

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:17:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446043

# Documents (100)

## 1. ANTI- ISRAEL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN METROPOLITAN CITIES

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

2. your say

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 3. U.N. Says Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Worsening

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

4. Reporters on the Job

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 5. Medics struggle to cope with daily horrors

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas



Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 6. We need a truce in Gaza's war of words

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 7. Charity convicted in terrorism financing trial

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 8. Medics struggle to cope with daily horrors

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 9. Pakistan president gets fatwa for flirting with Sarah Palin

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

## 10. Hunt laws must be workable

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 11. It's nothing but a hoax, minister DESALINATION PLANT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 12. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

### 13. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 14. Business & Media: Media: Press and Broadcasting: Cynical Israel is diminished by keeping journalists out of

Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 15. <u>Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission</u> has returned to Britain.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

16. Britain plans stricter measures to curb smoking

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

17. Be realistic about Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

18. We, the people, must define our future

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

19. <u>Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission has returned to Britain .</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

20. Palestinian Freedom Is Overdue

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

## 21. Britain plans stricter laws to curb smoking

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 22. <u>Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission</u> has returned to Britain.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 23. Dev Nadkarni: Pakistan unrest world's flashpoint

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 24. Right and wrong is one big blur in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 25. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009



26. READERS' Voice

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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27. An open letter to Annie Lennox

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

28. Harry's games

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

29. Is 'Mrs. Clean' up to the task?; Israel 's foreign minister is smart and tough, but critics say she lacks the

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

experience to be PM

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

30.\_... And another thing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 31. And another thing ... FEEDBACK letters @theage.com.au

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

## 32. Holding the line

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

## 33.\_42 killed after Israeli shells blast UN school

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

## 34. Security risk forces state to drop evacuation plan for Filipinos in war-torn Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

# 35. <u>Protesters in Richmond condemn Gaza campaign Demonstrators rally to demand fairness for the</u> Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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#### 36. UNDER ATTACK: GAZA



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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37. THE WEEK

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

38. News in brief

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

39. 50/50

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

40. Duke Gaza vigil highlights human cost

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

41. Readers Write

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas



Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

42. No rocket protection for Negev's unrecognized Beduin residents. Desert dwellers put their faith in sheet metal and Allah

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

43. chatroom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

44. chatroom

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

45. <u>Comment & Debate: We have no words left: Palestinians are at a loss to describe this latest catastrophe.</u>

International civil society must act now

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

46. LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 47. Feature - View from Israel - Hunt for the war criminals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 48. Feature - View from Israel - Hunt for the war criminals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 49. Feature - View from Israel - Hunt for the war criminals

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 50. letters@independent.co.uk Being sacked can be the beginning of the good life

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

### 51. Letters - Why does Israel deny hope to the ordinary people of Gaza?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

52.\_... And another thing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

53. Massacre of a family seeking sanctuary The Samounis claim they were guided to a safe haven by Israeli

troops - only to be cut down by shells

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

54. YOUR LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

55. <u>Zuma</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

56. Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza MIDEAST: Gaza Carnage Sets West Bank

<u>Aflame</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

57. Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

58. Egypt Offers Humanitarian Aid but Is Criticized for Refusing to Open Gaza Border

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

59. Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

60. Emergency measures must be temporary, says EP delegation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

61.\_10 IN TEN

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

62. Visions of the old settlers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

63. Man's desperate plea as five relatives killed Effects of fighting in the Gaza Strip are felt in Birmingham

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

64. <u>Critics urge Sen. Klobuchar to condemn Israeli assault She urged aid for Gazans and said, "We need to work toward a cease-fire."</u> Coleman and McCollum faced small protests.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

65. Why we are here

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

66. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 67. Silence of world leaders on Gaza Strip offensive is shameful

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 68. Sideshow: Joe the Journalist, in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 69. Despite Deeper Strikes, Israelis Vow to Soldier On

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 70. Gaza assault fuels rage across the spectrum

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 71. TALKING POINT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 72. This murder of children must be halted now

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 73. This murder of children must be halted now

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 74. First lady, Rice defend Bush's term in office

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 75. Hillary Clinton promises the new America will become the world's friend

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 76. Karachi police foil march on US Consulate

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 77. Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

78. This murder of children must be halted now

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

79. A-Sanaa to petition High Court over school shelling. Accuses Israel of war crimes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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80. MPs vow support for Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

81. In Short

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

82. Syracuse students gather for peace in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 83. Two wrongs, racism and hatred, do not make a right

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

## 84. Focus: Conflcit in Gaza: GAZA DIARY: 'We love the sun. So we sat outside to see the F16s bombing Rafah'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 85. Long-range target

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 86. MIDDLE EAST IS NOW MORE 'FREER AND MORE HOPEFUL': BUSH

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 87. Benetton store torched in Iran over 'link with Zionist network'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 88. U. Virginia students contest conservative speaker's ideas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 89. LIVNI'S BRAVE STAND

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

# 90. <u>GLOBAL ACCLAIM Obama's profile soars as Bush's fades Will the real President of the U.S. please stand</u> up?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 91. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

## 92. Raptors Fall (Again); Habs Forward Injured (Again)

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 93. Stop gaza war - county pleads



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

### 94. Children heavily represented among 917 dead, say officials

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

#### 95. Stop gaza war - county pleads

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 96. Column: Reflecting upon the War on Terror

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

### 97. Stop gaza war - county pleads

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009

#### 98. Clinton signals new Middle East policy initiative

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

99. Likud launches broadside against Livni. Billboard campaign says PM's job is too much for her too handle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

100. Rival protesters face off

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to

Jan 14, 2009



# ANTI-ISRAEL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN METROPOLITAN CITIES

#### **Hindustan Times**

January 7, 2009 Wednesday 6:16 PM EST

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Length: 304 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: New Delhi/ Kolkata

# **Body**

New Delhi/ Kolkata, Jan. 07 -- (ANI): Hundreds of people have been protesting against Israeli attack on Gaza by taking to the streets in metropolitan cities.

Protestors in New Delhi, comprising mainly Muslims, blamed the United States for the Israeli attack and accused the United Progressive Alliance Government for not strongly condemning the attacks on Gaza.

Children and <u>women</u> came out in large numbers in the protest march raising slogans against the genocide attacks on innocent children in Gaza.

"We want to give a call to America, Israel, Europe, Arab nations and our country as they are sitting as mute spectators. Everything is shut there and they are deprived of necessities like food, medicine shops and water. We have held this protest so that our voice reaches the UN Organisation, our Government and the Arab nations," said Ilyas, a protestor.

In Kolkata, the anti-Israel protests were organised by the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) whose supporters burnt effigies of the outgoing US President George W Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert expressing their anger against the Gaza attacks.

The supporters carried placards denouncing Israel and US as 'butchers of Gaza' and accusing Bush and Olmert as the 'greatest terrorists on earth'.

"They are trampling on all the democratic rights of the common people to elect their Government and also in the name of collective punishment. They are punishing the common people. They have totally failed to contain terror. They are acting as agents of terrorists," said Biplap Chakraborty, Secretariat Member, SUCI.

About 530 Palestinians have reportedly been killed since Israel launched its offensive on December 27 to curtail <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks on its territory from Gaza. (ANI)

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# ANTI- ISRAEL PROTESTS CONTINUE IN METROPOLITAN CITIES

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

**End of Document** 



## your say

The Cairns Post (Australia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: AGENDA; Pg. 13

Length: 787 words

# **Body**

Motorists ignoring simple road rules

AS the death toll rises significantly year after year, you would think that motorists would be more aware of road rules.

I'm a 22-year-old *female* driver and take great care when I drive.

I drive Mulgrave Rd every day and am tired of people blatantly ignoring rules that are put in place to protect us.

There are two places on Mulgrave Rd I'm specifically talking about: outside Honeycombe Motors and up further outside Yamaha.

People continue to U-turn there when it is not allowed. It is illegal, holds up traffic, but most of all, it is downright dangerous.

Why are there no police patrolling this section?

I have seen too many near misses. Wake up everybody.

Sarah Mulligan, Earlville.

Israel has right to defend itself

IT is commendable that Mr Caycedo feels so strongly about the plight of the people who live in the Gaza Strip, and is prepared to stand on the side of a busy street with a placard (10-1-09).

But I doubt whether he would last long if he stood on the street in Gaza city with a placard stating "To hell with <u>Hamas</u>".

Of all member states of the Arab league only three recognise Israel, have peace treaties with Israel and live in peace with each other: Egypt, Jordan and Mauritania.

Three members of the Islamic conference, which are near neighbours of ours, only partially recognise Israel and have no established diplomatic relations: Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

your say

Israel is a sovereign, democratic, secular state with a population of seven million, recognised by 163 countries and the United Nations.

It is surrounded by its enemies with a combined population of more than 100 million, and none of its known enemies could be called democratic or secular.

The biggest threat to the Palestinians in Gaza comes from <u>Hamas</u>, a proscribed terrorist organisation, who took control from the elected government to harass Israel.

Israel is not the antagonist; it has a right to defend itself from attack and to protect its citizens.

Ron Eadie, Kewarra Beach.

Impose heavy fines for level crossings

WITH regards to your push for boom gates to be installed at level crossings (2-1-09), I would like to point the failings of the idea.

What happens when the gates fail in the closed position out in the middle of nowhere: for instance, halfway between Cardwell and Ingham where the closest technician would be at either Cairns or Townsville?

Now the traffic would be held up for hours on end with the result people would be driving around the booms and becoming stuck in the middle, and then a train would definitely come along, and then an absolute disaster.

Now, at least with flashing lights you can cross over very carefully, for only a fool would do otherwise.

I believe that the answer to the current crisis would be to educate the public the hard way, with a \$300 fine, and then the message would soon spread.

E. C. Burgdorf, Mourilyan.

English monarchy is a racist system

PRINCE Harry (12-1-09) may not be a racist himself, but he represents one of the most racist systems that has ever existed, namely the English monarchy.

His ancestors, in whose name many of the world's most highly functional and humanly and ecologically appropriate societies were invaded, oppressed or virtually destroyed, profited handsomely, and continue to profit, from an ill-founded philosophy of self-interest that has few equals in history.

The fact that this line continues as though it were somehow valid is an insult to many, especially if one considers the ongoing divisions and problems they have caused.

Perhaps this is unfair, however, as the idea of a monarchy is hardly an English invention, but rather a symptom of an immature conceptualisation of humanity, an outpouring expressed in militarism, greed, classism and the slavery of organised religion.

The Australian Republic is way overdue as the representation of our national identity is dominated by symbols that no longer truly represent us.

David Barnes, Mornington Island.

Fluoride costing one man's vote

I DON'T know how many pro and con articles on fluoride I have read in the past 50 years.

I find myself thinking that people in government trying to force fluoridation of drinking water are doing it because they have been bribed to do so.

#### your say

Having said that, and as a former ALP supporter for 34 years, and as an enlightened swinging voter ever since, I assure our ALP MPs that, come the next state election, I will try to persuade voters to vote against them, unless the poisoning of our drinking water is stopped.

The feedback that I get indicates that most readers agree, but quite a few disagree and are quite upset at what I write.

But I go by the motto "If what one has to say, does not upset anybody it is not worth saying it".

George Manier, Whitfield.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

**End of Document** 



# U.N. Says Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Worsening

RTT News (United States)
January 6, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 344 words

# **Body**

(RTTNews) - The United Nations has said that there is "a worsening and an increasingly alarming" humanitarian crisis in the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza Strip, contradicting Israeli claims that there were no such crisis following its brutal military offensive, media reports said.

John Holmes, the U.N. humanitarian chief, told reporters Monday that officials believed as many as 25 per cent of the 548 persons killed in the fighting were civilians.

Additionally, Gaza's health system has turned "increasingly precarious," having to cope up with more than 2,500 injured persons. Health, energy and water infrastructure in the coastal territory, home to 1.5 million persons, were already verge of collapse before the fighting broke out.

"This is, in our view, a humanitarian crisis," Holmes said. "It's very hard for me to see any other way you could describe it, given the conditions in which the population are living." He raised fears that cluster munitions are being used, and said that it was "a fair presumption" that most of the civilians killed were **women** and children.

He also said that the situation would deteriorate as strip was suffering from acute shortages of fuel, food and medical supplies.

Separately, U.N. humanitarian coordinator Max Gaylard echoed Holmes' views saying a large section of the population, including many children, are hungry, cold and without ready access to medical facilities, electricity and running water. Above all they are terrified - that by any measure is a humanitarian crisis, he added.

Israeli leaders have maintained that there is no humanitarian crisis for the Palestinians living in the densely populated territory, and that they have been keeping border crossings open and are delivering vital supplies.

Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni said in Paris Saturday that Israel had been careful to protect civilians and there was no need for a humanitarian truce, since there was no humanitarian crisis.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



# Reporters on the Job

Christian Science Monitor November 21, 2008, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 305 words

# **Body**

\* You Go Girl: Staff writer Ilene R. Prusher says that today's story about the new role of <u>women</u> in the Palestinian security forces was an all-<u>women</u> all the time event. She reported the story alongside a Danish <u>female</u> journalist and worked with a <u>female</u> Palestinian interpreter, and the story was photographed by an American woman. And Ilene came across another <u>women</u> who impressed her.

When Ilene went to interview Palestinian Brig. Gen. Samaeeh el-Safy, who is head of the new security campaign in the Hebron area, she found him scolding a Palestinian university student.

"She'd been outside the general's headquarters with a group of university students who were protesting the torture of those arrested by the Palestinian Authority. Her statements made him furious. He told his junior officers to get her to come into the office for a 'discussion,' in which he was lecturing her about how she was doing damage by spreading *Hamas* rumors," says Ilene.

"We arrived on this scene, and I was so impressed with this young woman, who despite facing this rather intimidating general, kept on boldly turning her little video camera on him to capture what he was saying. He looked extremely perturbed. I think the fact that we were there watching prevented the woman from getting into any worse trouble with the general," says Ilene.

- David Clark Scott

World editor

Survey Says ...

- \* Hawks Would Win in Israel: A pair of polls published Thursday showed Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line Likud party cruising past Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni's moderate Kadima party to a decisive victory in Israel's Feb. 10 elections. The Israeli polls indicate that Netanyahu would have a strong hawkish coalition that would probably end any two-state peace talks with the Palestinians, the Associated Press reports.
- (c) Copyright 2008. The Christian Science Monitor

Load-Date: November 20, 2008



# Medics struggle to cope with daily horrors

The Australian

January 12, 2009 Monday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 750 words

# **Body**

IN the emergency room of the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City, doctor Raed al-Arayni was entering his 12th day of non-stop duty, and was preparing for another operation, when his worst nightmare came true.

The bloodied little boy being carried into the room was screaming at him. "Baba, baba (daddy, daddy)," the child cried.

"I did not recognise my own child because of his injuries," Dr Arayni said. "For a few seconds I couldn't move, my knees became weak. I could barely stand at the sight of my child halfway between life and death."

He then realised that both his sons -- Hathifa, 7, and Abdul Rahman, 5 -- were lying in the emergency room, severely wounded. In tears, Dr Arayni began working on Hathifa, who had the worst injuries. A chunk of shrapnel had pierced his chest, his right leg was broken and blood poured from his wounds.

A colleague began treating Abdul Rahman. The nerves in the boy's broken left arm had been severed and he had no feeling in his hand. They were able to stabilise the two boys.

"I just thank God my children didn't arrive to me in bits and pieces, missing body parts as the <u>women</u> and children I see arriving daily," said Dr Arayni, standing by Hathifa's bed, his face showing his exhaustion.

When the Israelis attacked Gaza, Dr Arayni moved his family from their home in Jabaliya to stay with a relative in the more central Fakhura district, believing they would be safer.

The surgeon pushed aside the thought of his own children as the wounded poured in, sometimes so many that the operating floors were thick with blood. Injured men, <u>women</u> and children were piled in the corridors, and surgeons commandeered the recovery room.

Dr Arayni's wife, Um Mustafa, and their boys had gone up on the roof of their building on Tuesday, desperate for fresh air after almost a week inside while Israeli missiles, tanks and artillery rounds pounded the coastal strip.

The boys had been playing for about an hour when Um Mustafa sent them downstairs for a bottle of water. Moments later a huge explosion rocked the building, followed by a second.

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#### Medics struggle to cope with daily horrors

Few are more exposed to the carnage of Israel's two-week military offensive than Gaza's medics, who number about 400, including volunteers. The overwhelming workload leaves no time to process what they have seen.

Medics come under fire from Israeli tanks and face long delays in getting to the scene of attacks, sometimes finding animals gnawing at corpses when they finally reach the dead and wounded.

Awaiting co-ordination with Israel often delays access to the injured, the medics say. Some reported finding people stranded in their homes for days, or bodies lying in the streets uncollected.

``Disgusting is not the word," said Shawki Saleh, 24, a volunteer medic at Kamal Adwan hospital.

"If it's not a dog, it's rats around the bodies ... I've been doing this volunteer work for two years but I never imagined I'd see this. Who knows how many people are still under the rubble? We were carrying them out screaming."

In one long day, medic Haitham Adgheir carried five corpses, saw six more at a hospital, and his medical convoy was hit by Israeli tank fire that showered a driver with glass. "My mind is like a video of body parts and injured people," said Mr Adgheir, 33.

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Since the fighting began, 21 Palestinian medical staff have been killed, 30 have been injured and 11 ambulances have been hit, according to the World Health Organisation.

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Red Cross officials working with ambulance crews co-ordinated with the Israeli military by mobile phone before moving, said Red Cross spokesman Simon Schorno in Geneva.

But sometimes fighting breaks out near authorised crews, putting them at risk.

The Red Cross had similar lines of communication with the Palestinian militants, Mr Schorno said, but they were less organised.

Many medics say they are being deliberately targeted, although the ambulances in Gaza are clearly marked.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

**End of Document** 



# We need a truce in Gaza's war of words

The Times (London)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

Edition 1

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 24

Length: 764 words

Byline: Matthew Parris

# **Body**

Aweight lifted from my mind this week. I had been looking at awful pictures and reports of mayhem in Gaza, and agonising over the outpouring of commentary from apologists for one side or the other. On finishing William Sieghart's cracking column in sympathy with <u>Hamas</u>, I blamed Israel. On finishing Daniel Finkelstein's reasoned defence of Israel, I blamed <u>Hamas</u>. Hearing David Aaronovitch's argument that we move beyond blame, I inclined to this too.

But yesterday something snapped. Do I, I asked, have to have an opinion at all? The whole world is having opinions, and it doesn't seem to be helping.

Then, very faintly through the moral fog, something began to dawn. If we all decided not to think about the Middle East any more, would that actually make things there any worse? There's now a whole industry of Arab-Israeli-ologists; the conflict supports the careers of thousands of journalists, broadcasters and photographers, not to say Tony Blair's. Duos, troikas and quartets of European leaders, US emissaries, Anglican peacemakers and the like fly back and forth, issuing solemn statements ... and I wonder whether the prodigious capital invested in the proposition that a story is desperately important may be subliminally egging both actors and audience to ramp it up further?

Is this dispute getting like the Corn Laws, or the Disestablishment of the Church of England, or the violent dispute in Gulliver's Travels over which end of the egg to crack - a bitter impasse whose potency future generations may struggle to explain? Objectively, how high does this conflict, in fact, stand in the grisly league table of world horrors? Would it be much worse if we weren't looking? Here's my personal new year resolution: to contribute by silence towards a larger silence.

#### One chair, five books

"Will you be a hard or a soft chair?" Mark Lawson asked me, disturbingly. He was presenting BBC Radio's Front Row on Monday evening. To my surprise I had been asked to be chairman of the judges who on the 27th of this month will choose the overall winner of the Costa (formerly Whitbread) Book Awards this year. Whether I'll be a

#### We need a truce in Gaza's war of words

hard or soft chair I've no idea, but I do want to be a conscientious one, and so am reading all five books (winners of their separate categories) properly - no skimming, no skipping, no speed-reading - from cover to cover. A children's book by Michelle Magorian, Just Henry, and a first novel by Sadie Jones, The Outcast, have already provided about 1,300 pages.

And, do you know, it isn't a chore at all? For the first time in ages, I'm not tearing through, flicking pages, trying to extract the guts in time for a column or speech, or a review deadline.

Instead, and for the first time in decades, I'm just sauntering along, enjoying every sentence, even rereading bits I like. For the first time I'm properly following the plot. For the first time this is not a conversation between reader and author where one's in a rush and the other isn't. It's relaxing, enriching. This is how most people read for most of the time: I'm joining the unhurried audience for whom any good author writes, putting the right words in the right place, making phrases flow and believing it matters..

#### Thanks to the Jews

Helen Suzman, South Africa's veteran campaigner against apartheid, was one of the great <u>women</u> of her century. With her courteous blend of ferocity and moderation, she helped liberal whites and blacks, people like my family and friends, to keep the faith in Southern Africa for two generations. Her death recalls, too, something of which it's worth reminding ourselves, now opinion is so jagged over Jewish involvement in a part of the world that (see above) we're not going to mention.

The record, generous and brave, of South African Jews in white-dominated South Africa should never be forgotten. Much of the most stubborn white resistance to apartheid, and much of the most generous help in the fields of poverty and education, came from Jewish liberal South Africans. Most of the English-speaking half of the white population tended to go along with injustice; but not her, not the hundreds of brave Jewish activists against racism, and not rich families like the Oppenheimers, who helped to fund the multiracial school I attended in Swaziland.

Critics may point out that Ernest and Harry Oppenheimer made their mining fortunes in an exploitative economy. Fair point; but they spent it in enlightened ways. When it mattered, South African Jews were, quite disproportionately, prepared to stand up and be counted. Suzman towered above all of them.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Charity convicted in terrorism financing trial

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

November 25, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: C; Pg. 5

Length: 314 words

Byline: The Associated Press

# **Body**

DALLAS (AP) - A Muslim charity and five of its former leaders were convicted Monday of funneling millions of dollars to the Palestinian militant group <u>Hamas</u>, finally handing the government a signature victory in its fight against terrorism funding. U.S. District Judge Jorge A. Solis announced the guilty verdicts on all 108 counts on the eighth day of deliberations in the retrial of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, once the nation's largest Muslim charity. It was the biggest terrorism financing case since the attacks of Sept.

11. The convictions follow the collapse of Holy Land's first trial last year and defeats in other cases the government tried to build. President George W. Bush had personally announced the freezing of Holy Land's assets in 2001, calling the action "another step in the war on terrorism." After Monday's verdict, family members showed little visible reaction until the jury left. Several <u>women</u> sobbed loudly. "My dad's not a criminal!" one nearly inconsolable woman said loudly. Court personnel told the family to calm her down, and as family members rushed her out of the courtroom, she said, "They treated him like an animal." Ghassan Elashi, Holy Land's former chairman, and Shukri Abu-Baker, the chief executive, were convicted of a combined 69 counts, including supporting a specially designated terrorist, money laundering and tax fraud. Mufid Abdulqader and Abdulrahman Odeh were convicted of three counts of conspiracy, and Mohammed El-Mezain was convicted of one count of conspiracy to support a terrorist organization. Holy Land itself was convicted of all 32 counts. "I feel heartbroken that a group of my fellow Americans fell for the prosecution's fear-mongering theory," Elashi's daughter, Noor, said outside the courthouse late Monday. "This is truly a low point for the United States of America, but this is not over."

Load-Date: November 25, 2008

**End of Document** 



# Medics struggle to cope with daily horrors

The Australian

January 12, 2009 Monday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 750 words

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Load-Date: January 11, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Pakistan president gets fatwa for flirting with Sarah Palin

Guardian.com

October 2, 2008

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Length: 306 words

# **Body**

After appearing to endorse <u>Hamas</u> and back Barack Obama's stance on Pakistan in her now infamous interview with Katie Couric, Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin has found herself embroiled in another diplomatic row over her meeting with Pakistan's president Asif Ali Zardari.

Zadari's greeting to the Alaskan governor at their meeting at the UN headquarters in New York - described as "overly-friendly" by the Christian Science Monitor - has earned him a fatwa from some of Pakistan's radical muslims.

Benazir Bhutto's widower tells Alaska's first woman that she is "even more gorgeous in life" and says he can see why "America is crazy about you". But what really got radical clerics backs up was his comment that he might hug the Moose-hunting governor if his aide insists hard enough.

For Palin, the incident appears to have confirmed jokes that her meet-and-greet sessions with world leaders at the UN were "speed dating" diplomacy.

But Zadari faces much harsher condemnation for his conduct. His remarks managed to unite both hardline Islamic leaders and Pakistani feminists in condemnation.

One radical Muslim prayer leader said the president shamed the nation with his "indecent gestures, filthy remarks, and repeated praise of a non-Muslim lady wearing a short skirt." Meanwhile, Tahira Abdullah, a member of Pakistan's <u>Women</u>'s Action Forum, criticised the president for failing to show decorum and behave like a "mourning widower".

But Zadari can perhaps take comfort that not everyone is taking his flirtatious manner so seriously. Two Facebook groups have been set up to commemorate his encounter with the Veep candidate. One group called Zardari should marry Sarah Palin for the sake of world peace!, reckons their union would "stop the incursion of US forces in Pakistan" and lead to polo races in the White House.

Load-Date: October 2, 2008



# Hunt laws must be workable

Irish Independent

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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# Independent.ie

Section: LETTERS
Length: 1277 words

# **Body**

In reply to John Fitzgerald's correspondence on hunting (Letters, Irish Independent, January 2), Mr Fitzgerald and I come from the same part of the South East, where hunting has a long tradition and a huge following.

This part of Ireland had only one drag hunt which ceased operating over three years ago.

There are numerous registered foxhound and harrier packs in existence in the South East. In some case these clubs have been in existence for over 200 years; others have been registered over the last decade, with public support and goodwill.

Freedom to make an informed decision is what has kept these clubs and traditions alive, through land wars, civil wars and world wars.

Drag hunting has a following in Ireland but traditional hunting has a much larger following and continued support in rural Ireland.

Let people continue to make an informed decision as to what they consider right and wrong and let's not make the mistake our neighbours have made in the UK with an unworkable and unjust law under which neither the fox, nor the hare, is better off.

#### Hands off public service pay

Until today I had great regard for Richard Bruton but I am quite shocked that he suggests reducing the pay of public servants earning over EUR50,000 yet he doesn't mention the high salary, pension and expenses that members of the Dail enjoy.

Well, I would suggest to him that pay for TDs should becapped at EUR100,000.

Perhaps he would kindly do his sums and see how much can be saved and leave those who are struggling to survive on low wages -- nurses, some teachers, clerical staff, etc -- alone.

Mr Bruton and his cohorts should do the work that the taxpayer pays them for and not claim extra for sitting on committees.

#### Hunt laws must be workable

As a former public servant I sat on many committees -- both voluntarily and as part of my job -- yet I did not expect to get paid extra for this.

The guys on the gravy train need to get real.

## O'Doherty's claims ridiculous

Ian O'Doherty rejects the notion that ethnic cleansing has taken place in Gaza (Irish Independent, January 5).

But the people of Gaza have already been ethnically cleansed. Some 80pc of them are refugees from the war which established the Jewish state when they were ruthlessly driven from their lands in what is now called Israel.

Most Gazans still have title deeds and keys to properties but cannot return because they are not Jewish. This has been established by a Jewish professor of history, Dr Illan Pappe, in his book entitled 'The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine'.

These refugees now rely on humanitarian assistance and \$2 per day according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

This economic catastrophe has been forced upon them by the 'oasis of democracy' which has precluded them from returning to their homes on the basis of their race, by the internal occupation of the strip until 2005 which left it economically isolated and then by the total embargo, imposed immediately after <u>Hamas'</u> electoral victory by the same 'oasis of democracy', which has stripped Gazans of the most basic necessities of life.

Mr O'Doherty accepts why Israel has "had enough" following the rocket fire but refuses to see how Gazans may have "had enough" of the Zionist state's cruel policies and how this also contributed to the current explosive situation. What a hypocrite.

His claim that civilian victims are human shields of <u>Hamas</u> is ridiculous. <u>Hamas</u> militants live beside civilians in densely populated refugee camps because that's where they live, just like 80pc of all Gazans. They didn't just move there for protection.

lan O'Doherty's claim that Israel 'mourns' Palestinian civilian casualties goes beyond baseless. It is actually embarrassing that a writer on this topic could be so ignorant of that state's gruesome crimes, such as Sabra and Shatilla for example.

As for his final rant regarding how this campaign of indiscriminate slaughter against Gazans should be tolerated on the basis of what he terms 'Islamic fascism', yeah that's right, Mr O'Doherty, every Palestinian murdered and wounded was just a crazy Muslim who committed honour killings and subjugated **women**.

## Nazi mindset in all but name

lan O'Doherty wrote: "Here in the West, where we share the same values as Israel, we need to start standing shoulder with this tiny oasis of democracy in a vast desert of savagery" (Irish Independent, January 5).

A number of things are evident here, namely:

- 1. Ian O'Doherty does not proofread/has no proofreader (reference two missing words).
- 2. The idea that we should eradicate those who do not share our values.
- 3. It is the view of this writer, clearly stated, that Arabs and/or Muslims are savages.
- 4. As intelligent as Mr O'Doherty likes to think he is, he has taken the Nazi mindset and refocused it.

Had the poor souls who occupied concentration camps during (and before) the Second World War been supplied with rockets, one would have fully expected them to use the rockets against their German oppressors.

#### Hunt laws must be workable

Is there anyone left who defends the Gaza strip as anything other than an open-ended concentration camp?

Mr O'Doherty is quite entitled to make a career for himself by taking the path of greatest resistance. It's called attention-seeking and is not illegal. What is completely unacceptable is racism printed big and bold.

### It's all me, me, me at incestuous RTE

WITH the release of the viewing figures for the Christmas period I wonder if the penny has dropped with RTE.

When the news tops the ratings it tells us that people will watch the national broadcaster no matter what else is on.

Why then is the station paying outrageous money to some of its presenters whose main ambition seems to be self-promotion and promoting others within the station?

Any programme you turn on will have someone from the station as the main guest or expert. Recent examples were Ronan Collins appearing on Pat Kenny's radio show to promote his folk collection while Carole Coleman and Kathryn Thomas had their books reviewed for at least the second time.

Ryan Tubridy seems unable to have a show without someone from RTE as a "guest".

There are surely professional explorers in this country who would love to make a programme about the Amazon or the Arctic circle. Instead, we have to watch Charlie Bird indulge his dreams. This is cronyism at its worst.

The station has become incestuous.

It even has an advert telling us that these people are Ireland's best-loved personalities. The lunatics have taken over the asylum.

What we are getting is not public service broadcasting but self-serving drivel.

I'm sure, in these tight times, the licence money could be allocated elsewhere if RTE continue to provide a substandard service.

## Work practices in the spotlight

In relation to the report 'No Irish need apply -- Polish builders get their own back' (Irish Independent, January 2) I would like to express how appalled I am.

How can we possibly accept the suggestion that they are getting their own back?

While it is evident that a number of companies treated foreign nationals less than well, most Irish people and companies I know went to extremes to make foreign nationals feel welcome.

Rather than focusing on the minority of negative situations that arose in this country we should be focusing on the many positive steps that a huge number of companies took to accommodate these workers.

May I also add that it is not just non-national workers who have been shortchanged.

This has been happening in Ireland for years to Irish labourers, young Irish students and workers under 18.

The Irish are so afraid of losing their jobs to other people, including foreign nationals, that we simply don't complain.

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# It's nothing but a hoax, minister; DESALINATION PLANT

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 12, 2009 Monday

First Edition

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# **Body**

IN NOVEMBER 2006, then premier Steve Bracks said this about the Opposition's planned desalination plant: "The energy generation is enormous, the intrusion on the community is enormous and, of course, it's extraordinarily expensive." He also described it as a "hoax". It still is.

Mr Bracks said recycling and conservation would secure Melbourne's water supplies. It still could - more quickly, at a lower cost, with less energy and pollution, and without squandering billions of dollars from Melbourne households in guaranteed profits to foreign multinationals such as Veolia (Connex) or Degremont.

Planning Minister Justin Madden, why have you facilitated this hoax with a whitewash environmental effects decision (The Age, 10/1)? Yet another Labor Government hoax. Yes, water for Melbourne is critical. Labor, which has been

in government eight years, has commissioned consultants to research other options, such as recycling and conservation, which have all been confirmed as adequate (and preferable). I can't fathom it.

Stephen Cannon, president, Watershed Victoria, Dalyston

Foregone decision

HOW gullible are we, the ordinary citizens? As some work has already commenced on the desalination plant, was Planning Minister Justin Madden ever going to say that it could not go ahead? Just one more nail in the coffin of democracy in Victoria and another win to the autocratic Brumby Government.

Peter D.Surkitt, Hawthorn

Priorities, please

YOUR front page, "Surfers dumped - by state" (10/1), did little to enchance the credit of The Age. Three million Melburnians will have improved security of water due to the desalination plant. Nineteen surfers (or is it 20?) will have to find different beaches - which they do now, depending on where the surf is up.

In the world of January 2009, is this the critical issue of the day?

Peter Wigney, Pakenham Upper

## Too many risks

THE Thomson Dam, completed in 1983, was supposed to "drought-proof" Melbourne. Our population has exceeded what the dams were intended to cater for, and is still growing, mostly through immigration, despite the limitations of our environment and natural resources.

Household water bills are expected to double over the next five years and, when this is coupled with the emissions trading scheme, the cost of utilities will continue to rise as our natural resources become more expensive to use.

The desalination plant will emit 1.2million tonnes of greenhouse gases each year. Limiting greenhouse gases is just given lip service. The plant will take in 480billion litres of seawater and pump out 280billion litres of saline concentration each year.

The effect of this pollution on the marine environment and biodiversity is unknown. The cost of the plant will be passed on to consumers and the benefits will be reaped by the State Government.

Vivienne Ortega, Heidelberg Heights

#### Shut Guantanamo

SEVEN years ago the first detainees were transferred to the US detention centre at Guantanamo Bay. They were hooded, shackled and tied down. Guantanamo has been part of a systematic seven-year assault on basic human rights, denying people the right to a fair trial and humane treatment.

Amnesty International calls on President-elect Barack Obama to announce a date for Guantanamo's closure and ensure the establishment of an independent commission to investigate abuses committed by the Bush Government in its "war on terror".

While the US is primarily responsible for resolving the human rights scandal at Guantanamo, other countries, including Australia, should facilitate its closure by offering humanitarian protection to detainees who are cleared

for release but cannot return home for fear of torture or persecution.

Claire Mallinson, Amnesty International Australia, Chippendale, NSW

#### Fun without booze

YES, the "party season" may be in "full swing" (The Age, 10/1) but there are various types of parties. The one in your report was out of control and featured alcohol-fuelled violence, indiscriminate destruction of anything in the party-goers' way and neighbours hiding behind closed doors.

But while this was taking place, another party for 1500 young people from around Australia and the Pacific islands was in full swing in Kew. It was the National Christian Youth Convention and those who attended had a ball. No violence, no shouting and no arrests. Why? Because 1500 young people enjoyed a well-planned, exciting event. And, each night, they enjoyed non-alcoholic cocktails.

Ellen Chandler, director, WCTU Drug-Free Lifestyles, Melbourne

## Feeling the squeeze

RE "FUNDS squeeze takes cheer out of beer plans" (The Age, 10/1). Good luck, Ryan Leslie, with your Effen beer. Sadly, your difficulty getting credit is a story all too familiar to promising start-up businesses. Ours is doing similarly well, but we cannot meet demand due to a lack of funds to purchase adequate stock. We were not able to get the \$400,000 we needed and had to raise it privately.

### It's nothing but a hoax, minister DESALINATION PLANT

I was bemused when, resigned to the lack of help from the bank, I asked for a bank guarantee for a paltry \$25,000 deposit on a commercial lease. The banker said: "Yes, provided you place a \$25,000 term deposit with us." The funny thing was that he believed this would be somehow helpful.

Sean Joshua, Caulfield

Asbestos time bomb

YOUR editorial on the dangers of asbestos in the armed services (The Age, 9/1) is timely.

It is surprising that urgent concerns have not been raised much earlier and corrective steps taken.

This laxity raises the spectre of even greater asbestos contamination in the public domain: in universities, schools, libraries, hospitals, shopping centres and derelict structures within the mining and chemical processing industries. Perhaps the Commonwealth should investigate this lethal, ticking health hazard as a matter of the highest priority.

C. Swaminathan, Blackburn

Oh so Melbourne

KENNETH Nguyen asks: "What makes a true Melburnian?" (A2, 10/1). He will be pleased to know that Metropolis bookstore did not simply disappear from Acland Street - it relocated. Where to? A relatively obscure inner-city location, up a staircase, beneath a couple of bars.

Nguyen will be even more pleased to know that the owner, when discussing with me the shop's fiction section while I was repping for a small publisher (also very Melbourne, no?), noted that her customers were very discerning - in particular, they bought "a lot of (Haruki) Murakami". If you shop at Metropolis, eat at Cookie and go to the Rooftop Cinema ... well, let's just say you're not from Sydney.

Hannah Francis, Elsternwick

A time to reflect

THANK you, Reverend John Bodycomb, for your intelligent, realistic comments on atheists (Letters, 10/1). Despite being an atheist, I was invited to attend a Mass once a month at our church.

Due to commitments, the priest did not attend and so my neighbour was permitted to conduct the service and give communion. We were a small "congregation" of half a dozen or so. We had a "lesson" followed by a few readings and then communion. Naturally, I could not partake in that so received a blessing instead. At no time did I feel as if I did not belong. I enjoyed those nights

of quiet contemplation with friends in that simple but special place. Our little church was recently sold, as it seems the cost of insuring it for our use was too expensive.

Reverend Bodycomb, I agree with you. As much as you relish conversation with atheists, so I welcome conversation with, and the company of, believers.

Lynne Hestdal, Seaview

More than greed

THE background piece on Somali pirates - "Wealthy pirates revel amid poverty" (The Age, 9/1) - does not mention that previously they were fishermen who were driven out of their trade by international fishing boats that exploited the lack of maritime boundary enforcement in Somalia. In no way does this justify piracy. But is important to understand the full picture, sadly portrayed as greed-driven violence.

Yochai Glick, Glen Iris

#### Shameful silence

IT IS a sad indictment of our political system that Israel's brutal attack has generated not a word of anger from MPs of our major parties. Can it be that not a single member of Federal Parliament is outraged by the sight of dead children in the arms of distraught parents?

Even those with a passing interest in Middle Eastern affairs know Israel's blockade of Gaza was the reason for the rocket attacks by <u>Hamas</u> militants. And anyone who can count knows that the Israeli military response is as disproportionate as it is brutal.

Of course, some federal politicians are outraged. But so authoritarian are our parties that dissent is treated as a crime. And aren't we the poorer for it? If these were attacks on <u>women</u> and children by Taliban forces in Afghanistan, politicians would be mounting the stump to express their moral condemnation. Yet when it is Palestinians being slaughtered, the silence, tragic and gutless, is deafening.

Phil Cleary (independent federal MP, 1992-96), West Brunswick

## Hamas' deadly goal

WHILE it is true that a permanent peace will only follow negotiations, and "doom awaits those who fail to learn from past mistakes" (Editorial, 10/1), we can also learn from past successes.

Negotiations are successful when at least one side is willing to concede some core demands, usually following military defeat.

Israel's demands are simple: not to be fired at. It has shown willingness for territorial compromise for peace, having withdrawn from most of the West Bank in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and unilaterally withdrawn from Gaza three years ago.

<u>Hamas'</u> core demands are also simple: destruction of Israel (well above the humanitarian needs of their people and a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank).

<u>Hamas</u> rejected the UN ceasefire resolution - which calls for cessation of fire, humanitarian aid for Gazans and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza - because it does not "take into account the aspiration of the Palestinian people". As long as their aspiration to destroy Israel is greater than their aspiration to provide a safe home for their people, there is no one Israel can trust or talk to.

Brian Dyskin, East Bentleigh

Joy of education

AMANDA McCleery's assault on "study for study's sake" (Letters, 9/1) exemplifies the need for the more well-rounded education offered at Melbourne University.

Sure, let's leave the real privilege of learning to the wealthy and encourage short-sightedness in our middle-class children so they never think beyond the self-made reality of "mobile phone and internet bills". What a ludicrous concept, devoting time and money to become a well-rounded individual with a global outlook who can be competitive with those who have the education that McCleery looks down on.

Australia does not need more mindless drones for the rat race. A liberal arts education, such as that offered at Melbourne, allows young people to sample different areas they might like to specialise in later. In the process, they become cultured, well-informed and able to think beyond the "world of mortgages and debt". Education is always worth the time.

Lynda Fajardo Banfield, Toorak

# Graphic

**CARTOON BY PETTY** 

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## **Body**

Both sides have claims legitimate and otherwise

MOST TALKED ABOUT

**GAZA OFFENSIVE** 

EVERYONE'S got an opinion on Israel's offensive against Gaza and it's mostly negative. The Israelis are accused of everything on a long spectrum from fundamentalist Zionist lunacy to political posturing in the lead up to February's election.

A word that's continually used to cast Israel's actions in a negative light is ``disproportionate" -- regularly quoted as if it's self-evidently true. Presumably it then follows that there could have been such a thing as a ``proportionate" response that Israel might have acceptably made (except that it was basically, as usual, ill-intentioned). Unfortunately, no one has suggested what such a proportionate response might have been. In fact, the notion of a proportionate, and therefore disproportionate, response is meaningless, a smart-sounding adjective to hit Israel over the head with. In reality, Israel's actions are a wholly legitimate attempt to wipe out the sources of the random, criminal rocket bombardment on its civilians.

But, yes, there is an underlying, chronic, long-term problem here, one that most of the world has struggled, as yet unsuccessfully, to help Israel and the Palestinians to solve for decades. Both sides have legitimate claims and grievances, as well as illegitimate ones. There's no way that Israel should simply give ground if the other side won't. Except for this critical reason: Israel is an advanced, sophisticated democratic state with powerful institutions and a strong rule of law. Therefore, for compelling moral reasons as well as pragmatic ones, Israel needs to lead the way.

Here's my suggestion: Israel offers large tracts of land to the Palestinians, including any slabs of the Holy City they want, as a one-off gift, no strings attached; then offer any help it can give to the Palestinian state to develop socially and economically. Crazy? Indeed! Of course in doing so Israel would have to come to terms with its own demons -- its deep-seated fears born of centuries of persecution, as well as its own fundamentalist fringes. But it needs to do this anyway, for its own sake.

Fergus McGinley

Hope Valley, SA

FOR both the Jews and the Arabs the Middle East conflict is about the same things, namely, tragedy and humiliation. For the Jews, the Holocaust is not just the destruction of almost an entire people, it is also the profound humiliation of knowing that Hitler's objectives were achieved with so little resistance. Likewise, the Palestinians feel ashamed that they were so easily chased from their ancestral home and were betrayed by some of their own people.

Both sides in the conflict have vowed never to make the same mistakes again. So it is pride, the worst of the seven deadly sins, that prevents dialogue and puts all power in the hands of the men of violence.

There can be no Arab/Israeli peace until both sides can come to terms with the great tragedies that have befallen them.

Stewart Malcolm

Bli Bli, Qld

ISN'T it ironic that no one in the West condemned Israel for its repeated breaches of the ceasefire by assassinating <u>Hamas</u> leaders, yet when <u>Hamas</u> breaches the ceasefire it is roundly condemned and is dealt with in apocalyptic terms? Isn't it ironic that a nation built out of the tragedy of the Holocaust fails to recognise the attrocities it commits in upholding its existence? Isn't it ironic that the same Western powers that said "Never again" can yet again turn another blind eye to history repeating itself and actually contribute to it?

Gaza is symbolic of the Warsaw ghetto -- surrounded by a heavily armed enemy that is slowly strangling them, Gazans are rising up to fight for their survival. Too many people are looking at the symptoms and not the cause of the problem.

Issam Eid

Strathfield, NSW

FAR from being a scholarly piece, Amin Saikal's latest offering (`Injustice of Israel's heavy hand'', Opinion, 31/12) is littered with logical fallacies and hurtful polemic that does nothing to shed light on the problems that exist in Gaza.

Saikal's problem with the current Israeli operation is that it has taken place during the holiday period and has targeted the infrastructure of the <u>Hamas</u> government. When else should Israel undertake its self-defensive actions? Should they arrange a time convenient for <u>Hamas</u> so that they may prepare their anti-aircraft capabilities? <u>Hamas</u> is considered a terrorist organisation for a reason. How else should Israel treat an organisation whose constitution calls for its destruction? Perhaps Saikal would prefer feather dusters at dawn?

Saikal's biggest problem, it would appear, is that Israel is attempting to protect its citizenry. His convenient ignorance of both Israel's attempts to preserve life as well as its patience through the six months of rocketry into southern Israel shows an alarming disregard for facts.

Jack Pinczewski

Acton, ACT

AMIN Saikal should know better. Gaza is accessible both from Israel and Egypt. Why no comment about the Egyptian blockade.

Marek Reicher

Caulfield South, Vic

BILL Mathew and Heather Lauterbach (Letters, 31/12) do nothing to promote their argument by using ahistorical, offensive and contemptible references to the Holocaust to attack Israel's efforts to defend itself from external attack.

Bill Anderson

Consultant Historian

Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research

Centre, Elsternwick, Vic

Why wasn't auto industry given the same message?

FEDERAL Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson is on the money when he advises the tourist industry to work harder, although his turning to electrical retailers for exemplars is a bit rich (``Tourism industry told: work bloody harder'', 31/12).

Australian tourist operators must provide value for money instead of exploiting local and especially foreign tourists: hundreds of dollars a night for a camp bed at Uluru, or thousands for a berth on the Ghan are not great value, even when the Aussie dollar is low. This is partly why so many Australians holiday in Bali and ski in New Zealand.

Ferguson's retailers of digital TV sets of course benefit from almost zero tariffs, and a comparatively high dollar alongside an artificially low Chinese yuan. What remains of Australia's manufacturers tend to be niche or highly innovative, and it would have been salutary for the minister to have pointed to some of these, which are thriving without government support.

J. Morrissey

Hawthorn, Vic

THE Government has told the tourism industry it is not offering competitive packages to attract business. Why wasn't the auto industry given the same message?

Peter Lane

Margaret River, WA

Poor educational standards

JULIA Gillard's statement (``Gillard's \$2.3bn for remote education", 29/12) of surprise about how the poor educational standards among indigenous children felt to her like a ``hit in the guts" shows how far our political leaders are removed from the grim realities and disadvantages of life in remote Aboriginal Australia. One can only hope that the proposed funding will be used prudently and effectively.

Michael Gracey

Wembley, WA

JULIA Gillard's \$2.3billion pledge to improve Aboriginal literacy is commendable but how does she plan to reduce truancy rates to make the program meaningful?

**David Crommelin** 

Strathfield, NSW

Tell that to shoe-thrower

IN a ``healthy sign of democratic values", says Janet Albrechtsen (``Talk about surrender", Opinion, 31/12), Iraqis can now ``throw shoes freely at any leader". I guess Muntadar al-Zaidi might agree if his action had not resulted in his beating, alleged torture, isolation from his family and charges which could result in 15 years' imprisonment. Some freedom, some democracy!

Len Kane

Birkdale, Qld

JANET Albrechtsen rightly describes the shoe-throwing incident as symbolic of free speech. Possibly President Bush should have returned one of the shoes after cutting out its tongue as a reminder of the former Iraqi regime's response to dissident expression.

David d'Lima

Sturt, SA

A New Year's resolution

ENJOYING my holidays, I have noticed a great number of people with aggressively `witty" statements printed on their T-shirts, such as, ``It's not that I don't understand, I just don't care."

Can I suggest a generic T-shirt for all the modern ``bitches" and ``dudes" that would read as follows: ``I am so verbally, socially and decency impaired, and hate real discourse or conflict so much, I get some neanderthal to print their words on my T-shirt. Aren't I hilarious."

As so many people seem incapable of thinking for themselves, may I suggest this New Year's resolution: Engage with the world in a loving, meaningful and honest way, knowing one might make mistakes, as might others, but if we all work together we might help each other have a better 2009. Otherwise just shut up -- verbally and ``shirtily".

Kent Maddock

Macquarie Park, NSW

Protection from sharks

ANOTHER Australian is eaten by a shark (``Victim would not have wanted shark dead, says son", 29/12) and I hear the same ridiculous statistics recited telling me that I am more likely to be stung to death by a bee than eaten by a shark.

People are inherently good at judging risk and, as such, it's not surprising that they feel more nervous swimming 100 metres offshore than driving to the shops. The risk that needs to be calculated is my chance of getting eaten by a shark while spending one hour swimming in the ocean versus dying from other activities such as smoking a cigarette or driving my car for an hour. This calculation would take into account that millions of Australians drive every day and only a handful spend more than 10 minutes in the water.

