

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:16:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446029

Documents (100)

1. Arab silence on Gaza is shameful

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

2. Just SMS your views to 0429 TEXTUS (That's 0429 839887)

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

3. LETTERS

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

4. Why do they hate the West so much, we will ask Comment

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. 'After this bombing, we are scared of dying at any moment'

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

6. Western complicity in Israeli massacres We cannot claim to really not know the answer when |indignantly asking, 'Why do they hate us?'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

7. Politics

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

8. Israel agrees to daily combat halt Aid supplies to be allowed into Gaza during 3-hour breaks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

9. Gaza bloodshed continues despite UN calls for ceasefire

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

10. Gaza massacre

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

11. <u>International: Gaza: Fighting intensifies as Olmert says Israel is nearing its goal: Civilians in suburbs try to</u> find shelter in city centre: Mortar shell that killed 43 in UN school was off 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

12. Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

13. Koreans Advised Not to Travel to Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

14. Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

15. Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

16. Can Middle East suffering be measured in numbers?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

17. Victims in school bombing were all civilians, says UN

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jan 14, 2009

18. Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

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

19. Protesters here implore Israel to halt offensive

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

20. Making monkeys of Adam and Eve LETTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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21. <u>UNDER ATTACK: GAZA 13 DEAD IN FAMILY HOME AS GAZA ATTACK RAGES ON PEOPLE PINNED</u> DOWN IN HOMES

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. Column: US should stand up for civilians 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

23. Websites and TV spur flood of donations

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

24. UNDER ATTACK: GAZA CITIZENS PINNED DOWN IN HOMES

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

25. Global activists defend terrorists by condemning Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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26. No coalition means new Israeli elections

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

27. No coalition means new Israeli elections

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

28. Israel rejects ceasefire calls, bombs UN schools ANC condemns 'slaughter of the innocents' as dozens die

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

29. BALDWIN MISSES CHANCE TO PROMOTE PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

30. Attacks condemned as supplies dwindle and deaths rise

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

31. Dartmouth community caught up in Gaza war

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

32. Israel 's 'victories' in Gaza come at a steep price

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

33. A woman on the political front line For Tzipi Livni, rising star of Israeli politics, security was the stumbling block on the path to becoming prime minister. But not after Gaza, Dina Kraft reports from Tel Aviv

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

34. <u>Palestinian football team held to draw, but scores a victory They play their first home game in their home</u> stadium, in the shadow of Israel 's barrier. Ben Lynfield reports

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

35. <u>WE HAVE ENOUGH FUEL FOR 2 DAYS.. WHEN IT'S GONE, 6 BABIES WILL DIE GAZA DOCS' GRIM POWER-CUT WARNING</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

36. Mid-East war is not simply a case of right vs wrong

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

37. Only at montrealgazette.Com; Inside today'S GAZETTE; tomorrow in the GAZETTE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

38. Seven days

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

39. Your say

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

40. Media: Press analysis: Why we have to let pictures tell the real story

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

41. Aid agencies report horrific scenes 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

42. AID GROUPS LASH OUT AT ISRAEL U.N., RED CROSS AMONG CRITICS OF WARFARE IN 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

43. Obama keeps observers guessing on Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

44. UN halts Gaza aid work after driver killed

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

45. Stanford students react to violence in 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

46. Israel should be punished

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type

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

Jan 14, 2009

47. Gaza: our common humanity Pregs Govender dissects the turmoil in the Palestinian - Israeli conflict and offers the voice of solace as a reminder of our nation's troubled past - that hate dehumanises us

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

48. Gaza: Our common humanity

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

49. <u>Gaza: Our common humanity It's time to resist the hate, greed and fear that permeate our hearts and our world, says Pregs Govender as she dissects the politics and human turmoil involved in the Palestinian - Israeli conflict, with the latest strife having claimed 900 lives</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

50. <u>Gaza: our common humanity Pregs Govender dissects the turmoil in the Palestinian - Israeli conflict and offers the voice of solace as a reminder of our nation's troubled past - that hate dehumanises us</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

