af-

ter a group of MPs sent letters to 27 university presidents asking if calling for the genocide of Jews violates their codes of conduct, all of them said that it does.

But the students making such calls are only following the lead of their professors, and universities have not committed to auditing their classes to ensure unbiased accounts of historic and contemporary world events are being taught to the next generation of professors, activists and political leaders.

I'm all for academic freedom, but we have heard too many stories of instructors bringing their skewed narratives into the classroom. This should not be tolerated by institutions that are supposed to be dedicated to seeking the truth and creat-

ing productive members of society who are capable of taking in divergent views and thinking about them critically, not mindless automatons who are instilled with illiberal values and refuse to give opposing viewpoints a fair hearing.

If the past few days have taught us anything, it's that the Gazan population has been so infused with hate that even its school teachers were willing to lead the charge into Israel to slaughter innocent babies and kidnap helpless children. And in Canada, too many of our professors wish they could have joined them.

None of this bodes particularly well for future generations, who are being indoctrinated with hate and misinformation.

National Post



ARIEL SCHALIT / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A poster with pictures of revellers murdered at the Nova music festival is placed in front of the Knesset in Jerusalem on Feb. 7.

EDITORIAL

Pro-Hamas puppet masters behind 'pro-Palestinian' protests

It is six months since the poisonous ideology that is the political and terrorist entity Hamas murdered, butchered, raped, gang raped, mutilated, tortured, burnt, and desecrated innocent civilians in Israel.

Hamas also kidnapped more than 250 people on Oct. 7. More than 130 are still captive, a key reason why a ceasefire in Gaza has not yet been achieved. Kidnapping civilians is a war crime under the Geneva Convention, but the United Nations, like

large parts of the world, including Canada, prefers to concentrate on other matters.

Part of the reason for this shift in priorities can be attributed to the pro-Palestinian protest movement, which is mostly pro-Hamas, anti-Israel and antisemitic, and which has hijacked the political discussion so that Palestinians as victims and Gaza as an occupied territory are seen as absolute truths. Neither are true, but truth isn't what matters.

What matters politically is to control the narrative, to convince people of the cause and to suppress opposing voices. Nothing is more important than the message.

Since Oct. 7, the voices of those crying out for justice for murdered Israelis have been drowned out by protesters who have seduced the naive public into believing that Hamas is a legitimate government, that Israel is to blame for the current war and that Jews are to be despised.

The persecution of the Jews throughout world history has been well documented, but after the Holocaust it must surely have been felt that antisemitism had been dealt a fatal blow.

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Yet, here we are in 2024, in Canada, a country that prides itself on multiculturalism and compassion, with Jew hatred not only at an all time high, but masking itself in legitimate protest.

There have been hundreds of supposedly pro-Palestinian protests around the country and few arrests. But that speaks more to the tolerance we have for free expression, even when it veers into hate, and a police response that has been mostly passive unless things become violent.

In another context, advocating for genocide against a specific people and calling for an armed uprising might well provoke a police reaction.

Arrests might also be expected if demonstrators were specifically intimidating and harassing a particular religious group.

Jews have been the target of all these things. Chants of “intifada” and signs urging Palestinian freedom “From the river to the sea” have become all too common in Jewish neighbourhoods.

No one should be under any illusion that these tactics and protests are a spontaneous outpouring of support for Gazans.

These demonstrations are well-planned, orchestrated by organizations with an anti-Israel and anti-semitic bias, and lead by terrorist sympathizers.

The Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM), that purports to be “a transnational, independent, grassroots movement of young Palestinians in Palestine and in exile worldwide,” is one of the biggest organizers of protests. It was this group that shortly after the horrors of Oct. 7 glorified the Palestinian “martyrs” and called the attack “Palestinian resistance.”

The PYM was also cited by the Anti-Defamation League as promoting “classic antisemitic themes on so-



HATEM ALI / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hamas terrorists celebrate the capture of an Israeli senior from the Kfar Aza kibbutz on Oct. 7.

cial media” and supporting “terror against Israel.”

The PYM supports the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a banned terror group in Canada, as well as Leila Khaled, one of the PFLP leaders, who is well-known for hijacking two jets.

It was the PYM who blockaded the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto last month, forcing the closing of an event featuring Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Italian counterpart, Giorgia Meloni.