If this calculation were done, it should become apparent that driving and smoking are in fact safer than ocean swimming and that the authorities should act to protect us from sharks.

Tom Cunneen

Merewether, NSW

Gambling and investing

IF I go to a casino and get stopped at the door by someone who offers to do the gambling for me (ie, they'll take my money and charge an upfront fee and a commission on any potential winnings), then I would either run for the exit or call the cops.

The line between gambling and investing is often blurred and hopefully the current financial crisis will put the spotlight on the value of these so-called investing middlemen (whether it be investment bankers, financial planners, stock brokers, fund managers, etc).

Managing superannuation funds, for example, must be the best game in town. Millions of dollars pouring into these funds from the forced savings of unsophisticated investors whose apathy, lack of interest or understanding of super will ultimately mean little competition and a fee feast for the fund, which will gouge maximum fees and commissions. The lack of competition is best highlighted by super funds charging fees when they show negative returns -- not a bad gig for the middleman, who is rewarded for losing clients' money.

I've long held the belief that there is too much value attached to these investing middlemen. Perhaps as a result of the current financial crisis there will be more exposure and critical examination of their role.

Paul Monson

Cairns, Qld

Victoria has shown the lead

NEW national parks for the Murray River's wetland forests in northern Victoria will deliver significant environmental and economic benefits to the region (`Brumby declares national parks to protect red gums", 31/12). Logging and damaging cattle grazing in internationally recognised wetlands and river forests is clearly unsustainable and impacts upon a range of threatened plants and animals.

For the first time ever in Victoria, a joint management model between Aboriginal traditional owners and parks managers will provide new opportunities for indigenous communities and regional tourism. These river wetlands and forests are worthy of national park protection and will become some of Australia's greatest natural attractions. Now that Victoria has shown the lead, it is time for NSW and the Commonwealth to follow suit by protecting significant red gum areas north of the river and working with the other Murray-Darling Basin states to ensure forests and wetland are provided with enough water to ensure their on-going health.

Nick Roberts

Victorian National Parks Association

Shepparton, Vic

Thank you, Rowan Callick

WHAT an excellent correspondent Rowan Callick has been during his three years in China. His writings are diverse, full of human interest and empathetic to China's cultural norms.

Rowan's articles were a ``must read" and none more so than his latest one describing his grandfather's journeys to Hong Kong and mainland China (``Spot of naval gazing", 30/12). He was able to weave a fascinating link between his modern journey and that of his grandfather, whose life story could be the basis for a novel. His writings about China will be missed.

Barbara Northcott

Hollywell, Qld

FIRST BYTE

## letters@theaustralian.com.au

K.M. Gunn (First Byte, 29/12) muses that, ``even in the current economic conditions, the union movement is more concerned with increasing their own pay and improving their own conditions than they are in preserving jobs for as many as possible". The unions are finally following the long-term example of their suited superiors, it would seem.

Glen Coulton

Marmong Point, NSW

AN early joke about GeorgeW. Bush suggested that his library had burnt down destroying both books and one he hadn't even coloured in yet. So the Bush presidential library, at \$US300 million, (``Bush's library to be white elephant", 29/12) sets a new benchmark for individual book prices.

Paul Murrell

Macclesfield, SA

If Fred Nile wants to stop seeing topless <u>women</u> on the beach, then all he has to do is stop going to the beach and perving on them.

**Gavin Date** 

Marleston, SA

I do wish that the Reverend Fred Nile and his wowser mates would get abreast of the times!

John Young

Epping, NSW

Mary Nixon (First Byte, 31/12) shows her ignorance by implying that the Pope is unaware of what good there is in the world. Only people with a perverted sense of good would say that.

Ray Barbero

Pymble, NSW

Look on the positive side, Adele Ferguson (``It's time for better, not more, regulation", 31/12). If two words can sum up 2008, they are ``gravity works".

Kim Hillier

Cooktown, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## **Body**

Now is the time to revise our stance on the eurozone A DECADE ago, monetary union for the eurozone was established, and three years later the euro was born. Here in the UK the eurosceptics confidently predicted failure.

However, the euro has plainly been a success. It now outstrips the US dollar in the value of notes in circulation and has established itself as the alternative international reserve currency to the US dollar. Countries in the eurozone have survived the financial crisis in much better shape than, say, Iceland or Hungary.

In short, the disdain that British policymakers traditionally reserve for European ventures has been refuted. The euro has worked and the potential benefits are legion. They include increased trade flows, greater price transparency and lower transaction costs for consumers and businesses.

In addition, the current crisis has underscored the importance of co-ordinated international action to stabilise economies, and for the UK to be part of the eurozone would make it easier to undertake this, as well as advancing effective European regulation. It is now plain that the benefits of euro membership are many and the costs few, and it is the right time for a much needed debate in the UK on ditching the pound and embracing the euro.

Alex Orr, Flat 8, 35 Bryson Road, Edinburgh.

Remember that every rose has its thorn

AFFLUENCE as understood by Colette Douglas Home (We are all better off when we are well off, December 30) is about fine wines, holidays in the sun and a comfortable home. Does she ever wonder where her affluence comes from? She probably enjoys fresh flowers in her sitting room. These are flown from countries where high levels of pesticides are used, endangering the lives of <u>women</u> and children who work in the industry. This is the other side of affluence: exploitation and degradation.

She is affluent in a consumer society where children are born to shop. Yes, Gordon Brown wants us to spend, spend, spend so that we continue to indulge our wish for goods we don't need and that "cost the earth". It's technology we need, and research, infrastructure and homes.

Yes, we had plenty of affluence. We just couldn't handle it. Instead of raising the standard of welfare for all, Gordon Brown's policy was to overindulge the already rich. He achieved what the feckless, the work-shy, single mothers, beggars, wasters, asylumseekers and drug addicts couldn't achieve: the demise of the country's wealth and welfare. The children he neglected today will have to pay for it tomorrow. We can cope with poverty but not the challenge of affluence.

Morag McKinlay, 36A Weir Street, Falkirk.

No positive aspects to poor NHS service

I DETECT a worrying trend in the debate on the National Health Service. Accusations of "negativity", that convenient way of brushing aside any argument that seeks to address uncomfortable truths, are now to be levelled against those who are aware that there are serious shortcomings in the care provided for the sick and the dying and wish these to be addressed.

Only this week I was unfortunate enough to accompany a very sick relative to a hospital where, despite a known serious condition and a GP referral, he was advised that he would have to wait two hours to be seen. While my companion sat slumped on a hard, plastic chair in the corridor, his head in his hands, moaning with pain, I watched what passes for care in some of our 21st-century hospitals.

Fragile, exhausted, elderly people "parked" in wheelchairs for hours and ignored, denied basic human contact or reassurance; people vomiting into bowls without even the privacy of a curtained cubicle; solitary porters transferring sick patients to other departments. I could go on.

In the same week I heard from a friend who had been upset when a dying man was admitted to the geriatric ward on which she works. They had no bed for him so they moved another patient to the day room so the poor fellow could borrow a bed in which to die. Now, can I ask your chipper correspondents to provide me with the positive aspect to these scenarios, which I am quite sure are not unusual in our fabulous NHS?

Morag Chalmers, 7 Orchard Street, Falkirk.

Why not give talks a chance when *Hamas* has offered negotiations without preconditions?

R OAKLEY and A Soudry (Letters, December 31) claim that the numbers of Palestinian civilian casualties of Israeli strikes are being exaggerated. R Oakley claims Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> stated that only 15 of the first 290 dead were civilians.

While A Soudry is right that most of the dead so far haven't been <u>women</u> and children, what Haniyeh was actually quoted as saying in a Reuters report of December 28 was that 180 of the 296 were <u>Hamas</u> members, while many of the rest were civilians, including at least 16 <u>women</u> and children.

Since many civilians are adult men, Haniyeh's figures and the UN's figure of at least 62 civilians killed don't contradict each other, unless we follow the wrong example set by General Mladic at Srebrenica by claiming any man of military age is a combatant and a legitimate target.

The pattern in past strikes has been for the proportion of Palestinian civilians killed to rise, the longer bombing continues, to around half. If these strikes continue, that's likely to happen again, followed by "revenge" killings of Israeli civilians. When Haniyeh has offered negotiations without preconditions, why not give talks a chance instead?

Duncan McFarlane, Beanshields, Braidwood, Carluke.

THE letter from Pauline McNeil MSP, Sandra White MSP, Mohammad Sarwar MP and others (Letters, December 31) is stunning more for what it does not say than for the predictable and one-sided condemnation of Israel from a predictable collection of self-assumed notables. Nowhere in their missive is there any condemnation of the thousands of Qassam rockets that have been indiscriminately fired at Israeli civilian targets over the past three years. Nowhere is there any mention of the 800,000 Israelis who have to live their lives within 30 seconds of an air

raid shelter. Above all, nowhere is there any condemnation of <u>Hamas</u>'s refusal to renew its tenuous ceasefire and put a halt to its military operations, which is widely viewed as the spark that led to the current Israeli response.

The absence of any sort of balance by these individuals significantly undermines their righteous indignation. In addition, the use of titles that clearly link them to the <u>Hamas</u> side of the dispute will be noted by most neutral readers of The Herald, who will treat their condemnation with caution.

Dr Sanjoy Mukherjee, 51 Stamperland Gardens, Clarkston, Glasgow.

HOW interesting that at a time when Israel is under attack, physically and verbally, it should be the Czech Republic, a small European state that suffered more than its share of hostility from neighbours, that exemplifies a more balanced understanding of the situation.

Seventy years ago, her European friends abandoned Czechoslovakia to her fate when Nazi hordes overwhelmed her borders and subjected her citizens to barbarism and ethnic cleansing. Yet, significant numbers of Czechoslovakian refugees fought and died to protect Great Britain from a similar fate. A decade on, Czechoslovakian friends helped a nascent Israel - whose Jewish citizens of Mandate Palestine also volunteered and died aiding the Allies overcome fascism - battle similar threats from Hitler's war-time allies.

Again, today, we see European states unwilling to live up to expected standards of decency by failing to support Israel in her fight against a similar neo-fascism.

European politicians of dubious morality, while recognising the Czech Republic's balanced policy in dealing with the Arab-Israel conflict, sneer at its longstanding friendship with the Jewish state, demanding that prime minister Mirek Topolanek lower his standards in the name of expediency.

The Czech Republic foreign minister, Karel Schwartzenberg, recently stated: "Why am I one of the few who have expressed understanding for Israel? I am enjoying the luxury of telling the truth."

Stanley Grossman, 5 Mey Place, Newton Mearns, Glasgow.

FOR the past 60 years I have watched the wars and excursions between Jews and Arabs and to begin with was completely mesmerised by the much lauded audacity and apparent bravery of the occupants of the Jewish state. Only in the past 20 years have I read the true story of what the Jews did to the Arabs in their Palestinian homeland. I could cite endlessly the accounts of what happened in Palestine after 1948, but why bother when David Ben-Gurion, a great and early leader of the Israelis, did it so much better.

Ben-Gurion told Nahum Goldmann, the president of the World Jewish Congress: "If I were an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country? We come from Israel, but 2000 years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault?

They see only one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?"

He was speaking of the ruthless assassinations of the 1948 war, of the total elimination of Palestinian villages whose names were obliterated and whose occupants were backward, ill-trained fruit farmers. And, of course, of the millions of Palestinians driven in their diaspora to neighbouring countries.

Eventually, a false security was rendered by an endless supply of stateof-the-art weaponry from the US to the new Israeli state.

One thing not mentioned was the high level of education and technical training of the new Jewish arrivals, their ability to absorb information, to fight technical wars, and develop their lives in the face of great geographical adversity. Any visitor to Israel might wonder what they have been fighting for.

One unspoken question still remains with many: Why can the Jewish people not have a homeland free from enmity within and without its borders?

A patch of land and seaboard twice the size of Palestine/Israel would never be noticed in Texas or in Western Australia, so huge and sparsely populated are these places. Of course, violent objections might arise to such an idea but any country would benefit by having in their midst such a talented people as the Jews.

They would need to have their own independent nation but, free of enmity, the Jewish people would blossom and interact with the free world as they are not doing now.

It is an old solution, but anyone who rejects it must accept the ruthless logic of Ben-Gurion.

James A Findlay, 76 Dundas Street, Edinburgh.

Police should focus on crime, not accounts

THE year is now 2020 and police officers have for a number of years been trained in parallel to those in the medical profession.

We now have consultant police officers in a wide range of specialities operating in the private sector. Call on your local GP ("general policeman") with your case of housebreaking, rape or vandalism. After a brief interview you will be given a specialist appointment several weeks hence.

If you are in Bupa (British United Police Service) you will be given an almost immediate appointment at a shiny Bupa clinic or, if you are in the greater Glasgow area, Rozzer Hall.

I wish senior police officers would concentrate their minds and efforts to policing society and cease worshipping at the crumbling altar of accountancy.

Dan Edgar, Toward View, 31 Ardbeg Road, Rothesay, Isle of Bute.

Remembering the death of Holy Willie

WHILE eyes are fixed on Burns's 250th anniversary, the death of "Holy Willie" merits some attention. February 13 is the bicentenary of the death of Willie Fisher, immortalised in the Burns supper favourite, Holy Willie's Prayer.

On that night in 1809, Willie Fisher had been visiting his landlord in Mauchline. Then aged 72, he set off on the four-mile trek back to his farm at Tongue-in-Auchterless in Sorn Parish. Just two miles into his journey, Fisher was caught in a blizzard and froze to death in a roadside ditch. There is no evidence to support the traditional story that he was drunk.

I will be reciting Holy Willie's Prayer at a Burns supper on February 13, quite possibly 200 years to the very hour Fisher perished.

The bicentenary of the death of Holy Willie should be seen as a cultural landmark.

Tom Johnston, Past president, Cumbernauld Burns Club, 5 Burns View, Cumbernauld.

Governments and big databases do not mix

FEW people will be surprised to learn that 3.5 million tax records are wrong. What else would one expect from the government department that managed to lose an entire database of child benefit records, including the details of millions of bank accounts?

By government standards, an error rate approaching 10per cent is actually rather good. For comparison, onethird of DVLA's records are estimated to be inaccurate. By now, it should be clear to even the most technologically illiterate ministers that big databases and government are a poor combination. Yet the Home Office remains enthralled with its perverse desire to create ever bigger databases to manage our identities and snoop on our communications.

With penalties of GBP1000 each time for people whose details are found to be wrong on the National Identity Register - penalties imposed by the Secretary of State, not the courts - 3.5 million erroneous records could raise GBP3.5bn for the Home Office from the pockets of innocent and traduced citizens. Perhaps this is what ministers mean when they blithely suggest that the ID scheme will pay for itself.

Dr Geraint Bevan, NO2ID Scotland, 3e Grovepark Gardens, Glasgow.

National bargaining is to be welcomed

THE news reported in Andrew Denholm's article (December 31) that Education Secretary Fiona Hyslop is planning talks to consider a return to national bargaining will, I am certain, be welcomed by staff in Scotland's colleges. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the statement by Sue Pinder, lead principal for Scotland's colleges, that "colleges were always keen to ensure staff were appropriately paid for their important work" with a salary differential of GBP3500 with university lecturers doing the same job.

Sue Pinder is correct when she says: "Scotland's colleges need to be able to provide a stable learning environment to meet the needs of their students at this critical time and remain focused on their core business of learning and teaching." I can think of no better way for colleges to remain focused on learning and teaching than divesting themselves of often lengthy and therefore costly negotiations on salary and conditions for academic and, indeed, all college staff.

It remains to be seen, therefore, if college boards and principals are prepared to give up what the EIS general secretary describes as a very inefficient method of bargaining.

Marion Fellows, 53 Campbell Street, Wishaw.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



# <u>Business & Media: Media: Press and Broadcasting: Cynical Israel is</u> diminished by keeping journalists out of Gaza

The Observer (London) (England)

January 11, 2009

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# **The Observer**

Section: OBSERVER BUSINESS PAGES; Pg. 10

**Length:** 318 words **Byline:** Peter Preston

## **Body**

THERE WAS a sudden spurt in the numbers of journalists killed on duty as the old year ended. Totals (recorded at the International News Safety Institute) just topped 100 dead: among them, Hamza Shahin, photographer for the Shihab Media Agency, killed in Gaza by an Israeli bomb.

It is desperately dangerous to work and report within the beleaguered enclave. (Morbid, too, as the AP bureau chief sees his house destroyed by Israeli soldiers recording it for Facebook.) But how far can fear be used to keep journalists out?

Independent facts, independently verified, are the most vital commodity in any war. (See how Israel retreated from its claims of rockets launched from within a school when the UN said otherwise.)

Many Palestinian journalists and cameramen trapped inside Gaza are doing a brave, vigorous job; but they can't carry the weight of the 400 or so western reporters locked on the outside trying to get in, and getting an Israeli supreme court order of passage that Israel's army promptly ignores.

Let's be brutally clear. Bang goes a rocket attack on a news weekly that echoes <u>Hamas</u>'s views. UN Resolution 1738 makes a fundamental point: "International law provides unambiguous protections for journalists, even during military operations, and media installations can only be targeted if they serve a military function."

Journalism has no "military function" here. Journalism is about trying to blow away the fog of war and see how many <u>women</u> and children have died. Israel diminishes itself when it turns off the tap so cynically.

You can understand, after the kidnapping of Alan Johnston (pictured), why the BBC decided not to replace him. Yet even a small session of Newsnight studio-bound expertise from Johnston shows what we're missing. Once this is over - and we'll know it's almost over when western teams are allowed in - some of them, at whatever cost, should stay in a Gaza that needs them.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

Business & Media: Media: Press and Broadcasting: Cynical Israel is diminished by keeping journalists out of Gaza



# Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed; A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission has returned to Britain.

Western Morning News (Plymouth, UK)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 310 words

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The badly damaged boat, called the Dignity, was forced to make for Lebanon or face being sunk by the Israeli navy.

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"Everything has been put on hold now. I feel I'll be of much more help from Britain."

He decided to join the Dignity crew after seeing the Israeli air strikes on Gaza on the news last weekend.

Mr Halpin has visited Gaza 10 times under the auspices of the charity he founded, the Dove and Dolphin, which delivers emergency food and medical aid to Palestinian children.

He has also helped to set up trade links and an international medical unit which pools expertise from doctors and medical specialists from around the world.

Israel has showed no sign of slowing a blistering seven-day offensive against *Hamas* militants in Gaza.

More than 400 Palestinians have so far been killed in air strikes, including dozens of civilians, <u>women</u> and children, and more than 1,700 have been wounded.

Jenny Linnell, a 33-year-old peace worker from Totnes, is still in the Gaza Strip documenting the effect of the Israeli attacks.

She said yesterday: "Imagine the sense of isolation and abandonment when an entire population is under attack and the world seemingly sits back and allows it to happen."

Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission has returned to Britain .

Load-Date: June 11, 2009



## Britain plans stricter measures to curb smoking

Cape Times (South Africa)

December 10, 2008 Wednesday

e2 Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 334 words

# **Body**

Britain has unveiled plans to compel retailers to keep cigarettes under the counter, in the latest government move to reduce smoking. Corner shops, which typically display cigarettes on the wall behind the counter, have protested, saying the move would significantly harm their business.

The governor of Illinois has been released on bail after being charged with trying to sell an appointment to president-elect Barack Obama's recently-vacated US Senate seat. Governor Rod Blagojevich, 51, made no comment as he paid his \$4 500 bail.

Hong Kong health authorities have raised their bird flu alert level to "serious" after dozens of chickens died on a farm of the H5 virus, leading to the culling of 80 000 birds.

A German court has sentenced a Lebanese man to life in prison for trying to bomb German trains in 2006. It said the incident as the closest Germany had ever come to an Islamist attack.

Israel has allowed dozens of trucks loaded with humanitarian supplies into the Gaza Strip, the fifth such shipment permitted to enter the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Palestinian territory in the past month. The military also allowed in diesel fuel for Gaza's sole power plant and for the United Nations refugee agency.

Insurers are prepared to pay a \$1-million reward for information leading to the recovery of gems stolen from luxury Paris jewellers Harry Winston's on Friday in one of the biggest hold-ups in French criminal history. A gang of armed men, some disguised as **women**, stole gems worth e85 million.

Organised crime slayings in Mexico more than doubled in the first 11 months of this year, from 2 477 to 5 376, and could rise further as powerful drug cartels fight for control of territory, the government has said.

Hundreds of Chinese dissidents, activists and former officials have called for dramatic democratic reforms to the one-party state, according to a document released on the internet. Two prominent dissidents behind the reform charter were briefly detained before its release, one of the dissidents said.

Load-Date: December 10, 2008



## Be realistic about Gaza

Daily News (South Africa)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6 Length: 363 words

# **Body**

Hopefully this comment will go to print before the regular detractors' of Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip.

As with any comment I make on this issue, the foundations are to recognise and |acknowledge recent history.

The start-off point must be to acknowledge that <u>Hamas</u> in particular and many of the Arab states have declared their desire to see the complete "annihilation of Israel in its entirety".

Since the international recognition of the state of Israel, the Israelis have learnt the hard lessons of terrorist type attacks on their state and faith which effectively have caused them to act according to their well-effected principle of war: defence by way of offence.

When the enemy is a cowardly terrorist type, who sets up base camps for terror operations in built-up civilian areas, then launches rocket attacks and the heinous misguided suicide bombers on Israel, it is obvious that the Israelis will defend heavily by way of "offence".

And, as experience has shown, they will hit hard not only to eliminate terrorist-type attackers, but also to get the message across to the civilian population that the innocent among them will unfortunately suffer also.

Once, during a lunch discussion, one of those at the table declared that the Israelis were too heavy-handed against street demonstrations, throwing of stones and petrol bombs.

I responded that many of the stones were from slingshots, catapults, soft drink bottles and snipers. Many of these attacks were carried out from behind a wall of <u>women</u> or men in traditional <u>female</u> Muslim attire. These weapons are potential killers, so, should the Israeli defence force people on such occasions to equip themselves with same? I tailed off with "get real man!".

When the innocent are killed or injured, it is always very sad but more so when |they are unwillingly or |unknowingly positioned around or within areas adjacent to terrorist base camps.

So, with obvious and average common sense I say, please, no ancient historical rhetoric. Look to the patently obvious and average common sense, which effectively and unfortunately means that for the Israelis, "any form of conventional military response is acceptable".

D Willis

Durban

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



## We, the people, must define our future

Post (South Africa)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 881 words

## **Body**

TWO weeks into the New Year and for many, the holidays seem a distant and hazy memory. How quickly we get embroiled in the hectic pace of the working year, almost forgetting to breathe? I returned to work two days ago after a two-week break in Cape Town - sun, sand, mountain, long lunches, walks on the beach, sunsets at 9pm. I have terribly mixed feelings about Cape Town. On the one hand, it reminds me of the old lily-white pre -1994 South Africa of entrenched divisions, glaring extremities of wealth and poverty, a city cushioning its privileged minority white population within the sheltering walls of Table Mountain.

At the same time, the proximity of mountains and sea, and a gentler pace of life, also beguiles me with time for everything: work, family and friends.

Capetonians seem to have a more balanced lifestyle that is in complete contrast to Johannesburg's incessant and frenetic rhythm dictated by money and achievement. More importantly, I don't feel that my life is threatened at every given moment or that my car will be hijacked or my holiday home burgled. People park their cars on the street! They walk their dogs in parks and have neighbourhood get-togethers! Okay, so one would argue that spending leisurely days in Vredenhoek, Paternoster and Stanford, does not reflect the lived experience of the less privileged who reside in Khayalitsha or Mitchells Plain, but one can not deny that Cape Town just does not have the same palpable form of aggression. Living in Johannesburg is like being in a war zone without the bombs - manic rage-driven drivers, daily hijackings, ATM bombings, cash heists, shopping mall hold-ups, house-breaking and rape - it's a non-stop saga of violence that encompasses our lives completely. The anxiety is like a never-ending migraine, a constant throb that dictates your moods, regulates life into calculated moves dictated by a need for safety.

Yes, people are paid more, but at what a cost that comes. More and more people are choosing to move and take pay cuts in order to preserve their sanity, safeguard their lives and the future of their children. So, is a move to a quieter, safer place on the cards? I don't know. I do know that the rampant crime has taken its toll on my health and outlook on life. Nevertheless, perhaps I should also be counting my blessings. Just read on. The Zimbabwean people are at the mercy of a mad dog dictator, without food, medical care, education or a chance to offer their children a decent life. Israel continues its reign of terror against the Palestinians. Rockets rain down on innocent civilians in the heavily blockaded Gaza strip. To date, more than 800 Palestinians have lost their lives, many of them little children. Israel defends its actions saying it will use any means whatsoever to disarm and neutralise <code>Hamas</code>, citing the organisation's rocket attacks against northern Israel. Thirteen Israelis, mostly soldiers, have been killed. The retaliation is completely out of proportion.

The Red Cross and UN have accused the Israeli army of attacking medics and ambulances attempting to assist the injured and preventing the evacuation of people to hospitals and safe areas. Gaza's infrastructure has been

## We, the people, must define our future

annihilated, hospitals have no electricity or supplies and are completely unable to cope with the hundreds of injured and dying. Images of bleeding and maimed Palestinian children, who in some cases have lost their entire families, tell of the human tragedy that is unfolding. And while the world protests and the UN calls for an immediate cease-fire this genocide continues because Israel is sheltered by the might of the US.

Western leaders howl in protest against the likes of Robert Mugabe and president of Gabon, Omar Bongo, but are silent about Ehud Olmert, Israel's Prime Minister, who has sanctioned this radical air and ground incursion into an already beleaguered Gaza Strip. They are targeting civilians, deliberately saying that *Hamas* is using the civilian population as a shield. I find it frightening how a people who suffered the Holocaust can inflict such pain on innocents and all in the name of protecting their rights. Not all Israelis support the Gaza attack and I am sure that this reflects the sentiments of many Jews all over the world, who cannot abide the atrocities that are taking place in their name.

South Africa must speak out and take diplomatic action against Israel. But our government does not have a respectable record of accomplishment in international diplomacy, having failed to take action against Robert Mugabe; vetoing a UN bill that would regard the rape of <u>women</u> as a war crime; and electing to remain silent on a whole array of moral issues. As we enter 2009, the world is beset by enormous political, economic and social challenges that demand that each of us take a stand and make our voices heard. This year we vote in a new government and my resolution is to ensure that my voice will be as loud as my vote. We must all contribute towards building a democracy that upholds the rights of all, and that can only happen if we get involved in holding people in power to account, asking questions and demanding answers. Corrupt politicians, warmongers or global capitalist pirates, need not define the future. We can make an impact and should.

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



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Western Morning News (Plymouth, UK)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 310 words

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Mr Halpin has visited Gaza 10 times under the auspices of the charity he founded, the Dove and Dolphin, which delivers emergency food and medical aid to Palestinian children.

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Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission has returned to Britain .

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



## Palestinian Freedom Is Overdue

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle, UK)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: MAIN; Pg. 22-23

Length: 847 words

## **Body**

ON several occasions over the past decade or so, I and many others have wrote to the Chronicle calling for a separate state for the Palestinian people.

Over several years Israel has had resolutions put up for voting at the UN only to be vetoed by the USA and the UK.

For the last 40 years these unfortunate people have lived like prisoners under occupation by the most heavily sophisticated armed (by the USA) nation in the Middle East.

All the Palestinians want is an independent state and to live in peace.

Over the years hundreds of their citizens have been killed or injured by incursions by Israel over the border. Because they elected a <u>Hamas</u> government to lead them they have suffered more raids including their leaders being murdered.

The only armoury in their hands with which to strike Israel is homemade rockets, while 500 Palestinians, including **women** and children, have been murdered by helicopters, planes, artillery and now a full-scale invasion.

We are now witnessing arrogant Israeli leaders queuing up for television interviews stating that they don't intend to hit civilians, only *Hamas* fighters, the only people prepared to stand and fight for its citizens.

The USA has once again vetoed a peace settlement. There must be a ceasefire before there are anymore senseless killings on both sides.

An independent state for these people free from the yoke of Israel suppression is long overdue.

LES MAY,

Gateshead.

Question the Tory leader

RESIDENTS in North Tyneside will get the chance to quiz David Cameron face-to-face this Friday when he comes to North Shields.

This will be a chance for people to ask him questions in an open forum and local residents will set the agenda, not politicians.

#### Palestinian Freedom Is Overdue

I know that many people across North Tyneside, and the wider region, are concerned about the economic situation and its effect on jobs, the housing market and local businesses.

I hope as many people as possible will register for the event and come along to outline their concerns and ask their burning questions.

Cameron Direct is free and open to all residents of North Tyneside, but tickets have to be obtained in advance. To apply, e-mail wendy4tynemouth @butinternet.com.

The event will take place at Christ Church Parish Centre, Preston Road, North Shields, NE29 0LW, at 6pm until 7pm on Friday January 9.

We are facing big challenges both politically and economically don't miss the chance to put your questions directly to David Cameron.

WENDY MORTON, Conservative Parliamentary Candidate, Tynemouth.

Loyalty to our Royal family

THANK you H Sands for your loyalty towards the Royal Family who proudly honour and respect the military.

MPs sitting pretty sent our soldiers to war in Iraq and Afghanistan without proper boots and necessary equipment. William and Harry want to play their part, cowards they are not.

Gordon Brown rushes through his condolences to the families who have lost loved ones, but there's not an MP in sight when these brave men return in coffins.

Instead townspeople and old soldiers line the streets in silence to show their respect.

However, Brown is quick to praise Alexandra on X Factor. Man for the job? No, he's not.

MC, Felling.

United are in a sorry state

HAVING supported Newcastle for more than 50 years I am despondent about the current state of affairs.

I remember the days of the great Stan Seymour and the cup wins. In those days the team wore their shirt with pride.

These days it's all about money and the player is only loyal to the club that will pay the most wages.

Newcastle is a laughing stock and this is partly due to the sacking of the long list of managers.

Then there's the Owen saga. Why does he not say what he wants to do? It must be causing a disruption to other players' plans.

Andy Cole was a great player banging them in left right and centre and then what happened? He was sold. More's the pity.

It is time for Newcastle United to get real and think of the fans for once, not the money in their pockets.

PETER BESTFORD, Newcastle.

Pay a visit to the Stables

STEPNEY Bank Stables held their Annual Street Collection on December 20, 21 and 22 at Grey's Monument.

#### Palestinian Freedom Is Overdue

Once again it was a great success and raised a staggering £1,910.

We would like to thank all of those who gave so generously to our organisation.

It's always nice to be able to meet and talk to the public about our organisation and the young people who benefit through coming to the Stables.

We have many young people who, through no fault oft their own, have life problems and need a little help. Some of our long-standing members have special needs, but are ambassadors to the Stables because of their knowledge and hard work as volunteers.

We have hundreds of young people who we are very proud of because of their energy, enthusiasm and commitment.

Many of our teenagers give there time freely to help with the young children who attend from many schools and groups in the Newcastle area.

Stephen Bank Stables is open seven days a week from 9am to 5pm and everyone is welcome to visit.

SUSAN TRON, pictured, project manager,

Stepney Bank,

Ouseburn,

Newcastle.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



## Britain plans stricter laws to curb smoking

Cape Times (South Africa)

December 10, 2008 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 348 words

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Japan's Sony said it will cut 16 000 jobs, curb investment and pull out of businesses to save \$1.1 billion a year as the financial crisis ravages demand for its electronics products.

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Load-Date: December 9, 2008



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Western Morning News (Plymouth, UK)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 310 words

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Mr Halpin has visited Gaza 10 times under the auspices of the charity he founded, the Dove and Dolphin, which delivers emergency food and medical aid to Palestinian children.

He has also helped to set up trade links and an international medical unit which pools expertise from doctors and medical specialists from around the world.

Israel has showed no sign of slowing a blistering seven-day offensive against *Hamas* militants in Gaza.

More than 400 Palestinians have so far been killed in air strikes, including dozens of civilians, <u>women</u> and children, and more than 1,700 have been wounded.

Jenny Linnell, a 33-year-old peace worker from Totnes, is still in the Gaza Strip documenting the effect of the Israeli attacks.

She said yesterday: "Imagine the sense of isolation and abandonment when an entire population is under attack and the world seemingly sits back and allows it to happen."

Doctor home after his mercy boat is rammed A doctor who tried to sail to Gaza as part of a mercy mission has returned to Britain .

Load-Date: August 21, 2009



## Dev Nadkarni: Pakistan unrest world's flashpoint

The New Zealand Herald January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; General

Length: 895 words

#### **Body**

As world attention remains intensely focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict, a similar but far more serious situation with implications way beyond the Middle East may be closer than most people think.

Israel's Gaza action has diverted attention away from the fallout of November's carnage by Islamist gunmen in Mumbai that left nearly 200 dead. Indian authorities have submitted dossiers on investigations linking the planned, co-ordinated attacks to Pakistani nationals and their Pakistan-based sponsors. The reports have gone to the Pakistan Government and Western countries.

After more than a month of consistent denials, Pakistan has grudgingly begun to acknowledge evidence of the involvement of individuals and organisations in that country, despite the FBI, European and Russian investigators having established these links.

Both the outgoing Bush Administration - rather too late in the day - and Obama's regime have acknowledged that the key to making headway in the war on terror lies in dealing with the Pakistan situation first.

The biggest foreign-policy challenge awaiting President-elect Barack Obama is not Iraq or Afghanistan but Pakistan, Stephen Hadley, United States national security adviser told the Wall Street Journal last week.

"Pakistan's increasingly turbulent border region poses threats not just to the US mission in Afghanistan, but also to neighbouring India, as evidenced by the recent Mumbai terrorist attacks, as well as to urban areas of Pakistan itself - and the world beyond. If extremists succeed in destabilising Pakistan, the resulting chaos will threaten the entire region. That's why I think Pakistan is at the centre," he said.

What he left unsaid is the intelligence agencies' fears this might already be happening. The increasingly porous Afghanistan-Pakistan border has waves of Taleban militants making inroads into Pakistan. A month ago, militants bombed a Nato depot destroying dozens of trucks and communication infrastructure besides killing three workers. As a result the Western coalition's operations in a crucial area around Peshawar were temporarily suspended.

Amid rumours of possible military action by India after the Mumbai attacks, the Pakistani Army threatened to move 100,000 troops from its Afghan frontier to its border with India to the East - causing consternation through the Western countries' camp. India assured the world it was not contemplating military action but the Pakistani Army's alacrity in announcing a troop withdrawal from the western front was an emphatic signal about its priorities.

The Taleban considers India one of its main enemies along with Western nations but unlike them India is within easy striking range. It is a soft target and a great one for global exposure.

#### Dev Nadkarni: Pakistan unrest world's flashpoint

There is no doubt Pakistan's announcement to move troops emboldened the Taleban to infiltrate further into Pakistani territory. In fact, the Taleban leadership even issued media statements that it would fight India alongside Pakistani forces.

Indian media have consistently carried reports of the increasing Talebanisation of Pakistani villages where <u>women</u> are barred from being seen in public and schools for girls are being razed. Men have to wear beards and recruitment into their armies continues.

The legal system is being replaced by the Taleban's own brand of brutal, instant justice.

Not containing the Taleban's slow, but what appears to be steady, eastward foray into Pakistan immediately puts the country's nuclear hardware and infrastructure within its greater reach with each passing month. As things stand, Taleban activity is less than 200km from some of Pakistan's nuclear installations.

There is no knowing how safe and secure the country's nuclear chain of command is, what with poorly defined demarcations between the Army and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), which world intelligence agencies know is teeming with highly placed officials, many of them retired army brass, that are partial to radical Islamist causes and the nuclear establishment.

It's more a question of when, not if, the Taleban infiltrates the Pakistan's nuclear defence system. Not that the Western countries are unaware of this - but the question is how to deal with the situation.

While the West needs to do everything it can to keep President Asif Ali Zardari's democratically elected fledgling Government alive, the Mumbai attacks have pointed to the Government's progressive marginalisation with each passing week. The West is painfully aware that nothing can be achieved without the Army's help.

It can't deal with the Army directly so long as a civilian government is in place and the Army won't listen to its own Government (its reversal of the President's assurance to send the intelligence chief to India after the Mumbai carnage is a case in point).

Instead of the Gaza situation for a moment consider a scenario involving Western nations (with India included). And rather than *Hamas* they are dealing with a far more geographically widespread and nuclearised Taleban.

Instead of the 30-60km range rockets that <u>Hamas</u> has been using on Israeli targets, the scenario in Pakistan could involve dozens of 700-2000km nuclear-capable missiles ready to fly at the push of a button. What you might have is a scenario that will leave the Middle East situation looking like a bar brawl.

\* Dev Nadkarni is an Auckland based journalist.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



## Right and wrong is one big blur in Gaza

New Straits Times (Malaysia) January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 21; LOCAL

Length: 791 words

Byline: Umapagan Ampikaipakan

## **Body**

WHO are we if not the sum total of our philosophy? Those fundamental views that make up the basis of all of our knowledge. Our philosophy influences our experiences. It is the guiding principle for our behaviour. That which we believe defines us. Because it is, in essence, our natural instincts, reified.

I have always claimed to live and die by my philosophies. An impudent assertion, I know, but the temerity of my youth knows no bounds. The boldness of my claim lay rooted in the belief that I always knew which side I was on. I had an opinion, an outlook, a point of view. I always took a stand, based on the best information I could find, and hoped that it was the right one.

But things haven't been so black and white recently, and I find myself conflicted.

Over the last couple of weeks, whenever the discussion has strayed to the topic of Israel and Gaza, I often found myself sitting silent in a corner. People asked me what I thought. They asked me what I believed. They wanted my perspective. To which I usually mumbled something unintelligible while trying to change the subject. Because here's the thing. I don't know.

I just don't know.

I do know the following. I know that all wars are crimes. I know that the senseless murder of men, <u>women</u>, and children is indefensible. It is unjustifiable. I know where I stand on the morality of war. I just don't know where I stand when it comes to everything else.

And so I keep asking myself these questions. Because I am, as yet, unable to answer them. In any measure. What is the virtue of a proportional response? If your neighbour were to start throwing bricks at your home, would you want the authorities to send just one policeman, or deploy every resource at their disposal? Wouldn't you want them to do everything within their power to make it stop? How important is your security? What about that of your family?

Then again, what if you had provoked this attack? What if you had in fact built a wall around his house, and then forced him to go through countless checkpoints every time he needed to buy a loaf of bread? What if it was the constant humiliation and suffering that provoked him to throw bricks in the first place. What then?

Why didn't <u>Hamas</u> extend the ceasefire? In a poll released on Dec 11 by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 74 per cent of Gazans supported continuing the ceasefire. Was it because the last six months of the ceasefire saw Fatah making gains in the Palestinian polls? And if conflict and bloodshed is the only way for <u>Hamas</u> to remain in power, is Israel then playing right into their hands?

#### Right and wrong is one big blur in Gaza

Also, wouldn't an actual boycott of American goods and services be more detrimental to us? After all, American corporations employ tens of thousands of Malaysians.

America may be everyone's favourite whipping boy, and rightly so. A superpower should behave like one. Because while they can defend Israel's reaction, they should not condone Israel's overreaction. Which in itself should come as no surprise.

It's Psychology 101. For two millennia the Israelites have been the scrawny, spotty kid at school. The one being shoved in lockers; the one humiliated in showers. But the bullied became the bully. The oppressed became the oppressor. He grew up, got built, and developed a persecution complex. But Israel's mania is neither irrational or obsessive. History can attest to that. Six million Jews dead by the hands of Hitler's Nazis can attest to that.

No, the problem lies in their morality. The whole of Israel's morality seems to have derived from "enlightened self-interest". It was Jeremy Bentham who supposed that "a person who always acted with a view to his own maximum satisfaction in the long run would always act rightly". Jeremy Bentham was, of course, wrong.

And I am inclined to agree with Russell, who, when commenting about Bentham's supposition, said: "Tyrants have existed who derived exquisite pleasure from watching the infliction of torture: I cannot praise such men when prudence led them to spare their victims' lives with a view to further sufferings another day."

And the only conclusion that I can derive is that there are no sides. There is no longer any right or wrong. It has gone beyond that. For both Israel and Palestine, there is no fate than what they make for themselves. They have stepped so far outside the zone of proper conduct, that there may be no one left to help them. Not even their staunchest allies.

There are just too many questions. There are too many contradictions that make it impossible for me to make any kind of informed opinion on the matter. And maybe I shouldn't have to. Maybe it's just a matter of instinct. But what am I to do when even my gut is divergent?

So, tell me, what do you believe?

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

January 4, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 The New Mexican

Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; Pg. B-1

Length: 795 words

#### **Body**

#### HISTORY A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

While on his recent re-writing history tour, Dick Cheney was asked to name what had been, up to then, the high point of his vice-presidency. He replied "9/11."

I remember what I was doing on Sept, 11, 2001, and it wasn't sitting safely in a bunker under the White House. I was working on the Lower East Side of Manhattan at a college library that had lots of windows. I remember seeing smoke in the distance as I was heading to work. When I arrived my co-workers told me that the Trade Center was hit by a plane. I continued working. Shortly after that a second plane hit, and that's when we stopped working and glued ourselves to the Internet.

Things got progressively worse, I looked outside and saw people walking up Lafayette, covered in ash, and then more people, and more people. There was nothing we could do but offer them water or a place to rest, and that's what we did.

That date, 9/11, was not a high point in my life, and I struggle every day to try to understand how something like it could have happened.

John St. Peter

Santa Fe

Hostile neighbors

Having lived in Jerusalem for nine years, I am very familiar with the constant threat of terrorist attacks and the horrific devastation they cause. As much as I am saddened by the current war and its effects on the lives of ordinary citizens, the attacks against Israel for defending herself trouble me. *Hamas* has fired over 1,000 missiles into Israel in 2008.

If Mexico or Canada attempted to attack the U.S. with that number of missiles, what do you think our government's response would be?

Levi Ben-Shmuel

Santa Fe

Never-ending cycle

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How dare they? They were given lands, yet they chose independence! They were forced through checkpoints and agencies, and when they protested, they were blockaded into camps and reservations.

Some became refugees, renegades, terrorists. They fought back with primitive and ineffective weapons, and they were shown the true meaning of weaponry, and they were killed -- men, <u>women</u> and children. They were told, "We will kill 100 of you for every one of us!" yet they protested and said they would fight to the last, so they were choked even harder and starved and made to live in their own filth and squalor, and they were told, "you will strangle until you give in!"

They did, here, and we call them Indians. They have not yet in Gaza, and they call themselves Palestinians. The same story, over and over. The oppressors go unpunished, unexposed. The oppressed die, as they should.

Brian O'Keefe

Santa Fe

Partisan protests

For context, I'm not left, right, blue or red. That said, are those who usually criticize Israel now bashing Israeli retaliation in the latest Gaza horror? Among thousands of protesters, I haven't heard any outrage over <u>Hamas</u> firing rockets earlier at Israeli civilians. Did Israeli civilians deserve it because Israel's a U.S. ally?

I haven't heard any outrage over Taliban terrorists burning and beheading their way across that Pakistan valley, either. Are those butchers -- who also steal two-thirds of people's income and call it taxation, and who burn girls' schools -- "OK" because the U.S. is against them?

Knee-jerk anti-Americanism (e,g., Amy Goodman's), or knee-jerk anti-anybody-ism, makes me sad. It's the pseudo-intellectual, shallow-minded, snobbish, stubborn, self-righteous equivalent of being Redneck. And these selective protesters are the well-meaning folks!

Let's tell the truth: political positions, parties and debates will bring us only more self-righteousness, never the permanent peace, happiness, health and physical comfort we truly wish for.

Eric Schneider

Santa Fe

Dropping out's undemocratic

In the Dec. 29 letter, "Historic inauguration ruined by Warren choice," Paul Glickman states he'll no longer participate in our representative form of government -- unless President-elect Barack Obama rescinds his invitation to the Rev. Rick Warren to deliver the inauguration invocation.

Mr. Glickman needs to realize, as do many partisan Americans, that in order for our government to work as intended, we need to work together. Working together in any context requires some compromise.

Glickman may have forgotten that those he disagrees with have been endowed with the same inalienable rights that he has. That is the problem with our democracy. Everyone has a voice, even those we disagree with. But instead of having his voice continue to be heard, Glickman has chosen to become silent. I would remind him and others who disagree with our new president, that "silent" voices will never be heard. Democracy is an ongoing process that requires constant input and participation in order to work. When a single group or voice becomes silent, their causes are forgotten and our democracy breaks down.

Juan Bernardez

Santa Fe

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



## READERS' Voice

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia) January 9, 2009, Friday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P5A

Length: 774 words

#### **Body**

- -They are advertising trucks on the local channels here in Charleston. These dealers in Charleston and South Charleston need to look at the papers. We need to take a stand, not buy and minimize what we do, such as weddings. Cut out these DJs and this fancy stuff. Those things you can do on your own anyway. If you want to help the economy, be more frugal. It will help balance things back out. These prices are ridiculous.
- -I made it almost 70 years without going to the government for any help. I have worked hard all my life but it has finally come down to where I am going to have to go begging to the state. I hate it, but you have to swallow your pride sometime because it is hard to fill your belly up on pride.
- -I attended an opera in New York City and everyone in the audience had on either suits and sport coats or tuxedos. I attend the opera at the Clay Center in Charleston and people wear blue jeans, flannel shirts and are dressed like they are going to the beach. That is deplorable. No wonder they call us hillbillies.
- -Having a law against smoking in public places is not denying anyone his or her civil rights. It's an addiction just like being addicted to drugs. It can and does kill others who breathe the smoke. Your civil rights have not been violated because you can't give me cancer in a public place. It's your right to do what you want to your lungs, but you have no right to kill or permanently harm others with your habit.
- -During a recession, Manchin's ego is showing. Shame on him for having an inaugural ball.
- -The Democrat-controlled Congress is going to give Obama a mess to clean up.
- -To the person inquiring about the bus run to the veterans hospital in Huntington, the VA in Charleston daily runs a van to and from the Huntington VA hospital.
- -I couldn't care less about Manchin's second inauguration. I will never attend one, and I am sure no one I know will attend one because we are not rich enough. Have fun at a party that we paid for, the ones that aren't invited.
- -Actually, the second reader got it wrong. Christians love God and non-Christians fear him. Fear will not send you to hell. Pacifying public opinion and not strictly following God's teachings will.
- -Someone called in Tuesday defending George Bush for the Katrina disaster and saying it wasn't his fault. There were two disasters there. One was weather-related and one was federal ineptitude after the disaster. Anyone who lives in New Orleans can tell you it was a disaster and President Bush was responsible for it.

#### READERS' Voice

- -Who are the "we" West Virginians Gayle Manchin quoted? Tell the truth. The Manchins are feeding their inflated ego.
- -Let me get this straight. It's OK for <u>Hamas</u> to fire into Israel unprovoked, OK to use roadside bombs, hide weapons in mosques and use <u>women</u> and children for shields. If Israel defends itself it's wrong. All you <u>Hamas</u> supporters need to pack up and move to Gaza. Your comments are wasted here.
- -Does anyone know of a grocery store in the area that carried beef brisket, not corned beef brisket? When you ask their eyes glaze over.
- -Karl Priest has the nerve to criticize public education from which he retired, with full benefits and rights, after 30 years of teaching. He now advocates the abolition of public education. If he thinks so little of public education, why was he an active participant for 30 years in a system that he now condemns?
- -Seven hundred million dollars for a new embassy in Iraq. I think that says just about everything. How stupid can you be? I wonder how long it will take them to blow it up?
- -Greenbrier County officials may want to go to Vegas and see the attention given to the Japanese who gamble there. Tables are reserved especially for them and they play for high stakes. The Greenbrier is "ripe" for purchase by a Japanese firm now that gaming is legal at the resort.
- -The 100-acre diplomatic compound with 27 buildings in Iraq is obscene.
- -To the person who said Obama supporters think Sarah Palin made the "Russia-porch" statement, no, we all know that she didn't say it. What you don't seem to know was that the line originally came from one of her bonehead supporters and SNL just picked up on it. We're not as stupid as you wish we were.
- -For Joseph Wyatt to equate Vice President Dick Cheney with Hitler, Stalin and Idi Amin is an outrage. To think that Wyatt "teaches" our young people at my alma mater is very sad indeed. It is evident that he knows no shame.
- -Thank you to the nice lady at the St. Albans Kroger who turned in my purse at the information booth and the lady at the information booth who announced my name over the intercom. West Virginia has so many honest people.