51. AID REACHES DIRE GAZAN BATTLEFIELD

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

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Jan 14, 2009

52. Pondering about a Pope called Pius

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

53. A fight, too, over David and Goliath

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

54. 'Free Gaza' boat en route with 16 journalists on board. Reporters from Sky News, CNN, BBC attempt to

circumvent IDF ban
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

55. Vent line

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

56. Close US bases call by MPs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

57. Conventional news sense is nonsense

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. ISRAEL DEFIES WEST AND SENDS IN TROOPS 10,000 SOLDIER MASS AS BROWN CALLS FOR

PEACE Protests held in UK support Palestinians

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

59. Ongoing attacks on Gaza - Thousands call for Middle East peace

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

60. NEWS IN BRIEF

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

61. Activist Group Pledge New Gaza Boat Mission

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. Christmas shoppers victims of Philippine blasts

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. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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. Egyptians struggle over response Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

65. Candals lit in gaza protest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

66. Egyptians struggle over response Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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67. 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

68. How many more?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

69. Protest elsewhere

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. Made in Canada

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

71. Candals lit in gaza protest

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

72. Candals lit in gaza protest



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

73. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

74. Region rallies to raise funds for Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

75. My son is a reservist in the Israeli army. He is a gentle person . . . but he had to do his best to defend Israel A SCOTTISH MOTHER'S STORY

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

76. No one has the right to murder

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

77. Wake up or it would be too late to mend

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

78. Huge melamine toll

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

79. Secretary of State Clinton

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

80. Too close for comfort

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

81. Gaza conflict stirs emotions for Arabs in Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

82. Rice reflects on the world Obama will inherit From The New York Times Magazine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

83. Call to PM to censure Israelis

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

84. Israel's Livni has politics in her blood; Foreign minister can be moderate but isn't afraid of tough decisions

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

85. Faltering prospect of peace MIDDLE EAST

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

86. Canadians turn out in droves to rally against attacks on Gaza; Demonstrations from Halifax to Victoria mirror

protests around the world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

87. Children caught in violent circle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

88. Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

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

89. Vent line

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. Israel bombs UN schools Dozens die in Gaza sanctuary

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

91. Dozens die as Israel blasts UN schools in Gaza ANC condemns 'slaughter of the innocents'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jan 14, 2009

92. Gaza in trouble

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

93. It is time to tell the truth - what Israel is doing in Gaza is wrong Innocent men, women and children will continue to die until politicians stop wringing their hands and do something, says Mary Riddell

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

94. Separating the Terror and the Terrorists

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

95. Economic alarm bells have distinct echoes from events of late 1970s

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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96._Feedback

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

97. A rare imam who juggles fatwas, interfaith confabs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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98. War of words ... and killing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

99. Shattered calm

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jan 14, 2009

100. All out: Lebanese village empties after rocket attack from nearby

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Arab silence on Gaza is shameful

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
January 10, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 961 words

Byline: Khalaf Ahmed Al Habtoor

Body

The terrible carnage inflicted upon a starving people caged in the dark is too much to bear for anyone with eyes to see and a heart that beats. This unfolding crime against humanity must be stopped else we should merely throw up our hands in despair and submit to the principle of "might is right."

First person by Khalaf Al Habtoor

The terrible carnage inflicted upon a starving people caged in the dark is too much to bear for anyone with eyes to see and a heart that beats. This unfolding crime against humanity must be stopped else we should merely throw up our hands in despair and submit to the principle of "might is right." As a human being, I am disgusted by the inaction of the so-called international community. For, indeed, our laws, conventions, treaties and international bodies are seemingly powerless in the face of Israel's inhumane aggression.