Another major protest organizer is Samidoun, a group that has praised Hamas’ “resistance” for massacring Israelis as well as supporting the kidnapping of civilians. It is banned in Germany for supporting terrorists. It has also been accused of serving as an affiliate for the PFLP.

With organizations like these behind Canada’s provocative pro-Palestinian protests it is not surprising that the rallies often descend into hate and intimidation. The organizers are able to dupe people into supporting them by cloaking their real motives behind a purported desire to help Gazans.

And clouding the issues and motivations like this can lead some people to say stupid things.

In the House of Commons last

month, NDP MP Brian Masse insinuated that the fight against anti-semitism in Canada wasn’t going to be tackled “until there’s a ceasefire” in Gaza. He probably didn’t mean to give the green light for anti-Semites to attack Jews, but he certainly didn’t help matters.

Masse later apologized and acknowledged that antisemitism was rising in Canada.

Trudeau has also been guilty of equivocating on this matter. The prime minister is never able to denounce antisemitism without also condemning Islamophobia.

But there is a difference.

It’s Jewish synagogues, shops and schools that are being firebombed and shot at, not mosques and Muslim institutions.

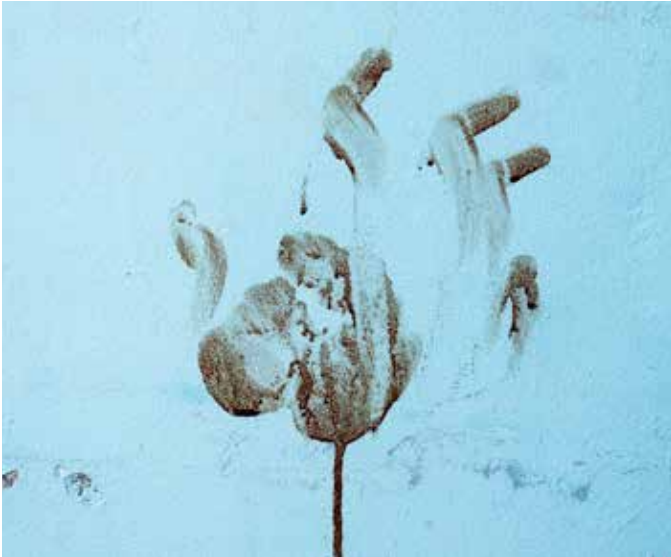
It’s Jewish neighbourhoods where loud, angry protests are being staged to intimidate and frighten residents.

When hospitals and university buildings are targeted it’s because they have links to the Jewish community.

We can’t tackle the scourge of antisemitism unless we call it out for what it is, without equivocation and without being blind to the true intent of protests still happening on our streets.

National Post

This has just been a sampling of the content available online, and doesn't include the two compelling longreads excerpted below. Please give them some of your time when you can by clicking on the links.



BERNAT ARMANGU / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Terry Glavin: I went to the heart of Hamas horror

We weren't the first outsiders to be guided through Kfar Aza. Preceding us were delegations involving former British prime minister Boris Johnson, former Australian prime minister Scott Morrison, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee and former Kansas governor Sam Brownback.

Israelis are dealing with their grief in various ways. While some residents of the southern kibbutzim ask to be left to mourn and pick up the pieces beyond the limelight, others insist that the world should get at least a glimpse of the horrors Israel sustained at the hands of Hamas on Oct. 7.

While Kfar Aza was among the hardest hit of the kibbutzim bordering Gaza that day, the story of what happened here is more or less the same as any number of horrible stories of savagery, pitiless sadism and mass murder that unfolded in Kibbutz Be'eri, Kibbutz Nir Oz, Kibbutz Re'im and several other towns and villages.

[To read the full story, click here](#)



SAID KHATIB / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Jesse Kline: Jihad didn't begin with Israel

Hamas's Oct. 7 terrorist attack, commonly likened to Israel's 9/11, served as a wake-up call — both to the threat still posed by Islamism, and to the insidious ideology that makes westerners think it's OK to support the massacre, rape and kidnapping of innocent men, women and children on a massive scale.

It is also an opportunity to examine "the root causes" of terrorism, as Justin Trudeau advocated following the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013.

At the time, Trudeau surmised that, "This happened because there is someone who feels completely excluded. Completely at war with innocents. At war with a society."

In reality, the bombers were motivated by religious extremism. In particular Islam, a religion forged through violence and conquest, and its radical interpretation, Islamism.

[To read the full story, click here](#)