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Load-Date: January 9, 2009



## An open letter to Annie Lennox

The Jerusalem Post January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 785 words

Byline: YORAM DORI

**Highlight:** The writer is a senior adviser to President Shimon Peres.

## **Body**

Dear Annie Lennox.

I cannot claim that I am familiar with music in general, and with British music in particular. Therefore, regretfully I must note at the outset of my letter that until two days ago, I did not exactly know who you are.

When I saw the fervor with which you demonstrated at the anti-Israeli demonstration in London and your interviews in which you slandered my people and my country in their efforts to defend the lives of our citizens in the southern part of our nation, I decided to write to tell a short story about what is happening in our country.

No, I do not intend to recall the efforts of your government during World War II to prevent Jews - the brands snatched from the fire - to reach their homeland, Israel. I have not come to settle the account of my father who, fleeing from Austria when the Nazis entered that country, was caught at sea by a British destroyer and who, with great initiative, threw all his documents into the sea and thereby foiled their intention to send him back to the killing fields. To be fair, I'll not salute your people for the Balfour Declaration, although you deserve it.

I ONLY want to introduce to you to a sweet Israeli child, joyful and full of life, whom I got to know when I accompanied President Shimon Peres on a visit several days after his having been injured.

Let me introduce you to Osher Tewito - an eight-year- old child, like any other child, British, French or Palestinian. He lives in Sderot, a small town in the south of the country. Osher, like most children his age, is a fervent soccer fan. Although I did not visit his home, I assume that photographs of David Beckham, John Terry or Wayne Rooney hang on the wall of his room, and his life's dream, surely, is to meet one of these stars in person. I learned that Osher was good at playing soccer (sometimes - as children go - he preferred it to lessons) and that he had an even greater dream in his heart: to become at least like Yossi Benayoun from Dimona, who stars for Liverpool.

The life of Osher Tewito changed in a day. It was the 45th birthday of his father Rafi. Like every good child, Osher went with his older brother, Rami, to buy a gift for their dad. Rami and Osher, who discovered on their way to withdraw money from the bank that they had forgotten their credit card at home, returned to get it, and on their way back their world was shattered. Suddenly from nowhere and for no reason, a Kassam rocket exploded near them. Osher was severely wounded and Rami was also wounded, but less severely. Osher, the soccer player and fan, lost his left leg and his right one was severely injured.

#### An open letter to Annie Lennox

You can understand the significance of losing a leg, in general, and for a boy who plays soccer in particular. By the way, the psychological harm is no less than the physical, which is in itself difficult - we Israelis are no different than anyone else in that regard, though you might have thought otherwise.

OSHER IS undergoing a long and painful rehabilitation. We are all hoping that we will see him run and scamper again in youthful exuberance. The surgeon who operated on him is optimistic and, immediately after the operation, said to Osher: "The day is not far off when we will see you again on the green soccer field." In the meantime, Osher has moved with his family from Sderot to another town 40 kilometers away from the border. (We are, after all, a small country and 40 km. is almost the center of the country.) There, he is undergoing the rehabilitation process, distanced - so he thought - from the shelling, and far from *Hamas*.

But that turned out not to be the case. During the past two weeks <u>Hamas</u> decided that it was not interested in continuing the quiet along the border and opened fire with Grad missiles on a million Israeli citizens.

For your information, there are civilians also in Israel. There are <u>women</u> and there are children. Not all are soldiers. Osher's new town has also absorbed indiscriminate firing. A Katyusha rocket hit a kindergarten. Fortunately we had evacuated the children in time. Another hit a school. Osher, with an amputated leg, now has 15 seconds to reach a shelter. A little complicated, don't you think, Annie?

And the child asks, as one of your songs is titled: "Why?"

By the way, although I do not wish to go into politics but only to deal with the human angle, it would nevertheless be worthwhile to remind you that Israel left Gaza, withdrew all its soldiers from there, dismantled its settlements, and left the vegetable and fruit hothouses from which they made their livelihood. At the same time, we provided and continue to provide electricity and water to the residents of Gaza.

What have we received in return?

A rocket on Osher Twito.

# Graphic

Photo: ANNIE LENNOX with Bianca Jagger at a press conference announcing the January 3 mass demonstration in London against Israel. British comedian Alexei Sayle is seen at center. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## **Harry's games**

Guardian.com January 12, 2009

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# theguardian

Length: 1398 words

Highlight: Welcome to the Wrap, guardian.co.uk's roundup of the best of the day's news

## **Body**

Welcome to the Wrap, guardian.co.uk's roundup of the best of the day's news

#### PRINCE OF GAFFES

Oh, dear: he's gone and done it again. Prince Harry's attempts to steal Prince Philip's crown as most gaffe-prone royal were given a boost over the weekend as it emerged that he had filmed himself calling a fellow cadet at Sandhurst a "Paki" and another a "raghead".

As the Guardian put it: "The extracts were greeted with exasperation in palace circles, where huge efforts have been made to improve the prince's image, emphasising his charity work and service in Afghanistan last year, after previous apologies for other incidents, such as the fancy dress party four years ago when he dressed as a Nazi soldier." One can only imagine the collective sigh that echoed around the palace.

So what now? The Times cites "military sources" who say that Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Fullerton, Harry's commanding officer of the Household Cavalry, could fine or demote the Prince. "The general view, however, was that the commanding officer would give him a sharp talking to and remind him of the standard of behaviour expected of an officer in the British Army," says the paper.

Broadsheets and tabloids alike had a field day analysing just how serious a gaffe Harry had actually made. Was it on a par with dressing as a Nazi at a friend's birthday party? Did it heap more shame on the royal family than that 2004 scuffle with a photographer outside the Pangaea nightclub in London?

The Independent does a sterling job of reminding its readers of those top princely mishaps. "While other members of the Royal Family have diligently attempted to avoid boosting tabloid sales with sensational headlines, Prince Harry has been relied on in recent years to provide a steady stream of 'playboy prince gaffes and scandals', it writes, before highlighting Harry's hilarious mishaps.

In the Telegraph, Colleen Harris, press secretary to the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry from 1998 to 2003 and communications director at the Commission for Racial Equality from 2003 to 2007, states with confidence: "I know the Prince, and know that he is not a racist." The real disappointment is not the prince's reprehensible behaviour, she says, but that fact that "army culture does not seem to be changing", despite huge reform efforts.

#### Harry's games

For those arguing that Harry's comments were mere lighthearted army banter, the Mirror provides an interesting insight into life as an Asian soldier in a first-person piece from former Lance Bombardier Nasar Khan, 44, who served in the 1990 Gulf war.

He explains that he was called "a 'black s\*\*t Muslim bastard' and all the names under the sun". He was not alone, he says. "Everyone I've met in the army from an ethnic minority says they've been abused." He adds, with admirable restraint: "And it's so disheartening when someone like Prince Harry is doing it as well. How can they expect to attract ethnic minorities into the army when even such a prominent figurehead calls people 'Pakis'?"

Guardian: Video nasty - Prince Harry faces racism inquiry over footage of 'Paki' remark Times: Prince Harry in hot water over 'Paki' remark to cadetTelegraph: Prince Harry's gaffe highlights a deeper malaiseMirror: Racism is never a joke ... I am utterly disgusted by Harry Independent: Harry's games - a young man who's rarely out of headlines

#### **AUTISM TEST CLOSER**

The Guardian splashes with the news that research published today will bring testing for autism significantly closer, "prompting experts to call for a national debate about the consequences of screening for the disorder in the womb and allowing <u>women</u> to terminate babies with the condition".

The paper reports that a breakthrough study by Cambridge University's autism research centre, which has followed 235 children from birth to the age of eight, found that high levels of testosterone in the amniotic fluid of pregnant **women** was linked to autistic traits, such as a lack of sociability and verbal skills, in their children by the time they are eight. The study raises the possibility an amniocentesis - the same procedure used to test for Down's syndrome - to detect autism.

The Times adds to the debate about how the ability to identify an increasing number of disorders could affect society. Journalist Magnus Linklater, whose son has bipolar disorder, argues that if we screen out autism we run the risk of losing genius. He cites Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, director of the Autism Research Centre at Cambridge, who points out that autistic males often turn out to be skilled at mathematics and engineering. Linklater argues: "So if we found a test for autism, and gave parents the opportunity of aborting the foetus, we might eliminate not just an unwanted and difficult child but a potential genius."

Guardian: New research brings autism screening closer to realityTimes: If we screen out autism we run the risk of losing genius, too

#### ISRAEL'S 'HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY'

Gaza continues to dominate the foreign pages. In its main piece on the conflict, the Telegraph reports that Israeli troops pushed deeper into Gaza's main city yesterday, with warplanes carrying out nearly 60 air strikes to combat continuing Palestinian rocket fire. The army has begun sending in some of the thousands of reservists called up when the war began, according to an army spokesman who denied this signalled a new phase to the campaign, which has entered its 17th day.

In a separate piece, it covers the cabinet briefings by the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, during which ministers agreed to give the military more scope to confront <u>Hamas</u> in the urban battlegrounds of the Gaza Strip. "Israel is nearing the goals that it set for itself," Mr Olmert said. "However, further patience, determination and effort are necessary in order to achieve those goals in a way that will change the security reality in the south."

In the Guardian's analysis of the most recent manoeuvre, which despite Israeli officials' denials, is widely acknowledged as the third phase of Israel's offensive, Chris McGreal argues that the problem for Israel lies in is defining victory. "The military and the politicians are divided not only over whether to go to phase three, but what it is intended to achieve," he says. Israel's aims of stopping the rockets and deterring <u>Hamas</u> from breaching the next ceasefire have thus far been unsuccessful, he argues. However, some in the military see phase three as serving another purpose entirely, he says. "The Israeli press reported yesterday that the officer in command of military operations in Gaza had urged the cabinet to allow the army to make the most of a 'once in a generation'

#### Harry's games

opportunity. 'If we don't do that we'll be missing a historic opportunity,' Major General Yoav Galant is reported to have said." That opportunity? "Toppling Gaza's Islamist government once and for all".

The Independent takes a more personal look at the situation as its Gaza correspondent, Fares Akram, writes a first-person piece explaining why he and his heavily pregnant wife have been forced to flee Israel. Akram, whose father was one of the first casualties of the Israeli Gaza invasion writes: "We've left our home. Like 60,000 other Gazans, we've taken our belongings and fled. Once again, we've become displaced people. Soon, there will be nowhere to run to, since nowhere in Gaza is safe."

Guardian: Ultimate aim remains unclear as government prepares for next moveTelegraph: Israel sends army reservists into Gaza StripTelegraph: Israel 'close to destroying military wing of <u>Hamas</u>'Independent: 'Soon we'll have nowhere left to run. Nowhere in Gaza is safe'

#### A WORKPLACE IN THE SUN

If you heart is sinking as you face another gloomy morning in recession-ravaged Britain, you may want to dust off your CV, as the Independent reports that the world's best job is up for grabs in Australia. The enviable job spec reads: "Wanted: one 'island caretaker'. Must be able to swim and willing to move to Hamilton Island, in Australia's tropical Whitsundays, to begin 1 July. Flexible hours, six-month salary of \$150,000 (£75,000), non-negotiable."

Apparently, no academic qualifications are needed, but good swimming skills and a love of snorkelling, scuba diving and other water sports are a must.

Mail: Best job in the world? Earn £70,000 to live on this island, watch whales and scuba diveIndependent: Wanted - caretaker for island paradise

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



# <u>Is 'Mrs. Clean' up to the task?; Israel's foreign minister is smart and tough,</u> but critics say she lacks the experience to be PM

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
January 10, 2009 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Pg. A17

**Length:** 1360 words **Byline:** Daily Telegraph

## **Body**

Tzipi Livni was born of tough stock. Her mother, a militia fighter for Israeli independence in the 1940s, is said to have injected milk into her veins to feign illness while under arrest by the British, then escaped a guarded hospital room.

Sixty years later, the country that her mother and father fought to establish is still locked in conflict, and Livni, its foreign minister, is running to become the next prime minister, with the hope that she might be the one who finally cleans up the mess.

"Israel is here and Israel is going to exist and we are going to solve our problems, including the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. This needs to be clearly understood," she said before her selection to lead the Kadima party into the Feb. 10 elections, displaying the determination that is characteristic of her.

This former lawyer, once an operative for Israel's overseas intelligence agency, Mossad, has been nicknamed "Mrs. Clean." The moniker reflects her image as a refreshing contrast with the current prime minister, Ehud Olmert, and many other politicians tainted by corruption scandals.

Now, as war rages between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza, this no-nonsense 51-year-old mother of two has been thrust further into the spotlight. To the world, to fellow citizens and to the Palestinians, she has put the case that Israel's latest foray into battle was just, and could be delayed no longer.

"Israel wants to live in peace but there are certain things that nobody can accept," she told journalists. "No state in the world would have accepted the fact that its citizens are being targeted and its children cannot go to school or to kindergartens because of these terrorists."

Livni, who has spent only a decade in politics, enjoyed a rapid rise under the tutelage of former prime minister Ariel Sharon. With her reputation for bluntness, intelligence and centrism, she has gone some way to catching the popular imagination in a country weary of corruption and political grandstanding.

She entered the fray with the advantage of what in Yiddish is called "yichis:" a solid family background, with the connections that brings.

Is 'Mrs. Clean' up to the task?; Israel 's foreign minister is smart and tough, but critics say she lacks the experience to be PM

Her parents were ranking members of the Irgun, the militant group behind the bombing of Jerusalem's King David Hotel in 1946. Her father served in the Knesset.

But from a right-wing tradition that considered settlement of "Greater Israel" the Jewish birthright, she drifted toward the political centre. When Sharon decided to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, Livni stood beside him, working to win over the public and members of her Likud party.

After the withdrawal, with Likud deeply divided, she was among the founders of Sharon's centrist party, Kadima.

Former aides speak of their respect for her analytical talents and stamina -- she's known for working into the early hours -- but some suggest that she has difficulty with the personal touch. Even her supporters fear she could be damaged by a public perception of her as aloof.

But friends like Mirla Gal, who grew up with her in Tel Aviv, have a different impression. The young Tzipi maintained both a reputation as a bookworm and a key place in the all-city basketball team; Gal says Tzipi reserves her full warmth for those closest to her.

"Being steady is about knowing how to make difficult decisions, not just relying on emotion and impulse. When it comes to her family and friends, she is extremely warm."

In Israel, much has been made of the close friendship between Livni and her American counterpart, Condoleezza Rice. When, in 2007, Time magazine named Livni as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, Rice wrote a tribute that called her "a woman of conviction, intelligence and peace: I deeply respect her. I like being around her. And I know that long after we have both exited the world stage, we'll still be friends."

Livni's main confidante and adviser in both the personal and political realms is her husband, Naftali Spitzer, an advertising executive. She is said to talk over every significant move with him.

It was her relationship with him that led her to leave her brief career with Mossad in Paris and return to Israel. The spy work was reportedly not the stuff of high drama -- mostly surveillance. But Livni, knowing it lifts her political stock, does little to silence those who make much of her days in the shadows.

As her profile has soared, she has had to give up her favourite shopping haunts in the flea markets of Tel Aviv. A vegetarian who likes wearing jeans and once worked as a waitress, she is seen these days almost exclusively in tailored black business suits.

But she still has relatively little experience of two difficult staples of Israeli politics: coalition-building and security. This has made her a target for those who think she's not yet ready for the highest office in the land.

Before the warfare in Gaza put a freeze on campaigning, her fiercest rivals -- Ehud Barak, the defence minister; and Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the Likud opposition -- were aggressively, and some said chauvinistically, trying to cast her as a liability on security issues. Both men are former prime ministers.

"It's too big [of a job] for her," read a recent poster from Likud's campaign next to her photograph.

Livni fired back with another play on words that drew on Israeli slang, saying, "Too small for me, too small for you and too small for everyone." Netanyahu's people interpreted that as a veiled sexual insult.

<u>Women</u>, although present in the top Israeli political echelon, face a special challenge here. Men who have come to prominence in the military often carry that reputation, and the security credibility it brings, on into the corridors of power.

If she succeeds in her quest for the premiership, Livni would be Israel's first <u>female</u> prime minister since Golda Meir. She is already the first <u>female</u> foreign minister since Meir held the post in the 1960s. Also like Meir, Livni has largely steered clear of **women**'s' issues.

Is 'Mrs. Clean' up to the task?; Israel 's foreign minister is smart and tough, but critics say she lacks the experience to be PM

"Livni says at every chance she gets that she is not a feminist and has never participated in legislation related to <u>women</u>'s issues, and because of this, she really is free of any feminist imagery," says Orit Kamir, a Hebrew University law professor who specializes in gender issues.

"It's a type of Thatcherism."

The Gaza war has helped Livni's security credentials, enabling her to position herself as a hawk. She came out strongly against a French proposal for a 48-hour ceasefire, arguing that Israel needed to continue its air assault on <u>Hamas</u> targets until the situation was changed more fundamentally and the rocket attacks were fully stopped.

"She is proving in a measured and focused way that she makes good decisions," says Eran Cohen, a former aide.

Before the fighting broke out, Livni had been the chief Israeli negotiator with the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, ruled by the Fatah party. Fatah is considered by Israel the moderate face of Palestinian leadership and one that they can do business with, unlike the Islamic militants of *Hamas*.

"She knows how and when to be flexible when it comes to negotiating with the Palestinian moderates, but she also knows how to deal with those involved with terror," says Cohen.

Having an election loom in the midst of a war is unprecedented in Israel. But Livni's role in managing that war seems to have boosted her prospects.

The latest polls show Kadima in a dead heat with Likud. Before the outbreak of war, Kadima's support had lagged behind. And in a poll in the Maariv newspaper in early December, 27.9 per cent said her performance in the war has improved their opinion of her.

Recently some young Livni supporters got together to make a YouTube video called Livni's Boy, a takeoff of the Obama Girl video that was a hit during the U.S. elections.

In it, a young Israeli actor named Liran Avisar is seen waking up under a giant poster of his favourite candidate and then dances along Tel Aviv's beaches and streets crooning to a hip-hop beat in her praise.

"I always knew it would be a woman who would bring change and not throw out empty slogans. I'm tired of generals who try to scare us," he sings. "I want you Tzipi, baby, and I'm not alone."

# **Graphic**

Photo: AFP.Getty Images; Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, a former lawyer and once an operative for Israel's overseas intelligence agency, has steered clear of political scandals, earning her the nickname "Mrs. Clean." She is running to become prime minster in the Feb. 10 elections.;

Load-Date: January 10, 2009



## ... And another thing

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 8

Length: 377 words

## **Body**

ANY queries about Harry's parentage can be laid to rest. He is definitely his grandfather's grandson. Now leave him alone. Ian Kerr, Camberwell

Prince Harry

WHY is it any more offensive to call someone a "Paki" because they come from Pakistan than call an Australian an "Aussie"?

Wendy Hughes, Hawthorn

GET a grip. A lot worse can be heard every day in any group of men, service or otherwise.

Paul Kehoe, The Wallaby Run

Cricket

ON SUNDAY, South Africa was beaten by a mob called KFC. When will they play Australia?

Geoff Pratt, Burwood

WHY are R.Ponting and M.Hussey in a Twenty20 side?

Neville Wright, Kilcunda

TO WHOEVER decided to relieve Chappell, Lawry, Benaud and Greig of their commentary duties on Sunday: congratulations. Boredom thresholds around Australia were reduced.

John McManus, Queanbeyan, NSW

CONGRATULATIONS, Channel Nine. Thanks to your brilliant delayed coverage, I can listen to ABC radio and, when a wicket falls, have time to get to the TV to watch it.

Colin Jones, Carnegie

Gaza

... And another thing

IF ISRAEL wants peaceful relationships with its neighbours, it will not achieve it by killing their children.

Don Bruce, Watsonia

WHILE both sides claim the other is responsible for the killing of innocent <u>women</u> and children, who will take responsibility for stopping the slaughter?

Steve Melzer, Hughesdale

PHIL Cleary (12/1), you say nothing of the <u>women</u> and children killed in Israel by suicide bombers and missiles fired by *Hamas*.

Francis Smith, Caulfield North

**Furthermore** 

MARK O'Brien says atheism is "another religion" (10/1). I'd like to share a useful analogy: if atheism is a religion, then baldness is a hair colour.

Henry Dyer, Mount Eliza

I HAD an ironic chuckle at the slip-up about jobs: "Number of advertised sobs sinks by almost a third" (Online, 12/1, 11.30am). Say no more ...

Lise Baker, Bell Post Hill

IF THE alcohol content in mouthwash can lead to oral cancer, does this mean drinking alcohol (especially high-proof varieties) has a similar effect?

Reece Marks, Bundoora

MEL Brooks would be an admirable choice to make the Medal of Freedom presentations to the Iraq war "heroes", provided he can keep a straight face.

Jim Banks, Yarrawonga

IT IS all very well having bike cages at railway stations. What about proper spaces for bikes on the trains?

Anna Crowley, Hawthorn

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



## And another thing ...; FEEDBACK letters @theage.com.au

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 10, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Letters; Pg. 18

Length: 373 words

#### **Body**

Art

THE 22-month-old artist (The Age, 8/1) brought to mind two saws most appropriate to modern "art": the emperor's clothes; and a fool and his money are soon parted. Derek G. Andrews, Warrnambool

GET out the paints, son. We're going to take care of the mortgage, once and for all.

Christian O'Toole, Pakenham

AELITA Andre may be too young and innocent to be an "angry penguin", but gallery director Mark Jamieson is naive enough to be a Max Harris.

David Seal, North Balwyn

Howard

WILL the citation on Howard's medal of freedom be written in Iraqi blood?

Kyriakos Amanatides, Glen Waverley

WHAT a beat-up. Howard is staying at Blair House for only one night. Still, it stirs up the Howard haters.

Neville Wilson, Rosanna

WILL Howard, after accepting his medal, utter the immortal words: "I did but see him passing by, and yet I love him 'til I die"?

Reg Osborne, Upwey

ONCE again, the value of a bestowed honour is demeaned by its recipient. In this case, its value is further belittled because of its bestower.

John Walsh, Watsonia

KEATING is routinely vilified for hubris but he has the grace to confine his exhibitionist tendencies to within Australia. If only Howard would do likewise.

#### And another thing ... FEEDBACK letters@theage.com.au

Jill Mazzotta, Balaclava

IF I were Nancy, I would Wake in fright.

Denis Le Neuf, Mont Albert

Gaza

AMBASSADOR Yuval Rotem, I will change my opinion about Israel when it changes its behaviour.

Sue Kitson, Ascot Vale

IF <u>HAMAS</u> hides behind <u>women</u> and children and fires rockets from civilian areas, then it must accept responsibility for the civilian casualties.

Kenneth Higgs, Lindisfarne, Tas

ISRAEL is defeating its global citizenship, surrendering its humanity and recruiting for Gaza.

Liz Conor, North Fitzroy

**Furthermore** 

I ASSUME the gentleman who helped run his son's party at Werribee will receive a bill for police attendance. Other entrepreneurs who run big events have to pay for police time.

Gerry Lonergan, Reservoir

CONGRATULATIONS, Katherine Wilson (9/1), the deliverer of a richly deserved comeuppance to Keith Windschuttle - and, I trust, a fine, young Australian.

John M.Edwards, Vermont South

THE Government wants us to limit our water use, but water companies will put up prices because we don't use enough. Are we, as consumers, the drips?

Ian Anderson, Ascot Vale

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



## **Holding the line**

Financial Times (London, England)

December 12, 2008 Friday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: ANALYSIS; Pg. 7

Length: 1600 words

Byline: ByRoula Khalaf

#### **Body**

Only two years ago, political Islam was staging a stunning comeback across the Arab world. In the Palestinian territories, <u>Hamas</u> won the 2006 parliamentary elections, routing the secular and corrupt Fatah. That surprise victory followed a strong showing the previous year by Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, which gained 20 per cent of parliamentary seats in spite of fielding only a limited number of candidates.

In Iraq, too, Islamist parties emerged as the dominant force in parliament and formed the first post-US invasion government. Even in Saudi Arabia, which had its first - limited and local - election in 2005, relative liberals were roundly defeated by Islamists. For the first time since the 1991 Algerian debacle, when an Islamist party's victory was thwarted by the army, triggering a decade-long civil war, Islamists who had pressed for engagement in the political process felt vindicated.

But any celebrations were short-lived. For as Islamists flexed their political muscle, they heightened the anxiety of the Middle East's autocratic rulers and their western backers. The backlash has been sweeping.

Some western governments might be tempted to take comfort in the setbacks suffered by groups that often hold deeply anti-American views and promote social policies that would undermine the few rights now accorded to Arab <u>women</u>. Yet it is Arab democracy - and the region's future stability - that has been dealt a blow, given that Islamists remain the main opposition and that a democratic future excluding them is difficult to imagine.

Indeed, analysts say that the danger now is that the setbacks for political Islam will undermine moderate elements within these movements and strengthen conservatives. They are already also contributing to a deepening apathy among voters tired of casting ballots that do not lead to change.

Palestinians were the first to be made to regret their vote, as western governments - and many Arab states - shunned *Hamas*. Divisions with rival Fatah deepened, tearing apart Palestinian society. In the conservative Saudi kingdom, the results of the municipal vote convinced rulers that the experiment should not be repeated.

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, meanwhile, has paid a heavy price for its electoral gains. Unnerved, the Egyptian regime has not only intensified its crackdown on the group but also ensured, through constitutional amendments, that the Islamists cannot wrest control of the state. By the time Egypt held local elections earlier this year, the Brotherhood was driven to call for a boycott after the vast majority of the candidates it backed were barred.

#### Holding the line

No wonder, then, that Islamists are questioning the merits of their embrace of the political process. Although Islamist officials prefer to play down the dilemma they face, analysts point to a debate within top leaderships over whether political participation is worth pursuing. Some officials are arguing that Islamist groups should give up on participating in elections and focus more of their attention on proselytising and social work.

"Political participation has been the strategic choice of most Islamist movements since the 1990s - every option other than political participation, whether overthrowing regimes, or working only in the social sphere, was going nowhere," says Amr Hamzawy, of the Carnegie Endowment's Middle East Centre. "But there is a real debate now - what to do with the fact that the outcome of political participation has also not led to anything."

Even Islamist groups that have faced fewer domestic or international restrictions, as in Jordan and Morocco, are under pressure to justify their political participation to increasingly sceptical followers, having performed worse than expected in recent elections.

In Morocco, for example, the Justice and Development party (PJD), which is recognised by Washington as the most moderate of Arab Islamist groups, scored only modest gains in the September 2007 parliamentary vote - a disappointing showing that its leaders blamed on vote-buying by its rivals as well as a record low turnout. Indeed, the result of the poll was seen, at least in part, as a boon to the more radical Islamist group, Justice and Charity, which refuses to engage in what it maintains is a rigged political game.

Mustafa Ramid, a PJD official, says participation remains the best of the bad choices available to Islamists. But he acknowledges that, given parliament's restricted powers (real authority in Morocco still lies with the monarchy), some of the party's supporters may no longer be convinced of that choice. "When you participate and you notice that the regime does not want a real democracy, you do ask yourself whether participation makes sense - it is a legitimate question," he says.

The reversal of Islamist fortunes testifies to the dogged determination of Arab regimes to monopolise power and the inability of the US to come to terms with the rise of political Islam. It was after the attacks of September 11 2001 that the administration of President George W. Bush held up democratisation as an essential antidote to the radicalisation of Arab societies, pressuring existing regimes to reform their political systems and giving the Islamist opposition a new opportunity.

Yet the administration could not overcome its fear of Islamism. Nor could it accept that democracy would produce parties fiercely opposed to its foreign policy. The experiment was complicated by the fact that, while some Islamists operated in peaceful environments, others were directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Western analysts had assumed that participation would convince <u>Hamas</u> and Lebanon's Hizbollah, the militant group, which is also a powerful political party, to lay down their weapons. But the Islamists insisted that their military wings are tied to the conflict with Israel, not to the domestic scene.

So, after a brief flirtation with Arab democracy, the US found safety once again in the arms of existing regimes. With its authority in sharp decline as its Iraq occupation unravelled, its Arab allies, most notably Egypt, had a free hand to resort to the old habit of repressing the Islamists.

But that too has its costs. Khalil al-Anani, an Egyptian analyst who was a visiting fellow at the Saban Centre for Middle East Policy, blames the "scorched earth" policy of governments for the growing appeal of the Salafi movement - groups preaching a message that rejects political involvement.

"The Muslim Brotherhood and other moderate groups are losing their appeal before the Arab public perhaps because they are focusing on politics and neglecting religion . . . so Salafis are sliding up to centre stage," he recently wrote in Egypt's al-Ahram weekly. "If anything, this is a moment of truth for moderates. Either they connect once again with the public, or they embrace irrelevance."

Perhaps most worrying is that repression has disrupted an evolution among Islamists towards greater acceptance of democratic rules. Though they still define themselves as seeking to establish a state based on Islamic law or sharia, many Islamist groups are less rigid when it comes to the application of their aspirations. According to Mr

#### Holding the line

Hamzawy, Islamists who have been consistently included in the political process, such as in Morocco or Jordan, tend to become more flexible.

"When you participate in a stable manner, there is also a de-prioritisation of issues relating to morality," adds Mr Hamzawy. "While the Muslim Brotherhood is confused over its priorities, 90 per cent of the [Moroccan] PJD's platform [in the 2007 parliamentary elections] was about public policy issues."

Even in Egypt, however, the Muslim Brotherhood's attempt to draft a programme was a sign of political maturity. Last year the group sent a copy of a proposed agenda to dozens of experts, soliciting comment. Some of the content provoked outrage, not least its stipulation that <u>women</u> and non-Muslims be barred from the office of head of state and its call for a religious council that would vet government decisions. Still, the exercise spoke of the Brotherhood's need to act like a political party (even if the authorities would not allow it to form one).

Islamist officials who still advocate the route of political participation insist that they are not as weakened as they appear. They argue that, with a less ideological American administration taking office next month and economic troubles accumulating, governments in the region could come under renewed pressure for political reform.

Nabil al-Kofahi, of Jordan's Islamic Action Front, says that although regimes have stagnated, Arab society has evolved, with greater access to free media and the internet, and this could help the Islamist opposition. "People are more aware today and less dependent on the state, and governments' legitimacy has not improved," he says.

Ali Fayad, who runs a Beirut research centre affiliated with Lebanon's Hizbollah, says the Arab world's political crisis has been overshadowed in recent years by the oil-fuelled boom. Now that the boom is ending, he contends, political troubles will rise to the fore again, and the vulnerability of governments will become more apparent.

Essam el-Erian, a Muslim Brotherhood official, stresses that his organisation - founded 80 years ago and forever in a struggle with Egyptian regimes - can be patient. "Our work is about change in the future," says Mr el-Erian. "We were not in parliament throughout the decade of the 1990s, but our popularity did not suffer. You can disappear from parliament for 10 years but you do not disappear from society."

Load-Date: December 11, 2008



## 42 killed after Israeli shells blast UN school

The Express

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: NEWS; 10 Length: 353 words

Byline: By Ben Raymond in Tel Aviv and Padraic Flanagan in London

## **Body**

FORTY-TWO <u>women</u> and children were killed yesterday when an Israeli tank blasted a school in Gaza where hundreds were seeking refuge from attack.

Two shells exploded outside the United Nations Fakhoura School in the Jabalya refugee camp near Gaza City, where 350 people had taken cover in squalid conditions from the advancing battlefront.

The explosions blasted shards of jagged shrapnel towards people inside and outside the building.

Speaking shortly afterwards, US President-elect Barack Obama said: "The loss of civilian life in Gaza and Israel is a source of deep concern for me."

He was commenting for the first time since the conflict began.

But Mr Obama said only US President Bush would speak for American foreign policy at this time. He would have more to say after his January 20 inauguration.

Last night Al Qaeda said the offensive in Gaza was part of a crusade by the West against Islam and accused President-elect Obama of complicity.

In an internet message the Islamist terror group's second-incommand, Ayman al-Zawahri, said: "What you are facing now . . . is a link in a chain in the Zionist crusader campaign on Muslims and Islam. These attacks are Obama's present to you (Palestinians) before he takes office."

Yesterday's blast was the second Israeli strike on a UN-run school in a day. Earlier UN officials said at least three Palestinians died when a school was hit in the Shati camp, north of Gaza City. In another incident 13 people were killed when Israel bombed an apartment block, which collapsed on families trying to shelter in the lower floors.

"There's nowhere safe in Gaza.

Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised, " said John Ging, the top UN official in Gaza, speaking at its largest hospital.

Israeli ground forces hunted <u>Hamas</u> targets in close-quarter combat around Gaza City, Khan Younis and Rafah. Five Israeli soldiers were killed and 20 wounded.

#### 42 killed after Israeli shells blast UN school

Prime Minister Gordon Brown called the crisis the "darkest moment yet for the Middle East".

But he added he was "hopeful" the basis for an immediate ceasefire could be found and called for borders to be opened under international supervision.

# **Graphic**

A Palestinian carries a wounded boy to a Gaza City hospital yesterday

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



# Security risk forces state to drop evacuation plan for Filipinos in war-torn Gaza

#### BusinessWorld

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. S1/12 Length: 362 words

Byline: AFP and Emilia Narni J. David

## **Body**

The government has abandoned an attempt to evacuate Filipinos from the war-torn Gaza Strip as fighting between Israel and *Hamas* intensified, officials said yesterday.

"Plans to have a small group of Filipinos join a Red Cross convoy [Monday] had to be abandoned due to the dangerous and dire security situation," Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Esteban B. Conejos, Jr. said in a text message to journalists.

He said six Philippine nationals - four children, their mother and a nun - were unable to join the convoy.

"We have been advised by our security people to suspend any plans to evacuate our nationals until the situation is normalized." he said.

"All Filipino nationals have been told to remain indoors. No evacuation of any foreign nationals from Gaza has taken place today," he said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs initially said 66 Filipinos wanted to be evacuated but the number went down to six on Sunday.

According to the department, there are 108 Filipinos living in Gaza, including children.

It said around 20 were women married to Palestinians and only one was considered an overseas worker.

Mr. Conejos said some of the <u>women</u> found it difficult to leave their Palestinian husbands as the Israeli government was allowing only Philippine citizens and their children to leave Gaza.

He said some of the women still retained their Philippine citizenship despite living in the Gaza Strip for 15 years.

Mr. Conejos said many of the **women** also held Palestinian identity cards.

Philippine embassy officials in Israel said the Filipinos were afraid to leave their homes.

Mr. Conejos said: "It's very difficult to move because of the ground fighting. Many of [the Filipinos who wanted to be repatriated] changed their mind for fear of safety."

Security risk forces state to drop evacuation plan for Filipinos in war-torn Gaza

The evacuees should have been moved from Gaza to Amman, Jordan for flights to Manila.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it will make arrangements should others decide to leave Gaza once the security situation normalizes.

Meanwhile, the Department of Labor and Employment said that there is only one overseas Filipino worker - Isabelita Balala - in Gaza. Labor Secretary Marianito D. Roque, however, said Ms. Balala refused to leave.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



# <u>Protesters in Richmond condemn Gaza campaign; Demonstrators rally to</u> demand fairness for the Palestinians

Richmond Times Dispatch (Virginia)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: AREA/STATE; Pg. A-9

Length: 356 words

**Byline: ZACHARY REID** 

Times-Dispatch Staff Writer

## **Body**

A mixed lot of protesters calling themselves the Coalition of Conscience fought off a late-afternoon chill yesterday to stage a pro-Palestinian demonstration in front of Richmond's City Hall.

The group, about five-dozen strong, voiced opposition to the Israeli bombing of Palestinian targets in Gaza.

"The atrocities that are happening to Palestinians, I've never seen anybody do anything like this against a populated area," said Jameel Abed, proprietor of the Mediterranean Bakery & Deli in western Henrico County and a native of Jerusalem. "What's happening, everybody is watching but nobody is doing anything."

He said he was particularly appalled at the number of innocent women and children caught in the middle.

While he has spent his lifetime waiting for a promised Palestinian homeland - the United Nations began promising as much about the time Israel was created in 1948, two years before Abed was born - he said he's still hopeful.

"We will never give up hope," he said. "When you do, you're doomed. There's hope.

"We hope [President-elect Barack] Obama will have a different way of handling the situation," he said.

Fellow protester Moutaz Abdeen said he, too, was casting a wishful eye on Washington in the coming month.

"We are not here to defend *Hamas*," he said. "We are here urging our U.S. government to give us fair play in the Middle East. We'd like our government to have a fair policy toward the Middle East."

The group decided to set up shop on East Broad Street because of its proximity to local, state and federal government offices, organizer Umar A. Kenyatta said. The relatively close setting of a bit of national history came in handy, too.

"A few miles from here, Patrick Henry said, 'Give me liberty or give me death,' " he said. "That must have a universal application."

Protesters in Richmond condemn Gaza campaign Demonstrators rally to demand fairness for the Palestinians

The gathering was peaceful, if understated, on a day when most nearby government offices still were closed for the holidays.

The usual buzz of rush hour was absent as the sun was setting just before 5 p.m. An occasional car passed with horn atoot, but no one stopped.

Contact Zachary Reid at (804) 775-8179 or zreid@timesdispatch.com

# **Graphic**

**PHOTO** 

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



## **UNDER ATTACK: GAZA**

The Mirror

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Eire Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8 Length: 318 words

## **Body**

THE BBC has spoken to a few ordinary citizens in Gaza about their experiences as the Israeli tanks roll in. Here are their stories:

MUHAMMAD ABUSHABAN, Gaza City Last night an F16 plane attacked a civilian car parked at the end of our road, 20 metres away. We were all downstairs at the time, the noise from the explosion was terrible, the whole house moved. The car is totally destroyed, but thank God no one was in it. Apart from that, nothing is too close in my area. But about an hour-and-a-half ago a lot of noise and huge explosions started up. We're not sure where from. We get very little news. I heard this morning that friends of mine, in the far eastern areas, were taken away by the Israeli army. My family is OK, we don't put ourselves in danger.

TAMER, Beit Lahiya Can you hear it outside? The Israeliar my are approaching my area and it's very intense outside. I'm in the northern part of Beit Lahiya, if you look from the window you can see the tanks quite nearby, and lots of smoke. All we can do is listen to local radio. The majority of the stations are *Hamas* and they don't always give exact information. Israeli radio in Arabic keeps breaking into the local broadcasting and repeating the same message: "For your own safety we ask you to leave your house and go to the centre of the city." They don't say which city. Explosions can be heard What you are hearing is firing from tanks. It's becoming very heavy.

FAHMY SHURAB, Khan Younis I spent two hours today looking for somewhere selling bread.

After that I gave up, because even if I'd spent 10 hours I still couldn't find any, even the biggest bakeries were empty. Most of the time I stay at home looking after my mother, grandmother, wife and child, younger brothers and sister. I only leave for important things like bread.

My family is very scared. They listen to the radio and say: "Oh, our turn is coming soon, the Israelis are coming."

## **Graphic**

GRIEF Palestinian women mourn dead

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

#### UNDER ATTACK: GAZA



# THE WEEK

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; GENERAL; Pg. 5; THE WEEK

Length: 361 words

#### **Body**

Dec 29 - Jan 3

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"If you had radio eyes you could look through the continent and see the subcontinent under us, and it would look as clear as glass for miles and miles." Bring on the thick lenses, says University of Hawaii Professor Peter Gorham, who is in Antarctica with a team of scientists hoping to take the measurements of neutrinos, high-energy invisible elementary particles from cosmic rays, using a balloon fitted with 40 antennas.

Super yacht: Wild Oats takes the Sydney to Hobart race line honours for the fourth time, beating second placegetter Skandia by just over an hour, despite a mid-course collision with a shark.

"I've had some individual highlights here, but lost test matches and drawn test matches, so this one takes the cake." The Proteas' series- winning victory over Australia at the MCG is sweet revenge, says veteran South African batsman Jacques Kallis.

"They say half a cake is better than none, but I'm sorry, they've destroyed my million- dollar apartment." Elderly Thorndon resident Constance Baker, above, whose once- panoramic views of Wellington and the harbour have been blocked by a new development, and now wants compensation.

No truce: Israel rebuffs international pressure for a 48-hour pause in its aerial bombing assault on the <u>Hamas</u>- ruled Gaza Strip, where the death toll after six days is estimated at 400, at least 62 of whom are believed to be noncombatant **women** and children.

"I'm very aloof from politics. I have to be . . . if I took up a stance, then millions would follow me like lemmings." We couldn't possibly comment. Dame Edna Everage, aka Aussie comedian Barry Humphries, in an interview to launch a range of Dame Edna cosmetics.

Waiting, hoping: Rescuers pluck five lost boaties - two adults and three teenagers - from the appropriately named Wait N Sea after a 28-hour ordeal in big seas off the Maketu coast.

"Yeah, probably. I don't know." Dr Ngatata Love becomes a Principal Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, but isn't sure if he will front up to actually collect the gong.

Me ginga: Analysis of fossil bones reveals Neanderthals living in Europe were probably red-haired and freckled.

#### THE WEEK

Load-Date: January 28, 2009



## News in brief

The Jerusalem Post January 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 351 words

Byline: Etgar Lefkovits, Matthew Wagner, Ruth Eglash

## **Body**

#### Police restrict Friday prayers

Limits will be placed on the entrance of Muslim men to the Temple Mount on Friday, due to the weeklong IAF assault on *Hamas* in Gaza, Jerusalem police announced late Thursday amid a heightened security alert.

Arab men under the age of 50 will be barred from Friday midday prayers due to security concerns. Those above 50 with Israeli ID cards - as well as **women** of any age - will be allowed into the compound.

\* Etgar Lefkovits

Olim hot line serves Gaza-area families

Since the Immigration and Absorption Ministry opened a hot line on Wednesday afternoon for new immigrants living near Gaza, about 70 families have called. "Most of the callers are Russian speakers, but there have also been Spanish, French, Amharic and even a few English speakers," said Boris Herman, who heads the ministry's information center.

"Compared to the calls we got during the Second Lebanon War, most of the callers are fairly calm," added Herman. "We've had only a few people asking to move temporarily from the South to a place that is out of range of the Kassams and Grads."

Herman added that "the most common calls have been complaints that the alarms cannot be heard and that the bomb shelters are inaccessible, or whether or not they can come out of their shelters."

The hot line number is 12-55-08-10-10.

\* Matthew Wagner

NGO works to save animals in South

Non-profit organization AHAVA, the association for saving animals, put out a call Thursday for volunteers and funds to save hundreds of dogs and cats that have been abandoned in the South as residents flee their homes from the deadly rocket barrages.

#### News in brief

According to AHAVA, more than 40 dogs and some 70 cats have already been rescued from the region, three of them in serious condition. The association said it desperately needed temporary homes for the animals, as well as families willing to adopt them. In addition, the organization needs donations of food and medicines, and pet owners who are willing to donate their animals' blood. Those interested in helping can leave a message at (03) 643-9010 or e-mail <u>animalsavers@gmail.com</u> \* Ruth Eglash

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## *50/50*

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 10, 2009 Saturday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: SATURDAY; Pg. 62

Length: 348 words

## **Body**

SO the Rudd Government now has Vegemite Watch.

Gordo, Keilor

NOW that Bill Farrow is back in the money, can we assume he will do the right thing and use it to pay back some of the money to the investors who lost money in his grandiose Pyramid scheme? Somehow I don't think so.

Geoff Ireson, Langwarrin

THE short-term impounding of hoon cars is far too lenient. In worst-case scenarios the whole vehicle should be crushed.

Paul Murchison, Kingsbury

I FEAR Lleyton Hewitt might have put the wrong type of fuel into his lawnmower.

Karlo Svetec, Norlane West

ZARAH Garde-Wilson can now breathe easy with publicity queen Roberta Williams no longer her friend. A fresh meaning to the friends/enemies conundrum.

Max Adams, Barwon Heads

PALESTINIANS haven't enough money for bread and other food, and yet their elected leaders, <u>Hamas</u>, have enough money to buy unlimited amount of arms and missiles including new long-range rockets that can reach Tel Aviv. Palestinians sure have strange priorities.

Michael Burd, Toorak

RICK Sadowski (50/50, January 8), the reason it's so cold in Kiev, London and Munich has nothing to do with the lack of global warming, but is because it's winter. Didn't you pay attention in geography class?

Paul Lenkic, via email

HOW did we get by with seeds on our watermelons for all those years? Gee, we had it tough. What were we thinking?

50/50

Steve, via email

TO Jenny Schneider (50/50 January 08): parking on a nature strip is a parking offence, not a traffic offence, and does not carry a three-point penalty. Ring your council if you have an issue.

Geoff Pike, Diamond Creek

PEOPLE who wander up to the smoke counter at the supermarket (50/50, January 1) are served first because they haven't got as long to live as the rest of us.

Marg Mitchell, Melton

JUST love Sam Kekovich and his ads to pieces but unfortunately cannot afford to buy lamb, it's cheaper to buy a beef steak.

Gloria, Preston

ROY Commerford (``<u>Women</u>'s tennis cops a serve", January 8) says <u>women</u> should be equal to men in the tennis and play five sets. Two more sets of grunting? You must be kidding.

Tricky Dick, Strathfieldsaye

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



## Duke Gaza vigil highlights human cost

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 The Duke Chronicle via U-Wire

Length: 911 words

Byline: By Naureen Khan, The Duke Chronicle; SOURCE: Duke

Dateline: DURHAM, N.C.

## **Body**

Following an emotional week for Muslim and Jewish communities, approximately 100 Duke University students and members of the community gathered on the Chapel steps to make a plea for peace during Friday evening's "Vigil for Gaza."

The event, sponsored by the Arab Student Organization, the Muslim Student Association, Duke Against War and the Interfaith Dialogue Project, was designed to be a platform for individuals to express their grief for the Palestinians caught in the crossfire, organizers said.

"We gather here as a cry to humanity for an immediate end to the suffering of the people of Gaza," sophomore Yasmina Chergui, president of the Arab Student Organization, said to the attendees. "Our intention is not to draw attention to the perpetrators of the violence but rather to take a moment to place ourselves in the shoes of the victims."

Keeping with this spirit, the presentation began with a slideshow illustrating the human cost of the war-images of rubble-strewn streets, grief-stricken family members and dead children wrapped in Palestinian flags flashed across the screen as the Black Eyed Peas' song "Unison" played in the background.

"I appreciated the vigil's organizers' attempt to begin on a universal, human note," Rabbi Michael Goldman, of Duke's Freeman Center for Jewish Life wrote in an e-mail Sunday. "Even more important, one of the heads of MSA approached me before the rally just to make sure that I was alright. She expressed a genuine desire not to let the conflict, and the way it plays out on our campus, to jeopardize friendships. I thought that was very mature."

Despite organizers' insistence that the event was a vigil, not a protest, at moments the tone became political. Faisal Khan, a staff assistant in the philosophy department, urged attendees to call for an end to the conflict while MSA members collected donations for the Palestinian victims and signed up participants for a political demonstration in Washington, D.C., against the offensive.

Palestinian journalist and blogger Laila El-Haddad, Trinity '00 and a former Chronicle columnist, compared conditions in Gaza to those in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943, decrying "the illegal occupation of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem" and calling for a free Palestine.

"It is incumbent upon all of us to speak out for peace and justice for all Palestinians and Israelis," she said. "We must not only call for an end to arms-whether they are Palestinian rockets or Israeli laser-guided missiles-but we must also address the underlying cause of it all. We must demand an end to Israel's illegal occupation."

#### Duke Gaza vigil highlights human cost

Junior Rachel Silverman, a Jewish student and former president of Duke Friends of Israel-who wrote a letter to the editor in The Chronicle last February condemning El-Haddad's appearance at a similar peace vigil-again said that although the vigil was in good taste for the most part, she did not appreciate the speaker's comments.

"I just thought she was very offensive and inflammatory," Silverman said. "She compared the situation in Gaza to the Holocaust, and I thought that was very unfair."

Silverman was one among several members of the Jewish community who were in attendance, including Goldman and current Duke Friends of Israel president Max Kligerman, a sophomore.

"Even though we had some basic disagreements, we can agree on the tragedies of the conflict, and that is enough to bring us together," Kligerman wrote in an e-mail Sunday. "The vigil was for the most part very respectful and well done."

Duke Friends of Israel for its part will begin a campaign to educate the campus about the Israeli side of the issue, beginning with a set of fliers advertising its own set of facts, he said. Kligerman wrote in an e-mail to the DFI listserv that the purpose of the fliers is to "help shed light on the conflict and... defend Israel's actions."

"Did you know... <u>Hamas</u> hides their arsenal of weapons in civilian neighborhoods, even under elementary schools and hospitals," one draft of a flier reads.