As an Arab, I am appalled at the deafening silence of leaders of Arab states and governments. Have Arabs become so weak that our leaders can no longer express an opinion? The angry sentiments on our streets are overflowing but they are not being reflected by Arab governments. When Israeli's Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was asked whether some Arab countries gave Israel the green light to launch its assault on Gaza, she hesitated before saying, "moderate Arabs" share Israel's aim to destroy *Hamas*. If there is a kernel of truth in her between-the-lines message then the entire Arab nation is being dishonored. Since when did "moderate" translate to "cowardly?" Does being moderate mean we should relinquish our rights, abandon our families (brothers and sisters) and trash our dignity? Will those Arab leaders preferring to play the blame game rather than stand shoulder to shoulder with helpless victims cheer when President Mahmoud Abbas rides into Gaza atop an Israeli tank? Do we even deserve to equate ourselves with such heroes as Omar ibn Khattab, Khalid Ibn al-Waleed, Tariq Ibn-Zeyiad, Al-Moutassem Bellah, Salah al-Din or those brave souls who lost their lives in 1948, 1967 and 1973 defending Arab lands and honor? They must be turning in their graves. We cannot hope to demand respect if we don't respect ourselves and our history.

Arab leaders have shied away from attending an Arab summit meeting as well as expelling Israeli ambassadors or cutting communications with the Jewish state - the very least they should do. I'm no fan of *Hamas* or its ideology. I believe in one Palestinian authority, but this assault goes beyond politics. There is a far greater moral imperative that must be heeded. If you came across a burning house filled with *women* and children, would you ask their

Arab silence on Gaza is shameful

political affiliation or dissect their worthiness before you tried to save them? I cannot help wondering how the West is so tolerant and understanding when it comes to Iran's nuclear file, while it is pretending to be deaf, dumb and blind to the Arab's central case. Iran, whose people are impoverished and whose economy is in shambles, can dictate its terms on the international community, while our richer, more populated, more strategically located and historically rich Arab world is ineffectual.

Every hour the death toll and misery rises. Until now, over 760 Palestinians are dead and almost 3,000 are wounded. Gaza's Parliament building, ministries, mosques, schools, a university and even ambulances have been targeted in Israel's quest to destroy "*Hamas* infrastructure," according to Israel's well-oiled propaganda machine. In a cynical pubic relations ploy, Israeli pilots drop leaflets warning civilians to flee their homes if they know there are rocket launchers hidden in nearby structures. But in such a tiny, densely populated enclave there is nowhere to run; no mountains or caves, no bomb shelters and few basements. Their long-depleted hospitals cannot cope with the influx of broken bodies, and soon they will have no fuel for generators, meaning premature babies will die. People are queuing for hours for a few loaves of bread; *women* have to gather sticks just to make tea, children are traumatized and unable to sleep, wondering if the next missile will bring their homes down on their heads. But no one with the power to effect real change is listening.

Late on Saturday, the United Nations Security Council met in an emergency session but predictably the US blocked even a joint statement calling for an immediate cease-fire. President George W. Bush has made his stance clear: The situation is entirely the fault of *Hamas*. President-elect Barack Obama, who ran on the ticket for "change," remains mute. No matter who is commander in chief, US Middle East policies are likely to remain the same. Similarly, the EU has shown itself to be toothless. The bloc's new Czech presidency actually described Israel's incursion as "defensive" rather than "offensive." When the region's most powerful army attacks cold and hungry innocents with the full force of its military might from land, sea and air this cannot be termed "self-defense" by any stretch of the imagination. Gaza's courageous people, who have somehow managed to survive an 18-month-long siege and who are now captive to the terrifying sounds of Israeli F-16s, helicopters, drones, bombs, missiles and tank shells, are calling out for help. They don't want pretty words, fancy speeches or even well-meant protest marches. They want an end to their pain and imprisonment. Like every one of us, they simply want to live. If Arabs turn their faces away from such desperate pleas then we might just as well fill our pockets with shekels, our hearts with stones and call ourselves Israelis for we will be just as culpable as they are for Gaza's destruction ... and ultimately our own.

Khalaf Al Habtoor is chairman of Al Habtoor Group.

Load-Date: January 20, 2009

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Just SMS your views to 0429 TEXTUS (That's 0429 839887)

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday
1 - Main Edition

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Section: LETTERS; Pg. 24

Length: 336 words

Body

You can talk to us anytime, any place about simply anything.

Parking fine after surf \$120. police catch people with drugs new years eve slap on wrist what is going on?

-- Peeved

Cadel Evans needs 2 remember respect is earnt. Just worry bout the rogue cyclists and let drivers concentrate on the road.