"We decided to launch this campaign because many members of the Jewish community on campus felt that the conflict was being depicted improperly and were very upset by this," Kligerman said, referring to fliers posted by MSA and ASO advertising the vigil.

The death toll in the conflict, now in its 17th day, has topped more than 800 Palestinians, nearly half of whom are reported to be <u>women</u> and children, and 13 Israelis, according to United Nations estimates. Casualties have been quickly mounting since Israeli forces launched an air and ground offensive into Gaza Dec. 27 in response to rocket fire from <u>Hamas</u>, an organization that controls the area and is considered a terrorist group by most Western nations.

A common refrain repeated by speakers was an appeal to Jewish and Muslim communities to maintain and strengthen their bonds of friendship, in spite of conflicting views.

"We all have personal opinions and clear disagreements, and that's when intellectual, ethical and moral tests arise," Muslim chaplain Abdullah Antepli said at the vigil. "I personally believe that what's been done to the victims in Gaza-innocent civilians in Gaza and keeps happening as we speak-is neither acceptable nor justifiable.... But at the same time, we should continue the friendships, partnerships, coalitions and alliances that we have had on this campus and continue to do the common work together as we are part of this one community."

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009



## **Readers Write**

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday
Metro Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8A

Length: 897 words

## **Body**

LETTER OF THE DAY: Family struck by cancer is overwhelmed by compassion

There are no words that could come close to expressing the gratitude for the overpowering show of support and compassion my family has received recently. What started out as a small, kind gesture of love and dedication by my Cub Scout pack by jumping into the frozen waters of Lake Minnetonka for the "On It & In It" ice plunge has escalated into something too large for my family to get our hearts and emotions around.

From my Scouts, who set the stage, to Bill Wenmark, the founder of the Active Life and Running Club that sponsored the plunge, to Nick Ruehl, the mayor of Excelsior who took the time to greet us, to every newspaper and television station that took the time to hear and air or publish our story, and to especially all of our new "friends" who just stopped by and with whom we were able to share a few precious moments, laughs, tears and hugs at the BayView Event Center -- not to mention the overwhelming support from those who heard our story and have called to offer your support and prayers -- you are all wonderful, amazing individuals.

I am humbled by the tremendous show of support, and my family and I wish to express an enormous heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who has touched our lives.

DAR, HELEN AND JESSE DURANT, PRINCETON, MINN.

#### **RECOUNT SAYS IT'S FRANKEN**

Despite critics' claims, process was open

A Jan. 6 letter writer states that it was a "Democratic sleight of hand amounting to corruption beyond measure" that allowed Al Franken to seemingly win the election.

But it was apparent to everyone following this election that the recount was above-board and conducted in plain view for everyone to see.

It wasn't done behind closed doors; voters weren't denied their rights to vote, and the Supreme Court of the United States didn't step in to stop the recount process as was done in Florida in 2000. All parties had ample time to view and review the recount process and did so during the recount. This is democracy at its best.

STEVE KOZICKY, MINNEAPOLIS

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The new motto for the Secretary of State's office should be: Making sure almost every vote is counted -- and some are counted more than once.

#### MARK JOHNSON, EDINA

It is ironic that the same Republicans who decry the work of "activist judges" in issues of same-sex marriage, affirmative action and other matters of justice will now go crying to those judges to overturn the very democratic, legal and bipartisan process that has resulted in Al Franken's election as our next senator.

MEG RILEY, MINNEAPOLIS

- - -

After our recent voting debacle, I can just see everyone suggesting that the answer is instant-runoff voting. I have just one question: If voters cannot follow the simple instructions to fill in an oval, does anyone really think that they'll be able to rank their voting choices in order of preference?

MIKE MCLEAN, RICHFIELD

---

The next time a letter writer wants to accuse the Franken campaign and the DFL of cheating or vote fraud, I sure wish they would provide some evidence alongside their diatribe. Without evidence, it just appears like sour grapes from someone who supported the losing candidate.

DEAN CARLSON, MINNEAPOLIS

#### ISRAEL AT WAR WITH HAMAS

There's been a state of war in Gaza for years

I read with amusement that <u>Hamas</u> has called for a "day of wrath" against Israel. What makes such a day different than the other 364 days of the year? A culture that teaches its children from their earliest days to despise Jews while wishing for, and actively participating in, their deaths defies all logic and deserves its fate at the hands of the IDF.

JOHN RAUSTADT, PRIOR LAKE

---

There can surely be no more disastrously fitting end to eight years of Bush "foreign policy" than the Israeli Defense Forces' brutal attacks on the impoverished civilian population of Gaza. This is a humanitarian outrage that will bring neither peace nor prosperity to Israel or its allies.

FREDERICK NAIRN, MINNETONKA

#### **ABORTION DEBATE**

Instead of talking points, let's have a debate

The Jan. 2 letter concerning abortion ("New rule on abortion / Some day, America will value life in the womb") could have been respectful. It could have been understanding. Instead, it fell back on the same talking points that have made abortion such a difficult topic to even attempt to discuss.

#### Readers Write

The author seems to think that the only reason <u>women</u> have abortions is "convenience." It is not up to anyone but the patient to decide why they are having a medical procedure anyway, but to suggest that <u>women</u> would end a pregnancy because of "convenience" is truly worthy of ridicule.

I also take issue with this idea of "proabortion" voters as a whole. No one is proabortion. The decision to have an abortion is a difficult and certainly painful one for everyone involved. The fact that the author thinks there are people eager to have and perform abortions indicates apathy at best, ignorance at worst. There are, however, those of us who do believe that the government has no right to tell a woman what she can do with her body. When Bristol Palin announced that she was pregnant and that she would carry her child to term, conservatives were thrilled that she didn't have an abortion. What they failed to realize is that the whole situation proved the prochoice argument: women can choose to have babies, too. The operative word is "choose."

NATHAN COULTER, BLOOMINGTON

## **Graphic**

**PHOTO** 

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



# No rocket protection for Negev's unrecognized Beduin residents. Desert dwellers put their faith in sheet metal and Allah

The Jerusalem Post January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 817 words **Byline:** ABE SELIG

## **Body**

"Rockets don't know the difference between Arabs and Jews," said Suliman Abu Abayed, as he sat in the backseat of a pickup truck on a bumpy road outside Beersheba on Wednesday.

"They go up and come down - nobody knows where they'll land," he continued. "But it doesn't really matter, they're deadly no matter what."

The truck's driver, Muhammad, a middle-aged man with a stubble beard and dark black mustache, nodded in agreement as he strained to navigate the old Toyota towards a patchwork of sprawling caravans and farm equipment that sat in the middle of the desert.

"This village is unrecognized," Abu Abayed said, pointing towards the group of structures. "They don't even have electricity, much less a siren system, and they have no way of knowing when a rocket is coming."

Abu Abayed explained that the small Beduin village of Assir, like many other small encampments scattered across the Negev, had never been granted permanent status by the Israeli government and was in no way prepared for the rocket strikes that had begun peppering the fields and desert plains around it.

The residents have Israeli citizenship and some have even served in the military. Yet in an effort to encourage them to move to recognized cities like Rahat or Shaqib as- Salam, the government has refrained from officially recognizing their villages.

Abu Abayed knows the story well. As head of the Regional Council of Unrecognized Villages (RCUV), a body which represents the estimated 80,000 residents of these small Negev farms and plots of land, he assists residents in their fight for basic services like water or electricity, in what can often seem like an overwhelming tangle of bureaucracy within the government system.

Obtaining assistance for rocket fortifications, said Abu Abayed, was all but out of the question.

"Like all residents of the South, the Beduin community is scared of the rockets," he said.

"At least in the recognized towns, the homes were built with safe rooms and the residents have a siren system. Out here," he continued, looking out across the wide expanse of desert and the minarets that stand tall above some of the area mosques, "they have nowhere to go. There's nothing for these people to rely on but luck."

No rocket protection for Negev's unrecognized Beduin residents. Desert dwellers put their faith in sheet metal and Allah

So far their luck has been good. Rockets have landed in open areas near a few of the villages, but no direct hits have been reported.

"Not yet," he said. "Thankfully nothing has happened so far."

Nonetheless, the villages represent a vulnerable target - the thin metal walls of their homes are no match for the ball bearings and gunpowder of <u>Hamas</u>' Grad rockets, and with little protection and no more on the way, representatives from the Beduin community are afraid that if the rockets keep falling, their luck may run out.

Traversing a rocky dirt road, the truck maneuvered up a small hill and past a series of caravan homes, their exteriors constructed from nothing more than sheet metal.

Children ran by and young women, clad in black and purple scarves that covered their faces, backed away shyly.

"Call your father," Muhammad said to the children, and they ran off to get him.

Soon, Khalil Azaz, the head of the household and owner of the farm, was sitting in an open structure with cement floors and a thin metal roof. Carpets had been laid out to accommodate the guests and glasses of sweet tea were passed around.

Azaz launched right into talk of the rockets.

"I have to rely on the siren in Beersheba if I want to know when they're coming," he said, "But I can barely hear it out here."

"Besides," he added, "half the time we work with electric generators, and when they're on I can't hear the siren at all."

"But if I [do] hear it, I tell my kids to take cover and I go out and look for the rocket to see if it's going to land anywhere near us. Usually, I just hear the boom."

Azaz pointed out that the Home Front Command had not paid a visit to his farm, nor had it issued him instructions on what to do in case of an attack.

"This is our 'miklat,'" (bomb shelter) he said, grinning and pointing to the metal roof.

"What am I supposed to do? If a rocket is going to come out of the sky and hit us, there's nothing to stop it. It's God's will and I welcome it."

Azaz added that he must pay taxes on all of his animals, the government was constantly threatening to tear down the structures on his farm and that current plans to build a guardrail on the highway outside his property had not allocated an entrance for him and his vehicles.

"So what are some rockets?" he asked. "I'm already living here with difficulty, and it hasn't moved me yet. This lifestyle is in our blood, and we won't move for anything. A rocket is the least of my worries."

But Azaz has six children of his own, not to mention other families nearby with even more.

"I do worry about the children," he said. "It's a dangerous situation. I just hope it all ends soon, and we won't have to worry about it at all anymore."

## **Graphic**

No rocket protection for Negev's unrecognized Beduin residents. Desert dwellers put their faith in sheet metal and Allah

Photo: THE BEDUIN village of Assir, near Beersheba, is one of many unrecognized encampments in the Negev which have no protection from *Hamas* rockets. (Credit: Abe Selig)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 20

Length: 832 words

## **Body**

CAN anybody tell me . . . when the American- backed Jews return home after their slaughter of Palestinian <u>women</u> and children in Gaza will they be awarded medals of dishonour?

COME on hot tomato bring back luke & mel early need a good laugh. - tony

ONCE again idiot, I mean Elliot, you have proved you don't have to have a long neck to be a goose. - Col

JUST come back from Toowoomba fuel 85 cents a litre.

GO back to sydney bye bye reg. xxx

TO southern bel most drivers up here dont have a right hand.

TO keen local golfer try looking out over the jungle everyday that was once the parkwood international it is a very sad sight on course resident

BEAUTIFUL gold coast I took my family to the spit on sunday after the summerfieldayze music event all clean and nice wouldnt even know + there was an event on. Goon on them too for cleanin up so well.

CAN someone tell me where a father can find free legal advice regarding a physically and verbally abusive, drug-addicted wife threatening to take away my children and moving 1000km away. Seems to be a heap of resources 4 **women** but not a lot for men. Why so? - Distressed

THERE is nothing wrong with dropping explosives into a rabbit warren. - BR

POOR pounamu u sound like your typical kiwi big shoulders with a big chip on them. - Hawkman

I PARK my car outside my house 150mm on 3 metre wide grass strip 70 dollar fine dozens of cars parked on footpaths at bmx track for 2 days not 1 ticket. I want my money back council. - uncle festa

JUST came back from sydney holiday. shocked to hear g.c girls look tarty in their race wear when it comes to the races. so glam up girls and show sydney we are even more classier than them on saturday! and boys-no jeans! u can help our great city image too! - g.c born

WHAT a pack of filthy obnoxious rot! Do any of you fools actually know paris hilton? How much do you give to charity deni? Pull ya heads in and grow up. - Glenn

TO the putz supporting *hamas* and hezbollah go home. we dont want u radicals here in Aust.

FORGIVE me. Just fell out of a tree . Is jane mc grath the first person to die from cancer. - Gavo

WHAT do the palestinian protesters want aussies to go palestine and fight their battles for them? Maybe if they went back there and joined the war they could help their countrymen or is it too dangerous for them. What a load of freeloading whimps. If it

was my old country i would go and fight, but that wouldnt happen where i come from coz it is a civilized country not a country that thrives on violence.

TAKE note lebo blow-ins on holidays its ok to not wear a shirt on the beach but at night through surfers is a joke. - Surfer adz

CUTE kids who had photo in bully with paris didn't recognise her but loved all the cameras and gifts she gave. - nan

SUPERHUMAN: some of the lies began in 310 ad. the council of nicae and church father Clement, removed nearly 35 gospels from the old testament. They r not in the bible at all. They r in the vatican and r never 2 b released 2 either priests or christians. There is a letter from Clement, 2 a young priest, advising him 2 deny the gospels existence 2 anyone who asked of them; because they didn't like wot they read, no one can read them. How can anyone, even a priest, claim 2 know or teach Jesus's story? No one knows the whole story 2 begin with! The vatican wont release them, i have asked. - Kb1

POOR kiwis they drug up n stuff k up so much ova there they gotta come here n start again n pretend the life they had ova there was better, oh evthns betta ova there hey bro? Wot u doin here? U 4got 2 mention our sportsmanship in surfing, swimming, lifesaving, track and field, diving, snowboardin, aerial skiing, boxing, judo, rowing, rodeo, sailing, i cld keep goin and fil whole page. u bros make me laugh u r pathetic. - NATOR

TO reg (MR yeah right!!) fancy you calling someone a sook you should have called the dude a know it all and been the complete hypocrite. We're lol at you. - Azza

U ALL ask why did paris hilton get paid 2 cum here why coz she generates publicity and judging by the amount of texts in paper she was successful get ova ya selves. - bj. nerang

FORGET 1947, drag yourself into 2009, who fired 1st rockets. without provocation? was it Israel or Hamas?

HEY pounamu why stay with a bunch of losing pussies should go home. Sorry forgot gotta put dole form in. - Daze

PARIS Hilton only took a handful of gifts to GC Hospital with her enormous wealth she could have bought every child a gift anyone with half a brain can tell it was only just a PR stunt come in suckers. - Julie

HI it was a bit frivolous 2 send the Clint-Eastwood txt wasnt it! How's Skye doing + wen r u likely 2 go 2 the library next?1

TO the texters complaining about free 2 air TV running over timeslots and ads being synchronised - fair comment. If I want to record a free 2 air prog through cable I have to program in the following show just to catch the ending. Hey, and what about all the endless repeats on cable nowadays? Still paying the same amount every month. - Narked

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

January 1, 2009 Thursday

B - Main Edition

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Section: Pg. 32

Length: 829 words

## **Body**

HEY Anita, GCB Monday 29, first of all just because some1 owns a investment property it doesn't automatically make them rich. If it's 4 sale maybe they r struggling like others. 2nd thing, if u have a lease they cant evict u. They have 2 give u the right amount of notice either way. - Tracey, Coombabah

BOATING rule - Power gives way to sail gives way to paddle. Surfers = paddle. Stuff water taxi. I paddle ovr b4 dawn b4 crowd with bike light. Most boats good but pls keep watch. - Sailer n surfer

TO GB, why should council fence all waterways? You have sooked about this before, cant u swim? Fences around rivers and lakes! Think about it. - Mr Reg

LOVIN the fact that around 8am every morning Worrendo av is now a 100km/h zone. - Clazza

PITY our entry laws aren't strict like the US and spare us from felons . . . and the press going ga ga over a *female* Corey with a purse full of cash. Front page . . . nothing more important happening . . . shame! - Meddles

IN response to Chatroom question `Do you plan to economise in 2009, and if so, how?' Most were good answers except for young *female* who replied `Yes i'll save my money by using my mum and dad's money' well that's typical of today's generation how disgusting are they. We never bummed off our parents. - Beverly Todd

WELL done to the magistrate who said spitting is a vile act. Why should anyone be spat on in their place of work. Next time give the maximum 7 years and that just may be a deterrent. - Sam, Mermaid

2 THE scum that stole \$400 worth of xmas pressies and \$600 cash from my car on 22/12 outside video ezy at nerang. i hope u had a gud xmas cause i didnt. i saved all year for xmas and in a breath u stole my kids' xmas from them. We had nothing at xmas as i dont earn much. I sure hope that 1 day sumone does the same 2 u and u will see how gut wrenching it is when u have 2 tell ur kids what happened. How can we teach our kids gud when theres evil people round like u. - sg nerang

JUMP on head, go free. Spit on cop, 3 months. - Rocket, main beach

MERMAID mauler refence. On my early morning walk, i saw 4 youths lurking up ahead. They may have been nice boys but i preferred to cross the road just in case they weren't. I couldn't get across due to the fence. Having nowhere to go, I walked half a kilometre on the road truly praying that these 4 weren't into bashing up old boilers for kicks. There really should be a few gaps in the fence under street lights. Agree with baker one. Cinemas, petrol station, best seafood, macas, antiques all gone! Lucky to still have some xlent shops! Shop local. - Jb

IN 1994, the pope announced, 2 the world, that december 25th was not the birthday of jesus. They borrowed the date from a pagan festival. The world heard it, yet the church continues 2 teach it as fact; christians must have missed it. Mr Main is right, do some actual research. - Kb1

AMERICA came 2 australia & new zealand during world war 2 to help us from japan terrorist so I am all 4 israel 2 bomb <u>hamas</u> and their terrorist supporters. <u>hamas</u> started it so they deserve what they get. - Israel & America supporter Edward

HEY, young buck, men r like clouds. Once they disappear it becomes a nice day, so bye bye. - Miss v

IS ANYONE else sick 2 death of parents blaming swimming pool fences cos their kid drowned? I know kids r quick off the mark,

but it's still parents' job 2 watch them.

Every second of the day. It just wouldn't happen if they were watched. It's not rocket science. Remember good old supervision.

#### - Steve Nerang

NEW year, new outlook. Crack down on hoons, graffiti, bashings, break and enters and all the other crimes. Create more jobs by building more jails and fill 'em with society's scum. Vote for leaders with a backbone. - PF

TO the nameless fool, GCB Mon. U reckon professional fisherman are killing our ocean. Do u suggest we ban everybody from eating seafood worldwide just to make a little whimp like u happy? an IQ of a spanner crab or a muddie, all right all due respects to the crab family of course. - Charlie pro fisherman

I WOULD really like 2 get 2 gether with people who have a problem with barking dogs in clear water nerang. i am so sick of losing sleep because of inconsiderate dog owner. we may be able 2 get the council 2 do some thing if we complain as a group. - Maggy

HEY you in 4wd, my little car might be older than your tank but my 80km/h and 100km/h is the same as yours. so if i am in front of you back off. oh and guess what my little old car in perfect condition will soon be worth more than your city tractor. - Li'l honda

FLUORIDE. Go anna. Thank god she has good sense.

WHY dont the police give a ticket to the speeding taxis on the gold coast. they think its their road. they drive like idiots

THAT ferris wheel is going to be another tacky addition to an already tacky surfers paradise. Bring back the white shoes i say.

HEY GC Bulletin have yas sacked ur staff or has the economic crisis hit yas cos ur paper is getting smaller by the day! - Longtimelocal

Load-Date: January 1, 2009



# Comment & Debate: We have no words left: Palestinians are at a loss to describe this latest catastrophe. International civil society must act now

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# theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES; Pg. 24

**Length:** 888 words **Byline:** Ali Abunimah

## **Body**

'I will play music and celebrate what the Israeli air force is doing." Those chilling words were spoken on al-Jazeera on Saturday by Ofer Shmerling, an Israeli civil defence official in the Sderot area adjacent to the Gaza Strip. For days Israeli planes have bombed Gaza. Almost 300 Palestinians have been killed and a thousand injured, the majority civilians, including <u>women</u> and children. Israel claims most of the dead were <u>Hamas</u> "terrorists". In fact, the targets were police stations in dense residential areas, and the dead included many police officers and other civilians. Under international law, police officers are civilians, and targeting them is no less a war crime than aiming at other civilians.

Palestinians are at a loss to describe this new catastrophe. Is it our 9/11, or is it a taste of the "bigger shoah" Matan Vilnai, the deputy defence minister, threatened in February, after the last round of mass killings?

Israel says it is acting in "retaliation" for rockets fired with increasing intensity ever since a six-month truce expired on 19 December. But the bombs dropped on Gaza are only a variation in Israel's method of killing Palestinians. In recent months they died mostly silent deaths, the elderly and sick especially, deprived of food, cancer treatments and other medicines by an Israeli blockade that targeted 1.5 million people - mostly refugees and children - caged into the Gaza Strip. The orders of Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister, to hold back medicine were just as lethal and illegal as those to send in the warplanes.

Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister, pleaded that Israel wanted "quiet" - a continuation of the truce - while <u>Hamas</u> chose "terror", forcing him to act. But what is Israel's idea of a truce? It is very simple: Palestinians have the right to remain silent while Israel starves them, kills them and continues to violently colonise their land.

As John Ging, the head of operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, said in November: "The people of Gaza did not benefit; they did not have any restoration of a dignified existence . . . at the UN, our supplies were also restricted during the period of the ceasefire, to the point where we were left in a very vulnerable and precarious position and with a few days of closure we ran out of food."

Comment & Debate: We have no words left: Palestinians are at a loss to describe this latest catastrophe.

International civil society must act now

That is an Israeli truce. Any act of resistance including the peaceful protests against the apartheid wall in the West Bank is always met by Israeli bullets and bombs. There are no rockets launched at Israel from the West Bank, and yet Israel's extrajudicial killings, land theft, settler pogroms and kidnappings never stopped for a day during the truce. The western-backed Palestin ian Authority of Mahmoud Abbas has acceded to all Israel's demands. Under the proud eye of United States military advisors, Abbas has assembled "security forces" to fight the resistance on Israel's behalf. None of that has spared a single Palestinian in the West Bank from Israel's relentless colonisation.

The Israeli media report that the attack on Gaza was long planned. If so, the timing in the final days of the Bush administration may indicate an Israeli effort to take advantage of a moment when there might be even less criticism than usual.

Israel is no doubt emboldened by the complicity of the European Union, which this month voted again to upgrade its ties with Israel despite condemnation from its own officials and those of the UN for the "collective punishment" being visited on Gaza. Tacit Arab regime support, and the fact that predicted uprisings in the Arab street never materialised, were also factors.

But there is a qualitative shift with the latest horror: as much as Arab anger has been directed at Israel, it has also focused intensely on Arab regimes - especially Egypt's - seen as colluding with the Israeli attack. Contempt for these regimes and their leaders is being expressed more openly than ever. Yet these are the illegitimate regimes western politicians continue to insist are their "moderate" allies.

Diplomatic fronts, such as the US-dominated Quartet, continue to treat occupier and occupied, coloniser and colonised, first-world high-tech army and near-starving refugee population, as if they are on the same footing. Hope is fading that the incoming administration of Barack Obama is going to make any fundamental change to US policies that are hopelessly biased towards Israel.

In Europe and the Middle East, the gap between leaders and led could not be greater when it comes to Israel. Official complicity and support for Israel contrast with popular outrage at war crimes carried out against occupied people and refugees with impunity.

With governments and international institutions failing to do their jobs, the Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions National Committee - representing hundreds of organisations - has renewed its call on international civil society to intensify its support for the sanctions campaign modelled on the successful anti-apartheid movement.

Now is the time to channel our raw emotions into a long-term effort to make sure we do not wake up to "another Gaza" ever again.

Ali Abunimah is co-founder of The Electronic Intifada and author of One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse

http://electronicintifada.net/

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## **Body**

We should follow the example of Burns the man

COLETTE Douglas Home's essay on Burns is timely and accurate ("Homecoming for the man who made love, not war", Comment, January 6). Burns himself wrote:

I murder hate by fear or flood Though glory should thus screen us In wars at home I'll spend my blood Life giving wars of Venus The deities that I adore Are social peace and plenty I'm rather pleased to make one more Than be the death of twenty.

Burns loved womankind as much as individual <u>women</u>. Many of his songs are in <u>women</u>'s words, decrying the practice of arranged marriages, bride-purchase and the Scots tocher or dowry, which was as prevalent in Scotland then as it is in the Indian subcontinent today. Songs such as What can a Young Lassie dae wi' an Auld Man, The Tocher's the Jewel and The Braw Wooer should be valued for their feminist content. Had I the Wyte is a graphic account and condemnation of domestic violence. Where else can you find this but in Burns?

Equally important for our creditcrunch times is Burns's disdain for wealth and condemnation of greed.

Better a wee bush than nae bield Contented wi' little and canty wi' mair I make indeed my daily bread but ne'er can make it farther, O But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard it O.

I doubt if Burns ate as much in a year as Michael Fry consumes in a week.

It if often said that a night in the dark with Burns was worth a lifetime in the daylight with any other man. It is time that we appreciated his poetry, song and social analysis, and followed his example.

Dr Elspeth King, 19A Broad Street, Stirling.

A proper job?

WHAT is Tommy Sheridan's crime ("Why do they sacrifice careers for television's shilling?", Ruth Wishart, January 7)? Yes, he has gone on a TV show and so far has argued against war and racism and for socialist ideas to millions

of young people and, what is worse, was paid for it. He has also spent his life fighting for these ideas on the streets, in prison, in the council chamber and in the Scottish Parliament. Now he wants to train as a lawyer so he can help defend working-class people. What a pity he doesn't get a proper job as, say, a newspaper columnist.

Hugh Kerr, 23 Braehead Avenue, Edinburgh.

#### Cost of parking

I HAVE noted with interest the news release from the Scottish Government's own website which states that staff going back to work at Scotland's hospitals have been given a New Year bonus, following the abolition of car parking charges. This is not true: parking is restricted to four hours, after which a GBP40 penalty is imposed, so staff are being charged GBP200 per week to park their car at Glasgow hospitals (the GBP40 is reduced to GBP20 if paid within 14 days).

In effect, NHS staff are being charged GBP10 per hour after four hours to park their cars, while others, such as teachers and police, are allowed free parking at their work.

Patrick Sheils, 6 Hazelwood Gardens, Glasgow.

Managed access is the answer to busy hills

ROSEMARY Goring ("It's high time we had a congestion charge for the hills", Comment, January 6) paints a bleak picture of the mountain experience for walkers in Scotland, full of litter and mindless charity racers, oblivious to the natural environment they find themselves in.

However, there is still plenty of unspoiled wild land in Scotland where walkers and others can lose themselves. Even honeypots like Ben Nevis do not need to be a dismal experience if there is sensitive visitor management and people are responsible, following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Compare Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, situated just an hour away from 70per cent of the Scottish population, where visitor numbers are 2.1 million a year, with the Yorkshire Dales National Park's nine million visitors in a smaller area. Careful management of these visitors with litter bins, car parks, waymarked paths and signage ensure the protection of an area of great natural beauty and attraction. As for litter louts, this isn't simply a problem for the countryside but something that the entire country needs to address.

Scotland is big enough for the elite mountaineer and the family group who don't wander too far from their car both to have the experiences they seek. You might not see me up Ben Nevis on a Saturday afternoon in July, but you can be assured I'll be enjoying the outdoors on the most beautiful hill in Scotland? and, no, I'm not saying where that is.

Helen Todd, Ramblers' Association Scotland, Kingfisher House, Auld Mart Business Park, Milnathort.

ALTHOUGH I share some of Rosemary Goring's concerns, I think her proposals are impractical. I am retired and in the fortunate position of being able to choose my hillwalking days (usually midweek) and I'm frequently the only living soul on my mountains of choice. With very few exceptions, I have never found litter on hills to be a problem, although one can never legislate for the odd insensitive clot.

Popular hills such as Ben Nevis take a pounding from the boots of armies of hillwalkers, and such hills do need some degree of protection. Perhaps the best way of achieving this is actively to maintain and improve the most popular footpaths on crowded hills. I have seen the result of this kind of maintenance work on the Lairig Ghru and Lochnagar, and take the view that a concerted nationwide programme of conservation work is required on any Scottish mountain paths where serious erosion is present.

This will not solve all the problems, but it will go a long way to preserving our mountains for the pleasure of future generations, even if some of the mountains are occasionally overcrowded.

Alastair Runcie, 5 Vivian Avenue, Milngavie.

TOM Gill (Letters, January 6) wants to tax cyclists, and Rosemary Goring wants to charge us for taking to the hills. Cycling and walking are both relatively accessible and inexpensive activities; recognised as part of the solution to tackle obesity and associated health problems in Scotland. Barriers need to be broken down to include, encourage and support people to be physically active. Tom Gill and Rosemary Goring seem to be advocating the opposite.

Taxation, litter wardens and passports are bureaucratic aspects of modern life which, quite frankly, people want to escape from. Some people do this by getting on their bike, while others take to the hills.

Suzanne Hargreaves, The Hollies, 144 Main Street, Larbert.

Scottish records not subject to 30-year rule

YOUR leader ("Lessons of the past - Is it time to change the 30-year rule?", December 30) implied that such a rule applies in Scotland and that this impedes access to government records held by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS). This is inaccurate. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 replaced the blanket 30-year rule with a presumption of openness, qualified by certain exemptions.

This means any person may request information from records of any period and, unless an exemption is shown to operate, it will be made available. That information and the records containing it are then in the public domain and available to all.

Many records coming to the NAS from public authorities are less than 30 years old. Since the Act came into force, we have insisted that they are marked to show that they are open, or that a specific exemption applies. This means that, unlike in England, many government files less than 30 years old can be freely consulted in our search rooms.

George P MacKenzie, Keeper of the Records of Scotland, National Archives of Scotland, HM General Register House, Edinburgh.

We need children who can count and read

AS SOMEONE who gained a Higher maths certificate in the 1960s, I would like to make a plea to the Scottish Government and to Education Minister Fiona Hyslop in particular: bring back sums. By sums, I mean arithmetic.

I have been appalled and, frankly, amazed that there are a number of proposals currently in the pipeline to change, yet again, our Scottish education system.

It's a system that at one time was the envy of the world but which continues to fall behind its foreign counterparts in world rankings, according to the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Our organisation, Scottish Engineering, supports the manufacturing engineering industry in Scotland and our members are confused by the present range of education qualifications that youngsters present, never mind having to cope with a whole new set of baccalaureates and general qualifications.

To introduce this new education method will put immense pressure on the teaching staff, who will not only have to develop the new curriculum but will have to train for and deliver the new courses in a timescale which has already had to be put back by a year.

For some time we have been hearing promises from our government that it will improve the levels of literacy and numeracy in our schools, but, to date, there seems to be little improvement. The latest proposals to introduce a separate "numeracy" qualification would appear to be a way of spreading the subject away from the basic skills of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry. Why?

And to consider calling English subjects "literacy" could well be construed as an SNP plot to take the word "English" out of the subject.

For the sake of industry, we need young people who can count accurately and communicate effectively before we can start to train them in the many exciting areas of engineering.

My plea to Ms Hyslop is: "Please, please, please look carefully at the bathwater before you throw it out."

Dr Peter T Hughes, Chief Executive, Scottish Engineering, 105 West George Street, Glasgow.

Policy of honesty

IN THESE troubled times, one so often reads about things that are upsetting. May I take it upon myself to tell you a short story about integrity?

My wife parked in a car park in Milngavie on Tuesday. Upon her return she found a note with two telephone numbers and a lady's name, asking her to telephone the woman who had inadvertently reversed into my wife's car, causing some slight damage.

I telephoned and spoke to the lady. She apologised and asked me to obtain an estimate for the repair, for which she would pay.

This I did and informed said lady of the cost for the repair (just under GBP100). She once again apologised for the inconvenience and agreed to post me a cheque.

Would that there were more people in the world like this.

Brian D MacDonald, Wetbrae Cottage, Gartmore.

Israel has no right to stop the world's media from reporting the horror of its actions in Gaza WHAT power and right does Israel have to ban journalists from Gaza? Such a ban suggests that whatever horror it carries out there will not be seen by the international press. When Zimbabwe bans journalists, that is its sovereign right, but one state preventing journalists from entering another state is outrageous.

lan Bell (The Herald, January 3) describes Gaza as the "world's biggest prison"; correct, except that prisoners receive regular and sufficient food and free medical treatment as necessary. This is not available to Gazans.

Israeli spokesmen say no country would tolerate rockets being fired at its citizens. It is also true to say no country should have to endure the long-standing encroachment, humiliation, shortages, walls, separations and lifestyle disruption inflicted on Gaza's citizens for years. Rockets fired by anyone suffering the conditions existing in Gaza against their oppressors are understandable, if regrettable, but should never provoke the totally disproportionate response witnessed now.

Ian Bell also refers correctly to the hypocrisy of promoting democracy in the Middle East and Afghanistan and seeking to destroy it in Gaza. America's part in this tragedy over the years is despicable. Gazans are condemned for smuggling weapons and munitions through tunnels from Egypt: the US regularly gives millions of dollars to Israel to buy more tanks, helicopter gunships and bulldozers while blocking UN resolutions that might just bring some solution. In international relationship terms, there is something very far wrong here.

Nigel Dewar Gibb, 15 Kirklee Road, Glasgow.

THERE will be no solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict unless there is a will to act positively by all parties involved in this tragedy and, to date, there is none. There is one basic underlying fault which needs to be addressed: how can the Palestinians act positively with one voice when the "state" of Palestine is split geographically and politically?

The Israeli government mistakenly believes in this old adage of "divide and rule", but it is now outdated and dangerous; however, the US government and Barak Obama, the President-elect, by his relative silence, appear to agree with Israel's selfdefeating stance.

<u>Hamas</u> was elected legitimately, in no small measure due to the failure of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to make any headway in the negotiations with Israel over a period of 15 years. This failure has increased Israel's longstanding contempt for international opinion, as is shown by its failure to acknowledge international concern and ineffectual pressure. The US is the only nation able to exert pressure on Israel, but Condoleezza Rice said that <u>Hamas</u> was responsible for breaking the ceasefire, as it was. She failed to take into account the grossly disproportionate response by the Israelis. Apart from Nicolas Sarkozy, European leaders have been mealymouthed over this open warfare while our Middle East peace envoy, Tony Blair, remains ineffectual even though he has close rapport with the US government, and the UN has only expressed its concern.

Ian Bell (The Herald, January 7) correctly states that an Israeli victory will be seen as a failure of US policy, but why should we be surprised as the US has been on the skids for a few years now?

Ian F M Saint-Yves, Dunvegan, School Brae, Whiting Bay, Arran.

DR DENIS MacEoin (Letters, January 6) quotes <u>Hamas</u>'s founding charter as proof that <u>Hamas</u> can't be negotiated with. The Fatah and PLO charters don't recognise Israel's right to exist either, yet Israeli negotiations with them led to many breakthroughs. Dr MacEoin then compares <u>Hamas</u> to Nazi Germany and urges us to show Churchill's "moral courage" in the face of "evil".

Apart from the fact that it is massed Israeli tanks and bombers attacking Gaza, not Palestinian ones invading Israel, this is not a conflict of good versus evil but of wrong acts by both sides, with the stronger refusing to negotiate. Israeli forces have starved and indiscriminately bombed the population of Gaza. They've continued the practice of targeting civilians.

It's easy to call the other side "evil" and to claim that this justifies everything "our" side does and makes negotiation unthinkable. It's not true, though, and it leads to more deaths. "Moral courage" requires condemning wrong acts by either side or rejecting using a stronger military with utter ruthlessness when negotiations are on offer.

Duncan McFarlane, Beanshields, Braidwood, Carluke.

OF ALL President George W Bush's inspirational moments, his appointment of Tony Blair as his Middle East peace envoy surely ranks as the most efficacious. Gore Vidal said recently, anent the catastrophe of Iraq, that the four most beautiful words in the English language were: "I told you so." But even these have been surpassed by Gordon Brown. Asked in an interview at the weekend if he had discussed the Gaza crisis with the peace envoy, Big Clunkin replied: "Tony is on holiday."

Chris Walker, 21/23 Main Street, West Kilbride.

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Morning Star

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## **Body**

A Spanish judge has instituted a judicial inquiry against seven Israeli political and military personalities on suspicion of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The charge? The 2002 dropping of a one-ton bomb on the home of <u>Hamas</u> leader Salah Shehade. Apart from the intended victim, 14 people, most of them children, were killed.

For those who have forgotten, the then commander of the Israeli air force Dan Halutz was asked at the time what he feels when he drops a bomb on a residential building. His unforgettable answer was, "A slight bump to the wing."

When we in Gush Shalom accused him of a war crime, he demanded that we be put on trial for high treason. He was joined by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who accused us of wanting to "turn over Israeli army officers to the enemy." The attorney-general notified us officially that he did not intend to open an investigation against those responsible for the bombing.

I should be happy, therefore, that, at long last, somebody is ready to put that action to a judicial test, even if he seems to have been thwarted by political pressure. But I am sorry that this has happened in Spain, not in Israel.

Israeli TV viewers have lately been exposed to a bizarre sight. Army officers appearing with their faces hidden, as is usual for criminals here when the court prohibits their identification. Paedophiles, for example, or attackers of old **women**.

On the orders of the military censors, this applies to all officers, from battalion commanders down, who have been involved in the Gaza war. Since the faces of brigade commanders and above are generally known, the order does not apply to them.

Immediately after the ceasefire, Defence Minister Ehud Barak promoted a special law that would give unlimited backing by the state to all officers and soldiers who took part in the Gaza war and who might be accused abroad of war crimes.

I do not object to trials abroad. The main thing is that war criminals, like pirates, should be brought to justice. It is not so important where they are caught. This rule was applied when Israel abducted Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and hanged him for heinous crimes committed outside its territory and, indeed, before it even existed.

But, as an Israeli patriot, I would prefer suspected Israeli war criminals to be put on trial in Israel. That is necessary for the country, for all decent officers and soldiers of the Israeli army and for the education of future generations of citizens and soldiers.

There is no need to rely on international law alone. There are Israeli laws against war crimes.

Enough to mention the immortal phrase coined by Justice Binyamin Halevy, who served as a military judge in the trial of the border policemen who were responsible for the 1956 massacre in Kafr Kassem, when dozens of children, <u>women</u> and men were mown down for violating a curfew which they did not know about.

The judge announced that, even in wartime, there are orders over which flies "the black flag of illegality," which are "manifestly" illegal - that is to say, orders which every normal person can tell are illegal, without having to consult a lawyer.

War criminals dishonour the army whose uniform they wear, whether they are generals or common soldiers. As a combat soldier on the day that the Israeli army was officially created, I am ashamed of them and demand that they be cast out and be put on trial in Israel.

My list of suspects includes politicians, soldiers, rabbis and lawyers.

There is not the slightest doubt that crimes were committed in the Gaza war. The question is to what extent and by whom.

Example: the soldiers call on the residents of a house to leave it. A woman and her four children come out waving white handkerchiefs. It is absolutely clear that they are not armed fighters. A soldier in a nearby tank stands up, points his rifle and shoots them dead at short range. According to testimonies that seem to be beyond doubt, this happened more than once.

Another example: the shelling of the United Nations school full of refugees from which there had been no shooting, something that the army admitted after the original pretexts had been disproved.

These are "simple" cases. But the spectrum of cases is far wider.

A serious judicial investigation has to start right from the top - the politicians and senior officers who decided on the war and confirmed its plans must be investigated about their decisions. In Nuremberg, it was laid down that it is a crime to initiate a war of aggression.

An objective investigation has to find out whether the decision to start the war was justified or if there was another way of stopping the launching of rockets against Israeli territory.

Without doubt, no country can or should tolerate the bombing of its towns and villages from beyond the border. But could this be prevented by talking with the Gaza authorities? Was our government's decision to boycott *Hamas*, the winner of the democratic Palestinian elections, the real cause of this war? Did the imposition of the blockade on 1.5 million Gaza Strip inhabitants contribute to the launching of the Qassams?

The war plan included a massive attack on the civilian population of the strip. The real aims of a war can be understood less from the official declarations of its initiators, than from their actions.

If, in this war, some 1,300 men, <u>women</u> and children were killed, the great majority of whom were not fighters, and if about 5,000 people were injured, most of them children, if some 2,500 homes were partly or wholly destroyed, if the infrastructure of life was totally demolished, this clearly could not have happened accidentally. It must have been a part of the war plan.

The things said during the war by politicians and officers make it clear that the plan had at least two aims, which might be considered war crimes.

First, to cause widespread killing and destruction in order to "fix a price tag," "to burn into their consciousness," "to reinforce deterrence" and, most of all, to get the population to rise up against <u>Hamas</u> and overthrow their government. Clearly, this affects mainly the civilian population.

Second, to avoid casualties to our army at literally any price by destroying any building and killing any human being in the area into which our troops were about to move, including destroying homes over the heads of their inhabitants, preventing medical teams from reaching the victims and killing people indiscriminately. In certain cases, inhabitants were warned that they must flee, but this was mainly an alibi action - there was nowhere to flee to and often soldiers opened fire on people trying to escape.

An independent court will have to decide whether such a war plan was in accordance with national and international law or whether it was a crime against humanity and a war crime.

This was a war pitching a regular army with huge capabilities against a guerilla force. In such a war, too, not everything is permissible.

Arguments like "the <u>Hamas</u> terrorists were hiding within the civilian population" and "they used the population as human shields" may be effective as propaganda, but they are irrelevant. That is true for every guerilla war. This must be taken into account when a decision to start such a war is being considered.

In a democratic state, the military takes its orders from the political establishment. But that does not include "manifestly" illegal orders over which the black flag of illegality is waving. The Nuremberg trials decided that there was no such excuse as "I was only obeying orders."

The personal responsibility of all involved, from the chief of staff, the front commander and the division commander, right down to the last soldier, must be examined.

From the statements of Israeli soldiers, one must deduce that many believed that their job was "to kill as many Arabs as possible," meaning that there was no distinction between fighters and non-fighters. That is a completely illegal order, whether given explicitly or by a wink and a nudge. Yet the soldiers understood this to be "the spirit of the commander."

The rabbis have a place of honour among those suspected of war crimes. Those who incite to war crimes and call upon soldiers, directly or indirectly, to commit war crimes may be guilty of a war crime themselves.

When one speaks of "rabbis," one thinks of old men with long white beards and big hats who give tongue to venerable wisdom. But the rabbis who accompanied the troops are a very different species.

In the last decades, the state-financed religious educational system has churned out "rabbis" who are more like medieval Christian priests than the Jewish sages of Poland or Morocco. This system indoctrinates its pupils with a violent, totally ethnocentric tribal cult which sees in the whole of world history nothing but an endless story of Jewish victimhood. This is a religion of a chosen people indifferent to others, a religion without compassion for anyone who is not Jewish which glorifies the God-decreed genocide described in the biblical book of Joshua.

The products of this education are now the "rabbis" who instruct the religious youths. With their encouragement, a systematic effort has been made to take over the Israeli army from within. The kibbutzniks who were dominant in the army not so long ago have been replaced by kippa-wearing officers. Many of the lower and middle-ranking officers now belong to this group.

The most outstanding example is the chief army rabbi Colonel Avichai Ronsky, who has declared that his job is to reinforce the "fighting spirit" of the soldiers. He is a man of the extreme right not far from the spirit of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose party was outlawed in Israel for its fascist ideology.

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## <u>letters@independent.co.uk; Being sacked can be the beginning of the good</u> life

The Independent (London)
January 3, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Length: 2075 words

## **Body**

There must be some people feeling a sense of trepidation as the reality of life without work kicks in. Drawing your last pay packet these days is not a pleasant experience; you are surplus to requirements, and no longer have a reason to get out of bed in the mornings.

The despair you feel after an hour on the phone to the Job Centre, trying to answer probing questions on personal and financial matters that you would not normally discuss with your best friend, leaves you wanting to crawl into a hole and die.

I lost my job in October, after 12 weeks off recovering from an operation, but I wasn't too worried. I am still looking for another job, worrying if, at the age of 59, I am finally on the scrap-heap, after 44 years of work. Early retirement is not an option. I am going to have to rely solely on the state pension when it comes along in May.

I have given up worrying about money now, because over the past 10 years I have been downshifting. I have been reducing the amount of hours I've been working, which reduced my income, and I have budgeted my spending accordingly, and I feel great. Now I know how to live within my means.

Don't despair if you have lost your job; there is life after money. Get a notebook, list all your outgoings, then delete everything you don't need. I saved £135 per year when I dumped the telly. If you have a garden, you have time to grow your own vegetables; it saves a fortune. I have been doing it for two years and live off my garden all summer.

Changing your life can be daunting; it was so cosy and comfortable before, now it is all upside down. But hey, all is not lost; you just need to look at things a little differently.

Ilona Richards

Burton upon Stather, North Lincolnshire

Israel's leaders lose moral compass

Adrian Hamilton's comment that the Gaza bombing "is in the interest of all parties concerned" (1 January) hits the nail on the head, but does not drive it in far enough. The present Israeli leadership, with its nonsensical justication of the bombing, which makes fools and cowards of Western leaders, now occupies the same moral low ground as *Hamas*.

Take the key Israeli justification for bombing <u>Hamas</u> sites, which actually works against Israel, though our leaders wouldn't be indelicate enough to say so. Israel's military and political leaders point out that <u>Hamas</u> puts these sites among the Palestinian civilian population, yet, with this knowledge, they continue the bombing. So, since this apparently needs spelling out, Israel is deliberately targeting Palestinian civilians, <u>women</u> and children and, like **Hamas**, considers them expendable to the cause.

Israel purports to be the oasis of civilised democracy in the region and has recently agreed to closer links with the EU. The bombardments of Gaza and, previously, southern Lebanon, show that Israel's leaders have lost their moral compass (while their US and British counterparts mislaid theirs over Iraq). The targeting of civilians is not civilised: it's barbaric.

Rod Chapman

Sarlat, France

On New Year's Day, 2009, two excellent articles on the Middle East, one by Adrian Hamilton and the other by Robert Fisk, give ample reason for continuing to read The Independent through 2009. Both expose the sophism of Mr Miliband and our representative in the Security Council, and indeed, that of Messrs Blair and Brown.

Wouldn't it have made a refreshing change if your commentators could have reported on how our government has acknowledged its complicity in the genocide in Gaza, that it wished to apologise to all Palestinians because our government has been bluffing itself and the UK electorate that it can act as an honest broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and that it acknowledges that UK (and US) foreign policy in the Middle East, and in Palestine in particular, is a disaster?

It would have been so refreshing had both Messrs Hamilton and Fisk been able to report that the US and the UK were going to take firm action against Israel to begin mending our relationship with the Arab world? Until Messrs Fisk and Hamilton can write this, and until we prevent Israel from living by the sword, we in the UK will increasingly bear the consequences.

Alan Penny

TRURO, Cornwall

You claim that Gaza is "the most overpopulated few square miles in the whole world" (Comment, 30 December). According to the US Census Bureau's 2008 Statistical Abstract, Gaza is less densely populated than Gibraltar, Singapore, Hong Kong, Monaco and Macau. In fact, Macau (population 453,000) is four times more densely populated (42,271 per square mile) than Gaza (10,665 per square mile).

The idea of Gaza as the most densely populated place in the world is a propaganda fabrication with a very clear underlying logic. Meshing the images of densely populated neighbourhoods in Gaza - and which place lacks such neighbourhoods? - with scenes of poverty conjures up the idea that Palestinians lack land and resources.

If you believe that, it is a small jump to the conclusion that Israel should be giving Palestinians both. In fact, Gaza has been in Arab control for years, and the territories conquered by Israel in 1967 would be enough to maintain a large Palestinian population that was industrious, prudentially managed, well-governed and, above all, peaceful.

**Daniel Mandel** 

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

letters@independent.co.uk Being sacked can be the beginning of the good life

Despite objections from Israel, for the past six months a humanitarian aid ship has been sailing regularly between Cyprus and the Gaza Strip. It has carried mainly medical supplies and a few otherwise stranded passengers. Unfortunately, this link with Gaza has now been broken, after the ship was attacked by the Israeli navy last week.

If the European Union is serious about relieving the suffering in Gaza it should take over the sailing of this route immediately. To appease Israel, the EU would ensure that the cargos are solely peaceful, but rather like the Berlin airlift in 1948, the route would provide a humanitarian lifeline between Gaza and the outside world.

Dr Michael Paraskos

London SE27

The killing in Gaza need never have happened. We in the West, including Israel, who know about these things must tell the Arabs: "You don't understand democracy, therefore you cannot hold elections. Even if they are seen as free and fair, we will not consider them legitimate. We will decide who we are able to talk to and you must see that these people are appointed as your leaders. If you don't do what we suggest, we will bomb the hell out of you." It is as simple as that.

Maggie Foyer

London SW15

The Israeli authorities have closed the crossing points from Israel to the Gaza Strip to journalists, despite protest to the Israeli Courts by The Foreign Press Association. As a result, and in contrast to the Israeli-Lebanon war in 2006, there has been a lack of BBC news coverage of the effects of the Israeli bombing of the people of Gaza.

When the BBC is prevented from reporting in Zimbabwe and Burma it properly reminds listeners of the censorship and the barriers that it poses to full and balanced news coverage. Why is it not doing so now?

Nigel Hay

Teddington, Middlesex

But although the politics may be complicated ("Pure politics is driving this war", 1 January) the outcome in Gaza is the same. In massacres chillingly reminiscent of the Nazi reprisals on Lidice, Oradour, the Warsaw ghetto and countless other places in Poland and Russia, a ruthless and powerful oppressor state, convinced of its own superiority, is determined to crush by violent means any opposition to its illegal seizure and occupation of another country. Then, America and Britain led the fight against such injustice; today they are on the side of the oppressors.

**Tony Cheney** 

Ipswich, Suffolk

Lexicon was the British Scrabble

Alfred Butts, inventor of Scrabble, failed in the USA, in the early 1930s, with his board-less word game Lexico ("The sublime joy of Scrabble", 15 December) but in Britain, Messrs John Waddington had patented Lexicon, with playing card-sized letters, each of which had a numeric value (the final "n" would have been worth eight points).

The book of rules gives helpful advice on how to organise "Lexicon Drives": tables to be arranged to accommodate four players each, with a steward for every 10 tables. Born in the year the patent was taken out, 1933, I know our family pack was in constant use up to the 1950s.

C Sladen

Woodstock, Oxfordshire

letters@independent.co.uk Being sacked can be the beginning of the good life

Care for elderlyis sub-standard

I was very moved by Johann Hari's account of his elderly grandmother and difficulties in obtaining quality care for her (Comment, 26 December). I have had to get care for an elderly neighbour who has been left at home, with carers visiting three times a day, and left alone for hours on end.

The care of many elderly wards and homes is sub-standard, as is care in the community, partly due to the 1992 Community Care Act which separated personal care from health, so district nurses were no longer supervising this need.

Many elderly people receive no care at night and are dependent on friends and neighbours to help out. These unpaid carers plug gaps that social and health services are leaving, and get little recognition and support. When someone develops dementia their personality is altered and their response unpredictable, which is often reason for lack of visitors.

There is no simple answer, aside from making care homes more open and part of wider society. Valuing care workers by improved salaries and training would be a great step forward, but in the present economic climate this is unlikely to happen without intense lobbying.

Alexandra Murrell

London SE17

Planning a neweco-disaster

Just as the evidence for a cooling planet becomes undeniable, your headline on "Plan B" (2 January) cheered me up no end. What humour, what jest! A whole array of harebrained "solutions" to a problem that doesn't exist. Jobs for the boys, that's what we need in a recession.

But have a look at just one, the proposal to pump up cold water from the ocean bottom to bury the surface waters and the CO7 in it, and in the same stroke of genius mucking up the temperature stratification. Now there's an ecological disaster in the making if there ever was one.

Have they gone completely off their trolleys?

Dr Eduard J Zuiderwijk

Bar Hill, Cambridge

Briefly...

Bash at Bible

The Revd Wright is right in suggesting evolution does not disprove the existence of God (letters, 2 January). But it does disprove the truth of the Bible, which is the only "evidence" for the existence of God. Therefore God and unicorns are equally probable.

Maurice Hill

Alicante, Spain

Egged into Easter

My Waitrose store had chocolate eggs on sale on 1 January. I may be old-fashioned in thinking eggs are associated with Easter. So how come Cadbury thinks they belong before the end of the Christmas season? Even the Waitrose people seem to have no sense of liturgical sequence. If we allow the egregious anticipation of Easter,

letters@independent.co.uk Being sacked can be the beginning of the good life

we surely should have had pancakes (Shrove Tuesday) and hot-cross buns (Good Friday) before we got to the chocolate eggs? Has the great God of consumerism eclipsed Christianity as the faith of the global market?

Frank Campbell

Southampton

Days of defeat

When the Grand Old Duke of York failed in 1794 ("Red-faced royal", 1 January), it should not have represented the great shock your article suggests because "when the British went into battle against the French in those days, they expected to win". Only the year before, England lost to Napoleon at Toulon. And if in 1794 "there were plenty of people alive who could remember Wolfe's conquest of Quebec" in 1759, a great many more could hark back to the more recent American War of Independence being decided by Yorktown's surrender.

**BRYN HUGHES** 

WREXHAM, NORTH

Muddying history

Your article "Whoops, that was close ..." (31 December) says Napoleon's ailments, notably his haemorrhoids, caused a delay to the start of the Battle of Waterloo. Although an entertaining concept, it is false. The delay was caused by torrential rain the day before which turned the battlefield into a morass, thus preventing the artillery from manoeuvring. The guns were a key part of the French forces and to launch an attack without them was unthinkable. Napoleon had to wait for the ground to drainsufficiently before he could move (as it were).

John Mackeonis

London W6

Downsizing

Poundland may be having a sale (letters, 2 January), but what concerns me more is that, after the recent reduction in VAT, why are they not now known as "98pland"?

Gary Vincent

LONDON W1

Load-Date: January 2, 2009



# Letters - Why does Israel deny hope to the ordinary people of Gaza?

## Irish News

January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: Pg. 23

Length: 436 words

# **Body**

The continuing brutality, terror and utter madness being orchestrated by Israel in its 'might is right' blitz against men, **women** and children in Gaza has rightly been given media priority.

But in the mayhem the international community may have overlooked the fact that during Christmas week *Hamas* bravely offered a ceasefire in return for basic and achievable compromises.

The Israeli government rejected any such terms and entered into irresponsible disproportionate aggression against a small densely populated Palestinian territory.

Consequently the hope of meaningful peace-building - even confidence-building or exploratory talks - is faint.

The Israeli government has clearly demonstrated that they are more concerned - and adept - with the strategic terrorising of civilians as an acceptable state policy.

The disturbing reality of their military responses is that they see no wrong on their part - regardless.

They are blinded by a stubborn siege mentality, policy contradictions and insular sectarian politics.

They appear unwilling to pursue chances for long-term communal resolution and cling irresponsibly to one-sided and short-term military bravado.

Perhaps their 'madness' is deliberate - but why?

Nothing will be gained by their invasion of Gaza - humiliating Palestinians on their own land.

Israel would be better advised to stop its illegal collective territorial punishment and to end the humanitarian suffering. At present the Israeli government are actually radicalising more Palestinians.

And most of the rest of the world finds their reasoning beyond all comprehension.

Of course, there are two perceived sides, two stories, two voices and two ideologies.

But the true story behind this historic and cultural divide is not so simple.

It is not the story Israel wants the world to hear.

Gaza militants are without doubt 'active' but that is inevitable given present circumstances.

## Letters - Why does Israel deny hope to the ordinary people of Gaza?

The Gazan 'David' is bereft of the means to obtain any effective striking stone against an insensitive Israeli 'Goliath' who controls every aspect of life in Gaza which has been described as 'the biggest prison in the world'.

Honest dialogue is the key to a lasting resolution but that means risk-taking which is not on the present Israeli agenda. Deep down Israel must know they have to talk terms.

Like themselves, the Palestinian people and nation are not going to go away or be pushed into the Mediterranean. They too long for peace but right now only Israel can provide the opportunity for hope rather than hopelessness to the innocents in Gaza.

Israel must make the urgent decision to talk ... and listen.

BARRY FENNELL, Belfast.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



# ... And another thing

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 8

Length: 366 words

# **Body**

RE "PILL link to infertile men, says Vatican" (The Age, 5/1). Further proof that these men in frocks have no grip on reality. Lynne Hadly, St Kilda

The pill

YES, the Pope must be very concerned about the pill's grim progress.

Margaret King, Glen Iris

THE Vatican should be ashamed of its statement that the pill causes male infertility. Don't they know it's a sin to tell fibs?

Paul Henry, Murrumbeena

Cricket

FIRST we lose the Ashes, then this series to South Africa. Half the team are injured or off their game. Now the final disaster: we've employed a redhead.

George Houlder, Ballarat

"AUSTRALIA enjoys a resurgence in it's fortunes" (Sport, 5/1). Yes, but it's a bit like the old song - after the ball is over.

Pat Lester, Ringwood East

**Politics** 

IT ONLY took seven years and a change of government for seniors to get their interstate travel discounts (The Age, 5/1). It was a Coalition (non-core?) promise in 2001.

Robin Schokman, Doncaster

OUR Treasurer on the economy: "It will be a tough year, there is no point in gilding the lily." Someone needs to tell him that 2009 will not resemble a flower to most Australians.

... And another thing

Ben Freedman, Balmain, NSW

Gaza

CHURCHILL once said coalminers' leaders were the stupidest people on earth, until he met the coalmine owners. He never met the current *Hamas* leaders or Israeli politicos.

Rex Condon, Ashwood

THE Gaza Strip today's Warsaw Ghetto?

Edith Wilke, Mount Waverley

THE Talmud states: "Whoever saves a single life, it is as if he had saved the whole world." Does it follow that whoever takes a single life, it is as if he had destroyed the whole world?

Phil Perry, Mount Eliza

**Furthermore** 

BARASSI was a champion on the field. Now he is a champion off the field. All men should follow his lead. Violence against *women* should not be tolerated.

Patrick McGrath, Burwood East

YES, a happy new year to all, indeed. Even if the outlook on all things is for more of the same, if not worse.

Serge Liberman, Glen Iris

OH, HOW I miss my Leunig calendar.

David Cullinane, Kooyong

COME on, Wesfarmers. Easter may be a moveable feast - but Easter confectionary for sale in our local Coles supermarket? How about a little more decorum and little less commercial cynicism?

Keith Beman, Woodend

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



# Massacre of a family seeking sanctuary; The Samounis claim they were guided to a safe haven by Israeli troops - only to be cut down by shells

The Independent (London)
January 10, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 26

Length: 894 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre and Said Ghazali IN JERUSALEM and Fares Akram IN GAZA

# **Body**

Bitterly cold, famished, and thirsty they may have been. But the dozens of men, <u>women</u>, children and elderly of the extended Samouni family, sheltering in the unfinished warehouse-like building owned by one of their relatives, at least felt relatively secure.

Some explain that Israeli troops had explicitly told them to remain in the building - in several cases after actually escorting them there. They were relieved to wake to find the neighbourhood quiet for the first time since the ground offensive had began 36 hours earlier. So much so, according to one of them, that some time after 6am, four of the men decided to set out and bring an uncle and his family to their refuge.

It was then, survivors say, that the greatest of all the horrors visited on the Zeitoun district of eastern Gaza City occurred. A shell hit the little group, killing 27-year-old Muhammad instantly, and injuring the other three still lingering at the door.

According to 19-year-old Maysaa, a second shell or missile fell on the building's roof with such force that she would in hindsight assume it came from an Israeli F-16. At the time she lay down with her nine-month-old daughter Jumana under her, listening to the screams of those around her, as the structure filled with smoke and dust. When the smoke began to clear, she looked around and saw what she says were between 20 and 30 bodies, and 20 wounded. The dead included her own husband Tawfiq, her father-in-law Rashed, who "was hit in the head and whose brain was on the floor", and a five-month-old baby "whose whole brain was outside his body".

With foreign journalists barred by Israel from entering Gaza, it is not easy to reconstruct every detail of what happened with any certainty. But Maysaa's account to the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem is broadly and quite separately corroborated by other family members, including a religious studies teacher, Ahmad al-Samouni.

The 23-year-old told The Independent: "One shell hit the door, killing my cousin Muhammad immediately. One shell, I believe it was from an Apache, hit the ceiling. Then another shell and another." Ahmad could only recognise his dead mother Rahmeh, 45, from her clothes and earrings because "part of her head was gone".

Massacre of a family seeking sanctuary The Samounis claim they were guided to a safe haven by Israeli troops - only to be cut down by shells

Ahmad says they counted 25 bodies - 10 adults and the rest children. One of the infants was the five-year-old daughter of his cousin Salah. "Her last words were 'Baba, Baba' and she died," he said. "She was hit in the head."

The teacher rallied survivors, urging them to leave but not everyone could make it. "We were about 50, some of us wounded," he said. "My grandmother Shifa was too sick, we left her." As Ahmad walked to the main road, where they hoped to find cars to take them to the hospital, he tore a piece off his white T-shirt and attached it to a stick as a white flag. Some *female* members of the Samouni family describe being shot at as they escaped while holding white flags.

Maysaa says she escaped with her daughter and brother-in-law, Musa, to the house of an uncle. There she found at least 40 Israeli soldiers and about 30 Palestinians, including a handful that were blindfolded. The soldiers administered first aid to Maysaa and her daughter before releasing them, but, she testifies, said they would keep Musa and his uncle "in case <u>Hamas</u> came". She adds: "I understood that they intended to use them as human shields."

The Israeli military denies targeting any buildings in the Zeitoun area on Monday and says it never forcibly gathers civilians in a specific building. It is continuing to investigate the incident.

Interviewed at Al Quds hospital yesterday, Ibteffam Al-Samouni said soldiers had "fired missiles" in the neighbourhood on Sunday and broke into five houses inhabited by Samouni family members and told the residents to leave. They had then walked to the warehouse belonging to their relatives. She added: "The soldiers told us: 'Stay there and shut the door, habbibi [my love]."

"We are civilians, we are farmers, we don't take part in any kind of resistance," said the 30-year-old woman.

After the shelling on Monday, she tried to escape. But, she says, there was shooting from Israeli forces as they walked from the building despite the fact that members of the group were waving white flags and shouting in Hebrew: "Kattan, Kattan [We have kids]." One of the men, Iyad, was shot in the leg by soldiers. "They ordered us to keep moving and not take the wounded man," she recalls. It was not until three days later that his body was recovered and brought to the hospital.

Ahmad is strongly critical of <u>Hamas</u> for keeping its leaders in hiding while civilians suffer from Israel's "brutal arsenal of weapons". Wael al-Samouni, the owner of the warehouse that was to become a tomb for his family members, insisted that Palestinians would remain steadfast but added: "I appeal to the world for help. This is a tragedy."

## Zeitoun

## Site of a slaughter

\* Survivors of an Israeli attack in Zeitoun say that up to 30 people were killed in a building where dozens of men, **women** and children sheltered from the Gaza offensive on 5 January. The Israeli army denies that the families were told by the Israelis to head for the building on the day before the strikes, and that shells targeted the area the next day.

Comedy show satirises Gaza violence page 28

Bush orders Rice to abstain in UN ceasfire vote page 29

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



# **YOUR LETTERS**

Dayton Daily News (Ohio)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINIONS; Pg. A11

Length: 408 words

# **Body**

Israel has right to defend itself

I have a difficult time understanding why it is OK for Arab terrorists, with their suicide bombers and rockets that kill innocent men, **women** and children, to expect Israel won't defend itself.

Never again will we sit by and allow our Jewish brothers and sisters to be annihilated by those who are taught nothing but ethnic hatred.

In 1948, there was no Palestine, but the Jews were finally given a state of their own from a small sliver of the British-owned Palestine Mandate. On that day, five Arab states attacked. The attacks then and now are not about land. They are about destroying the entire Jewish population. In the 60 years that followed, Arabs have waged a continuous war to destroy the Jewish state.

Leftists, such as Jimmy Carter, portray Israel as the aggressor when all it is doing is defending its land and people.

The Dayton Daily News gives very one-sided coverage of what is happening. <u>Hamas</u> started firing rockets into Israel. I cannot think of another country that would be expected to sit by and do nothing.

Jan Berman

Englewood

Nonsmokers are on power trip

Re "Protect workers by keeping smoking ban," Dec. 31, 2008: This letter is sanctimonious. Smoker bashing is a popular indoor sport these days. Part of it is that many people do not like the smell of tobacco smoke. A more insidious motive may be "power." Nonsmokers (saints) can look down their noses at smokers (sinners) standing outside in the rain, cold or snow. What an ego trip!

Before the draconian law forcing smokers outside, there were plenty of smoke-free establishments. But that was not enough - the nonsmokers had to impose their preferences onto the whole population. They comprise a majority of Ohio's population, so the "will of the voters" was predetermined. I just wish as many voters were nondrinkers, so that we could get rid of the bars and drunken drivers.

There should be indoor places for smokers to go.

## YOUR LETTERS

We all live in an environment where, if there are jobs, there is smog, acid rain, polluted urban air from vehicle exhausts, soot from coal-burning public utilities, radon and more. Anybody who wants "clean air" had better put themselves into a plastic bubble.

Some say smoking is not safe. Neither is alcohol usage, driving a car, walking down the street, or cutting your lawn with a power mower. I wish nonsmokers would quit pretending to be saints.

Doug Ball

Kettering Visit DaytonDailyNews.com/opinion for more commentary.

Load-Date: January 16, 2009



# **Zuma**

Cape Argus (South Africa)
January 13, 2009 Tuesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 905 words

# **Body**

I Mister Umshini Wami got it with both barrels from Judge Louis Harms!

I Judge Harms's latest ruling blows Nicholson's judgement to pieces. They certainly thwart escape from the court - political intrigue increases!

I My belief at the time has now been confirmed by the Appeal Court. Judge Nicholson's outrageous ruling should be investigated as it smacks of possible outside influence. It served to again delay Zuma's prosecution process, just what the ANC wants. - Des Goslett

I The last court that Zuma will be able to appeal to will be to face St Peter at the Pearly Gates. How is his army of lawyers going to make the trip?

I If Zuma is innocent, as he professes to be, then he must stop his delaying tactics and have his day in court. We are sick and tired of his antics.

I For goodness sake, I thought we had good investigators. If there is proof against Zuma, get on with it and charge him. Get the case over so that the country can get on with it. Or are they scared of a Mugabe type repercussion?

I Can a president grant himself a presidential pardon?

I Since Nelson Mandela retired as president, the ANC has been two wise men short of a trio. Over 700 corruption charges is not a conspiracy, it's a damn disgrace! Zuma, take your umshini and wam!

I Jacob Zuma spoke much on Interface, but said nothing.

I Thank you once again, Madiba. Your words 'Let our organisation at all times conduct itself with dignity" etc, obviously does not mean the current corrupt and incompetent ANC but people such as Mampele Rampele who should be next president.

I Cope is the disgruntled ANC and will fail for the same reasons that the ANC has failed.

I I thought newspapers were supposed to be impartial but you print mostly anti-Israel smses when most people polled locally support Israel. Why the bias?

### Zuma

I The one who called the Palestinians terrorists could be right, but we know for a fact the Zionist are cold-blooded killers. - JC.

I So many civilians are dead in Gaza because the barbaric <u>Hamas</u> put <u>women</u> and children in the line of fire, as they are known to do. Disgusting.

I Zapiro always finds occasions in which to vilify only Israel in its struggle with Muslims. Why? Because he knows that with Jews he will be left unharmed physically.

I Will all Muslims and sceptics please read Chief Rabbi Goldstein's clear article in the Sunday Times and then think and not be mislead about the real cause of the deaths in Gaza. Israel is a productive nation, unlike <u>Hamas</u> which is destructive.

I Gershwin - you stirrer . The longer a bank stalls a repo, the lower the recovery. A weak recovery means more to be repaid by the dispossessed consumer. - Shaka M

I So the debt collectors simply go around taking cars! In the first place, how did they know payments were behind and secondly, why would they do this without payment? As with everything else in South Africa, the wrong things are over-regulated and banks get away with murder. They were the cause of this whole mess in the fist place!

I Dollman, get a life. You sound like a very angry person. Do a good deed tomorrow and feel the difference.

I J Dollman should get his business etiquette correct. It would be incorrect for Helen Zille to reply to a cc copy.

I The row over Prince Harry's so-called racists remarks has been blown out of all proportion. The nickname "Paki" is used all over the world.

I Athlone swimming pool, stop inconveniencing your patrons. Please open at the official times stipulated and not at your convenience.

I Still waiting for Christmas parcel posted in UK at end of October. Guess I might as well rest assured that it's been stolen.

I Why do TV ratings always have the little v? The v is already included in TV which means tele violence.

II would like to know why soccer is broadcast on SABC and not cricket. Not everybody can afford to buy M-Net.

I How will poor people ever get value for their money when the little they have is spent on smaller packs of things. Only the rich can buy bulk and get items for cheaper. Take disposable nappies. When I buy a pack of four I pay R3.50 each, but pay R1.90 if I buy 100. Which I can't buy because I don't have that kind of money. So the poor get poorer yet again.

I It amazes me how many accidents have happened at the Malmesbury level crossing. I was almost killed the other night when a train almost smashed into my car when I proceeded to cross the level crossing in Darling. I reported it, as the train hooted late. Why are there no booms? Why aren't trains marked with reflective tape, like trucks? Vicky - Darling

I Thank you to Inspector Dirk and colleagues of the N2 highway patrol for your help after midnight this morning. We are grateful for the service you provide. God bless.

I Are there any by-laws for residents who keep stagnant pools of water on their property, breeding millions of mosquitoes which keep the neighbours awake? If not, there should be.

I Sanpark should stop harassing artists and start protecting their coastlines from poachers and their mountains from muggers. Or is a statue an easier target?

## Zuma

I Great article on Vodacom's content subscription in Argus Action. Vodacom is party to theft from our kids' top-ups and should be reported to police which I will do!

I Dumping of garden rubbish reported to the council and attended to within 24 hours. Thank you for excellent service.

I Why no outcry over the Russian nuclear warship in the harbour?

I Come back, Badih Chaaban, the only colourful man in politics!

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



# Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza; MIDEAST: Gaza Carnage Sets West Bank Aflame

IPS (Latin America)
January 12, 2009 Monday

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**Length:** 1000 words **Byline:** Mel Frykberg

# **Body**

More than 300 Palestinians were killed and at least 900 wounded following an intensive Israeli air bombing campaign over the Gaza strip through the weekend.

This followed a barrage of rockets fired by Palestinian fighters at Israeli towns and cities bordering the coastal territory in the last few weeks which caused some damage but no casualties.

<u>Hamas</u> leader-in-exile, Damascus-based Khaled Meshaal, has called on Palestinians to rise up against Israel. The Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank called for a three-day strike in sympathy with Gaza's plight.

Following Israel's aerial assault, one Israeli was killed and several wounded in retaliatory rocket fire from Gaza Saturday afternoon. This was Israel's first fatality in many months.

The first Palestinian Intifadah broke out in December of 1987 when Palestinian refugees from a camp in the north of Gaza clashed with Israel soldiers following the death of several Palestinians after an Israeli settler's car ploughed into their vehicle.

The Palestinians claimed the victims were deliberately mowed into, while the Israelis said it was the result of a traffic accident.

Following the initial clash, rioting and protests spread spontaneously to all of Gaza and the West Bank, leading to a popular uprising which lasted for several years. This followed years of Palestinian resentment and bitterness towards a brutal Israeli occupation.

Israeli-Arabs, descendents of the Palestinians, clashed Saturday with Israeli police throughout Israel.

In the Bedouin village of Rahat in the Negev desert, around 400 residents protested the attacks, while mosques throughout the town broadcast prayers of mourning. Many Bedouins, descendants of a nomadic tribe, join the Israeli army, where they are valued for their tracking skills. They are regarded as traitors by fellow Palestinians.

Several hundred left-wing Israelis marched through the streets of Tel Aviv towards the Israeli defence ministry headquarters chanting 'No to war, yes to peace'.

The left-wing protestors carried signs saying 'Israel's government is committing war crimes', 'Negotiation instead of slaughter', and 'Lift the siege from Gaza'.

# Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza MIDEAST: Gaza Carnage Sets West Bank Aflame

Several Israeli protestors were arrested. Matan Kaminer an Israeli student who took part in the protest told the Israeli daily Haaretz that 'no one can tell us that slaughtering the citizens of Gaza is meant to protect the citizens of Sderot and Ashkelon (two Israeli towns bordering the Gaza strip).'

An Israeli police officer was deliberately run over by a Palestinian in East Jerusalem as groups of Palestinian youths clashed with police in the city, stoning them and setting dumpsters on fire.

Palestinian protestors from West Bank towns and refugee camps took to the streets and marched on Israeli checkpoints and Israeli settlements. Many were injured by rubber bullets -- marble-sized metal balls covered in half a millimetre of rubber -- and tear gas shot by Israeli Defence Force (IDF) soldiers.

In Ramallah hundreds of protestors from the various Palestinian factions waved banners and flags, and decried the Gaza slaughter. They called for unity and for Gaza's <u>Hamas</u> leader Ismail Haniyeh and West Bank Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas to bury their differences and put the Palestinian cause above their personal politics.

Many in the crowd waved Fatah flags, associated with Abbas and the PA, showing clearly their empathy with fellow Palestinians despite the political divide between the two Palestinian territories.

IPS joined the demonstration as it marched around Ramallah city. In the crowd were people from all sections of Palestinian society. Elegantly turned out middle-aged <u>women</u> from Ramallah's Christian minority marched side by side with tough young men from the surrounding refugee camps.

Grandmothers, journalists, factional leaders, and mothers with toddlers walked linking arms with a scattering of international sympathisers based in the cosmopolitan central West Bank city. Many countries have representative offices to the PA in Ramallah.

This was one of the largest demonstrations that Ramallah witnessed in the last few years of conflict.

'I couldn't just sit at home. I felt overwhelming anger at the situation in Gaza and I needed to show my solidarity,' Munther, a young computer programmer from the Palestinian Legislative Council who voted for Abbas in the last election told IPS.

As the crowd circled the city centre, the Palestinian police looked on quietly and stood back. But when the demonstrators marched on the Muqata, the government headquarters of the PA where Abbas was in his office, the mood of the Palestinian security forces changed.

On approaching the Muqata's entrance the crowd was met by Palestinian soldiers who took up positions and held their weapons at the ready. But the Shebab, or youth in Arabic, decided to head towards the nearby Israeli military checkpoint of Beit El.

While the more cautious in the crowd stood back, the young men headed towards waiting Israeli military jeeps and tanks and started to sling stones at them, and set tyres alight to block the road.

The Israelis responded with tear gas and rubber bullets, injuring a number of youngsters who were rushed to nearby hospitals in Palestinian ambulances.

This IPS correspondent helped two youths injured by rubber bullets to hospital. They were shot as they stoned the soldiers.

As dozens of Palestinian riot police arrived on the scene to disperse the protestors, one of them remarked that the police arrival had been coordinated with their Israeli colleagues on the other side of the checkpoint.

Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza MIDEAST: Gaza Carnage Sets West Bank Aflame

'They are nothing but quislings and a militia of the Israelis. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in Gaza, and who do they aim their weapons at? Not the Israelis but us, their brethren protesting the slaughter,' said one of the youths.

'There will be more protests tomorrow and I will be back,' he added, as he stepped out of the taxi and limped towards the emergency room. © 2009 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



# Gaza

Cape Argus (South Africa)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 942 words

# **Body**

I The Muslim world has condemned Israel for its actions in Gaza but they have still not come up with an alternative workable option for Israel to protect itself from the terrorism of <u>Hamas</u>. No self-respecting nation can be expected to just sit back and let their towns be slowly whittled away by constant bombing.

I Archbishop Tutu has shown that determination can take a person to the top. From a former golf caddy he has become an often quoted analyst on Israel's aggression against the Palestinians. The golfing world must regret having lost such a great talent to politics.

I There is something horribly wrong in the states of Israel and Palestine. The first step in ending this horror is for world leaders to stop taking sides.

I Israel was given that land in much the same way District Six was cleared and given to others. They are not entitled to it. It does not belong to them and never will.

I To all the people running off their mouths condemning the Palestinians, if you don't know the history shut up. You read the media propaganda and you believe the filth you read. You are a bunch of idiots.

I No country in the world would put up with hundreds of rockets fired at them daily. Why should Israel? <u>Hamas</u> are to blame for all those deaths as they provoked Israel into the action it had to take.

I I guess if you throw 20 rocks into your neighbour's yard for months and months, he has to grow tired of it and send in the rotweillers, and then you cry foul. Don't mess with Israel!

I I can't believe how the world can sit idly by while Israel bombs the crap out of the Gaza Strip. The massacre of <u>women</u> and children should not go on unless Israel is willing to accept responsibility for the suicide bombings which would rightfully take place in the aftermath of their heinous attacks.

I Fourteen children aged eight to 14 deliberately killed by Taliban yesterday. Where is the Muslim outrage? Over|1 500 cholera victims in Zimbabwe. Where is the outrage of SA Muslims. Oh sorry, they weren't Muslim victims.

I Holy Wars are the worst, as both Palestine and Israel think God is on their side.

I Harry, the latest .50 sniper's rifle will obliterate a human head accurately from two kilometres. The question is: will this kill the Zanu-PF beast? - Ex-sniper.

Gaza

I Just watch what Mad Bob will get up to while the world's attention is on Israel. - John.

I Until the government takes a direct stand against Uncle Bob, they will be seen as the hypocrites that they are they criticise the Israelis but say nothing about Zimbabwe.

I I wonder how many of those who justifiably condemn the horrors committed by the Mugabe regime will now also condemn the Israeli regime for its massacre of Palestinians.

I White farmers will be treated like trash even if they are saints in Zimbabwe and South Africa. God is not asleep and injustice will be dealt in no uncertain terms to the bloodthirsty monsters parading as human beings.

I What does Robert Mugabe have to do for our government to condemn him? Some consistency is needed here. Zimbabwe is as worthy of saving as Palestine.

I The constant attack by obviously the same person on Boesak and Marais for joining Cope shows some people are very nervous of a Cope victory next year. Viva Marais and Boesak!

I The ANC likes to project itself as our "great liberator" but has become an exclusivist club for crooks, racists and incompetent careerists. It plays the race card all the time, dismissing opposition parties as racists, while in the same breath insisting all black South Africans vote for them. They have lost my vote.

I Cigarette smoking in cars should be banned. The irresponsible people who don't extinguish their cigarette butts before discarding them should be penalised. We should declare Cape Town a smoke-free zone in summer.

I The person who wrote the article about Nigella is either sex crazy or insanely jealous to think of food as sex symbols. Nobody in his right mind will think like that.

I Mica Diep River, your salesman in the paint department needs training on how to deal with customers! Manners would help. You have lost me and friends as customers!

I Milk does taste rather awful and watery nowadays. I wonder if it isn't water that is milk-flavoured perhaps?

I I was upset when I and hundreds of people were notified to collect our UIF payouts yesterday at the Department of Home Affairs. Not only was the office locked but the staff cellphones were conveniently switched off. There were people crying. I think it is a disgrace as people desperately needed their UIF for necessities.

I What is going on with our services? Post and parcels have not arrived although sent by airmail weeks ago from Germany. It probably will not arrive at all. The postwoman on our route can't read as our post gets delivered to other roads! Happy 2009?

I The Christmas post from out of SA once again did not arrive! When will we get a reliable postal service? This is out of hand and unacceptable. - EU

I Who cares about Trevor and Maria? They've been living together for so long.

I Why are we still lighting up Table Mountain? Locals and tourists alike, we need to consider electricity use.

I I was at Killarney when Ben Greyling had his fatal race. My condolences to his family, my prayer is that God in his infinite mercy be with you and strengthen you and carry you through. Ben we salute you, may you rest in peace.

I What happened to uninterrupted movies DStv? Action channel had adverts right through Fear Itself!

I Clayton Barnes yesterday reported that the government is training 41 000 new police officials for the 2010 World Cup! Why they don't employ ex-policemen who are already trained is beyond me? Does anyone know?

Load-Date: December 30, 2008



# Egypt Offers Humanitarian Aid but Is Criticized for Refusing to Open Gaza Border - Correction Appended

The New York Times

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final



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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 861 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER; Nadim Audi contributed reporting.

Dateline: EL ARISH, Egypt

# **Body**

Egyptian ambulances have already brought 43 wounded Palestinians from Gaza to this southern city's general hospital, with 15 of them needing respirators to keep them alive, said Dr. Muhammad al-Gabr, who has been trying to get them to more sophisticated surgical hospitals in Cairo.

The nine who remain here, including a young boy, are all in critical condition with blast and fracture wounds, and Dr. Gabr hoped to medevac them out on Tuesday night. All the patients sent here were civilians, as far he knew, he said.

"Gaza was part of Egypt if you go back in history, so there is a special feeling," he said. "But we don't look at borders this way; we are helping the people."

That is easily said for a doctor. But the crisis across the border has confronted Egypt's longtime president, Hosni Mubarak, with a difficult political situation -- needing to show solidarity with the Palestinians under attack even as he refuses to open the border between Egypt and Gaza to anything but carefully monitored humanitarian missions, like the 30 ambulances this reporter saw going toward Gaza on Tuesday.

Egypt is facing sharp condemnation from elsewhere in the Arab world, and there is even criticism here, where people are normally very careful about what they say publicly about their president: Egypt, they say, must do more while Gaza is under such heavy attack from Israeli warplanes.

"Egypt is helping the wounded and sending supplies for the people," said Hishmat Abu Bakr, 63, who fought in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. "But we'd prefer bigger help. We'd like to break the border and go die there with our brothers."

Harsher criticism of Mr. Mubarak was rare on Tuesday in southern Egypt, where the landscape and the architecture are nearly identical to that of Gaza, and where the economy is linked to smuggling food, supplies, arms and explosives there.

## Egypt Offers Humanitarian Aid but Is Criticized for Refusing to Open Gaza Border

Near the border -- closed to visitors, including journalists, both ways -- there is a heavy presence of police, military and secret police, the Mukhabarat, and numerous checkpoints along the roads on the way to the split border town of Rafah, which has been declared a military zone.

The Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, and his ally, the Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon, have called on Egypt to open the border and the Egyptian people to break down the barriers. But Egyptian forces have clashed with Palestinians trying to leave Gaza, and Mr. Mubarak has said firmly that the border will remain closed.

Egypt would reopen the Rafah crossing only when the Palestinian faction <u>Hamas</u> reconciled with the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and allowed him to reassert his authority over all Palestinian territory, including Gaza, Mr. Mubarak said Tuesday in a nationally televised speech.

Mr. Mubarak condemned Israel's "savage aggression." But in a riposte to Arab critics who live at a distance, Mr. Mubarak said, "We say to those who are trying to make political capital out of the plight of the Palestinian people that Palestinian blood has a price."

Mr. Bakr, the 63-year-old war veteran, refused to believe it when told of Mr. Mubarak's speech. "Mubarak could not say something so wrong," Mr. Bakr said. "The Palestinians are his brothers."

Muhammad Ahmad, 25, who owns a dress shop called Farha, or Happiness, said Egypt was doing what it could. "If they open the border just like that, it will be chaos like last year," he said. "That's why we need an agreement. Here in El Arish, we're so close to Gaza and yet there's nothing we can do. It's sad, but we're powerless."

Two young men from Rafah had come to this seaside city, some 20 miles away, "to look at young <u>women</u> and to rest my head," said Hassan Salem, 22. When the Israelis were bombing near Rafah to try to destroy the many smuggling tunnels that run between the Egyptian and Gazan side of the once-unified city, "we were almost knocked out by the noise," said his friend, Khaled Kamal, 25, a postman.

Everyone in Rafah has family on both sides of the border, Mr. Salem said, "so there's a lot of worry -- everyone on both sides of Rafah is worried."

The two young men sat in a tea shop, eyes glued to Al Jazeera and its nonstop television coverage of the wounded and dead in Gaza, with a special focus on two dead sisters, shown repeatedly lying in shrouds side by side.

"When you see small children dying like that, why did they die?" Mr. Kamal said passionately. "What did they do?"

Both were careful in discussing the tunnels, but Mr. Salem said, with a bit of exaggeration, "Israel destroyed maybe 40 tunnels the other day, but there are a thousand."

His words were echoed by Ahmad Abdo, 43. "The tunnels are our lifeline," he said. "The Israelis bombed some, but they can't bomb them all. Their economy is our economy."

Mr. Salem said all Arabs should help the Palestinians, but he was less clear about how.

The military men in Rafah, Mr. Salem said, "are there to help." But then he said, neatly describing the Egyptian dilemma, "Of course, if the Palestinians push through, the military is also there to push them back."

## http://www.nytimes.com

## Correction

## Egypt Offers Humanitarian Aid but Is Criticized for Refusing to Open Gaza Border

An article on Wednesday about Egypt's response to the Israeli assault on Gaza described their geographical relationship incorrectly. Gaza abuts northern Egypt, not southern Egypt.

Correction-Date: January 2, 2009

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: A man wounded in the conflict between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> was put into an ambulance in El Arish, Egypt, to be taken to Cairo. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMR DALSH/REUTERS)

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



# Middle East

Cape Argus (South Africa)
January 06, 2009 Tuesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 920 words

# **Body**

I Gaza is like a big prison, even those Zionists surrounding and guarding it are part of a greater Israeli prison!

I If you want to put an end to the fighting in Gaza and the rest of the world, the answer is simple - just target the actual weapon manufacturers instead of chasing after the end users. Eventually they will have to go back to using bows and arrows instead of rockets. - Rob Gould

I It seems that Israel will engage in a ceasefire only once they have killed all the Palestinian children. I wonder if the civilian refugees are being allowed to cross the borders. This has nothing to do with religion. It seems that the Israelis are conducting ethnic cleansing.

I If you would like to know how it all pans out for Israel and her enemies, read the Bible. Do the outcomes of the 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars not give Israel's enemies a little clue as to the futility of their efforts? And even if Russia and Iran join the evil effort to wipe out the Jews, Ezekiel 38 and 39 should strike fear into the heart of anyone who tries to mess with Israel!

I South Africans know that no measure of force could stop their struggle for freedom. Why deny Palestinians the inevitable - freedom. Israel is a political state not religious. Mr Jantjes, you lack historical knowledge. - MN Davids

I To Somaya, Palestine does not care about its <u>women</u> and children; it sacrifices them for this holy war. <u>Hamas</u> is just reaping what it has sown so don't worry - those who were killed will be rewarded. It is so stated in your Qur'an.

I If millions of Palestinians have no right to be on land that they have lived on for hundreds of years, then every white South African should rightly and happily leave this country if told to do so.

I I am a Muslim, I have always been a Muslim and I pray that I will die a Muslim. Having said that, I join the people who ask *Hamas* to stop bombing the illegitimate state of Israel. - A M Jassiem

I All you need to do is compare the scenes you see from Gaza and the Israeli territory affected by rockets and then decide who the real terrorists are. It really isn't rocket science. The consolation is that everyone will get their just deserts, if not in this life then in the hereafter. May the terrorism end!

I Listening to a talk show recently, I realised why SA will never be part of the Zim solution. An alarming number of black callers voiced enthusiastic support for Mugabe. This suggests that a huge number - maybe even a majority in the ANC - actually supports Mugabe. God help up all!

## Middle East

I We need more people like Clive Jacobs in Retreat - what a heart-warming story. Just shows how one person can make a difference.

I The Coon Carnival sucks. They must shape up or ship out!

I Woolworths, please go back to FNB. I've never had such problems with my accounts since you switched to Absa. - IA McAloon

I I see the Marie Stopes Clinic offers "safe" abortions. Safe for who? Certainly not for the baby about to be murdered! And does the clinic guarantee the emotional, mental and spiritual safety of the mother once the murder of the baby has been committed?

I City of Cape Town, you suck. You left our neighbourhood (Belgravia) in total darkness. No electricity on New Year's eve. No luck with the 0800 number and no response from the area manager.

I When Eskom uses wind turbines to boost SA's electricity problems, then I think it's only fair for me to ask if the electricity charges will drop.

I In June, Chubb Security increased their fee due to the increase in the price of fuel. Now that the fuel price has decreased substantially they increase their fee yet again. What a rip-off!

I It amuses me that black racism (BEE, Black Lawyers Association, Black Chamber of Commerce) is fine, but white racism is a positive no-no.

I What a bunch of opportunistic praise-singers at Helen Suzman's funeral. If more politicians subscribed to her principles and actions, we could become a truly great nation.

I Congratulations to the traffic police in the Western Cape. I travelled from Struisbaai to Bellville on Sunday and saw one officer manning a speed-trap camera.

I I am certain there will be less disruptions with the Klopse if the City respects them and does not wait till the 11th hour to engage with them about legalities. They are part of the rich culture of this city, so all those elite whites who are buying up the city centre should stop moaning. They belong and should carry on, so pack your bags and trek if you have a problem with the Klopse.

I To Sumaya C - why don't you condemn the radical Islamic suicide bombers who murder innocent and unsuspecting people, including **women** and children?

I While sorry for the child hit by a car in Du Noon on New Year's day, why is a three-year-old left alone to wander in a street which, by all accounts, is dangerous?

I When will someone do something about the Pinelands FNB's disgusting service?

I How can anybody with a sound mind respect a president-in-waiting who is about to marry his fifth wife?

I is it only me or does the guy who does the voice-overs on e.tv irritate with his attempt to sound "American"?

I Am I the only one who gets totally peeved when the cashier stops ringing up my groceries to read my newspaper or magazine at the till?

I Can we please organise a protest against the suicide bomber killing almost 40 innocent people outside a Baghdad mosque?

I Lynne Brown, how low can one go to politicise the Cape Klopse?

I We need cameras on all six lanes at Hospital Bend on at least two positions - that's the only way to ensure road hogs obey the speed signs!

## Middle East

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



# Emergency measures must be temporary, says EP delegation

Daily News Egypt
November 28, 2008 Friday

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Length: 994 words

# **Body**

CAIRO: Special powers given to a government to handle a specific emergency situation must always come with a time limit, said the chairperson of the European Parliament (EP) Delegation for relations with Mashreq countries Beatrice Patrie Wednesday.

The delegation is in Egypt for the ninth EP-Egypt Interparliamentary Meeting.

Asked by Daily News Egypt whether she subscribed to the view posited by head of the National Council for Human Rights Boutros Boutros-Ghali - whom the delegation had met on this visit - that a balance must be maintained between security and civil liberties, Patrie said it was a question all European countries struggled with.

"This is a question which is on the agenda of all European countries, because you have to contend with security questions related to terrorism. Striking a balance can be a very delicate and subtle exercise, but it should never disregard individual rights," she said. "The difficulty lies in where to stop, where to draw the line."

Powers given to governments for this purpose can sometimes "inhibit or hinder respect for human rights to be granted to all citizens. So when dealing with laws of these kinds which are laid down for governments to deal with various specific situations, the very nature of these special laws is that they are temporary, they must be provisional in nature and therefore limited in time."

The EP delegation had met with a plethora of state and non-state actors during its four-day visit, and had encouraged the Egyptian government to continue the reform process it had announced during the last presidential and parliamentary elections.

"We realize that the emergency laws in Egypt have been in force for too long and 10 years can hardly be called an exceptional provisional situation," Patrie said. "Egypt has internal security issues to contend with, this is why the government is working on this permanent legal provision which will be an anti-terrorism law."

Emergency law has been implemented in Egypt since the assassination of former President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

## Emergency measures must be temporary, says EP delegation

The delegation however, welcomed the efforts of decentralization and strengthening the role of <u>women</u> in the reform process but also called for greater political participation of opposition parties and the assured independence of the Egyptian judiciary.

Miguel Portas, member of the delegation and the only EP member from the leftist Portuguese party Bloco de Esquerda, told Daily News Egypt that he cannot predict the future of these parties "because it depends on the political evolution of the country. They are parties [facing] difficulties in exerting their mission. Some of them are not legal and not illegal, others have limits."

Asked specifically about the Muslim Brotherhood, Portas said "We have listened to a lot of opinions about the climate of confrontation between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, and different kinds of analysis about this.

"We have listened also to one deputy [an MP] from the group and his points of view. In the Arab world we have the obligation as Europeans to listen to all the points of view and we are against discrimination by religious factors. And this is true in Egypt, in Palestine, in Lebanon or in Jordan."

Patrie however was adamant that the delegation, and by default the European Parliament, was not in the business of telling other countries what to do.

"We consider ourselves to be partners with Egypt and as partners, we do not believe it is up to us to give our partner country good or bad points. We are here to work; we are not here to give lessons to anybody. We are here to support what has been achieved."

Last year relations became strained between Egypt and the European Parliament after it had passed a resolution condemning Egypt for human rights abuses and the continued incarceration of former presidential candidate Ayman Nour. The delegation also denied that it had requested or attempted to visit Nour, stating they were not mandated to do so.

The delegation met during the course of its visit with Egypt's Parliament Speaker Fathi Sorour, Shoura Council leader Safwat Al-Sherif, Pope Shenouda and Grand Imam of Al Azhar Mohamed Sayed Tantawy.

They also met with representatives of opposition parties, the Muslim Brotherhood and various NGOs.

Patrie pointed out that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had come up many times in the discussions and reiterated the EP's stance against the blockade of Gaza and for the two-state solution.

The European Union (EU) considers <u>Hamas</u> a terrorist organization but Portas pointed out that opinions held within the union and the parliament were far more wide-ranging.

"I was an electoral observer of the 2006 elections in Palestine. In my opinion they were the most democratic elections in the Arab world; to me this was very clear," he said, "And in the European Parliament I and a lot of others are against the blockage of the elected [*Hamas*] government after the elections."

"The view of the European Union is balanced, it is not the position of the Bush administration and it is a position with evolutions," he added. "We have a lot of resolutions in the European Parliament in the last two years which condemned the continuation of the settlements, the situation in Gaza and the detentions."

The reason for the divergence in opinions was derived from the makeup of the union itself, Portas explained.

"It's necessary to understand that the international policy of the union is not a direct [result] of the European parliament. The parliament can make reports but they are declarations, not imperative resolutions.

"The international policy is a responsibility of the 27 governments and they are obliged to unanimity in their decisions, and now you can understand the positions of the EU particularly towards the Arab world are very ambiguous. They are always the compromised positions between more Atlantist governments and governments with an open mind about the Mediterranean sea and the rights of its people," he said.

Load-Date: November 30, 2008



# **10 IN TEN**

The Times (South Africa)
November 6, 2008 Thursday

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Section: ECONOMY, BUSINESS & FINANCE; Pg. 10

Length: 1003 words

# **Body**

## Congo

Rebels say government has violated ceasefire

CONGOLESE Tutsi rebels have fought for a second day in the east against local Mai-Mai militia, according to the UN.

A rebel spokesman accused the government of breaking a week-old ceasefire.

"The ceasefire has already been broken," said a spokesman for the rebels loyal to renegade General Laurent Nkunda. He said the rebels would respond to attacks by the government launched from the city of Goma - Reuters

Israel

Truce in danger of unravelling

ISRAELI rescue services reported a "massive" cross-border rocket barrage, fired by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip, only hours after an Israeli air strike in the first major exchange of fire since a truce in June.

## Hamas said it fired 35 rockets.

Israel launched an air strike on Gaza earlier yesterday after its troops fought a fierce gun battle with <u>Hamas</u> militants, who then fired mortars into southern Israel.

The fighting killed six Palestinians and threatened to unravel the truce that had stopped most of the violence in the volatile territory. - AP

## Ethiopia

Volcano erupts, earthquake follows

A VOLCANIC eruption in Ethiopia's north-eastern Afar region was accompanied by lava flows covering 300km² and a minor earthquake.

## 10 IN TEN

Five people were killed and more than 2000 displaced after an eruption last year in the same mountain range.

The volcanoes of the Arteale range had been largely dormant for six decades, but they started to spew lava after a series of earthquakes rattled the region in September 2005.

Experts have said the eruptions are caused by the movement of tectonic plates under the Great Rift Valley, which is highly susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. - AP

## North Korea

Dear Leader bouncing about - but when?

NORTH Korea's state-controlled media have released new, undated pictures of leader Kim Jong II for the second time in four days.

Weeks of absence from public events have fuelled speculation about the health of the 66-year-old "Dear Leader" of the Stalinist dictatorship.

The official Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim visited two army units and watched soldiers training. Pictures released with the report showed an apparently healthy Kim with soldiers, but dating the pictures was impossible.

In September, South Korean intelligence agencies said Kim was recovering from a stroke suffered in mid-August. - Sky News

### Colombia

Army chief resigns in body count scandal

THE commander of Colombia's army has resigned in a scandal over the killing of scores of civilians, allegedly engineered by promotion-seeking officers to inflate rebel body counts.