-- Wheel unhappy

Ban men with hairy backs in public places.

-- Ewe

<u>Hamas</u> send bombs in at random at least israel try to hit targets <u>hamas</u> r cowards hidin behind <u>women</u> n children to let off bombs come out n fight in the open

-- Rocketman

What a pleasure it was to visit the Tranquility fair at Ocean Grove.

-- Just thinking

To `thank god 4 Pako'. Move wit the times. I grew up wit that view but when drivin down yarra st i watchin traffic not the view. As 4 pensioners an coffee i in my 40s an i enjoy a coffee on bridge an proud 2 take my outer town friends 2 enjoy it 2. Pako 2 yuppi an expensive try gettin a waitress 2 smile at u?

-- Modern man

'You're On Notice' 3/1. I noticed your notice and noticed that it wasn't worth noticing. Just to let you know.

-- You betcha

Just SMS your views to 0429 TEXTUS (That's 0429 839887)

Y do i see kids as young as 11 smoking, swearing & spitting evrywhere every single time im in town? Ulittle punks beta watch ur backs coz the rest of glong r sick of the slimy looks u give us. we actually feel sorry 4 u coz u have no life & normal kids ur age r out having a great time playing sports & not trying 2 kill themselves.

-- Get a life

Safeway g/west ... Take a leaf out of Iga g/west and hire friendly staff. Wont shop there again.

-- IGA 4ever

Would have more water if brumby & his mates had been on stage 4 NOT this stage 3a rubbish

-- So dry

I went to the cricket at kp and they have save water signs. Pity the blokes toilet of about 20 metres of urinal, has water running all day from 2 in the arvo. Thats a lot of water!

-- Flushed

Watch out 4 the 4 wheel drive bullies, ther' all tarnishd with the same brush. Abuv the law!

-- Not 4 me

P.A. System at skilled stadium in Reg Hickey stand at 20/20 was pretty ordinary! But the 20/20 was gr8!

-- Go Vics

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

End of Document



The Tampa Tribune (Florida)

January 4, 2009 Sunday

FINAL EDITION

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Section: VIEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 1477 words

Body

LETTER OF THE DAY

Republican Supports Ousting Sansom

Florida House Speaker Ray Sansom is a disgrace. At a time when the Legislature is working to burden local and county government with further unfunded mandates, evidence surfaces that the speaker cooked up a \$122.5-million spending spree for his hometown community college.

Then we hear that on the very day Sansom takes the speaker's gavel, he shoehorned into a six-figure-a-year job at the same college that benefits from his largesse.

Florida voters statewide are seeing locally provided services like libraries, streets and sewers, public safety and education being gutted thanks to the self-serving crowd in the Legislature.

Ray Sansom's antics are an outrage and he should step down. Let's see how long his new job with the college lasts when the big checkbook in Tallahassee slams shut.

I am a lifelong Republican. It gives me no pleasure to say that if Republican members of the Legislature aren't outraged, then they are as politically tone deaf as the speaker.

If Sansom won't go immediately, the Republican members of the house should replace him. If they don't, Republican voters like me will cross the aisle and join our Democrat friends to replace them.

TIM SHEPHERD

Palm Harbor

Biased Reporting

The lead article of your paper last Sunday says "Israel Strikes At Gaza Strip." Inside the Views section, Karin Laub opines that "Israeli Missile Attacks A Risky Maneuver." No mention is made about the continuing attacks by <u>Hamas</u> by rockets launched against Israel.

This kind of biased, shameful and irresponsible reporting irritates me and I am not a Jew. I can imagine the reaction of your Jewish readers, assuming you have any.

Is it any wonder that your circulation is hitting the skids? Beginning next week you will have one less reader.

STEVE CASAKOS

New Port Richey

Need Drug Tests

When I was in business for more than 20 years in Tampa, I had to have a drug-free work place to be able to afford insurance.

Many businesses have random drug testing and all should have. This also applies to government jobs.

Why is there not random drug testing for welfare payments, Medicaid, etc.? It seems to me this would not only cut down on the use of drugs but also save the governments some money for violations.