General Mario Montoya, who won acclaim for the bloodless rescue of hostages Ingrid Betancourt and three US military contractors in July, did not mention the scandal as a factor in his retirement after 39 years in the service.

His resignation follows criticism of a policy he allegedly encouraged of promoting officers whose units killed the most leftist rebels. Prosecutors are investigating more than 90 officers. - AP

## Norway

Dwindling numbers end annual lemming run

LEMMING numbers are dwindling in Norway because of climate change, ending a historic cycle of population booms and busts that inspired a myth of mass suicides by the rodents, scientists said yesterday.

Fewer lemmings - small brown, black or yellowish mammals - in the mountains of south Norway meant predators such as the Arctic fox were forced to eat other prey including grouse and ptarmigan birds.

"The lemming population is falling and the peaks are disappearing," said Nils Stenseth of Oslo University, one of the authors of the report published in the journal Nature and written with colleagues in Norway and France.

He said it was the first study to link lemming numbers and disruptions to snowfall caused by global warming.

The study of lemmings since 1970 showed the last population boom was in 1994, ending a pattern of spikes every 3-5 years. - Reuters

10 IN TEN

Jurassic Park author Crichton dies at 66

BEST-selling author Michael Crichton, who wrote such novels as The Andromeda Strain and Jurassic Park, and created the popular TV drama ER, has died at 66, his family said yesterday.

Crichton, a medical doctor turned novelist whose books have sold more than 150-million copies worldwide, died "unexpectedly" on Tuesday in Los Angeles after a battle with cancer. - Reuters

Spain

Bin Laden's son denied political asylum

SPAIN'S Interior Ministry says it has rejected an asylum request from a son of Osama bin Laden.

A ministry official says the government determined that 27-year-old Omar Osama bin Laden did not "meet the conditions necessary for entering Spain".

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, would not elaborate or discuss Bin Laden's reasons for seeking asylum upon arriving on Monday at Madrid's Barajas airport.

Omar Osama Bin Laden has 24 hours to appeal and remains in an airport transit area. - AP

Afghanistan

Strike on Taliban 'killed women and children'

AN Afghan villager said to have been at the scene of a US bombing raid, has claimed that 23 children and 10 **women** attending a wedding party were among 37 Afghans killed during the strike against the Taliban.

The US military said it is investigating the reports.

President Hamid Karzai has demanded that US president-elect Barack Obama act immediately to prevent civilian casualties in US military actions against the Taliban.

Abdul Jalil said he was hosting a wedding party for his niece when Taliban militants fighting US forces took cover near his home.

He said 37 people were killed when US planes bombed the militants. - AP

**Philippines** 

Crowded ferry capsizes, captain arrested

INVESTIGATORS detained the captain of a crowded ferry that overturned in freak weather, drowning 42 people, on suspicion of operating the vessel illegally.

About 100 people were rescued and eight were missing after the Don Dexter Cathlyn was battered by high winds and waves soon after leaving port in central Masbate island.

The victims included 12 children and a mother who lost her husband a week ago. . - AP

Load-Date: June 2, 2009



# Visions of the old settlers

Weekend Australian

November 29, 2008 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 25

Length: 1616 words

Byline: Rebecca Weisser

# **Body**

The Rudd Government is failing to note in its vote against Israel that some Jewish settlements have a long history, writes Rebecca Weisser

TWENTY minutes out of Jerusalem, an armed guard and a cluster of outsized daisies mark the entrance to Neve Daniel, a Jewish settlement in the Palestinian West Bank. It's a graphic reminder of the threat of violence settlers live with and their determination to create a place that is safe to rear their children, even if the flowers are made of steel.

Israel has few friends left in the international community that are prepared to support the expansion of settlements beyond Israel's 1967 borders. Earlier this month at the UN Australia switched its vote, calling on Israel to stop establishing settlements in Palestinian territories. Only the US, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau and Micronesia still vote against such resolutions.

British Foreign Minister David Miliband, on a visit to Israel this month, also stepped up the pressure on Israel, saying that he would call for European Union tariffs to be imposed on West Bank goods produced by settlements and for labelling that could facilitate consumer boycotts of products.

But Israel President Shimon Peres pointed out that many of the labourers in the West Bank were Palestinians, and that if the products could not gain access because of tariff barriers, it would be Palestinian workers who would be laid off and suffer.

So settlements are a hot issue. But as I drive into Neve Daniel, a settlement in the Gush Etzion region, with Matthew Lawrence, a young New Zealand-born Israeli, his thoughts are elsewhere. ``If only there weren't all these clouds, you could see what a magnificent view we have from here," he says.

Can it really be true that he has come to live in one of the most contested places on earth for the view? ``Actually, it's a very good place to bring up children," Lawrence explains. This seems even more unlikely. Surely the West Bank is dangerous, at the very least compared with NZ? Lawrence disagrees.

"I let my children wander unsupervised in the street beyond where I live. I wouldn't do that in Jerusalem or even New Zealand. We're a community and we look out for each other."

### Visions of the old settlers

In fact, compared with the level of scrutiny I have been subjected to boarding an El Al flight in Bangkok or even entering an Israeli shopping centre, I am taken aback at the seeming indifference of a part-time guard as we drive into the settlement.

"You get to know what you are looking for," Lawrence explains. Community members, including him, take it in turns to guard the entry. "We can't expect the Government to meet all our security needs so we organise ourselves to take turns. It's like neighbourhood watch." With guns.

As we drive through the streets of Gush Etzion, the appeal is apparent. The houses are attractive villas, not large compared with the McMansions of Australian suburbia but built of honey-white Jerusalem stone with red-tiled roofs. The schools, shops, services are all apparently very good. It is quiet and peaceful.

I am surprised to see a Palestinian car, identifiable by its green numberplate, parked in front of a house. Is that what the neighbourhood watch is on the lookout for? Not at all, Lawrence says. The car belongs to a builder who is well known to the community.

Indeed, it is one of the ironies of this hot-button issue that the settlements have all been built by Palestinians. Last week, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad called on Israel to halt the expansion of settlements in the West Bank which he claims undermine the standing of the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, which controls it. But building settlements is good work and good money, and Palestinians do it regardless of what the Palestinian politicians say.

Shaul Goldstein, mayor of Gush Etzion, is fluent in Arabic and speaks warmly of his relations with Palestinians, many of whom have worked with him in his construction business. But he says many are pressured into not working with Israelis.

"I was organising a trial of how to respond in the event of a natural disaster, like an earthquake. I rang the Palestinian mayor and asked him if he would participate," Goldstein says. "He said he would but he didn't show up. When I asked him why, he said that he'd rang Ramallah (capital of the Palestinian Authority) and they told him not to."

The persecution of moderate Palestinians who work with Israelis goes far beyond verbal pressure. Khaled Abu Toameh, an Israeli Arab who reports on Palestinian affairs for The Jerusalem Post, says that since the Palestinian Authority was created by the Oslo Accords in 1994, it has targeted and executed what it calls collaborators and continues to do sotoday.

On the day I meet Toameh, November 15, he says a military court in Bethlehem has sentenced a Palestinian to death for collaborating with Israeli forces, the seventh this year. ``The Palestinian authorities are meant to work with the Israelis in maintaining law and order. Yet they sentence people to death for doing what they [the PA] do or are meant to do."

Ziad Abu Zayyad, a former minister of state in the Palestinian Authority who lost his seat in Jerusalem to <u>Hamas</u> in the 2006 elections, sees the settlements as a fundamental barrier to peace. ``A two-state solution is becoming less likely as long as Israel continues to build settlements in the West Bank," he says.

"The members of the Palestinian Authority are accused of being traitors and collaborators for working with the Israelis but, instead of being partners for peace, they [the Israelis] build settlements."

But Goldstein doesn't see it that way. He regards Gush Etzion as a non-negotiable part of Israel. ``Abraham and Isaac stayed here on their way to Mt Moriah. David shepherded his flock here. You can see Jordan to the east and the Mediterranean to the west."

But more important, he points out, from a strategic point of view the settlements of Gush Etzion built atop the high hills between Bethlehem and Hebron overlook Jerusalem and would allow an enemy to fire directly on the city. No government that had to guarantee the safety of Jews in Jerusalem could allow them to be controlled by hostile forces.

### Visions of the old settlers

But the battle for settlements isn't just for the high ground in terms of geography but also in morality, and when it comes to Gush Etzion Israel believes it has an unbeatable case. The modern settlements were built in 1927 by Jews from Yemen on lawfully purchased land. All four settlements were razed by the Jordanian legion during the 1948 war of independence, and 240 residents of the kibbutz were massacred and another 260 captured.

After the Six-Day War, descendants of the residents returned, as did others. Today there are more than 44,000 Israelis living in the Gush Etzion region.

Goldstein's view is that Jews have been living in Judea and Samaria, the area known as the West Bank, since biblical times. "The only time they have been prohibited from living there was under Jordanian rule from 1948 to 1967. But Jordan had no right to be there anyway," he says.

That doesn't cut ice with the Australian ambassador to Israel, James Larsen. When I visit his residence in Herzliya, he proudly offers Israeli and Australian wine, but stresses that none of the wine comes from Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Foreign Minister Stephen Smith, when asked to explain the change in the Australian Government's position on settlements, has said Australia is concerned that activity in the disputed settlements undermines confidence in negotiations to secure peace under a two-state solution. The Israeli Government's position is that it will negotiate on the status of settlements as part of a peace agreement. But Israel is convinced that the settlements are not the real obstacle to peace for a simple reason: there are no settlements in Gaza and there is no peace. Unilateral disengagement simply unleashed a barrage of rocket fire.

Jonathan Spyer, a senior research fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs Centre, points to a deeper problem. Iran is not only training and arming Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, he says, but also training and arming **Hamas** in Gaza. Both areas are beachheads for attacks. **Hamas** does not want peace with Israel and Iran would never permit it in any case. ``Iran needs `Hamastan' and `Hezbollahstan' in its war against Israel, but to activate them whenever it wants to, they have to exist." From this perspective, Iran represents not just an existential threat to Israel but the real roadblock to peace.

On my last evening in Israel I dine with rabbi Ron Kronish, a founder and director the Inter-religious Co-ordinating Council in Israel, and with young Israeli and Palestinian <u>women</u>. All have become friends through participating in Kronish's group.

Of the two Jewish girls, one is going to do her military service. The second is applying to be a conscientious objector. A third girl, a Muslim who considers herself Palestinian although she travels on an Israeli passport, says she will live in Palestine when it is independent. Why doesn't she go to live there now? "I want to finish university." She blames the poor services in the Palestinian territories on the corrupt Palestinian leadership. "We just need to choose better leaders."

Indeed. Like her friend, the conscientious objector, who thinks Israel could survive without an army, this seems unlikely. But if there is hope for future, it is not just in the quixotic idealism these <u>women</u> express but in the fact they are all dining at the same table.

Rebecca Weisser travelled to Israel and the Palestinian territories with the assistance of the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council.

Load-Date: November 28, 2008



# Man's desperate plea as five relatives killed; Effects of fighting in the Gaza Strip are felt in Birmingham

Birmingham Post

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

1ST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 13

Length: 399 words

**Byline: PAUL BRADLEY** 

# **Body**

A Birmingham relative of five girls killed in the Gaza Strip has called for politicians to stop the fighting before more members of his family are killed.

University of Birmingham research fellow, Mohammed Balousha, discovered that five of his cousin's children were killed when a bomb flattened their home in Gabalya on Sunday night.

The five children who died were four year-old Gawaher Balousha, and her sisters Donya, aged eight, Samar, aged 12, Ikra, aged 14, and Tahrer, aged 17.

Their parents, two of their sisters and one brother survived the bombing but suffered injuries in the attack.

Yesterday, Mr Balousha, aged 30, who lives in Selly Oak, described how he felt "completely helpless" knowing that his family were battling to survive amid frequent Israeli bombing attacks.

Mr Balousha, who has not returned to Palestine since before the borders were closed in 2006, said: "I'm absolutely devastated that my five beautiful cousins were killed. I'm now terrified that my mum, six brothers and two sisters, who all live in Gaza City, may also be hurt or even killed.

"They all live within a couple of hundred metres of Mosques which could be targeted by Israeli bombers at any moment.

It's horrible being so far away when I know my whole family are terrified, living in fear every day the attacks continue. "I spoke to my brother on the phone and he said it is like an earthquake has hit. I just want both sides to stop the fighting and bloodshed so all the civilians will be safe. I desperately want to return home to see my family and support them at this difficult time."

More than 360 Palestinians have been killed since Israel's bombing campaign started five days ago. Four Israelis have been killed by rockets from Gaza.

Mr Balousha, who was among 700 protesters who burned an Israeli flag outside the Bull Ring shopping centre on Monday night, said: "I just hope mum and my brothers and sisters, and all their children, make it through this

Man's desperate plea as five relatives killed Effects of fighting in the Gaza Strip are felt in Birmingham

terrifying time so I can see them again one day. I have no other family here so it has been an extremely difficult time. My friends and colleagues have been very supportive and that has helped a lot."

The UN says at least 62 of the Palestinians killed so far have been women and children.

"It's horrible being so far away when I know my whole family are terrified, living in fear every day the attacks continue

MOHAMMED BALOUSHA

# **Graphic**

A Palestinian man looks out towards destroyed *Hamas* government buildings following an Israeli air strike in Gaza

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



# Critics urge Sen. Klobuchar to condemn Israeli assault; She urged aid for Gazans and said, "We need to work toward a cease-fire." Coleman and McCollum faced small protests.

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Metro Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3A

Length: 417 words

Byline: RANDY FURST, STAFF WRITER

## **Body**

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, meeting with more than 40 critics of the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, said Tuesday that she would push for humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and favored a cease-fire, but she refused to condemn the Israeli offensive.

The meeting, which was polite but tense, culminated a day of demonstrations by protest groups that picketed the building on Washington Avenue South in Minneapolis where Klobuchar has her office. Earlier in the day, about 70 people held a rally in the building's lobby.

A small protest was held outside Sen. Norm Coleman's Twin Cities office, said Mary Beaudoin, director of <u>Women</u> Against Military Madness, who was there. And two or three protesters went to U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum's office and met with her district manager, McCollum spokeswoman Cleve Mesidor said.

In the meeting at Klobuchar's office, she listened intently as one activist after another implored her to oppose the Israeli bombings.

Among those at the meeting were members of a Jewish group that opposes Israel's military policies toward the Palestinians, the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, and several peace groups, including <u>Women</u> Against Military Madness and the Anti-War Committee.

One activist placed a large color photo in front of Klobuchar of a man carrying what appeared to be a child who had been badly mutilated by the bombings.

Klobuchar admitted to being affected by the photo. She said she had sympathy for people on both sides of the conflict and, as a result of the discussion, would push for humanitarian aid.

Pressed by the protesters to denounce Israel, Klobuchar said, "I am not condemning what Israel has done as you have asked me to do." But, she added, "We need to work toward a cease-fire and I would like to see a cease-fire in place."

Critics urge Sen. Klobuchar to condemn Israeli assault She urged aid for Gazans and said, "We need to work toward a cease-fire." Coleman and McCollum faced smal....

LeRoy Coleman, communications director for Sen. Coleman, said, "While Senator Coleman strongly believes that Israel has a right to defend itself, he calls on both sides to quickly work towards a lasting cease-fire. However, a cease-fire cannot just be a short term opportunity for <u>Hamas</u> to regroup."

During the afternoon rally, Humaira Afzal, communications director of the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, appealed to Minnesota's congressional delegation to mount pressure to end the conflict, saying the bombing of Gaza will fuel hatred of America and American interests "and will be used by extremists to recruit more individuals and justify their attacks."

Randy Furst - 612-673-7382

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



## Why we are here

The Jerusalem Post January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

**Length:** 957 words **Byline:** GIL TROY

**Highlight:** Being here will sometimes test our fiber. But a good yarn also means a great story, and we are blessed to be here,now, weaving the tapestry of modern Israel. The writer is professor of history at McGill University and the author of Why I Am a Zionist: Israel, Jewish Identity and the Challenges of Today and Leading from the Center: Why Moderates Make the Best Presidents.

## **Body**

My family and I returned from England on January 2, midway through the second year of our extended Israel adventure. The seventh day of war against <u>Hamas</u>'s rockets added frissons of anxiety to the usual arrival chaos. After an impromptu security check as we deplaned, guards detained one passenger. Our driver met us, saying, "The situation is rough." I told my daughter, "We're going to have to be extra careful wandering around for now." With a 13-year- old's defiant logic, she replied "Then why are we here?"

It was a fair question. We were returning from Limmud - a festival of Jewish learning with 900 sessions for 2,000 participants in five days at a bucolic (if freezing) English campus. In that British bubble, or our usual Canadian cocoon, we never worried about suspicious objects or avoided riding on buses.

I gave my daughter a 5:30 a.m. airport answer: "Because good people don't cut and run when bad guys start bombing."

Of course, the answer goes deeper.

WE ARE here because the Jewish people have only one homeland, only one Jewish place running on Jewish time, where we belong as a people and are not living by anyone else's good graces. There is nothing like Jerusalem on a Shabbat, on Succot, on Yom Kippur. The tranquility, spirituality, community and history enveloping us and enriching our lives here are unique.

We are here because daily life here is also special. Kids roam comfortably, under neighbors' watchful, even prying, eyes, as adults build this small, still fledgling state, with such potential, and yes, much room for improvement. Many of those Israeli traits that Westerners dislike, the pushiness, the incessant improvisations, are the very characteristics that will help win this war and make this experiment work.

We are here because we like Jerusalem's many "meaning junkies," as one friend calls them, seeking more to life than the latest pop culture trends, hoping to root our lives in enduring values.

We are here because when we wander around Jerusalem's Old City or delight in Tel Aviv's modernity, when we remove ancient pots from the ground or buy modern artistic knickknacks, we do it with the heroes of Jewish history

#### Why we are here

sitting proudly on our shoulders: Deborah the prophetess or David the king, Sarah Aaronsohn the Nili spy or Menachem Begin the fighter turned peacemaker, Golda Meir the prime minister who also left America's comforts or David Ben- Gurion, the prime minister who knew when to compromise in accepting the UN partition plan and when to plunge ahead in declaring the state despite American and Jewish calls to wait.

We are here because our great-grandparents dreamed of being here but could not be, because one grandfather fought in the 1948 War of Independence, and another helped smuggle weapons from New York so Israel could be free. For generations Jews have been singing "Next Year in Jerusalem." This is our time to be in Jerusalem, build Jerusalem and be rebuilt by Jerusalem, not sing about it as if it were some impossible dream.

We are here because the fight against terror knows no boundaries; this month it is Sderot and our cousins' kibbutz in the Negev, last month it was Mumbai, seven years ago on 9/11 it was my hometown New York. But here Jews control their own fate, unlike the Lubavitchers in Mumbai who had to wait for the Indian army to get organized, unlike in Montreal where we have to beg to designate firebombing a Jewish day school a hate crime, only to see the perpetrators punished lightly.

WE ARE here because - as I said at the airport - good people cannot flee but must fight evil. Even critics condemning Israel's supposedly "disproportionate response" implicitly concede that a state is justified in responding to 10,000 rockets terrorizing its citizens over eight years. And I for one, am proud of Israel's response - only after years of exhausting diplomatic efforts, only after offering the Palestinians a chance to build Gaza by removing the constant struggle with the settlers and the army, only after na-ve but well-meaning American Jewish philanthropists raised \$14 million to donate the burgeoning hothouses the Israelis developed, inviting Palestinians to make Gaza productive rather than a terror center - which Palestinians then trashed. I am proud of Israel's attempt to minimize civilian casualties even as *Hamas* terrorists cower behind *women* and children, behind mosques, hospitals and UN schools.

We are here because if we flee, who are we; if we let others fight for us, what are we; and if none of us fight, where will we - and the world - be? What values would we stand for if we abandoned Jerusalem, as cousin Daniel continues farming on the Gaza border with rockets flying overhead, as our friend Mickey and thousands of others serve their country, the Jewish people and the civilized world so honorably and selflessly? Israel, the Jewish people's national project, is a rich tapestry. Every day those of us in Israel, temporarily or permanently, add golden threads to this extraordinary old-new artwork. Some threads may be as short as the ones birthright israel participants add in their 10-day stints here, some may only last a year or two, others are lifelong. Others, tragically, are cut short - as we have seen too frequently in this war as well.

This is our moment to spin our Israeli yarn, and add to this magical Jewish tapestry with as many golden cords as we can create for as long as we choose, on our timetable, not cowed by anyone's threats. And yes, being here will sometimes test our fiber. But a good yarn also means a great story, and we are blessed to be here, now, weaving the tapestry of modern Israel - and helping to star in this grand narrative, one of the amazing adventures of 21st century modern democratic life.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## **Letters**

South China Morning Post January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Letters; Pg. 12

Length: 1143 words

## **Body**

US must review its support for aggressive Israel

The Israeli consul general Amikam Levy has tried to justify the killing of Palestinians in Gaza ("Israel's right to protect its own citizens", January 2).

It seems there is a highly political agenda behind the overwhelming and inhumane response to <u>Hamas'</u> provocation, namely that ambitious Israeli politicians, especially right-wing, military-obsessed personages, now predominate.

Israel is supposed to be the most technically advanced nation in the Middle East. Why was it not possible to use all-seeing (day and night) US-supplied drone aircraft to spot rocket launchers and direct "surgical strikes" at them? We know that Israeli warplanes routinely target individual houses and cars in their effort to kill <u>Hamas</u> leaders. Is it necessary to massacre **women** and children to knock out some rocket sites?

The Bush administration and the Christian world are also guilty of supporting Israel's vicious treatment of the Palestinians by the supply of huge amounts of military equipment and a massive subsidy, most of which, I presume, goes to buy more weapons. Some Christians, especially fundamentalist supporters of George W. Bush, believe that Israel has a divine mandate to occupy all the land controlled by David and Solomon 3,000 years ago.

This understanding of the Old Testament makes the God of Israel into a god of real estate, concerned more about square kilometres of desert than about human life or dignity.

Christians should urge the incoming US administration to abandon its flawed, carte blanche support of aggressive Israeli politicians and begin a long overdue reappraisal of US policy towards Israel and the aggrieved Islamic world.

One desirable shift would be to terminate all military supplies to Israel and other Middle East countries. One does not keep pouring petrol on a fire especially one that has been raging for more than 60 years.

If Israeli politicians do not stop dragging America into their stupid war let them build their own missiles and rockets, like the Palestinians do. As Shakespeare would say: "A plague on both your houses."

J. Garner, Sham Shui Po

Put our taxes to good use

I am writing to put forward my ideas for the 2009 budget which will be revealed by the financial secretary next month.

#### Letters

I have a selfish motive for this. I want to see my hard-earned tax payments utilised properly and in the best interests of Hong Kong.

First, in economic terms, I do not think a budget surplus is necessarily a good thing, nor that a deficit is by definition bad.

The average economic cycle lasts three to five years, and instead of looking at things year on year the target should be to have a balanced budget over the whole cycle.

Second, government spending should supplement private consumption and private investment.

During a recession, the government should not decrease public spending just because, for example, private consumption is cut back.

Third, the government should make use of the current low interest-rate environment by, if necessary, issuing government bonds.

Over time, given the growth on the mainland, Hong Kong will also enjoy an above-average growth rate. Government debt will be repaid.

In the meantime I think tax incentives should be offered in a bid to keep as many people in work as possible. Ideas like shopping coupons are popular, but will prove ineffective.

I think a redevelopment programme should be implemented across the whole of Hong Kong. What I am talking about is the redevelopment of old districts in the city, which will trigger genuine domestic investment and consumption, and in the long term improve people's living standards. This is preferable to concentrating solely on infrastructure projects.

Finally, the cost of the current Comprehensive Social Security Assistance scheme is increasing. We need to come up with a more incentive-oriented welfare system.

Winson Fong, Tsim Sha Tsui

Bag levy a form of education

I refer to the debate on the plastic bag levy.

In this busy city we use a lot of plastic bags and our landfills are nearing capacity.

I do not think that a plastic levy will solve this problem. However, it is sending a message to polluters that they need to pay for the cost of being environmentally unfriendly. We have to take responsibility for using too many plastic bags.

Imposing a bag levy is a way of educating people and encouraging them to use fewer plastic bags.

O. Cheng, Yau Tong

Not exactly the cutting edge

The word "expo" stirs images of a futuristic extravaganza featuring advanced technology, design innovations and cutting-edge entrepreneurial businesses.

And then there's the recent 43rd Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo, described as a record-breaking 23-day event.

According to reports nearly 3.5 million packets of instant noodles, 500,000 fishballs and 250,000 egg tarts were sold, along with huge amounts of dried seafood.

#### Letters

Along with fast food, there was everything from beauty products, blankets and massage chairs. In other words, a lot of mostly imported stuff you would find in any Kowloon market.

So much for "Asia's world city" and for an international audience energised by our 21st century brilliance and beating a path to our door in search of a better mousetrap.

Peter Sherwood, Discovery Bay

Bank gurus missed all clues

I read the report ("Worse 'yet to come' for HK and mainland", January 7), with great dismay.

All these purported financial wizards - leading investment banks - give their damaging views but they neglect to scrutinise their own failures in forecasting the subprime crisis, even though the infection had spread as early as late 2007.

Bad loans in the overall syndicated bank portfolio had far exceeded the financial sector's undertaking.

Anyone with a simple calculator and access to such data could have seen this coming.

Where were these so-called experts' telescope pointing when the economic meteorite crashed to Earth? Why do they still have a place anywhere to propagate and implant further pessimism into the public? Don't we all know that there are tough times ahead? In my mind they have no credibility whatsoever in telling the public their views.

All the red lights were flashing before the collapse of the two US banks that began the domino effect of the credit freeze, and not one of them came out to say: do not buy collateralised debt obligations-backed securities.

Les Gee, Discovery Bay

Don't worry, be grateful

We are going through bad financial times in Hong Kong and many people feel gloomy about the future.

However, we should realise that this a natural economic process and we will eventually get through it.

I think rather than grumbling about what is happening we should try and take an optimistic outlook to life and try to cope with the challenges we face and be grateful for what we have.

Sophia Chau, Tuen Mun

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



## Silence of world leaders on Gaza Strip offensive is shameful

The Irish Times

January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Opinion; Pg. 13

Length: 1066 words

## **Body**

**OPINION:** The United Nations has a unique moral obligation to protect the Palestinian people, writes **Hikmat Ajjuri**.

THE GRUESOME images of the most brutal aggression ever conducted by a "democratic" state which are coming from Gaza and shown daily on our TV screens - which have resulted so far in the killing of 680 and injuring of 2,950, half of them <u>women</u> and children - should induce all those with a sense of humanity to raise their voices calling not merely for an end to this aggression but also for a change in the rules of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle.

This savage assault on Gaza proves beyond doubt that Israel is not fighting terror but, on the contrary, is itself waging a war of terror. Killing one of the <u>Hamas</u> commanders, Nizar Rayyan, which was considered one of the great achievements of this war, came after all of his family was killed, including 11 of his children. The eldest was 16 years old.

The Israeli attacking forces give the Palestinians, who have nowhere to go, five minutes to evacuate their homes before they bombard them. In a blatant breach of international law and the Geneva Convention, the Israeli army failed even to protect those who evacuated their homes and took refuge in the schools of the UN.

On Tuesday, the Israeli army shelled Alfakhora UN school in Jabalia in spite of prior information given to the army by the UN agency regarding the nature of all its schools being used as shelters for civilians. The UN also gave the Israeli army GPS co-ordinates for all its installations. This savage attack by the army on the mentioned school resulted in the killing of at least 43 and injuring of more than 100 innocent civilians, many of them children.

During the first two hours of its ground offensive, Israel pounded Gaza with 700 shells, to lethal effect. The shameful and unacceptable silence of world leaders is, indeed, to a certain extent, responsible for the pain the inhabitants of the Holy Land, Jews and Palestinians, have endured for decades.

This silence blatantly reflects their impotence and failure to face the Israeli political leadership's intransigence and irresponsibility. Consequently, world leaders distance themselves and call on both sides to settle their differences on their own, as if this were a fight between equal contenders rather than a struggle between occupation and resistance forces.

This is in spite of the fact that these leaders know full well that the Israeli-Palestinian struggle constitutes a real threat to world peace and stability.

Everyone knows by now that the best we could have achieved via bilateral negotiations was the Oslo agreement.

#### Silence of world leaders on Gaza Strip offensive is shameful

Oslo reflected the political decency of those who designed and signed it, yet its guarantors - world leaders - know it has been in a coma since the assassination of its Israeli instigator, the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In August 2005, Israel redeployed its forces from the Gaza Strip and declared it a "non-occupied Palestinian territory", while in fact retaining its grip on all the border crossings, the sky and the sea of Gaza. Furthermore, Israel insisted on conducting this step unilaterally and without consultation with the Palestinian Authority, thus depriving it of any strategic value as a lasting peace initiative.

Instead Gaza has become a virtual prison, cut off from the world completely, with massive economic consequences amounting to humanitarian disaster. These conditions created a suitable environment for inter-Palestinian factional fighting.

The entire sequence of events in Gaza since August 2005 was anticipated by the planner of that move, Ariel Sharon. The undeserved international praise for Sharon's unilateral pull-out from Gaza marked a huge propaganda success for the occupying force. Sharon's trick was intended to deceive the world into believing that another unilateral pull-out from the West Bank was possible.

In reality, these unilateral actions allowed Sharon to evade obligations towards a bilateral peace agreement, while allowing Israel to define the borders of any future Palestinian entity on Israel's terms.

Six months before December 19th last, Egypt brokered a ceasefire between <u>Hamas</u>/Gaza and Israel. The first four months marked the most peaceful period for years between Gaza and Israel.

One expected the Israelis to benefit from that ceasefire and intensify peace negotiations with their moderate Palestinian interlocutor, President Mahmoud Abbas, in the hope of transforming President George Bush's vision of a two-state solution into reality. Instead, profiting from the world's concentration on the US elections, Israel launched a cross-border raid on November 4th, deliberately killing six Palestinians and provoking the Palestinian factions to end the ceasefire.

On the other front, the Israelis conduct daily incursions in the West Bank, killing, arresting and injuring Palestinian activists. Furthermore, Israel has continued to expand its illegal settlements and construct its apartheid wall, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice in July 2004.

Israel once again ignored an opportunity and dealt another blow to the cause of peace when it decided to replace diplomacy with military aggression in Gaza.

Since Oslo, the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have achieved little tangible progress because of Israel's bullying tactics and its determination to impose its terms unilaterally on the region. Consequently, the rules of the game need to be finally changed.

The Israeli occupation is the only belligerent occupation remaining on the face of the globe. It is unacceptable that any country should be granted a status above and beyond international law.

Israel came into being not by divine decree but by UN General Assembly resolution 181. This resolution was only half implemented, because the other half called for the creation of a Palestinian state. The UN, rather than world leaders, is obliged morally and constitutionally to protect the Palestinians against Israeli atrocities.

Furthermore, it is also the moral and historic duty of the UN to create a Palestinian state side by side with the state of Israel, by enforcing all of its relevant resolutions as it has done with such resolutions elsewhere. The creation of a Palestinian state would be much-needed proof that the UN preserves a vital function in the modern world.

Hikmat Ajjuri is the delegate-general of Palestine to Ireland

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



## Sideshow: Joe the Journalist, in Gaza

The Philadelphia Inquirer
January 8, 2009 Thursday
CITY-D Edition

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Section: FEATURES MAGAZINE; Inq Daily Magazine; Pg. D02

Length: 1073 words

Byline: By Tirdad Derakhshani

Inquirer Staff Writer

## **Body**

Joe the Plumber, whose pronouncements during the campaign established him as the most influential political pundit since Bart Simpson, plans to save journalism - from itself. London's Guardian says **Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher** is "dropping his unlicensed plunger and picking up a reporter's notebook" to cover the latest eruption of violence in the Gaza strip for conservative Web site pjtv.com.

Joe the War Correspondent, who will immerse himself in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for 10 whole days, promises to report "without a politically correct filter." Joe, who became a mascot for John McCain's campaign when he challenged Barack Obama's economic plan, tells NBC News he will try to explain Israel's reason for the offensive against <a href="Hamas">Hamas</a>. "I get to go over there and let their 'average Joes' share their story, what they think, how they feel, especially with world opinion," he said. "It's very tragic," he said of the rising death toll. "But at the same time what are the Israeli people supposed to do?"HBO nabs inauguration HBO, which paid a cool \$1.5 mil in '93 for exclusive rights to televise Bill Clinton's inaugural show at the Lincoln Memorial, which featured Bob Dylan and Diana Ross, has signed a deal, for an undisclosed sum, to cover the plethora of events leading up to and including Barack Obama's inauguration.

Programming will begin Jan. 18, two days before the big day, with a live telecast of the star-studded opening ceremony. HBO says this time its coverage will be available for free to all cable subscribers. Don't be despondent: All the major networks will cover the Jan. 20 ceremony itself. They will also broadcast taped segments of various inaugural-related shows.

Jay-Z announces inauguration show Hip-hop king **Jay-Z**, who was one of Obama's biggest celebrity boosters, has announced that he will perform an intimate show for a crowd of fewer than 2,000 people at the Warner Theatre in Washington on Jan. 19, the day before the inauguration.

Baby girl for Garner & Affleck **Jennifer Garner** and husband **Ben Affleck**, both 36, welcomed their second daughter on Tuesday, People mag reports. The baby, who was born in Los Angeles at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, has yet to be identified to the masses by name.

She joins 3-year-old sis, Violet.

Brad: I didn't cheat on Jen The Brad Pitt-Jennifer Aniston-Angelina Jolie love triangle has flared up again.

Brad, 45, tells W magazine's Web site that contrary to popular opinion, he did not have sexual relations with that woman (Angie) while he was still married (to Jen).

Brad's denials come on the heels of a recent scuffle between the two <u>women</u> that started when Angie revealed that she and Brad fell in love on the set of their '05 collaboration, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. Brad was still married at the time.

Jen called Angie's comments "really uncool," a retort so cutting it's a wonder Angie came out alive.

So what's the truth? Brad says he and Jen broke up before filming ended on *Smith*. Thus, his liaison with Angie wasn't "some kind of dastardly affair."

NAACP nods to Beyoncé, Hudson **Beyoncé Knowles**, **Alicia Keys** and **Jennifer Hudson** have each received NAACP Image Award nominations in two categories, music and film. The three stars are vying for multiple music prizes, including best <u>female</u> musical artist and best music video, as well as best supporting actress: Keys and Hudson for *The Secret Life of Bees* and Knowles for *Cadillac Records*.

Both films also are up for best picture, along with *Miracle at St. Anna*, *Seven Pounds*, and *Tyler Perry'sThe Family That Preys*.

The awards, which celebrate diversity in the arts, will be presented Feb. 12. For a list of nominations, visit www.naacpimageawards.net.

Bush looks forward to normal life **Laura Bush** tells *Entertainment Tonight*'s **Mary Hart** she has mixed feelings about leaving the White House after eight years.

"I'll be sad when I say goodbye to all the people that work here that we know so well and have made our lives so terrific," the first lady says in a two-part interview set to air last night and tonight. But Bush says the whole family is looking forward to resuming life in Texas. "Eight years is a long time and both George and I look forward to a much more normal life in Texas," she said.

Joe & Anderson, men among mice **Joe the Plumber**, who is shipping out to Israel as a war correspondent, will have the edge on all the major networks. The AP reports that ABC, CBS and NBC have decided to save money by not sending out their top news anchors to the Middle East to cover Israel's conflict with *Hamas*. (In '06, they sent their biggest stars to cover Israel's war with Hezbollah.) The only other star journalist to brave the war was CNN's **Anderson Cooper** - but he was recalled yesterday due to budgetary constraints. Perhaps Joe will save journalism from journalists after all.

Michael finds a new playhouse **Michael Jackson**, who lost an entire world when he stopped living in Neverland, has signed a lease for a Bel-Air mansion for \$100,000 a month, says the L.A. Times. M.J.'s rep, **Tohme Tohme**, says the former King of Pop wants to be closer to "where all the action is" in the entertainment biz. Added Tohme, "He might want to build his own dream house" during that time.

The new digs? A French chateau estate built in '02 that boasts 13 bathrooms, 12 fireplaces, a theater, wine cellar and tasting room. The Times notes that sadly, the dump doesn't have a Ferris wheel, roller coaster or exotic animal zoo.

Porn kings seek alms Porn moguls **Larry Flynt** and **Joe Francis** have taken to Capitol Hill to beg for alms. TMZ.com says the Hustler king has teamed up with the dude behind the sophisticated *Girls Gone Wild* vids to ask Congress for a *\$5 billion* porn bailout. "With all this economic misery and people losing all that money, sex is the farthest thing from their mind," Flynt said. "It's time for Congress to rejuvenate the sexual appetite of America." Francis said, "We feel we deserve the same consideration" as other "important businesses."

## Sideshow: Joe the Journalist, in Gaza

Nicole denies 'Gossip' gossip A rep for **Nicole Richie** denies a New York Daily News report that the sometime actress plans to guest star on CW's *Gossip Girl*. (Fan blogs have been buzzing with the news.) "This isn't true," the rep tells E!Online. Richie surprised TV fans this season when she gave a non-awful performance on NBC's *Chuck*.

This column contains information from Inquirer wire services. Contact "SideShow" at <a href="mailto:sideShow">sideShow</a> @phillynews.com.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



## Despite Deeper Strikes, Israelis Vow to Soldier On

The New York Times

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

Length: 950 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER

Dateline: ASHDOD, Israel

## **Body**

A piercing shriek went up and a young woman fainted as the body, wrapped in a white shroud, was brought into the packed funeral hall.

On Tuesday, this fast-developing, modern port city about halfway between Gaza and Tel Aviv buried its first victim of a rocket attack: Irit Sheetrit, a 39-year-old mother of four.

The Katyusha-type rocket that killed her was fired Monday night by Palestinian militants from Gaza. It was the first to have hit this city of more than 200,000, about 18 miles north of the Palestinian territory, and underscored how rockets from Gaza were reaching farther into the country with each passing day.

As the sun set on Tuesday, rockets flying out of Gaza were landing in new places, like Kiryat Malachi, to the northeast, and Beersheba, a major city in Israel's south.

Over the weekend, Israel began its devastating aerial bombardment of <u>Hamas</u> targets in Gaza with the stated goal of stopping the incessant rocket fire that has plagued Israeli towns and villages close to the border for years.

More than 370 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli assault so far, Palestinian officials said. Among the dead were at least 62 **women** and children, according to the United Nations, and an unknown number of civilian men. The militants have responded by firing increasingly advanced rockets with longer ranges into Israel.

Yet here, amid the sobbing of the mourners, many of them in a state of shock and disbelief, support for a sustained Israeli military campaign remained strong.

"Of course we support it," said Rosette Alalouf, a former colleague of Ms. Sheetrit, at the funeral. "Do we have a choice?"

In his eulogy, Yehiel Lasri, the mayor of Ashdod, conveyed the prevailing spirit of resolve here. "Has not the time come to use full force and all the means at our disposal?"

Mr. Lasri added that he had watched as Sderot first came under rocket fire, then Ashkelon, a city on the coast. "We hoped they would not get to Ashdod, but we did not delude ourselves," he said, noting that the authorities had been preparing for such a situation for two years.

#### Despite Deeper Strikes, Israelis Vow to Soldier On

The ability of civilians to withstand heavy rocket fire, which Israel fully expected in the wake of its campaign, is a crucial part of the military equation. As Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel put it at the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, "The patience, determination and stamina of the residents of the home front will, in the end, determine the ability" of Israel to attain its military and diplomatic goals.

Israeli officials say the preparations in that home front -- which now includes hundreds of thousands of citizens in southern Israel -- have saved many lives. Though four Israelis have been killed in rocket attacks since the start of the military operation, three of them on Monday, officials say the hundreds of rockets that have been fired could have exacted a much heavier toll.

All communities within 25 miles of Gaza have sirens that serve as alerts for incoming rockets, and while the Hanukkah vacation officially ended on Tuesday, schools within the range of the rockets remained closed.

Television and radio stations repeatedly broadcast instructions on how to behave during an alert. Those driving, for example, are told to get out of their cars and lie on the ground.

Ms. Sheetrit had been on her way home from the gym with her sister when the siren wailed. She managed to get out of the car and tried to take shelter in a bus station, but the rocket slammed down too quickly, too close.

The impact site has turned into something of a local destination. Curious residents came by on Tuesday, some taking photographs on their cellphones. A group of children from a nearby apartment building searched a grassy verge for tiny metal balls and other bits of shrapnel that had scattered all around.

Two more rockets hit Ashdod in the evening, this time falling in open areas and causing no harm.

The center of town was unusually quiet on Tuesday, though stores remained open in an attempt to maintain a sense of normality. Many of the adults seemed reconciled to the new situation, but they said that the children were very afraid.

Zion Ben Abu, 45, the owner of a falafel shop, said he used to run a factory in an industrial zone on the Gaza border where dozens of Palestinians worked. He said he felt some sympathy for average Gazans, who "mostly want to send their kids to school and live quietly, like us."

The problem, he said, is the *Hamas* leaders, who had left Israel no choice but to fight.

Oren Idelman, 33, an investment adviser at a nearby bank, said, "I'm prepared to live like this for months, as long as the army continues this aggressive line." The Gazans "have to understand that if we get hit, they get hit," he said.

In Netivot, an Israeli town east of Gaza, clusters of people waited at bus stops with small suitcases when the Sabbath ended on Saturday evening, hours after a local man was killed in a rocket attack.

But nobody seemed to be speaking of leaving Ashdod, perhaps because of the shrinking number of places where it was safe to go.

"I've been here since 1976," said Avraham Ohana, an older resident. "We are used to wars. But they always used to happen somewhere else, far away."

As Mr. Ohana spoke, his brother called on his cellphone and urged him to come and stay with him in Haifa, about 80 miles to the north.

"I said, 'What for? To be within range of Nasrallah's rockets?' " he joked bleakly, referring to Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, the militant Lebanese group that fired thousands of Katyusha-type rockets into northern Israel in 2006 when they fought a 34-day war.

http://www.nytimes.com

## **Graphic**

PHOTOS: Friends and relatives of Irit Sheetrit, who was killed on Monday in a rocket attack, gathered Tuesday at her funeral, above and left. So far, four Israelis have been killed in rocket attacks. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY URIEL SINAI/GETTY IMAGES)

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



## Gaza assault fuels rage across the spectrum

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

December 29, 2008 Monday

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Length: 1122 words

Byline: Inter Press Service

## **Body**

Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza has ignited spontaneous demonstrations and riots across the Occupied West Bank and Israel, sparking concerns of a possible third Palestinian uprising or intifada. At least 280 Palestinians were killed and at least 900 wounded following an intensive Israeli bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip over the weekend.

Mel Frykberg

Inter Press Service

RAMALLAH, Occupied West Bank: Anger, shock and revulsion at the continuing carnage in Gaza has ignited spontaneous demonstrations and riots across the Occupied West Bank and Israel, sparking concerns of a possible third Palestinian uprising or intifada. At least 280 Palestinians were killed and at least 900 wounded following an intensive Israeli bombing campaign on the Gaza Strip over the weekend. This followed a barrage of rockets fired by Palestinian fighters at Israeli towns and cities bordering the coastal territory in the last few weeks that caused some damage but no casualties.

The rocket attacks followed the shattering of a five-month old cease-fire by Israel in an early November invasion of the territory. The deadly offensive along with Israeli assassinations in the Occupied West Bank prompted Palestinian fighters to resume their attacks on southern Israel.

<u>Hamas</u>'s leader in exile, Damascus-based Khaled Meshaal, has called on Palestinians to rise up against Israel. The Palestinian Authority in the Occupied West Bank called for a three-day strike in sympathy with Gaza's plight.

Following Israel's aerial assault, one Israeli was killed and several wounded in retaliatory rocket fire from Gaza Saturday afternoon. This was Israel's first fatality in many months.

The first Palestinian intifada broke out in December of 1987 when Palestinian refugees from a camp in the north of Gaza clashed with Israeli soldiers after the death of several Palestinians after an Israeli settler's car plowed into their vehicle.

#### Gaza assault fuels rage across the spectrum

Palestinian-Israelis, descendents of the indigenous population that wasn't ethnically cleansed from their lands during the imposition of Israel in 1948, clashed Saturday with Israeli police throughout Israel. In the bedouin village of Rahat in the Negev Desert, around 400 residents protested the attacks, while mosques throughout the town broadcast prayers of mourning.

The High Follow Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel issued a statement on Sunday calling for protests against the Israeli "massacres" in all Palestinian-Israeli towns "as a symbol of the rage and severe grief of the Palestinian nation upon the loss of hundreds of its citizens in Gaza." The group also called for international sanctions to be levied against Israel and recognizing the Zionist state as a "criminal" nation committing "acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Several hundred left-wing Israelis marched through the streets of Tel Aviv toward the Israeli Defense Ministry headquarters chanting "No to war, yes to peace."

The protesters carried signs reading, "Israel's government is committing war crimes," "Negotiation instead of slaughter," and "Lift the siege from Gaza."

Several Israeli protesters were arrested. Matan Kaminer, an Israeli student who took part in the protest, told the Israeli daily Haaretz that "no one can tell us that slaughtering the citizens of Gaza is meant to protect the citizens of Sderot and Ashkelon [two Israeli towns bordering the Gaza strip]."

An Israeli police officer was deliberately run over by a Palestinian in Occupied Jerusalem as groups of Palestinian youths clashed with police in the city, stoning them and setting dumpsters on fire. Palestinian protesters from Occupied West Bank towns and refugee camps took to the streets and marched on Israeli checkpoints and Israeli settlements. Many were wounded by rubber-coated bullets - marble-sized metal balls covered in half a millimeter of rubber - fired by Israeli soldiers.

One Palestinian protester was killed after being shot in the chest by live ammunition at a protest in Nilin and another seriously wounded on Sunday. The two had thrown rocks at Israeli police.

In Ramallah hundreds of protesters from various Palestinian factions waved banners and flags, and decried the Gaza slaughter. They called for unity and for Gaza's <u>Hamas</u> leader, deposed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyya and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas to bury their differences and put the Palestinian cause above their personal politics. Many in the crowd waved Fatah flags, associated with Abbas and the PA, showing clearly their empathy with fellow Palestinians despite the political divide between the two Palestinian territories.

IPS joined the demonstration as it marched around Ramallah. In the crowd were people from all sections of Palestinian society. Elegantly turned out middle-aged <u>women</u> from Ramallah's Christian minority marched side by side with tough young men from the surrounding refugee camps.

"I couldn't just sit at home. I felt overwhelming anger at the situation in Gaza and I needed to show my solidarity," Munther, a young computer programmer for the Palestinian Legislative Council who voted for Abbas in the last election, told IPS.

As the crowd circled the city center, Palestinian police looked on quietly and stood back. But when the demonstrators marched on the Muqata, the government headquarters of the PA where Abbas was in his office, the mood of the Palestinian security forces changed.

On approaching the Muqata's entrance the crowd was met by Palestinian soldiers who took up positions and held their weapons at the ready. But the youth decided to head toward the nearby Israeli military checkpoint of Beit El.

While the more cautious in the crowd stood back, the young men headed toward waiting Israeli military jeeps and tanks and started to sling stones at them, and set tires alight to block the road.

#### Gaza assault fuels rage across the spectrum

The Israelis responded with tear gas and rubber-coated bullets, wounding a number of youngsters who were rushed to nearby hospitals in Palestinian ambulances. This IPS correspondent helped two youths injured by rubber bullets to hospital. They were shot as they stoned the soldiers.

As dozens of Palestinian riot police arrived on the scene to disperse the protesters, one of them remarked that the police arrival had been coordinated with their Israeli colleagues on the other side of the checkpoint.

"They are nothing but quislings and a militia of the Israelis. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in Gaza, and who do they aim their weapons at? Not the Israelis but us, their brethren protesting the slaughter," said one of the youths.

"There will be more protests tomorrow and I will be back," he added, as he stepped out of the taxi and limped toward the emergency room. - With The Daily Star

Load-Date: December 28, 2008



The Courier Mail (Australia)
January 8, 2009 Thursday

1 - First with the news Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 28

Length: 1726 words

## **Body**

Blame toll on stupid driving

JOE Moore is incorrect in claiming that speed is the most frequent cause of accidents (Letters, Jan 6).

In the 2007-08 financial year, speed was the primary cause of 22 per cent of road fatalities, placing it behind driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and nowhere near a majority.

It also is recognised that speeding accident rates are inflated. For example, a car is found having left the road and hit a tree. There is no evidence that the driver attempted to brake.

While the crash is usually written up to speeding, it could have been caused by a spider falling out of the sunshade or any number of other causes.