If you live in government housing and are "caught" on drugs, you lose your housing. If you are on welfare and tested for drugs and are positive, you lose your welfare. Sounds fair to me.

FREDRIC R. PLANK

Zephyrhills

Redesign Woes

Thank you Mother Trib? or should I say "Wicked Step Mother?" Thank you for ruining my holidays once again with your bad redesign.

Once again I missed the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade (a family tradition for 58 years of my 59 years, where we lit the Christmas tree when we saw Santa), the Rose Bowl Parade (taking down the tree), etc. No daily TV schedule in the Sunday TV guide, no daily TV schedule in the daily paper. Per the TV "Guide," only the normal daily schedule is printed, not holiday specials. Please rethink your redesign.

It will make you the No. 1 paper in the area. The TBT, free, is looking better every day.

SUE SLINGBAUM

Tampa

Crane Rescue

On New Year's Day my heart was broken as I noticed an injured sandhill crane on the golf course behind my house. The bird had limited mobility and appeared hurt. I called the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary and the attendant was helpful and provided me with five contacts.

Chris from the Seabird Sanctuary came over to assess the situation. Her knowledge of birds and love for animals was overwhelming. She said the crane likely lost its leg due to golf ball.

In a time when budgets are cut please remember those innocent animal and bird victims that are unable to take care of themselves. Thank you animal and bird lovers for all you do.

ANN VON SPIEGELFELD

Tampa

Trolley Waste

Our local government never ceases to amaze me as they come up with another way of wasting taxpayers' money. To wit, use job-creating federal money for many worthy projects including extending Tampa's streetcar line. Excuse me.

That's throwing good money after bad. The trolley cost taxpayers over \$50 million dollars and goes nowhere. The money could be better spent fixing roads.

RICHARD HARDESTY

Seffner

Robbing Banks

Like Somali pirates steadying their own scales, entrepreneurial Americans rob banks.

Given the privileged airs of many banks, why not? One prominent bank affixes successive overdraft fees on accounts of people who make one miscalculation.

The bank initially lets the error slide while grabbing up the dozen fees with which they clean up handsomely. When the horrified customer petitions for mercy, they may as well stoke back death. Someone earning seven dollars an hour cannot recover from the meteoric collapse a \$500 penalty promises.

Banks received billions in public bailout with the implication that relief would trickle down, but it hasn't.

I'm not surprised people feel their only recourse is to go in and take the money out themselves.

LOUISE RATERMAN

Temple Terrace

Reassembling Trib

What a pleasant surprise to open the Tampa Tribune this New Year's morning and discover that this issue is separated into actual sections. Not one big jumble with too many pages and no logical arrangement, as it has been since its latest "new and improved" incarnation.

Could we faithful readers hope to find that this will be how our paper is to be assembled every day? With a "news" section that is 12-14 easily manageable pages (not 20-24), a completely separate "Business and Finance" section. a freestanding sports section, and the separate classified section with the comics in the back?

If that were to happen, I'm sure I would not be the only pleased long-term reader.

MARY SNYDER

Tampa

Pit Bull Attack

I urge anyone whose neighbors own a vicious dog to be very careful. I don't care if they have a fenced-in yard or not.

Our neighbor's pit bull escaped from its yard and killed our eight-year-old Chihuahua on Dec 28. Our dog was in his own yard and we were there with him when this vicious dog came around to our yard and viciously attacked.

I was able to shoot the attack dog but it was too late for our little Rocky.

Please don't think you are safe even if you're on your own property.

RICKIE NOTHSTEIN

Zephyrhills

Buchanan's Rehash

Other than a brief lamentation that <u>Hamas</u> handed Israel an excuse to defend itself militarily, Patrick Buchanan's column (Other Views, Jan. 1) is a rehash of oft-repeated canards, including the big lie that Israel is the puppeteer when it comes to the shaping of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Buchanan's xenophobia is always bubbling close to the surface - his drumbeat of insane ramblings about the "neocons" is testament to his fear of having American Jews serve in important positions - he truly believes that American Jews would subvert this country's interests in order to enhance Israel's position.