Fast driving, in and of itself, doesn't cause many accidents. Stupid driving -- which can include speeding but also can include driving under speed, not obeying traffic signs, performing unexpected manoeuvres which endanger other motorists -- is what causes most accidents.

Sam Morrison, New Farm

DAVID Leatherbarrow (Letters, Jan 7) argues in the same vein as Rudyard Kipling in his poem If.

If we all obeyed the law, the world would be a better place. Indeed, the road toll would tumble. However, it won't happen because we don't all obey the law all of the time. Even though our compliance may be close to 100 per cent, none of us will achieve perfection.

We will break the law on purpose or inadvertently, and face the punishment. The trouble is that the punishment at level crossings is immediate execution. The extreme outcome does not stop the practice despite the fact there are no repeat offenders.

Knowing this, the Queensland Government continues to dither. Transport Minister John Mickel wants to run an education campaign for 4 million Queenslanders and visitors. Everyone in Queensland, except for the Government, can see that this will change nothing.

Because of the severity of outcomes, level crossings must be eliminated. They remain today because governments continue to place a low value on the lives of citizens and visitors.

The Government is so far out of touch that it plans to build more level crossings for southeast Queensland infrastructure. I refer to the scores of intersections becoming level crossings along the proposed Gold Coast light rail route from Southport to Broadbeach. That's no backwater where an occasional truck crosses a lightly used rail line.

Bill Hauff, Surfers Paradise

Law rules on compensation

I FEEL compassion for anyone who is blind but why should Anita Dawson (C-M, Jan 7) consider herself different from anyone else who has sufficient funds (a six-figure compensation payout for a work injury) on which to live.

The government pension, in whichever form it is received, is to financially help those who are in no position to help themselves survive. Others are not so fortunate to have the funds Dawson now possesses.

She should be thankful she was fortunate enough to receive a pension and associated benefits in the past when perhaps she could not afford to look after herself.

Glenda Wickman, Kuraby

I HAVE looked into Anita Dawson's case and assured myself it was handled correctly, but her experience highlights an important message for anyone about to receive compensation payments for personal injury.

Australian law means people who can't work because they have a compensatable injury cannot receive income from both the social security system and compensation system for the same period. This includes those on a Disability Support Pension because they are blind.

Centrelink offers a free service to advise individuals or their legal representatives how compensation payments affect benefits. Hank Jongen, Centrelink general manager, Greenway, ACT

Mixed message

ON Sunday Treasurer Andrew Fraser was reported as saying Queenslanders were living in a lucky place and his treasury department had forecast the generation of 50,000 jobs this year.

On Monday, he warned of the loss of 13,000 jobs and said the economic climate was changing so rapidly that anyone who claimed to be able to give a guaranteed forecast was "being heroic and courageous and doesn't have a good grasp of what they are talking about". It is obvious that the Treasurer doesn't know what he is talking about.

Rosemary Scott, Robertson

Co-exist with caution

MANY more people are killed at road intersections than at rail-road intersections, and no one is howling for boom gates or lights on every road junction.

Every rail-road crossing will never get boom gates or lights. The cost to install and maintain them is more than we can afford, so a reasonable solution must be developed or the expansion of our rail system will never happen.

We, the public, have to accept that driving safely is our own responsibility and that static signs, such as ``caution -- rail crossing" or similar, mean ``slow up, have a good look up and down the track before crossing the lines".

If we are honest, we know that each of us has crossed a railway line while preoccupied with something else.

The fact that a train is seldom on a particular crossing can lead us to lapse and be inattentive but with traffic increasing, both road and rail, we must be more careful.

Train drivers cannot be blamed. They cannot pull up even with the best intent, neither can they take evasive action, so they have the trauma of watching helplessly as the train and vehicle collide. Think of others and think of yourselves. Treat every rail crossing as very dangerous.

Ken Nicholson, Gladstone

Maintaining optimism

I READ with interest the article ``Gone but not forgotten" by Suzanna Clarke (C-M, Jan 3-4). It is fitting that lost icons of Brisbane be represented and remembered in the Optimism exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art.

We need to ensure that the remaining places that are so important in the lives and memories of the people of Brisbane do not follow the same fate. The sale of the 121-year-old Yungaba immigration centre for development is a tragedy, as is the proposed redevelopment of the Regent Theatre as the back entrance for a huge office tower.

Last February, the Government issued a directive to save the cinemas. This directive is no longer in place, and the application made to Brisbane City Council is for small token cinemas which will be accessible to the public only on weekends. It also will mean the destruction of historical aspects not listed on the Heritage Register.

If this is allowed to go ahead, it will be a tragic outcome for the Regent, which gives people the last glimpse of the magnificent picture palaces that once illuminated our city streets.

I urge the Government to save the Regent and the council to reject the development.

Vicki Bridgstock, Coopers Plains

Casualties of war

LIKE most apologists for <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah, Joseph Wakim (Viewpoint, Jan 7) refuses to acknowledge these organisations continue to attack Israel with the aim of its total destruction. He complains when Israel hits back.

<u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah site their weapons among the civilian population. When they're attacked, there are civilian casualties. While complaining about the casualties, they continue to fire rockets at the civilian population of Israel.

If Wakim wants the violence to cease, he should acknowledge Israel's right to exist and defend itself from these cowardly attacks, and urge the people of Palestine and Lebanon to stop <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah from attacking Israel.

Tony Miles, Wooloowin

IT IS easy to forget that through the generosity of other nations Israel was established after World War II, giving the persecuted Jewish people a home by pushing the residents of hundreds of years aside, claiming Palestinian territory as their own. That they can be so brutal, deliberately killing <u>women</u>, children and non-combatants, reflects poorly on a people who were shockingly treated in World War II, along with others, including Christians.

Admittedly, this has always been a tit-for-tat war but the origins of the Israeli state must not be forgotten. If I was a Palestinian living in the confines of the Gaza Strip, I might send the odd rocket to Israel.

John Morris, Aspley

BARACK Obama is saying nothing about the Middle East until he takes over as president. He is concentrating on the US economy. Have any of his advisers suggested that he allocate the billions given to Israel to fixing the US economy? Such a decision might solve two problems.

F. Waddington, Wooloowin

Contracts skip holidays

ROSEANNE Schneider (Letters, Jan 6) refers to the large number of teachers employed on short-term contracts. She says if teachers are not valued enough to be given fully tenured positions, how can they be expected to provide the quality teaching they were trained to deliver?

The answer is they can't -- and why should they when, at the end of the school year, the Education Department allows a system that is legally able to deliver another contract to the same contract teacher to begin the following year, after pupil-free days and public holidays?

This flawed system not only voids any legal responsibilities to pay holiday pay but also deprives contract teachers from making any valuable contribution in regard to their involvement and responsibilities in class planning during the pupil-free days.

Lyn O'Brien, Rochedale South

'It is fitting that lost icons of Brisbane be represented and remembered in the exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art' -

Vicki Bridgstock, of Coopers Plains, wants to ensure the Regent Theatre does not suffer the same fate as other historic buildings

' Have any of Barack Obama's advisers suggested that he allocate the billions given to Israel to fixing the US economy?' -

F. Waddington, of Wooloowin, says such a decision might solve two problems simultaneously

Letters

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Load-Date: January 7, 2009



The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 436 words

## **Body**

It was appropriate on Saturday that children led the way in Gloucester at the head of the march to protest about the bloodshed in Gaza.

For it is the plight and suffering of the children of Gaza that is really horrifying us all, irrespective of which side of the fence we sit - supporting the Palestinians or Israel.

When some 257 children have been killed in Gaza out of a total Palestinian death toll of roughly 750, we must all, with one voice, demand that this conflict is halted by an immediate ceasefire.

We must end what is quite simply the murder of innocent children - now.

This has nothing to do with the terrorists of <u>Hamas</u>, and we realise they will go to any lengths to kill Israelis and will also use families as human shields.

It has all to do with saving children's lives. How many more small body bags wrapped in the Palestinian flag do we have to see on our television screens?

Gloucester's MP, Parmjit Dhanda summed up the march through the city well when he said: "We were there to show that this really matters to us.

"The Red Cross says that there are war crimes going on with children who have been left to starve".

And one of the organisers of the march, 18-year-old Afifa Patel, from Barton, said: "I was watching it on the news and a guy was holding a dead child.

"We have a few younger children in my family and it really upset me so, me and two other <u>women</u> organised the march."

Afifa and her friends did a good job. People came from all over the country as well as from Cheltenham and throughout the county.

In Stroud too, there was a big turnout for a peace vigil organised by the Stroud Peace Group.

And Stroud district councillor Martin Whiteside, who wrote movingly about the vigil in The Citizen on Saturday, said: "We can't, as human beings, just stand back and say nothing."

He is right. This weekend, Gloucestershire people spoke with one voice - on the streets of Gloucester and Stroud , and online on our website - the killing of innocent children in Gaza must stop.

### IS IT RACIST?

PRINCE Harry was very unwise to make the video on an Army exercise in which he talks of a squaddie as "our little Paki friend" and he has, quite rightly, apologised.

But if we are honest, is this video, made three years ago, really racist? Surely, it is no more than some high-spirited Army banter. Isn't this the language used by many squaddies?

We certainly don't condone it, but this viedo is nowhere near the real Harry horror revealed in January 2005 when he was shown to have hired a Nazi outfit from a costume company in Nailsworth for a party. That was shameful and before this latest incident.

Load-Date: August 21, 2009



The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 436 words

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Load-Date: June 11, 2009



## First lady, Rice defend Bush's term in office

WeekendPost (South Africa)

January 3, 2009

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## **WeekendPost**

Section: POLITICS Length: 456 words

## **Body**

#### THE FAN CLUB

First lady, Rice defend Bush's term in office

WASHINGTON - US President George Bush's top <u>women</u> advisers - wife Laura and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice - fought back against critics who said his presidency was one of the worst ever.

"It's ridiculous," Rice said. "Generations are going to thank this president for what he's done."

Both Rice and Laura Bush assailed the news media, with the top diplomat repeatedly dismissing "today's headlines" as meaningless to the task of governing and the first lady bluntly calling reporters unfair to her husband. "Do I think the press is fair? No, absolutely not," Laura Bush told Fox News Channel.

Asked about critics who say her husband's presidency was a failure, Laura Bush replied: "Well, I know it's not. And so I don't really feel like I need to respond.

"This administration will be judged well, and I'll wait for history's judgment and not today's headlines," Rice told Fox. The interviews came amid a months-long effort to polish president Bush's controversial legacy at a time when he remains deeply unpopular with the US public and policies like the Iraq war have tarnished the US image abroad.

Laura Bush and Rice mostly cited the same successes, including the toppling of the Islamist Taliban regime in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and the overhaul and expansion of US aid to Africa, notably to battle HIV/Aids.

"His inner core and his belief in freedom - from tyranny, disease and illiteracy - is what really is the basic of American values, and that's what I think he's shown the whole time he's been president," said the first lady.

"When you look at the number of countries that this president and the number of people that this president has actually liberated - you know, I really am someone who believes that you don't want to pay too much attention to today's headlines," said Rice.

Rice drew comparisons between Bush and US president Harry Truman (1945-1953), who left office unpopular but has benefited in history's eyes from having overhauled US national security institutions in a way that was instrumental to winning the Cold War.

Any historians already criticising Bush "aren't very good historians", said Rice.

"Good historians are still writing books about George Washington. Good historians are certainly still writing books about Harry Truman."

## First lady, Rice defend Bush's term in office

The interviews took place before Israel launched a punishing offensive at <u>Hamas</u> targets in the Gaza Strip. Rice defended Bush's Middle East policies, notably the talks revived in November 2007 at a conference in Annapolis, Maryland - negotiations which failed to yield a hoped-for agreement before this year and have yet to resolve any of the core issues.

LAURA BUSH CONDOLEEZZA RICE

Load-Date: June 2, 2009



## Hillary Clinton promises the new America will become the world's friend

The Daily Telegraph (London) January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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## The Daily Telegraph

Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 15

**Length:** 473 words **Byline:** Alex Spillius

## **Body**

HILLARY CLINTON yesterday promised that America would win back friends across the world, as she set out a vision of foreign policy under the presidency of Barack Obama.

Although she refrained from naming the outgoing President George W Bush, Mrs Clinton sent a strong signal to the world that as secretary of state, she would strengthen US diplomacy and "build a world with more partners". She said she and Mr Obama believed in foreign policy that married "principles and pragmatism, not rigid ideology".

"American leadership has been wanting but it is still wanted," Mrs Clinton told her confirmation hearing before the Senate foreign relations committee.

"We must use what has been called 'smart power,' the full range of tools at our disposal," she continued, advocating a mix of diplomatic, economic, military, political legal and cultural strategies. Judging by the gushing welcome she received from the Senate panel, the former First Lady will sail through. However, Republican senators raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest between foreign policy and Bill Clinton's global charity, which receives donations from numerous foreign governments and businessmen.

Richard Lugar, the committee's senior Republican, said the foundation's charitable efforts "should not be a barrier to Mrs Clinton's service", but he acknowledged that conflicts of interest might arise. "The work of the Clinton foundation is a unique complication that will have to be managed with great care and transparency," he said.

He suggested that the foundation should forgo all foreign donations while she was secretary of state.

Mrs Clinton removed any lingering doubts about her ability to work with Mr Obama. Time and again she referred to their common approach and ideas.

Both were committed to a "fresh approach" to Iran which would involve a greater willingness to talk and may include the opening of a diplomatic office in Irain for the first time since the overthrow of the shah in 1979. She made clear that issues such as climate change, the liberty of <u>women</u> and human trafficking would be more prominent concerns on her watch.

#### Hillary Clinton promises the new America will become the world's friend

Other than Iran, however, she offered little to suggest that there would be major departures from the policies pursued by Mr Bush in the final two years of his presidency, which have been much more conciliatory than the first six.

Mrs Clinton, who remains a New York senator until she is confirmed as secretary of state, ruled out negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> until the militant Palestinian group that controls Gaza "renounces violence, recognises Israel and agrees to abide by past agreements".

Promising the new administration will pursue a "very aggressive effort" against North Korea's alleged role in atomic weapons proliferation, she praised the "merit" of the six-party talks of which the US is already part.

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



## Karachi police foil march on US Consulate

The Nation (AsiaNet)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 513 words

**Byline: OUR STAFF REPORTER** 

## **Body**

KARACHI - Police on Sunday used tear-gas and batons to disperse hundreds of angry protesters rallying against Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip when they tried to march on US Consulate.

About 2,000 people had answered the call of ISO and other parties to protest the Jewish state's campaign in the Palestinian territory, torching Israeli and US flags. They briefly turned violent when several hundred protesters deviated from the planned route and started heading toward the US Consulate in the city. When police tried to stop the demonstrators, they were pelted with stones. Some protesters even started fistfights with officers, prompting police to fire tear-gas shells and baton-charge the crowd.

Shia leaders used loudspeakers to urge the protesters to disperse without further incident and the situation was quickly brought under control.

Thousands of children attended the rally wearing the army dress and carrying toy guns chanting the slogans against Israel. They are carrying the flags of Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> and pasted the pictures of Hassan Nasarullah on their shirts. The participants of Difa-e-Gaza rally included thousands of <u>women</u> with their children and infants to show solidarity and attachment with the innocent Palestinian people.

"We have not arrested anyone," said city police chief Wasim Ahmed. All roads leading to the US Consulate were nevertheless sealed off as a security precaution.

Demonstrations to express solidarity and support for the Palestinians were staged in several major cities in Pakistan on Sunday.

, with about 2,000 turning out in Islamabad and several hundred more in Lahore.

Several small demonstrations took place in Lahore, with more than 400 people taking part in the main procession along Mall Road, chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans before dispersing peacefully.

Meanwhile, various political and religious organizations staged a protest rally against Israeli aggression and called for immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Pakistani Awami Tehrik (PAT) and Tehreek-e-Menhaj-ul-Quran took out a rally from Fountain Chowk to the Karachi Press Club. A large number of <u>women</u> and children too took part in the demonstration. The protestors were holding placards and banners inscribed with anti-Israeli slogans.

PAT President Dr S M Zameer, Ali Ausat Shah, Mahmood Qadri and other leaders participated in the rally.

### Karachi police foil march on US Consulate

In another protest demonstration, activists and leaders of the Awami Muslim League (AML) gathered outside the press club and chanted slogans against Israel and US.

Addressing the participants, speakers urged unity among Muslim nations and appealed to boycott Israel products. The protestors torched the effigy of US President and the Israeli flag.

"Muslim rulers must take serious note of the double standards of the West," the secretary general of Jamaat-i-Islami, Munawar Hussain, told protesters.

"The US, Britain and some other European countries raised a hue and cry over the Mumbai attacks but surprisingly the world is watching the killings of innocent **women** and children in Gaza as silent spectators."

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



## Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

The New York Times

November 15, 2008 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 2

Length: 2262 words

## **Body**

International

## HAMAS FIRES ROCKETS INTO ISRAEL;

18 Hospitalized as Tensions Rise

<u>Hamas</u>, the Palestinian rulers of Gaza, fired a barrage of rockets into southern Israel as part of what it called retaliation for the killing of 11 militants over the past 11 days and the increased closings of Gaza crossings by Israel. The rockets sent 18 Israelis to the hospital with mild injuries and shock and has increased tensions between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel. <u>Hamas</u> said that it wanted to continue the five-month-old truce but that Israel's actions showed they did not. Page A7

#### TWO REPORTERS HURT IN PAKISTAN

A Japanese journalist and an Afghan colleague were wounded in a shooting during a botched kidnapping in Peshawar. The attempt came after the men had conducted interviews with Taliban fighters in the nearby tribal region, the police and local journalists said. The attack followed several others, all part of a surge of militant violence in Peshawar, including the assassination of an American aid worker on Wednesday. Page A6

#### RUSSIA MOVES TO EXTEND LIMITS

It was the old-timers from the Communist Party who stepped in with the only word of protest as Russia neared passing a bill to extend the presidential term to six years from four. The bill's rapid trip through the lower house of Parliament has drawn harsh criticism from opposition leaders. But the opposition has little presence in the house, so the bill is almost nearly assured of becoming law, leaving the Communists as virtually the only dissenters. Page A8

#### PILOT ERROR IN MEXICO PLANE CRASH

The authorities said that a Mexican government Learjet crashed last week, killing the interior minister, because it flew too close behind a jumbo jet and lost control in the turbulence created by the larger plane. The report on the crash, which killed all nine people on board and five on the ground, said that the pilot and co-pilot appeared to be confused about how to operate the Learjet's controls. Page A8

UNDER PINOCHET, THE WHOLE STORY

Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

Heraldo Munoz was willing to die for an insurrection that never materialized and life under the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. He later became Chile's permanent representative to the United Nations and head of the Security Council's antiterrorism committee. His book, published this fall, "The Dictator's Shadow: Life Under Augusto Pinochet," offers the whole story, even an anecdote about creeping through Santiago with unstable dynamite strapped to his chest. Page A6

National

#### **CONCERNS OVER GUANTANAMO**

As New Administration Nears

As Senator Barack Obama moves closer to assuming responsibility for the Guantanamo Bay prison, his vows to close it are bringing to the fore thorny questions his advisers are now considering. For example, what if some detainees are acquitted or cannot be prosecuted at all? That concern is at the center of a debate among national security, human rights and legal experts that has intensified since the election. PAGE A13

#### HEATED SENATE RACE IN MINNESOTA

The vote gap between the incumbent Republican senator, Norm Coleman, and his Democratic challenger, the comedian Al Franken, in Minnesota's still-undecided Senate race has narrowed since Election Day, but the hostility and vitriol surrounding the race seem to grow by the hour. Stakes are high, because with three Senate races yet to be decided, Democrats still have a chance of winning the 60 seats needed to break Republican filibusters in Washington. PAGE A13

#### ANOTHER BLOW DEALT TO GALVESTON

Still struggling to recover from Hurricane Ike, the battered economy of Galveston Island suffered another severe blow this week when the University of Texas decided to lay off 3,800 people, a third of the work force, from the medical center that is the largest employer on the island. PAGE A10

#### **REVAMPING THE SPACE STATION**

While previous NASA missions have often focused on adding modules or solar panels to the International Space Station, a 15-day shuttle mission is devoted to work on the \$100 billion orbiting outpost to transform the inside so that crew size can be doubled to six. A crew of six will allow more scientific work to be performed, and will change the dynamic of life in orbit. PAGE A10

Obituaries

**ROSETTA REITZ, 84** 

An ardent feminist, she scavenged through the early history of jazz and the blues to resurrect the music of long-forgotten <u>women</u> and to create a record label, Rosetta Records, dedicated to them. "My hope and dream," she said, "is that there won't be a need for a <u>women</u>'s record company." PAGE B10

CARL D. KEITH, 88

He was a co-inventor of the three-way automotive catalytic converter -- a major advance in eliminating the toxic tailpipe emissions that once blanketed cities in smog. PAGE B10

New York

**RUMORS OF CLINTON APPOINTMENT** 

Create Anxious Buzz in New York

Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

When word passed that Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton was a contender to serve as President-elect Barack Obama's secretary of state, it set off a buzz of speculation in New York -- who would replace her? According to New York election law, Gov. David A. Paterson would appoint her successor if she takes the job. Two people close to the governor said that Mr. Paterson believes he might have to do so. Page A15

#### WINNING DESIGN FOR BIKE RACKS

A circle struck through by a bar, sort of like the Ghostbusters logo, except not red, and well, no ghost either. Actually, never mind, they're not much alike. A new bike rack created by Ian Mahaffey and Maarten De Greeve, two designers from Copenhagen, has won the CityRacks Design Competition, officials announced. It will become the city's new standard bicycle rack. Page A15

#### PHASING OUT A LEGENDARY THUG

It's hard out here for a thug -- the only job he managed to land was getting shot at by the police, and he may be facing retirement. For four decades, the Police Department firing ranges have been using "the Thug," a silhouette target created in the 1960s. Initially designed to make it harder to gauge where shots hit the target, it is being phased out in favor of one that makes it easier to score from a distance, a police spokesman said. Page A15

**Sports** 

#### YANKEES MAKE A RECORD OFFERING

### While Prowling Free Agent Market

The Yankees have been laying in the cut for a while. They passed on trading for Johan Santana, eager to slip another ace into their hand while not giving up their best prospects, and Friday they got their chance, making an offer to C. C. Sabathia that would be a record figure for a pitcher. According to two people with intimate knowledge of the deal, the six-year offer is worth \$140 million, an amount that exceeds the \$137.5 million deal the Mets gave Santana. Page D1

#### LAW'S TALK TO JETS BEFORE WIN

The night before the Jets triumphed in fine fashion over New England, Ty Law, a day into his tenure with the team, gave his new teammates a window into the Patriots' opinion of the Jets: that given enough space, they would find a way to lose. Mr. Law spent nine seasons with New England and was himself responsible more than once for serving up defeat to the Jets. They now have a chance to rise above their previous collapses, and a superior quarterback to help them do so. Page D2

**Business** 

#### THE OPTIONS ARE GETTING THINNER

## For Corporate Health Care

It's that time of year again, when corporate America gets to choose medical plans for the coming year. But even if employees are in the enviable position of having a job, when so many positions have been trimmed, using the word choice for their medical options should maybe be in quotes. The menu is short. Another typical new feature is a health plan with a high annual deductible that is likely to reach \$1,100 for an individual and even more for family coverage. Page B1

#### WALL STREET CLOSES ON LOW NOTE

After late trading slowly inched shares toward positive territory, Wall Street did a 180-degree turn and shares sank back, deeply in the red, where they had spent most of the day. On this occasion, a last-minute sell-off of stocks absorbed most of the gains from the rally on Thursday, when major exchanges closed more than 5 percent ahead.

Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

Experts called it "almost a classic bear market," adding that taking a piece of that back before the weekend was to be expected. Page B5

## **INSURANCE AND RELATED WORRIES**

When the American International Group became a household name two months ago, a small-time fear began to creep into the minds of policy holders at all kinds of insurance companies. That fear heightened when A.I.G. increased its bailout needs to \$150 billion and Goldman Sachs suggested that some companies might go under entirely, leaving policy holders to fret over what to do and ways to protect themselves. Page B1

#### AT LEAST THE STASH OF SPAM IS SAFE

We named one of the most obnoxious side-effects of the digital age after it -- Spam. A rubbery processed food made of pork and ham, it has a reputation as a notorious hard-times food. And in a struggling economy with a dark financial future, the Hormel Foods factory that makes the stuff has been working around the clock to manufacture more, seven days a week since July, as Americans explore more cheap foods. Page B1

## NONPROFIT, EMPHASIS ON THE 'NON'

With people gripping ever tighter to their purse strings, imagine the effect this has had on charities and nonprofit groups that depend on private donations. While the average person has been allowed the luxury of waiting for the other financial shoe to fall, nonprofit groups and charities have not. That shoe has fallen -- fast, hard and on their necks. Coupled with the demand for their services growing sharply, the decline is even grimmer. Page B6

Arts

#### BELOVED TAXIDERMIST LOST,

#### Parisians to the Rescue

When a fire ripped through Deyrolle, the 177-year-old taxidermist in Paris, last February, it was as if a dagger had been plunged into the heart of the city. Ninety percent of the shop's stock, including a celebrated fossil collection and a 19th-century diorama of more than 100 birds, was lost. But Paris has since come together in an unusual display of solidarity to save the store. Hermes reissued a limited-edition scarf to raise money, and private donations have included 50 boxes of butterflies, and a bull's head. PAGE C1

### FOLLOWING MARCO POLO'S FOOTSTEPS

Back in 1993, Denis Belliveau and Francis O'Donnell, two friends from Queens, decided it would be fun to try to follow the trail supposedly blazed by Marco Polo more than 700 years earlier. The adventure crossed thousands of miles and lasted two years, and more than a decade later their vacation has become a film, "In the Footsteps of Marco Polo," which is being broadcast this Sunday on WLIW. PAGE C7

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR CABLE NEWS?

Over the last three months of the 2008 presidential campaign, ratings for the cable news channel MSNBC were up 158 percent over the same period a year earlier. They were up 101 percent for the Fox News Channel. For cable channels with strong points of view, it was a very good election. But for all the media outlets that set viewership records in recent months, the looming question after Senator Barack Obama's election is: What happens now? PAGE C5

This Weekend

**BOOK REVIEW** 

Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

Roy Blount Jr. wrote "Alphabet Juice," which is probably all some people need to know. If you need more recommendation, Jack Shafer praises it for "its erudition, its grand fun and its contrary view of what constitutes good writing." PAGE 9

#### **ARTS**

Playing the hard-living, emotionally scarred singer Etta James, Beyonce Knowles -- one of the few pop stars left with a wholesome, good-girl image -- swaggers and swears her way through the new film "Cadillac Records." It represents a stark new range since her most significant previous role in "Dreamgirls" in 2006. PAGE 1

### **TRAVEL**

They're known as highpointers, hopscotching the country to visit the places of highest elevation in a state. No big deal in Florida (345 feet). Much bigger deal in Alaska (20,320 feet, take along your mountain gear). PAGE 3

#### Editorial

#### SAVING DETROIT FROM ITSELF

A messy bankruptcy filing by any of the Big Three auto companies would likely cost the government, and the economy, more than trying to keep them afloat. But if Congress is going to risk billions more of the taxpayers' money on these companies it must also insist on sweeping changes in the way they do business. Page A20

### WHEN WALL STREET RUNS DRY

The reason Gov. David Paterson is cutting budget untouchables like Medicaid and school aid is that New York is in a terrible hole. Anybody who won't acknowledge this is simply hiding under the desk. Which is where some Senate Republicans and union leaders can be found these days. Page A20

## SONAR OVER WHALES

The Supreme Court showed extreme and troubling deference to the views of the military, deciding to lift two restrictions on the Navy's use of sonar in training exercises off the California coast. Page A20

### Op-ed

#### **BOB HERBERT**

Rather than letting Detroit's Big Three further undermine an already failing economy, we should fashion a recovery plan that is tough, smart and points the way to energy security. Page A21

#### **GAIL COLLINS**

My little Obama hyperpartisans: You spent a year of your lives trying to keep Hillary Clinton out of the White House because she voted to let the Bush administration invade Iraq. And now, your man is talking about letting her be the point person on foreign policy. What happened to transformative change? Page A21

#### CHARLES M. BLOW

If the Republican Party wants to move forward, it should look back to 1980. Page A21

## http://www.nytimes.com

# Graphic

Inside the Times: November 15, 2008

**PHOTOS** 

Load-Date: November 15, 2008



# This murder of children must be halted now

The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 436 words

# **Body**

It was appropriate on Saturday that children led the way in Gloucester at the head of the march to protest about the bloodshed in Gaza.

For it is the plight and suffering of the children of Gaza that is really horrifying us all, irrespective of which side of the fence we sit - supporting the Palestinians or Israel.

When some 257 children have been killed in Gaza out of a total Palestinian death toll of roughly 750, we must all, with one voice, demand that this conflict is halted by an immediate ceasefire.

We must end what is quite simply the murder of innocent children - now.

This has nothing to do with the terrorists of <u>Hamas</u>, and we realise they will go to any lengths to kill Israelis and will also use families as human shields.

It has all to do with saving children's lives. How many more small body bags wrapped in the Palestinian flag do we have to see on our television screens?

Gloucester's MP, Parmjit Dhanda summed up the march through the city well when he said: "We were there to show that this really matters to us.

"The Red Cross says that there are war crimes going on with children who have been left to starve".

And one of the organisers of the march, 18-year-old Afifa Patel, from Barton, said: "I was watching it on the news and a guy was holding a dead child.

"We have a few younger children in my family and it really upset me so, me and two other <u>women</u> organised the march."

Afifa and her friends did a good job. People came from all over the country as well as from Cheltenham and throughout the county.

In Stroud too, there was a big turnout for a peace vigil organised by the Stroud Peace Group.

And Stroud district councillor Martin Whiteside, who wrote movingly about the vigil in The Citizen on Saturday, said: "We can't, as human beings, just stand back and say nothing."

## This murder of children must be halted now

He is right. This weekend, Gloucestershire people spoke with one voice - on the streets of Gloucester and Stroud , and online on our website - the killing of innocent children in Gaza must stop.

## IS IT RACIST?

PRINCE Harry was very unwise to make the video on an Army exercise in which he talks of a squaddie as "our little Paki friend" and he has, quite rightly, apologised.

But if we are honest, is this video, made three years ago, really racist? Surely, it is no more than some high-spirited Army banter. Isn't this the language used by many squaddies?

We certainly don't condone it, but this viedo is nowhere near the real Harry horror revealed in January 2005 when he was shown to have hired a Nazi outfit from a costume company in Nailsworth for a party. That was shameful and before this latest incident.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



# A-Sanaa to petition High Court over school shelling. Accuses Israel of war crimes

The Jerusalem Post January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 449 words

**Byline: GIL HOFFMAN** 

# **Body**

United Arab List MK Taleb A-Sanaa is working on a petition to the High Court of Justice against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi for Tuesday's shelling of the UNRWA school in the Gaza Strip.

A-Sanaa said his attorneys were drafting the petition, which will accuse Israel of breaking international law by shelling the school that the IDF has said was used as a cover to fire mortars and for storing missiles. At least 30 people were killed in the attack, most of them civilians.

"Israel cannot break international law and not get punished for it," A-Sanaa said. "Israel needs to decide whether it wants to be a terrorist organization like *Hamas* or respect international law."

A-Sanaa wrote Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz, asking him to probe what he called "the murder of innocent children" in the attack. He accused whoever was responsible for the attack of "war crimes." He also wrote President Shimon Peres a letter accusing Israeli politicians of advancing their personal political interests at the expense of the good of the Israeli and Palestinian people. He said Olmert was trying to change his image and become a hero while Barak was trying to help his political campaign.

Balad chairman Wasel Taha lashed out at what he called "sadistic ministers who dance on Palestinian blood to help them in the election." He accused Barak of "burning alive <u>women</u> and children" and Israelis of "lacking human feelings" for what he termed "the shocking slaughter in Gaza."

Ta'al chairman Ahmed Tibi lashed out at what he called the "unprecedented killing of civilians," which he said was "a war crime perpetrated by Barak and Livni" that must be stopped. He accused the Israeli press of being complicit with the IDF for not showing pictures of the devastation of the school.

United Arab List's chairman, MK Sheikh Ibrahaim Sarsour, sent an e-mail to his mailing list with a picture of a dead Palestinian child buried in rubble. In the e- mail, which had the subject "forward to all people [sic] you know," Sarsour complained about the Israeli Left supporting attacks against civilians.

Meretz criticized the attack, saying that "killing innocents makes Israel pay an unacceptable moral price and harms the justice of our cause in our own eyes and the eyes of the world."

A-Sanaa to petition High Court over school shelling. Accuses Israel of war crimes

The Central Elections Committee will convene on Monday to consider Israel Beiteinu's request to prohibit Balad and the United Arab List from running in the February 10 election on the grounds that they oppose Israel being a Jewish state. Taha said he would not be surprised if the same Israel that could kill innocent children would also prevent his party from running.

# **Graphic**

Photo: Taleb A-Sanaa (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# MPs vow support for Palestinians

Gulf Daily News December 31, 2008

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Length: 475 words

Byline: MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

# **Body**

BAHRAINI MPs yesterday condemned Israeli hostility against Palestinians and the bloodshed in Gaza. They observed a moment's silence at the start of the session for the victims of the aggression which included men, women, children and the elderly.

Wearing Palestinian scarves and surrounded by Palestine flags, MPs backed urgent proposals to send money, medicines and other aid to Gaza.

They also approved a proposal to send letters to international and regional parliamentary associations and federations, urging them to condemn Israel's actions and call for urgent meetings to discuss the assault on Gaza.

In addition, MPs urged the Egyptian government to open the Rafah border crossing to allow aid to reach Gaza and announced plans to hold an extraordinary parliamentary session to debate solutions to problems facing the Palestinian people.

Chairman of parliament's Palestine Support Committee Nasser Al Fadhala said MPs had put their political differences aside to approve measures in support of the Palestinian people.

"We as MPs are here to pressurise the world to take a stand against what's going on in Gaza, as Palestinians are in need of our support," Mr Al Fadhala said.

"Today's session is in the name of Palestine and this is why we have come back to vote in favour of a string of urgent decisions.

"Palestinians, especially Gazans, are in need of every support they can get - whether from us or from decent MPs around the world."

MPs agreed to postpone all other discussions until they had addressed the Palestinian plight at their session yesterday.

## MPs vow support for Palestinians

Mr Al Fadhala said four major decisions were agreed on with all parliamentary blocs and independent MPs.

"They include urging the government to give cash and material donations, send letters to international and regional parliamentary associations and federations, urge the Egyptian government to open Rafah border and issue our own statement," he said.

"Thankfully, this has happened in addition to a bonus - and that's having an extraordinary pro-Palestinian session."

Mr Al Fadhala said he got the idea for MPs to wear Palestinian scarves at several pro-Palestine rallies this week.

"If normal people wear them, so should we," he said.

Parliament later issued its statement condemning Israel's assault and siege of Gaza, along with the lack of action by the international community.

It described Gaza as "easy prey" for Israel because it had been severely weakened by sanctions and urged the international community to lobby for the release of Palestinian parliament chairman Dr Aziz Al Dowaik, a member of <u>Hamas</u> who they said had been unfairly jailed.

Parliament's statement also urged the Arab community to unite in support of Palestine in its time of need, accusing Israel of pursuing policies designed to grab control of more Palestinian soil - wiping out Palestine in the process.

alaali@gdn.com.bh

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



# In Short

#### The Irish Times

November 25, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 488 words

## **Body**

A round-up of other world news in brief

## 19 die in wave of Baghdad bombings

BAGHDAD - A volley of explosions killed 19 people in Baghdad yesterday, including five who were caught up in a suicide attack by a woman whose bomb vest was apparently detonated remotely.

Witnesses to the attack at the entrance to Baghdad's international zone said the woman was behaving erratically at the checkpoint before her bomb exploded.

Witnesses told Iraqi media that the woman's explosives were set off remotely.

The attack came moments before a much larger "sticky bomb" attached to a bus exploded, killing 13 **female** government employees inside. A third bomb killed a man in a shopping district. - (Guardian service)

#### Israel lets limited aid in to Gaza

GAZA - Israel opened border crossings with the <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza Strip yesterday, allowing in limited amounts of food and fuel for the second time in three weeks after the United Nations warned of a looming humanitarian crisis.

Aid groups said the one-day shipment would have minimal impact because border crossings have been closed for so long, depleting reserves. "It is just not enough," said a spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency. - (Reuters)

#### Bid to stop Syrian atomic aid blocked

VIENNA - The UN nuclear watchdog chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, objected to western moves yesterday to block aid for a planned Syrian nuclear power plant, saying US intelligence pointing to a secret Syrian atomic weapons programme remained unproven.

Diplomats at a 35-nation meeting of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) governors said the US, Canada and EU signalled it would be prudent to halt the project while Syria is under IAEA investigation over the US reports.

But China, Russia and developing nations, which together comprise the majority on the governing body, rejected the western challenge as "political interference" undercutting the IAEA's aid programme for civilian atomic energy development. - (Reuters)

#### In Short

#### Juror discussed trial on Facebook

LANCASHIRE - A woman juror was dismissed from a trial after posting details of the case on Facebook and asking friends if they thought the defendants were guilty.

The woman went against strict rules forbidding jurors from discussing cases with family and friends and posted details of the sexual assault and child abduction trial on the social networking site.

After the juror's actions were discovered, she was removed from the case at Burnley crown court. - (PA)

## British police to get 10,000 Tasers

LONDON - Tens of thousands of police officers across England and Wales are to be allowed to use high-voltage Taser stun guns, the British government said yesterday.

Funding will be provided for police chiefs to buy an extra 10,000 of the weapons - designed to temporarily disable a suspect - after a year-long trial in 10 police forces, a home office spokesman said. Previously, use of Tasers had been restricted to 6,500 authorised firearms officers. - (Reuters)

Load-Date: November 25, 2008



# Syracuse students gather for peace in Gaza

University Wire

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 Daily Orange via U-Wire

Length: 480 words

Byline: By Katrina Koerting, Daily Orange; SOURCE: Syracuse

Dateline: SYRACUSE, N.Y.

# **Body**

A solitary candle stood at the front of Hendricks Chapel.

Approximately 100 people gathered at 5:30 Tuesday evening for a candlelight vigil to show their support and sympathy for the people of Gaza.

"We are here for those who died in Gaza," said Ahmed Al-Salem, president of the Muslim Student Association, to a crowd of students, faculty and community members. "We are here to answer the man who asked, 'Where is humanity?' 'Humanity is here,' we answer. Do not lose hope."

Raed Sharif, a doctoral candidate in the School of Information Studies and one of the organizers of the event, told stories of the hardships and fear his own family and friends are facing in Gaza, his native city.

"We are here today to show the world that we care about humanity, about people," he said. "We are here today to send a message of respect, support, sympathy and solidarity."

Andy Mager, a Jewish member of the Syracuse Peace Council, brought a different perspective to the vigil.

"It's very important for people to know that not all Jews of the United States support the Israelis, and not all Israelis support it either," he said.

Toward the end of the vigil, Lara Yalouaya, a Syracuse University alumnus and audience member, walked to the center aisle and spoke loudly to the audience that the rockets being fired were a consequence of Israel's aggressive occupation policy.

"It's not for America, for Bush or Cheney to choose who would be government," she said to some applause. "It's democratically elected *Hamas*. It's not for American policy to decide."

Tula Goenka, a professor of television, radio and film and an organizer of the event, said she was very pleased with the vigil and the turnout.

"The two <u>women</u> that spoke were very passionate," she said. "I think that people have been very silent about it. For people to feel that they were in a safe place to voice their concerns is good."

Ahmed Kobeisy, SU's Islamic chaplain, agreed.

## Syracuse students gather for peace in Gaza

"People were supportive for the cause. People were very humane in their expressions and also very respectful of human life in general."

He said he enjoyed hearing people's stories, although he feels that the stories presented were the least of what happened.

In addition to speeches from Magel, Sharif and Al-Salem, there was a prayer and a song performed by Joanne Shenandoah and Dianna Schenandoah. Kobeisy and Rev. Gail Riina spoke on behalf of Rev. Kelly Sprinkle, dean of Hendricks Chapel, because he was sick and unable to attend. At the conclusion of the vigil, the attendees went outside on the steps with their candles.

Dorris Habayebe Courgi, an SU alumnus, spoke of a personal connection to the situation in Gaza.

"There are SU alumni trapped in Gaza," she said. "Thanks to Facebook, we're able to stay in touch. I send my friends pictures from all of the protests, and they say thank you because it shows we're not alone."

(C) 2008 Daily Orange via UWIRE

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



# Two wrongs, racism and hatred, do not make a right

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 10

Length: 489 words

# **Body**

Paul Sheehan's description of the racist nature of some of the anti-Israel demonstrations is chilling ("It's too easy just to blame the Jews", January 12). The placards and chants are nothing more than racist hatred. That there has been barely a word spoken in protest is shocking. The Islamic community has the right to protest peacefully, but that does not extend to whipping up racism and hatred against another ethnic minority.

## Ian Fraser Cherrybrook

Paul Sheehan's article exemplifies why the Israel/Palestine crisis remains intractable. While the issues he raises are logical and accurate, no one can afford to focus on extremists' views on whichever side. The issue for most of those concerned with ending the crisis is not about anti- or pro-Semitic feeling, but of stopping the senseless slaughter of innocent civilians. Most of those horrified by recent atrocities are opposed to Israel's policy, not anti-Semitic, and to use the latter to avoid accountability for the former only forestalls reconciliation.

After correctly lamenting the racism implicit in the signs of protesters in Melbourne, Sheehan asserts that **women** in Gaza "are used primarily as breeding stock". Shame.

David Hollier New York

W. H. Auden said it all: "Those to whom evil is done/Do evil in return."

And the state of Israel hadn't been created when he wrote that.

Peter Spencer Darlington

So phosphorus bombs are illegal ("Egypt shuns proposal for troops on its border", January 12). Apparently they cause great pain and death. So why stop at phosphorus bombs? Which weapons of war don't hurt and kill people? That's what they are for.

Like all morally derived criteria, this is meaningless unless applied universally. But is a species hard-wired for hate and aggression ever going to bite this deductive bullet: no weapons, no war as we know it? What a result for innocent children that would yield.

Moral logic is a puny force to send out against our timeless psychic drive to destroy people we have never met, but whom nonetheless we know to be our enemies.

## Two wrongs, racism and hatred, do not make a right

## Stephen Clarke Summer Hill

Thanks to Julia Irwin for her courage in speaking out against the horror in Gaza ("Getting away with murder", smh.com.au, January 11). Although the Australian Government and Opposition have rushed to apologise for Ehud Olmert's actions, I cannot believe they speak on behalf of most Australians.

I have yet to meet anyone among my colleagues and students who approves of what the Israeli Government is doing in Gaza, or who does not, more broadly, condemn that Government's treatment of the Palestinian people.

None of them is an anti-Semite or Holocaust denier. None wants to see the Israelis forced into the Mediterranean. None is a *Hamas* supporter. Some are Jews. All hope, and in some cases pray, for a just and lasting peace in Israel/Palestine and for an Australian Government willing to work towards it.

Dr John Tully School of Social Sciences, Victoria University, Melbourne

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



# Focus: Conflcit in Gaza: GAZA DIARY: 'We love the sun. So we sat outside to see the F16s bombing Rafah'

The Observer (London) (England)

January 11, 2009

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# **The Observer**

Section: OBSERVER FOCUS PAGES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 1062 words **Byline:** FIDA QISHTA

## **Body**

Fida Qishta is a writer and teacher living in Rafah on the Gaza Strip. She is keeping a diary of the Israeli bombardment

## Monday 5 January

Every night, the Israeli air strikes continue to hit Rafah. The air is full of smoke. At home, we are trying to have a normal life, but it's not possible. We are scared to death. My dad is terrified, so my sisters and I are trying to be normal, to make him feel better. We talk about stories from the old days, to make him laugh. One of the funniest things we used to ask my father when we were children, when we watched cartoons on the TV, was: "Dad, can we get into the TV?" He'd say: "No, silly, you can't." Then we'd ask: "How did these other people get into the TV?"

We didn't sleep for more than an hour, so many explosions shook our house so strongly. Every 30 or 40 minutes the house is shaken. I feel like everyone is going to die, but I'm trying not to be scared.

## Tuesday 6 January

I woke up at nine and knew there was still a war going on. No electricity, the phones down, bombing and shooting.

In my family, we love the sun. We decided to sit outside and watch the F16s bombing Rafah. We see a missile strike the orphans' school. I don't know why they attack the schools, the mosques, the universities. The Israelis have attacked three schools - the al-Salah school for orphans in Jabalia, the American school in Gaza and the al-Fadela school in Rafah - 11 mosques and the Islamic University. I don't think this is a war against *Hamas* leaders.

One of the stories that makes make me feel most sad is about five children and their mother who were living on the border, in the buffer zone. Their mum decided to take them to a safer place. But just before they left, they were hit by an Israeli missile and all of them were killed.

Focus: Conflcit in Gaza: GAZA DIARY: 'We love the sun. So we sat outside to see the F16s bombing Rafah'

Worse was to come. When I got home, the electricity was on. A chance to see the news. I couldn't believe what I saw - a UN school in Jabalia hit by Israeli shells. The school was full of refugees. Men, <u>women</u> and children, families who wanted somewhere safe to stay, all killed. Forty-two dead, they say. More than 100 injured.

### Wednesday 7 January

The Israelis have dropped leaflets telling people who live by the border to leave. If the Israeli soldiers observe anybody moving in the area, he or she will be killed.

This is what the leaflets say: "Citizens of Rafah: because <u>Hamas</u> is using your houses to smuggle and store ammunition, the Israeli Defence Force will attack your homes from Sea Street to the Egyptian border. To the people who live in these areas: Block O, Al Brazil camp, Al Shora area, Qishta area. You must evacuate your homes beyond Sea Street from the time you receive this leaflet/paper until 7am the following morning. For your and your children's safety, follow this leaflet. The leadership of the Israeli Defence Force."

My relatives, who live near the border, were terrified. We asked them to come to our house, two of my uncles with their families and my cousin with her children. That meant there were 32 people staying in my home. So many children. We slept on the floor. Another friend phoned and asked if we have space, we said, "Sure." They didn't have anywhere else to go.

My sisters and brother were laughing at the children and said in Arabic, "Jaish Atfal" - the children's army.

Among the kids were my two little cousins, Mohammed, six, and Hada, eight. Since the attacks began, Moham med won't take his fingers out of his ears. He's terrified a bomb will hit him. When an explosion went off on the border, he and his sister sat in a corner holding each other, rocking.

I am grateful I have no children, so I don't have to worry that an Israeli tank or air strike could kill them.

My worst nightmare is that our house would be targeted and our whole family killed apart from one survivor. Better for us all to die. When the bombing stopped, I went with my friend Hassan, a paramedic whose house had been attacked. Then I saw my uncles' houses - two had been destroyed. One of my cousins was running and screaming, asking everyone, "Have you seen my daughter?" She didn't find her for hours; the girl was scared and hiding.

I went to the ambulance station - 12 ambulances have been targeted by the Israeli army and three paramedics died yesterday. I volunteered to accompany the ambulance crew when they go out, me and two international friends from Europe, from the International Solidarity Movement. Human shields. Maybe it will stop the Israeli army hitting the ambulances. We can try.

In Rafah, they tried to rescue some injured people near the border with Egypt - a rocket nearly hit the ambulance. They feel afraid. When I returned home, the city looked like a ghost town - most of the shops were closed. I saw a market open, a great chance to get more vegetables for a week. A few people run out, pick what they need, then run home. We are all running short of food now.

## Night

F16s in the sky. No one in Rafah can sleep. The attacks shake our house again. We can see the smoke from the window again. Big attacks on the border. A scary sound. My sisters decided to sleep early to try to get some sleep before things got worse.

I watched the TV with my friend - news of the UN Security Council meeting. I told myself: "They will take a decision after the attack on the UN school. This must end now." I was shocked when they delayed the decision. When will the UN decide? After the Israeli army has finished?

## Friday 9 January

Focus: Conflcit in Gaza: GAZA DIARY: 'We love the sun. So we sat outside to see the F16s bombing Rafah'

I woke at 7am, to a phone call from one of my friends in Nuserat. Last night, she and her family spent the night downstairs, sleeping on the floor, afraid to be in their bedrooms. Even though they live in the centre of the city and nowhere near the border. I asked her why - she said it's because the Israeli army warned her neighbours to evacuate the area. That means their house could also be attacked. She told me her daughters are scared all the time.