It's important to remember when evaluating Buchanan's positions that he has loudly condemned Churchill and Roosevelt for saving Europe from domination by Nazi Germany. Buchanan is now an isolated and marginal figure

JEFF MEYER

Clearwater

Cut Israeli Aid

According to news reports, the Israeli military, in broad daylight, attacked sites in Gaza as police cadets were graduating, <u>women</u> were at outdoor shopping markets and children were emerging from school. Is this how Israel defends itself or this state sponsored genocide and terrorism? It is time to cut off military aid to Israel. We are out of work and money and can no longer afford this.

RON KUHLER

Lutz

Fault Hamas

Tell me why <u>Hamas</u> can fire rockets repeatedly at Israel and nothing is said by anyone. It doesn't even get front page on your paper. But when Israel retaliates it gets everyone's attention, they are condemned by the world and suddenly a cease fire is needed? Israel is criticized for killing civilians but no one mentions that <u>Hamas</u> purposefully works within civilian areas putting those people at risk knowing very well what will happen when Israel responds. Israel has bent over backward for these people by giving up land and moving their own people out. But <u>Hamas</u> refuses to acknowledge Israel's right to exist. I would like to see some balance in reporting for a change.

BRUCE ALLEN

Plant City

JOIN DISCUSSION

The Tribune welcomes letters and e-mails from readers. The text should be original and no longer than 150 words. By making a submission, you agree the Tribune may edit the letter for length and clarity, and publish it in any medium.

Please include your name, address and daytime phone number. Mail to: P.O. Box 191, Tampa, FL 33601-0191. Or e-mail without attachments: <u>tribletters@tampatrib.com</u>

Also, read and participate in the Tribune editorial board's blog, "Thinking Out Loud," at www.tboblogs.com/index.php/thinkoutloud/categories/C930.

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Load-Date: January 6, 2009

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Why do they hate the West so much, we will ask; Comment

The Independent (London)

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 Length: 974 words

Byline: Robert Fisk

Body

So once again, Israel has opened the gates of hell to the Palestinians. Forty civilian refugees dead in a United Nations school, three more in another. Not bad for a night's work in Gaza by the army that believes in "purity of arms". But why should we be surprised?

Have we forgotten the 17,500 dead - almost all civilians, most of them children and <u>women</u> - in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon; the 1,700 Palestinian civilian dead in the Sabra-Chatila massacre; the 1996 Qana massacre of 106 Lebanese civilian refugees, more than half of them children, at a UN base; the massacre of the Marwahin refugees who were ordered from their homes by the Israelis in 2006 then slaughtered by an Israeli helicopter crew; the 1,000 dead of that same 2006 bombardment and Lebanese invasion, almost all of them civilians?

What is amazing is that so many Western leaders, so many presidents and prime ministers and, I fear, so many editors and journalists, bought the old lie; that Israelis take such great care to avoid civilian casualties. "Israel makes every possible effort to avoid civilian casualties," yet another Israeli ambassador said only hours before the Gaza massacre. And every president and prime minister who repeated this mendacity as an excuse to avoid a ceasefire has the blood of last night's butchery on their hands. Had George Bush had the courage to demand an immediate ceasefire 48 hours earlier, those 40 civilians, the old and the <u>women</u> and children, would be alive.

What happened was not just shameful. It was a disgrace. Would war crime be too strong a description? For that is what we would call this atrocity if it had been committed by <u>Hamas</u>. So a war crime, I'm afraid, it was. After covering so many mass murders by the armies of the Middle East - by Syrian troops, by Iraqi troops, by Iraqii troops, by Iraqii troops - I suppose cynicism should be my reaction. But Israel claims it is fighting our war against "international terror". The Israelis claim they are fighting in Gaza for us, for our Western ideals, for our security, for our safety, by our standards. And so we are also complicit in the savagery now being visited upon Gaza.

I've reported the excuses the Israeli army has served up in the past for these outrages. Since they may well be reheated in the coming hours, here are some of them: that the Palestinians killed their own refugees, that the Palestinians dug up bodies from cemeteries and planted them in the ruins, that ultimately the Palestinians are to blame because they supported an armed faction, or because armed Palestinians deliberately used the innocent refugees as cover.