I tried to make her feel better. I told her I'd heard news that the UN Security Council had called for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Then, down the phone, I could hear explosions happening around her. "They are still bombing buildings and shooting here," she said.

## ON OTHER PAGES

Israel, we support you, but. . . An open letter to the Israel government from prominent Jewish figures, Comment, page 28

Differing views on Britain and Gaza from Francesca Segal and Ed Husain, Comment, page 29

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



# Long-range target

The New Zealand Herald January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: SPORT; General

Length: 500 words

# **Body**

An Israeli tennis player who will be targeted by protesters at the ASB Classic today says she feels deeply affected by the fighting in Gaza.

Shahar Peer is expected to face a picket line of shoe-waving demonstrators from the group Global Peace and Justice, led by activist John Minto, demanding she quit the **women**'s Classic tournament.

Yesterday the 22-year-old, who is ranked 39 in the world, said her 28-year-old brother had finished his compulsory military service, but had been called up as a reserve.

Though she was worried about him, she was also determined to enjoy her tennis and serve her country proudly on the court.

"What's going on in Israel is not easy for any of us," she said. "I hope it will end as soon as possible.

"I'm just coming here to enjoy playing tennis. That is my main reason, and that is what I am going to do tomorrow."

Peer was surprised to be the target of an anti-Israel protest, and has rejected the call for her to withdraw from the tournament.

"There's nothing to do with what I'm doing in the politics ... I think sport can help solve a lot of those problems."

Tournament director Brenda Perry said security would be beefed up today to cope with the protesters. Anyone trying to protest inside the stadium would be removed.

The Government yesterday appeared to toughen its language on the conflict yesterday, after several days of criticism that it has been too soft on Israel.

Foreign Minister Murray McCully said Israeli attacks on UN facilities in the Gaza strip were of grave concern.

"New Zealand is deeply worried by the mounting humanitarian crisis in Gaza ... We call for Israel to immediately cease military attacks and for *Hamas* to immediately cease rocket and mortar attacks."

He said New Zealand was continuing to monitor the evolving situation through international aid agencies.

Mr Minto said Peer should withdraw from the Classic to bring attention to the plight of Palestinians.

"She is a high profile figure in Israel, and for her to make a stand would have a significant effect."

## Long-range target

Global Peace and Justice was asking demonstrators to bring old shoes to the protest.

"To show the base of your shoe is a grave insult in the Middle East, which is appropriate to her participation in the tournament."

Shoe waving as a form of protest has enjoyed a surge in popularity in the Arab world since Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zeidi last month threw both his shoes at US President George W. Bush.

Mr Minto said that the protest was not a personal attack.

But he criticised Peer's eagerness in performing her own military service.

She began her compulsory service three years ago, excelling in rifle marksmanship. She balanced her commitment as a military administrative secretary with her burgeoning professional tennis career.

When she rose to tennis prominence in 2007 by reaching the quarter-finals of the Australian Open and US Open, she was granted "outstanding athlete status" by the Israeli military, allowing her to focus on tennis while remaining a part-time soldier.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



# MIDDLE EAST IS NOW MORE 'FREER AND MORE HOPEFUL': BUSH

#### **Hindustan Times**

December 6, 2008 Saturday 2:04 PM EST

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Length: 472 words

Byline: Report from Asian News International brought to you by HT Syndication.

**Dateline:** Washington

# **Body**

Washington, Dec. 06 -- (ANI): US President George W Bush has told the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy that the Middle East is now "freer and more hopeful" than it was when he took office in 2000.

"We see it in <u>women</u> taking their seats in elected parliaments, and bloggers telling the world their dreams. We see it in skyscrapers rising above Abu Dhabi, and thriving Middle Eastern businesses connected to the global economy. And we see it in a Saudi king sponsoring an interfaith dialogue, Palestinian reformers fighting corruption and terror, and Israelis who love their ancient land, but want to live in peace," the Washington Times quoted Bush, as saying.

"The Middle East is closing a chapter of darkness and fear, and opening a new one written in the language of possibility and hope," he added.

He also admitted to shortcomings in his Middle East policy.

"In some areas we have fallen short of our hopes," he says according to a text of the speech released by the White House.

"For example, the fight in Iraq has been longer and more costly than expected. The reluctance of entrenched regimes to open their political systems has been disappointing. And there have been unfortunate setbacks at key points in the peace process - including the illness suffered by Prime Minister Sharon, the <u>Hamas</u> victory in the Palestinian elections, and the terrorist takeover of Gaza," he said.

Bush's optimism was however met by skepticism from at least some in the audience.

Martin S. Indyk, the Saban Center's director and a former ambassador to Israel under President Clinton, said: "For almost a decade, the United States has done little to address the region's principal conflicts and concerns and instead has opened the way for Iran to make a bid for hegemony inn the Arab heartland."

"In the process, the United States has developed a reputation for arrogance and double standards," Indyk added.

"The net effect is an impression left by the Bush administration that the United States is unable to deliver, and that when it tries, it tends to make matters worse. In so doing, the administration has raised serious doubts about American competence and intentions," Indyk and Richard Haass write in an essay titled "Restoring the Balance: A Middle East Strategy for the Next President."

## MIDDLE EAST IS NOW MORE 'FREER AND MORE HOPEFUL': BUSH

The two men argue that Bush showed a "willful disregard of the Palestinian issue for most of its two terms," that his "mishandling of Iraq and Afghanistan opened the door to an Iranian bid for regional primacy by removing Tehran's most threatening enemies," and that his "insistence on elections in Iraq, Lebanon and the Palestinian territories enabled Islamist parties with militias to enter the political process and then paralyze it in each place." (ANI)

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Load-Date: December 6, 2008



## Benetton store torched in Iran over 'link with Zionist network'

The Jerusalem Post January 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 488 words

Byline: AMIR MIZROCH

# **Body**

A branch of Italian clothing retailer Benetton was set on fire in Iran amid angry protests against the Israeli onslaught on *Hamas*-ruled Gaza, media reports said on Wednesday.

The store, located on Dowlat Street in upmarket north Teheran, "was set on fire by unknown people," the conservative Jomhuri Eslami newspaper and several other media sources reported.

The Teheran fire department said the cause of the incident, which occurred very early Tuesday, was under investigation, ISNA news agency reported.

"Benetton is said to be linked with the Zionist network," the government newspaper in Iran charged, adding that its opening in the Islamic republic "has sparked several disputes over the past two years and people and student bodies objected to its activities."

Established in 1965, Benetton is now controlled by Edizione Holding (a holding company wholly owned by the Benetton Family) with a 67% stake. It listed on the stock exchange in Milan in 1986.

Benetton has a long history of attention to ethical values and involvement in social and cultural initiatives.

Several Benetton stores have opened in the past two years in fashion-starved Iran, where global brands have largely been absent since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Last year a group of prominent MPs protested against Benetton's presence in Iran, alleging that it was owned by a "Zionist millionaire" and that its fashions were a bad influence on <u>female</u> consumers, AFP reported.

Islamic republic conservatives have long urged consumers to boycott "Zionist" products, ranging from Coca- Cola and Pepsi soft drinks, to Calvin Klein clothing and Nestle food products, AFP reported.

Angry protests have been held across Iran since Israel launched Operation Cast Lead on Saturday.

On Tuesday evening a group of Iranian demonstrators stormed the British diplomatic compound in Teheran to protest London's stance towards the Israeli offensive.

Meanwhile, hard-line Iranian student groups have asked the government to authorize volunteers to carry out suicide bombings in Israel in response to the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, AP reported.

#### Benetton store torched in Iran over 'link with Zionist network'

The government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had not responded to the call by Wednesday.

Five hard-line student groups and a conservative clerical group launched a registration drive on Monday, seeking volunteers to carry out suicide attacks against Israel.

Volunteer suicide groups have made similar requests in the past and the government never responded to their calls. There has not been any sign of Iranians carrying out suicide attacks in Israel - making it likely that the groups' activities are mainly for propaganda purposes.

ÊIn an open letter to Ahmadinejad, the students said "volunteer student suicide groups ... are determined to go to Gaza. You are expected to issue orders to the relevant authorities in order to pave the way for such action."

A copy of the letter was made available to The Associated Press on Wednesday.

# **Graphic**

Photo: IRANIAN JEWISH schoolgirls and their Muslim teacher attend an anti-Israel demonstration in front of the UN offices in Teheran yesterday. (Credit: Hasan Sarbakhshian/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# U. Virginia students contest conservative speaker's ideas

University Wire

October 16, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 Cavalier Daily via U-Wire

Length: 530 words

Byline: By Stephanie Kassab, Cavalier Daily; SOURCE: U. Virginia

Dateline: CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va.

# **Body**

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As conservative commentator David Horowitz prepared to speak on Grounds yesterday, students from the Minority Rights Coalition and the Middle Eastern Leadership Council, among others, organized themselves in silent protest against Horowitz's ideas.

Horowitz spoke yesterday about Islamofascism. While Horowitz said there are good Muslims and bad Muslims just as there are good Christians and bad Christians, he spoke out against Palestinian culture.

"The Arab states are racist," Horowitz said, citing a situation where Arab terrorists opened fire in a library in Jerusalem killing nine students. According to Horowitz's figures, 85 percent of Palestinians in a poll conducted by Palestinians approved the action.

"This is a very sick culture," he said. "Hamas is not interested in the Palestinian state. They are interested in a world Islamic state."

MELC President Manal Tellawi noted that his group disagrees with many of Horowitz's views.

"They not only offend Muslims... the MRC as a whole has been offended," Tellawi said. "The claims he makes are not factual ... like the association [between Muslim students associations and the Muslim Brotherhood]."

University Muslim Students Association President Alla' Hassan said the MSA has not participated in any political activities this year but rather strives to provide a positive educational and social environment for students on Grounds.

Students standing behind a table with a sign that read, "We support freedom of speech but we denounce hate and intolerance" handed out a fact sheet that outlined the differences between free speech and hate speech.

"We want people to know what Islam is," MRC Co-Chair Carlos Oronce said before Horowitz's speech. "There are certain limits to free speech. A lot of what he is saying is definitely a false perception of what Islam is."

Horowitz stressed that he believes Islamofascists cannot be deterred and are unable to tolerate anyone who is not an Arab nor a Muslim.

## U. Virginia students contest conservative speaker's ideas

"Unfortunately, these Islamofascists want to die," Horowitz said. "'Death in the service of Allah is our highest aspiration.'"

Following his speech, Horowitz responded to audience members' questions. One University student asked how Horowitz could call himself a fair speaker after making generalizations that all Arab governments are misogynistic. Horowitz replied that a woman who lives in a Muslim state and is raped needs four male witnesses at her trial to testify that she was raped.

"Women are second class citizens in Islam," Horowitz said. "They can kill you, You don't call that misogynistic? I do ... that's why I made the generalization."

Graduate Arts & Sciences student Arsalan Khan asked what motivates Muslims to interpret the Koran and religion in the way Horowitz said they were interpreted.

"He doesn't have an answer," Khan said. "There's a fundamental hole in his argument."

The Burke Society sponsored Horowitz as a speaker for its Islamofascism Awareness Week. Society member Keenan Davis, a second-year College student, introduced Horowitz, noting the society does not endorse everything invited speakers say and adding that the event was not intended to attack any religion.

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Load-Date: October 17, 2008



# LIVNI'S BRAVE STAND

The Australian
October 28, 2008 Tuesday
1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 487 words

# **Body**

Tzipi Livni gambles on peace ahead of politics

TZIPI Livni's call for a snap election after her failure to hold Israel's fractious coalition government together is a setback for the Middle East. Seemingly on the cusp of becoming Israel's second <u>female</u> prime minster after Golda Meir, Ms Livni refused to concede to the demands being made by the ultra-orthodox Shas party in return for political support. By the recent standards of Israeli politics, it was a courageous decision, even though it plunges the region into even more uncertainly.

Ms Livni's failure to form a government removes any chance that US President George W. Bush will leave office with his legacy enhanced by at least the outline of a peace deal with the Palestinians. And it could leave his successor with a poisoned chalice. Opinion polls favour the right-wing Likud party led by Benjamin Netanyahu to form the next coalition government. The election of Mr Netanyahu, who is adamantly opposed to Palestinian statehood, could delay the peace process indefinitely and lead to an increase in violence by the hardline Jewish settlers and militants among the Palestinians.

A staunch secularist who believes the best chance for the survival of the Jewish state is for Israel to get out of much of the occupied territories and the West Bank, Ms Livni was considered the best hope of advancing the peace process with the Palestinians. But instead of building on the progress being made on several fronts, including the ceasefire deal with *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip and the normalisation of relations with Syria, Israeli politics is likely to remain in the doldrums until elections are called in February.

Ms Livni used her clean image to win the Kadima party primary vote after Ehud Olmert was forced to resign over a corruption scandal, but getting enough parties to come on board to form a government eluded her. Israeli commentators criticised her for failing to live up to her promise of standing for a "different kind of politics". But the blame does not rest entirely with her. Israel is burdened by a fractious political system in which small parties backed by narrow interest groups demand huge concessions as the price of offering political support. When Shas demanded an exorbitant increase in support for child welfare payments and an undertaking that an undivided Jerusalem ruled by Israel was not negotiable, Ms Livni called the party's bluff.

Much will depend on whether Israeli voters see Ms Livni's failure to form a government as a sign she lacks the experience needed for an assignment as tough as Israel's next prime minister, or as someone who refuses to compromise on matters of principle. Ms Livni's best hope is that the vast majority of secular Israelis, who are tired of seeing government policy held hostage by fanatical groups, will put their trust in her rather than opt for the failed approach of Mr Netanyahu and his hardline supporters.

## LIVNI'S BRAVE STAND

Load-Date: October 27, 2008



# GLOBAL ACCLAIM Obama's profile soars as Bush's fades Will the real President of the U.S. please stand up?

The Advertiser (Australia)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

1 - State Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 505 words

**Byline: SAMELA HARRIS** 

# **Body**

SEVEN days remain until George W. Bush is no longer the most powerful man in the world.

As wintry Washington buzzes with excitement, Barack Obama seems to be the calm in the midst of the storm.

The world is in love with him - as well it may be for his elegant demeanor, that engaging smile, the kind eyes, the eloquence, the spirit of ``Yes We Can".

The presence of George W. Bush, 43rd president, is suddenly thin on the ground. Last heard, he was telling his party to think about a new group of leaders and a new message.

Perhaps no incoming president has been so organised in transition as is Mr Obama.

Perhaps no President-elect has had more that needed organising - a catastrophic economy, the Iraq war, crisis in Gaza, global warming, inadequacies in health care and social justice. While his daughters Sasha, 7, and Malia, 10 - with grandma in tow - have been preparing to start at a new school, the Quaker Sidwell Friends School, and the world at large has been trying to tell Michelle Obama how to dress and become a role model, Mr Obama has hit the ground running at Olympic speed.

He has selected members of his Cabinet and other senior positions more quickly and smoothly than any president in recent history.

His Administration will be an interesting mix. Apart from the best qualifications, those chosen are a well-balanced mix of male and *female*, black and white, Jew and Christian, Latino, Italian, Irish and Asian.

Meanwhile, Mr Obama already is hard at work on an economic recovery plan.

He has gained the sobriquet ``the pessimistic optimist" from his realistic stance on the gloomy state of affairs but his can-do attitude and a positive prognosis.

His chief of staff and other senior congressional liaison figures are working with Congress to promote the rapid passage of his economic agenda once he is sworn in. His economic team releases daily figures on plans for national infrastructure projects and employment projections.

GLOBAL ACCLAIM Obama's profile soars as Bush's fades Will the real President of the U.S. please stand up?

He has his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, consulting with outgoing Condoleezza Rice and others on how to address Israel and *Hamas*.

His national security team is hard at work dealing with the Middle East and Iran. He has retained Robert Gates as defence secretary, wisely providing continuity in the national security arena. Vice President-elect Joe Biden, meanwhile, has been dispatched to Pakistan and Afghanistan to lift the national profile of care and commitment regarding that sorry saga.

The President-elect has been offering olive branches to his opposition, personally contacting Republican opponents and making policy compromises such as tax reductions.

Americans are hungry for news, pictures and anything and everything to do with this stellar new president.

If it says or looks "Obama", it sells - from dolls to cups, from medals to caps.

The Obama action doll is touted as "the action figure you can believe in".

The famous American ice-cream maker Ben and Jerry's has produced ``Yes Pecan" ice cream, the special flavour for the Obama Administration.

**INAUGURATION DAY** 

**JANUARY 20** 

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



The Australian

January 12, 2009 Monday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 2549 words

## **Body**

MOST TALKED ABOUT

THE JEWISH STATE

Israel fighting a war for peace, and for its survival

DANIEL Finkelstein encapsulates the dilemma faced by Israel, the tiny sliver of land wedged between the Mediterranean Sea and neighbours wishing to destroy it, quite succinctly (``Israel just wants to live in peace'', 10/1).

There is a joke about a Jewish man who regularly attends anti-Semitic meetings. His puzzled friends ask him: "Why do you do it, Moshe?" He replies: "Well, at these meetings I feel powerful and significant. I am told that I rule the world, trigger financial meltdowns, and make governments of the biggest nations to do my bidding. It makes me forget that I am a poor tailor."

Not so long ago the Jewish history almost came to an end. The present war in Gaza is the result of a Jewish desire to stay alive.

<u>Hamas</u> undertook to destroy Israel and does everything in its power to do just that. It has the backing of a Jewhating Iranian Government. It shoots rockets at Israel with the expressed aim of killing as many Jews as possible and kidnaps Israeli citizens.

With so much history to learn from, the value of the world opinion, fleeting and fickle as it is, is not a determining factor in the Jewish behaviour and responses. Survival is.

Jewish survival is up to Jews and not up to a hand-wringing world opinion.

Michael Galak

Goondiwindi, Qld

DANIEL Finkelstein's piece exemplifies the delusional world occupied by many supporters of the bellicose regime in Israel. He writes: ``The Palestinians need only say that they will allow Israel to exist in peace ... and there is pretty much nothing they cannot have." Well now, Daniel, why not offer the Palestinians Israel's compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 242 (passed in November 1967) requiring withdrawal from the occupied territories?

A bit overdue, but that might bring peace. Maybe also educate Israeli soldiers, who (according to the Red Cross) `taunted and threatened" the Red Cross team rescuing children of murdered parents, and who stood by and let the children die one by one. Shades of the 1968 My Lai massacre, and the behaviour of other troops circa 1936 et al?

Peter Dowding

Fremantle, WA

I WONDER if Israel misses the inescapable irony in Daniel Finkelstein's impassioned article. His account of Israel's painful history is also the blueprint now being applied to Palestinians. As the Jews suffered persecution by a dominant force, so do Palestinians. I urge Finkelstein et al to ask themselves: What would you have done to prevent the persecution of Jews had you the power? Israel has the power to effect a change.

Not the change offered by Camp David, which like other negotiations was unacceptable. Israel's proposal would have divided Palestine into four separate cantons, so that Palestinians' movement would always be governed and controlled by Israelis. This is not an independent state.

So if Israel just wants to live in peace it needs to use its imagination. In the words of Paul Keating: ``It was our ignorance and our prejudice, and our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask: how would I feel if this were done to me?"

Andrew Dib

Lyneham, ACT

YOUR headline ``Israeli shelling blunder killed 30: UN" (10/1) prompts the question: what is a massacre? Can we speak of the Bali Blunder? At least in the Bali case the patrons of the establishments hit were not told to go there for safety.

We are watching this war with horror. We cannot sleep with the images of children dead in their parents' arms, or crying in a daze, not believing it is their parents' bloodied remains in front of them.

We must understand that killing has never worked as a tool of submission.

A. Young

Whitfield, Qld

SEEMINGLY eyeless to the blighted rule of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, European critics would deny Israel the right to defend its own territory -- thus giving a most incongruous preference to terrorists who openly scorn all that 2000 years of European thought have wrought in human affairs.

It's time once again for Europe's critics of Israel to find their souls.

Ron Goodden

Atlanta, Georgia, US

THE leadership of <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah should seriously reflect on the history of Israel since its formation in 1948. Neither organisation has the military ability to destroy it. The combined forces of Arab nations bordering Israel have tried several times and failed.

The Palestinian people have it in their power to bring peace to their communities, but it means a rethink of their objectives. If they again conclude that Israel must be destroyed, their pain will continue and they will only have themselves to blame.

Allen Arthur

Middleton, SA

THE only thing more useless than a <u>Hamas</u> rocket is a journalist trying to cover Gaza. Israel knows that excluding journalists enables the slaughter to go on longer. Israel has targeted ambulances, UN schools, relief convoys, and refuges as well as many public buildings and private houses. Surgical strikes indeed. The massacre of innocents suggests Israel is either remarkably incompetent or lying. Without journalists, we can't be sure.

Frank Campbell

Anglesea, Vic

Same church medicine

in a different coating

THERE was a time when, if your priest told you something was sinful, you believed it. You might even have stopped doing it, whether it was sex outside marriage or the use of artificial contraception. Alas for many of the world's religions, those days are largely over. The Catholic Church seems to have refined a policy to cover this dilemma: systematic intellectual dishonesty. Thus the poor in Africa are told not that condom use is a sin but that condoms are ineffective in preventing HIV/AIDS. Not true, but at least it decreases the sin rate, even at the expense of increasing the death rate.

In line with the same policy is the advice that the oral contraceptive pill and abortions lead to breast cancer, and most recently that the pill decreases male fertility, as addressed by Angela Shanahan (``It's wise to be wary of the pill", 10/1).

There are many reasons for doubting that hypothesis, but the most obvious is the following. Oestrogens are made naturally and excreted by all mammals. Extra can be absorbed into the body and acts as an extremely effective and safe contraceptive. The body uses these hormones then metabolises them, so they pass into urine in a form that has virtually no biological activity.

The amount of urinary oestrogen metabolites excreted naturally in urine worldwide must be several orders of magnitude greater than that originating in the pill.

All this does not mean we do not have a problem, we just don't have the one the Vatican would like us to have.

There are two incontestable truths in Shanahan's article: that male fertility appears to be undergoing a mysterious global decline, and that the abortion rate, especially in Australia, is unacceptably high. If a significant number of **women** stop taking the pill it will make no difference to the first problem, while sending the second one through the roof.

Michael Carrette (gynaecologist)

Cairns, Qld

ANGELA Shanahan seems to have missed the point about why some people are upset with the Catholic Church's trumpeting of ``evidence" of oestrogen from the pill finding its way into the environment and supposedly causing a rise in male infertility. It is not the science of the matter that is raising ire, but the fact that the Catholic Church is using the issue to lend weight to its medieval views on birth control and family planning.

If the Church really was concerned about the environment and its effects on us, then it would surely realise that one of our most significant environmental problems is an uncontrolled increase in human population. This is to say nothing of the associated damage of increased risk of human disease, which Catholic doctrine tacitly allows by

discouraging birth control in countries where HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases cause tragic human hardship.

Make no mistake, Ms Shanahan -- nothing in this story is about the environment.

Peter Miller

Ringwood East, Vic

Tasmania. Any takers?

IF ever there were a case for abolishing the statehood of Tasmania, the long-running fiasco of the Gunns pulp mill is it (``No end to pulp friction", 10/1). Majority state governments of Labor and Liberal persuasion in tiny Tasmania, both mad keen on rubber-stamping big polluting industries, have proved themselves incapable of thinking for themselves, unable or unwilling to come to grips with the idea of environmental sustainability and what it should mean for their policies.

Tasmanians would be better off being absorbed into one of the more civilised mainland Australian states, or becoming a branch of New Zealand. At least those colonies appreciate their native forests alive, in all their magnificent diversity, standing up.

Dr John R. Wilson

Daisy Dell, Tas

THE Government and the Liberal Opposition realise that the pulp mill approval process was a disaster, but are committed to support a flawed process. Both leaders should show the courage that Tasmanians expect and deserve, and give consideration to the many diverse small and large businesses in the region, by allowing them the opportunity to invest and expand with confidence. It's time for Premier David Bartlett to concede that the Tamar Valley is not the right location for a pulp mill.

Ernie C. Verbraeken

Launceston, Tas

THE anti-mill groups have well organised stunts and brilliant publicity but the vast majority of Tasmanians voted for candidates in favour of the Tamar pulp mill at the most recent federal and state elections. They accept the science, as has Peter Garrett, and support the mill as their interest is in value-adding and jobs rather than politics.

Robin Claxton

Tamar Valley, Tas

Let's cool down on climate

MY opinion piece (``Let's not waste energy on the warmaholics' fantasy", 6/1) was perhaps too strongly worded and for this I apologise. However, I too am fed up with being associated with deniers of the Nazi genocide of Jews and with being accused of being ``bought" by Exxon. But most devastating of all, as a virologist, with being accused of refusing to accept the scientific link between the HIV virus and AIDS.

So I should not have stooped down to the level of name-calling -- it was unprofessional and I will refrain from doing so in future.

However, here is a challenge to all the critics: El Nino is the biggest energy event on earth, it transfers about 5PW of energy from one side of the planet to another and affects climate and weather across the globe. I challenge the computer modellers to nominate when the next El Nino event will occur and its relative strength. If they get it even

roughly right I will take out the biggest advertisement in The Australian I can afford and withdraw everything I have said.

Dr Jon Jenkins

Bogangar, NSW

Hope in housing

IT is great to see from Paul Toohey's article (``A New Lease on Life", Magazine, 10/1) that Aboriginal Australians will have the opportunity to own their own homes. Now let's get rid of those two anachronistic, divisive, discriminatory and second-rate policies, Aboriginal education and Aboriginal health. We would not accept for our children, the services and programs they deliver, so why should Aboriginal people? They are entitled to the same health and education services enjoyed by all Australians. Let's get cracking, Jenny.

Tony Neale

Eastwood, SA

Some Lefts are all right

LARRY Buttrose's discussion of the historic opportunity facing the Left (``As capitalism falters, can the Left finally get it right?" 10/1) raises the question of which Left.

If it is the rent-a-crowd Left that marches through the streets chanting Whaddawewant slogans; the street theatre Left with its HoWARd signs and its swastikas inserted in Bush; the artiste Left with its demands for taxpayer subsidies for boring cliche-ridden plays and grunge films that no one wants to see; the ``Cuba is cool because it teaches its people to read and write (don't mention the one-party state)" Left; the ``Australians are racist rednecks" Left; or the soppy Left with its denials of personal responsibility that has undermined academic and discipline standards in out schools -- we can hope that it remains forever impotent.

On the other hand, if it is the social democratic Left that has focused on improving the life chances for ordinary people for more than a century (with its support for the conciliation and arbitration system, the rights of workers to bargain through their unions, the provision of decent social security payments and high-standard education for everyone), that was never conned by communism, that sees the US as on balance a force for good in the world, that understands how Israel lives in the shadow of the Holocaust and that is committed to parliamentary democracy and the rule of law -- we can hope that its current ascendancy in Australia remains the natural order of things.

The big advantage that the social democratic Left has is that is electable; the other Lefts are not.

**Chris Curtis** 

Hurstbridge, Vic

FIRST BYTE

## letters@theaustralian.com.au

One cannot help but be impressed with the power of voodoo priestess Mama Allah (``The voodoo healers", 9/1). We're told that among the items in her shrine is a photograph of the Virgin Mary. That's real power. But one does have to wonder whether the photographer was Hebrew, Samaritan, or Roman.

WJ O'Malley

Garran, ACT

Kevin Rudd, our Man of Butter. As soon as there's any heat in the kitchen he melts away.

Paul Drakeford

Kew, Vic

Hail, Peter Siddle, our man in the middle,

The crowds jumping over the moon,

And with Mitch at the pitch hurling bombs at the Poms,

Well be back, yeah, on track pretty soon!

P. Crowley

Adelaide, SA

Following advice from US and Australian intelligence, no journalists will be allowed to wear shoes at the ``Medal of Freedom" ceremony for the Honourable John Winston Howard.

Peter Thai

Bulleen, Vic

Who does John Howard think he is? First, he causes US President-elect Barack Obama to move house and now he wants Nationals senator Barnaby Joyce to do the same (``Howard tells Joyce to move house", 10/1)!

Ray Sanderson

Wynnum, Qld

I was sorry to hear that a hunting trip has ended in a tragic death. Still, I thought most of them did -- depends on whether you're the hunter or the hunted, I guess.

Mike O'Shaughnessy

Spence, ACT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: January 11, 2009



# Raptors Fall (Again); Habs Forward Injured (Again)

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)

January 2, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: SPORTS; Pg. A12; The Notebook

**Length:** 521 words **Byline:** Daily News

#### **Body**

Ontario and the United States earned semifinal berths with victories Thursday at the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge in Port Alberni. Ryan Spooner had a goal and two assists to lead the defending gold medallists from Ontario to a 5-1 victory over Germany. The victory clinched a top-two spot in Pool A for the Ontarians, who scored three times in the second period to break open a close game.

In the day's later games, Quebec (2-0-0-2) routed Finland 9-4 while Pacific beat Atlantic 4-3. Guillaume Asselin notched a hat trick and Yoan Pinette scored a pair, providing most of Quebec's offence. The team scored four goals in the second period to put the game out of reach early. Teemu Pulkkinen, Jose Sneck, Teemu Rautiainen and Eetu Koski scored for Finland (0-0-0-3). In Pacific's victory, Kamloops Blazers forward Brendan Ranford scored a third-period goal and Troy Rutkowski scored 1:46 into overtime for Pacific (2-1-0-0) to clinch the victory... Sean Quigley of Philadelphia won the men's title and Aziza Aliyu of Ethiopia took the <u>women</u>'s in the Emerald Nuts Midnight Run through a frigid Central Park early Thursday. Quigley, a former All-American at La Salle, covered the six-kilometre course in 18 minutes 45 seconds.

In a clash of Olympic stars, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt edged U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps to be voted the 2008 athlete of the year by the international media. Olympic pole vault champion Yelena Isinbayeva took the top place as sportswoman of the year. Spain's football squad was voted team of the year after winning the European Championship.

Nene scored 21 points, while Carmelo Anthony added 20 to lead the Denver Nuggets to a 114-107 victory over the Raptors on Wednesday, handing Toronto its 13th loss in its last 17 games and its fourth straight defeat at the Air Canada Centre. Andrea Bargnani topped the slumping Raptors (12-20) with 26 points, while Chris Bosh had 24 points and a team-high 11 rebounds. Jose Calderon finished with 18 points and 11 assists for the Raptors, who were playing without starters Jermaine O'Neal (knee) and Jason Kapono (quadriceps). . . . Israel's Football Association postponed all games Wednesday, two days after a missile fired by *Hamas* militants hit a team's pitch just before a practice. A Katyusha rocket exploded in the penalty area of third division Hapoel Ashkelon's stadium on Monday, just minutes before the players were about to begin training.

New England Patriots linebacker Jerod Mayo, the 10th overall pick in the 2008 NFL draft, was named the Associated Press 2008 defensive rookie of the year Wednesday. Mayo led the Patriots in tackles and received 49 of 50 votes from a nationwide panel of sportswriters and broadcasters. Cincinnati linebacker Keith Rivers received the other one. Mayo is the sixth straight linebacker to win the award, following Patrick Willis of San Francisco in

#### Raptors Fall (Again); Habs Forward Injured (Again)

2007. . . . Montreal Canadiens forward Alex Tanguay will miss a minimum six weeks with a shoulder injury. Team captain Saku Koivu hasn't played since Dec. 11, while enforcer Georges Laraque, winger Christopher Higgins and Mathieu Dandenault are also on the shelf.

Load-Date: January 2, 2009



The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 521 words

Byline: Sarah Webb

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Hundreds of campaigners took to the county's streets at the weekend to call for peace in Gaza.

Around 250 people marched at the Cross in Gloucester on Saturday with banners, flags and placards shouting 'Freedom for Gaza'.

Mohammed El Bark, 43, of Tredworth, took part with his wife Ingrid and seven-year-old son Nabil.

The engineer, who works in Stonehouse, said: "We care about what is happening to Palestine people, not just now but for the last 60 years.

"I have a lot of Palestinian friends, one of my friends has all his family over there and he doesn't know whether they are dead or alive. It is very worrying."

The march, which started outside Shire Hall at 11am was led by children.

It was organised by three young Gloucester women.

Organiser Afifa Patel, 18, of Barton, said: "I was watching it on the news and a guy was holding a dead child. We have a few younger children in my family and it really upset me, so me and two other <u>women</u> organised the march.

"We are pleased with how many people turned up, hopefully it will help to make people listen out there to get freedom for the people in Gaza.

Labour MP for Gloucester Parmjit Dhanda who took part, said: "Lots of people have turned out here to show their support to end the fighting. We were there to show this really matters to us. The Red Cross says there are war crimes going on with children left to starve.

"They should stop the fighting now and have a ceasefire right away so that the people of Palestine can get on with their lives in safety."

Another protestor called Sam, who lives in Whaddon, Cheltenham, has found the images on television even more upsetting than most.

He said: "I moved from Gaza about 15 years ago to study. Most of my family are out there, my mother, sisters, brothers, aunties, uncles, nephews.

"I am very worried. I would do anything to help."

Meanwhile in Stroud, more than 150 people took part in a peace vigil in the High Street, organised by Stroud Peace Group.

James Beecher, 24, from Stroud, knows more than most people how dangerous the situation in Gaza is.

His friend Jenny Linnel is volunteering with the international Solidarity Movement (ISM) on the front line.

He said: "She went out to Gaza on Dignity - the first boat that broke the siege of Gaza. She is now accompanying ambulance crews in Rafah.

"Buildings have been bombed and shelled around her and some of her colleagues have been shelled. The Israelis have dropped lots of leaflets to get people to evacuate half the town but they don't have anywhere to go."

Protest organiser and Stroud district councillor Martin Whiteside, 52, said: "We have organised this because we are totally outraged at the disproportionate use of violence by the Israeli armed forces that is resulting in lots of civilians, particularly children, being mutilated and killed.

"We can't, as human beings, just stand back and say nothing."

The UN Security Council called for an immediate ceasefire on Thursday.

But the Israeli government and <u>Hamas</u> - the Islamic group whose government controls Gaza - have both ignored the resolution. Israel dropped leaflets on Gaza on Saturday warning of a wider offensive.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



## Children heavily represented among 917 dead, say officials

The Irish Times

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 10

Length: 572 words

#### **Body**

**HUMANITARIAN SITUATION:**Casualty numbers are expected to rise as the Israeli army moves into heavily populated areas, writes **Michael Jansen** 

HEALTH OFFICIALS in Gaza said yesterday that the Palestinian death toll since Israel began its offensive against the Strip on December 27th had reached 917 and the number of wounded 4,100.

Officials expect the number of casualties to rise steeply as Israeli armour and troops move into heavily populated urban areas in the north and Israeli planes intensify their bombardment of the south.

Bassem Naeem, health minister in the <u>Hamas</u> government, said that about 380 of the fatalities were <u>women</u> and children. Israeli sources said 300 militants had been killed, a figure which may include the 187 civilian policemen who died in the initial bombardment. This means, analysts argue, that two-thirds of the fatalities are civilians. Children, who officials say are heavily represented among the casualties, comprise half of Gaza s population.

In the north, Muhammad Shriteh, an ambulance driver for the Red Crescent Society, speaking on the phone from Gaza city, said rescue teams were unable to enter Zeitoun on the border with Israel because of heavy bombing and the Israeli advance. It is very bad in Zeitoun area. All the families are leaving. It is a ghost town. We cannot collect bodies or the injured.

In the south, Jenny Linnel, a peace activist from Devon in England who is in Rafah, reported by phone that entire neighbourhoods parallel to the border with Egypt are being bombarded and tunnels used to smuggle essential goods and weapons into Gaza are being targeted.

All residents have been ordered to leave. Homes are being destroyed or severely damaged. There has been a mass evacuation. Families go to stay with relatives who live elsewhere. Linnel has been serving as a volunteer with the Red Crescent.

UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) spokesman Christopher Gunness said the agency estimates that the number of people who have fled Rafah is 20,000.

He said UNRWA had a convoy of more than 50 lorries carrying food, medical and non-food aid entering Gaza through Israel s Karem Shalom crossing.

UNRWA is dispersing aid to distribution centres and 31 shelters housing 25,000 people.

#### Children heavily represented among 917 dead, say officials

Human Rights Watch called on Israel to stop firing white phosphorus shells into heavily populated areas of Gaza. White phosphorous can burn down houses and cause horrific burns when it touches the skin, said Marc Garlasco, the organisation s military analyst. Doctors in Gaza say one person has died and a number have suffered injuries consistent with white phosphorus burns.

Shriteh confirmed this report: My partner and I collected from near al-Quds hospital one shahid [martyr or fatality] and seven injured people who had burns all over their bodies.

The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution that strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli military operations . . . which have resulted in massive violations of human rights of the Palestinian people and systematic destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure .

The resolution was adopted by 33 votes with 13 abstentions, including European countries, and one against, Canada.

A boat owned by the Free Gaza Movement, carrying doctors, journalists and medicine, which set out for Gaza from Cyprus, has had to turn back for mechanical reasons. An Iranian cargo ship carrying medical supplies is set to enter Israel s maritime exclusion zone today.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 521 words

Byline: Sarah Webb

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Load-Date: June 11, 2009



## Column: Reflecting upon the War on Terror

University Wire January 2, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 Cornell Daily Sun via U-Wire

Length: 496 words

Byline: By Rob Coniglio, Cornell Daily Sun; SOURCE: Cornell U.

Dateline: ITHACA, N.Y.

# **Body**

I think that among the briefing materials given to anyone working to win the war on terror (or terrorism depending on your political persuasion) should be a copy of the film, Battle of Algiers . The film gives an account of the struggle between the French colonial authorities and the Algerian independence movement, the National Liberation Front. It gives an interesting and in-depth perspective both on terrorism and insurgency, and the tactics used against them. One of the most resonant points is reflected in the following exchange between a journalist and a captured Algerian insurgent leader:

Journalist: "M. Ben M'Hidi, don't you think it's a bit cowardly to use <u>women</u>'s baskets and handbags to carry explosive devices that kill so many innocent people?"

Ben M'Hidi: "And doesn't it seem to you even more cowardly to drop napalm bombs on defenseless villages, so that there are a thousand times more innocent victims? Of course, if we had your airplanes it would be a lot easier for us. Give us your bombers, and you can have our baskets."

The question is not whether terrorism is effective. Instead it's a matter of putting terrorism (and terror) into perspective. Terrorism is a weapon of war, the choice weapon for the militarily weak against the militarily strong. As such, it is effective, or at least raises the costs of engagement. What terrorism is not is an ideology. It has nothing to say about how societies should be governed or how people should live their lives. And therefore it is not something we can defeat. Defeating terrorism is not like defeating communism, but instead like trying to defeat blitzkrieg warfare.

Instead we should consider the language we use and reflect upon who the enemy is. Certainly the enemy is al-Qaeda, but what does it stand for? Even if we consider this group Islamists, Islamism comes in many different forms and cannot in itself be considered the enemy. After all, a democratically-elected Islamist party governs Turkey, and some Islamists in Egypt and other parts of the Muslim world could be considered more democratic than their secular opponents. Alternatively, we could narrowly define the enemy as those who through terrorism would do physical harm to our allies and us. That definition could work, but it doesn't fit very well into a thirty second sound bite, or onto the footer of CNN or Fox News.

Part of the problem may also be that we're not entirely sure who our enemy is--after all, they're not really tied to particular countries or to one coherent overarching vision. If you put representatives from <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda into a room and tried to get a coherent and totalizing vision for the world out of them, you'd probably fail. So in the end, from this point of view, we're left with a much muddier picture of the conflict we're engaged in around the world but one that more accurately describes the situation than simplistic catch-phrases like the "war on terror."

Column: Reflecting upon the War on Terror

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Load-Date: January 5, 2009



The Gloucester Citizen
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 521 words

Byline: Sarah Webb

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Load-Date: August 21, 2009



## Clinton signals new Middle East policy initiative

# The Irish Times January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 573 words

Byline: DENIS STAUNTON in Washington

## **Body**

HILLARY CLINTON has signalled a new American policy initiative in the Middle East, seeking to engage Syria and Iran as "constructive regional actors" and renewing efforts to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Appearing before the Senate foreign relations committee for her confirmation hearing as the next secretary of state, Mrs Clinton said the United States must use "smart power" - a combination of diplomatic, economic and military tools - to pursue its interests in the world.

"The clear lesson of the last 20 years is that we must both combat the threats and seize the opportunities of our interdependence. . . we must build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries," she said.

"America cannot solve the most pressing problems on our own and the world cannot solve them without America. The best way to advance America's interest in reducing global threats and seizing global opportunities is to design and implement global solutions. This isn't a philosophical point. This is our reality."

As senator for New York, Mrs Clinton has been a strident supporter of Israel but her comments yesterday on the violence in Gaza hinted at a more even-handed approach as secretary of state.

"The president-elect and I understand and are deeply sympathetic to Israel's desire to defend itself under the current conditions and to be free of shelling by <u>Hamas</u> rockets. However, we have also been reminded of the tragic humanitarian costs of conflict in the Middle East and pained by the suffering of Palestinian and Israeli civilians," she said.

"This must only increase our determination to seek a just and lasting peace. . . We will exert every effort to support the work of Israelis and Palestinians who seek that result."

Mrs Clinton received a friendly reception from the committee but its most senior Republican, Indiana's Richard Lugar, complained that former president Bill Clinton had not gone far enough to remove the potential for a conflict of interest involving his philanthropic foundation.

The foundation has received millions of dollars from foreign donors, including between \$10 million (EUR 7.6 million) and \$25 million from the Saudi Arabian government.

Mr Lugar said it was not enough for Mr Clinton to reveal names of past donors but that the former president should refuse to accept any foreign contributions while his wife is secretary of state.

#### Clinton signals new Middle East policy initiative

"The Clinton Foundation exists as a temptation for any foreign entity or government that believes it could curry favour through a donation," Mr Lugar said. "It also sets up potential perception problems with any action taken by the secretary of state in relation to foreign givers or their countries."

Committee chairman John Kerry pressed Mrs Clinton on whether Iran should be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon and she replied that "no option is off the table" in preventing Tehran from doing so.

In the hearing's most memorable moment, Mrs Clinton noted that Mr Obama's mother, Ann Dunham, a pioneer in micro-finance, was due to attend the Beijing <u>Women</u>'s Summit in 1995 but was unable to travel because she was too ill at the time.

"I think it's fair to say that her work in international development, the care and concern she showed for <u>women</u> and for poor people around the world, mattered greatly to her son and certainly has informed his views and his vision," Mrs Clinton said.

"We will be honoured to carry on Ann Dunham's work in the months and years ahead."

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



# <u>Likud launches broadside against Livni. Billboard campaign says PM's job is</u> too much for her too handle

The Jerusalem Post
December 26, 2008 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 492 words

**Byline: GIL HOFFMAN** 

## **Body**

The Likud took a gamble on Thursday when it unveiled a new negative campaign attacking Kadima Leader Tzipi Livni with billboards bearing a picture of her looking tired and overwhelmed alongside the slogan "Out of her league."

The campaign is intended to create the impression that Livni does not have the experience necessary to be prime minister and that she has not proven herself in any of the cabinet positions she has held. But Kadima MKs charged that the slogan was chauvinistic and expressed confidence that it would be be be prime minister.

The Likud's strategists defended the slogan, saying that they tested it on focus groups, and they saw no problem with it. The strategists turned the tables and said that anyone who saw their campaign as referring to Livni's gender was himself chauvinistic.

"The Kadima campaign is intended to obscure who Livni is and disconnect her from Kadima's failures, but we won't let it happen," the Likud's campaign manager, Eli Ayalon, said in a press conference at the party's Tel Aviv headquarters. "We will reveal the real Livni, a mediocre candidate, who is unfit to be prime minister. This job is too much for her to handle. If it would have been a man with similar abilities, we would have gone a lot more to the extreme."

The Likud's strategists were asked whether Livni's gender was "an elephant in the living room" that was obvious but taboo to address, like US president-elect Barack Obama's race in the recent American presidential election. They responded that they had no problem with Livni's gender and did not intend to address it.

Calling Livni a "feel-good candidate," the strategists presented polls that found that the public respected Livni, but its admiration was not backed by any concrete reason relating to her abilities. They expressed confidence that the public would differentiate between liking people and trusting them to run the country.

The polls found that 59 percent of the public considered Likud chairman Binyamin Netanyahu a strong leader, while just 22 percent said Livni displayed leadership that was stronger. On both security and economic issues, the public preferred Netanyahu over Livni by more than two to one.

The Likud's campaign will also feature recent quotes from Livni's critics in Kadima, such as Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz, and even from Livni herself admitting that her own government was a failure.

Likud launches broadside against Livni. Billboard campaign says PM's job is too much for her too handle

Kadima faction chairman Yoel Hason responded that "Netanyahu is not big enough of a man for Israel, for *Hamas*, to tell the truth and to handle pressure." Kadima MK Ronit Tirosh accused Netanyahu of "piggish chauvinism."

"Bibi is unfortunately returning us to the dark days when <u>women</u> weren't considered capable of handling senior positions," said Tourism Minister Ruhama Avraham, who is Netanyahu's former secretary. "We remember that Bibi was there, and he failed big time. I am sure that the <u>women</u> of Israel will vote for Tzipi and enable her to succeed where Bibi failed."

# **Graphic**

Photo: A BILLBOARD campaign, which features a slogan that can be translated as 'Out of her league' alongside a picture of Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, was launched Thursday by the Likud. (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Rival protesters face off

The Toronto Star January 4, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A01

Length: 451 words

Byline: Kenyon Wallace, Toronto Star

# **Body**

Thousands of demonstrators waving signs and Palestinian flags marched in Toronto yesterday afternoon condemning Israel's attacks on Gaza as Israeli tanks and infantry began a massive ground offensive into the territory.

The air was tense as pro-Palestinian protesters of all ages gathered at Yonge and Dundas Square around 2 p.m. Across Yonge St. stood about 200 pro-Israel demonstrators.

Dozens of police on foot, horseback and bicycles monitored the two groups hurling insults at each other. Barriers set up down the middle of Yonge kept them apart.

"The attacks on Gaza are not acts of self-defence on Israel's part. They are the murder of innocent civilians, **women** and children," said Rafeef Ziadah, an organizer of yesterday's demonstration and a spokesperson for Palestine House, a group representing members of the GTA Palestinian community.

Similar protests were held in Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver.

Traffic came to a standstill as the pro-Palestinian demonstrators, chanting "Free Palestine" from loudspeakers on the back of a pickup truck, marched two kilometres north on Yonge St. to the Israeli consulate on Bloor St. The pro-Israel group took a parallel route up Bay St. to the same destination.

"The argument that Israeli attacks are disproportionate is ridiculous," said Meir Weinstein, national director of the Jewish Defence League in Canada, walking north on Bay St. holding an Israeli flag. "We support the Israeli government's efforts to stop *Hamas*, stop terrorism and stop terrorist infrastructure."

Hussain Azraq, a wholesaler who came to Canada from the region 22 years ago, urged Prime Minister Stephen Harper not to be afraid to condemn the Israeli attacks.

Lawrence Cannon, Canada's foreign affairs minister, has expressed concern about the attacks, but the federal government says it believes Israel has a right to defend itself.

Azraq, 45, brought his four children. Son Mohammed, 9, said news of children dying in Gaza makes him "feel sore inside. "The children don't deserve to die because they're innocent people."

#### Rival protesters face off

News of yesterday's ground invasion of Gaza arrived around 2 p.m. Toronto time, but organizers opted to delay the announcement until protesters arrived at the Israeli consulate an hour and a half later. The group then marched down University Ave. and burned Israeli and American flags before the U.S. consulate.

In the pro-Palestinian crowd were union and civil rights activists and a smattering of Jewish Canadians opposed to Israel's policies.

"We've got people here from almost every background supporting the cause. Our numbers are diverse," said Omar Hamid, 24, carrying a platform on which lay the effigy of a dead Palestinian child.

With files from the Canadian Press

## **Graphic**

Protesters rally at Dundas Square. Colin McConnell toronto star Toronto police officers on horses and bikes keep an eye on protesters yesterday at Dundas Square as emotions heated up over Israel's attacks on Gaza. The pro-Palestinian protesters far outnumbered pro-Israel marchers. Colin McConnell toronto star Toronto police officers on horses and bikes keep an eye on protesters yesterday at Dundas Square as emotions heated up over Israel's attacks on Gaza. The pro-Palestinian protesters far outnumbered pro-Israel marchers.

Load-Date: January 4, 2009