The Sabra and Chatila massacre was committed by Israel's right-wing Lebanese Phalangist allies while Israeli troops, as Israel's own commission of inquiry revealed, watched for 48 hours and did nothing. When Israel was blamed, Menachem Begin's government accused the world of a blood libel. After Israeli artillery had fired shells into the UN base at Qana in 1996, the Israelis claimed that Hizbollah gunmen were also sheltering in the base. It was a lie. The more than 1,000 dead of 2006 - a war started when Hizbollah captured two Israeli soldiers on the border - were simply dismissed as the responsibility of the Hizbollah. Israel claimed the bodies of children killed in a second Qana massacre may have been taken from a graveyard. It was another lie. The Marwahin massacre was never excused. The people of the village were ordered to flee, obeyed Israeli orders and were then attacked by an Israeli gunship. The refugees took their children and stood them around the truck in which they were travelling so that Israeli pilots would see they were innocents. Then the Israeli helicopter mowed them down at close range. Only two survived, by playing dead. Israel didn't even apologise.

Twelve years earlier, another Israeli helicopter attacked an ambulance carrying civilians from a neighbouring village - again after they were ordered to leave by Israel - and killed three children and two <u>women</u>. The Israelis claimed that a Hizbollah fighter was in the ambulance. It was untrue. I covered all these atrocities, I investigated them all, talked to the survivors. So did a number of my colleagues. Our fate, of course, was that most slanderous of libels: we were accused of being anti-Semitic.

And I write the following without the slightest doubt: we'll hear all these scandalous fabrications again. We'll have the <u>Hamas</u>-to-blame lie - heaven knows, there is enough to blame them for without adding this crime - and we may well have the bodies-from-the-cemetery lie and we'll almost certainly have the <u>Hamas</u>-was-in-the-UN-school lie and we will very definitely have the anti-Semitism lie. And our leaders will huff and puff and remind the world that <u>Hamas</u> originally broke the ceasefire. It didn't. Israel broke it, first on 4 November when its bombardment killed six Palestinians in Gaza and again on 17 November when another bombardment killed four more Palestinians.

Yes, Israelis deserve security. Twenty Israelis dead in 10 years around Gaza is a grim figure indeed. But 600 Palestinians dead in just over a week, thousands over the years since 1948 - when the Israeli massacre at Deir Yassin helped to kick-start the flight of Palestinians from that part of Palestine that was to become Israel - is on a quite different scale. This recalls not a normal Middle East bloodletting but an atrocity on the level of the Balkan wars of the 1990s. And of course, when an Arab bestirs himself with unrestrained fury and takes out his incendiary, blind anger on the West, we will say it has nothing to do with us. Why do they hate us, we will ask? But let us not say we do not know the answer.

'The electricity came back and I heard the news' Gaza diary, page 6

Israel's divisions Donald Macintyre, page 7

Deborah Orr Opinion, page 27

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

End of Document



'After this bombing, we are scared of dying at any moment'

Cape Times (South Africa)

January 07, 2009 Wednesday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 **Length:** 388 words

Body

Among them were Rawhi, 21, Abed, 19, and Hussein |Al-Sultan, 20, three cousins who went to the school yesterday from their home in the town of Beit Lahiya.

The cousins thought themselves safe inside the school even though there is no food, water or blankets. The blue flag was flying when they strayed out to get water just before dawn and an Israeli helicopter gunship fired a missile.

The walls of the toilets in the school yard were covered in blood and bits of flesh. Torn shoes stained with blood lie nearby.

In the schoolyard, Ziyad Zayyad, 52, was full of grief and anger. "The three boys went to get some water from the toilet taps outside when the attack took place. A couple of minutes later, we found them ripped to shreds," he cried.

Umm Al-Ezz Al-Hamlawi, 39, took refuge in the school with her seven children.

"After this bombing, we are more scared than ever. We are scared of dying at any moment, since nothing protects us from the Israeli planes," she said.

Heavy fighting raged in parts of Gaza City and around nearby Deir al-Balah and Bureij. One air strike killed 12 people - including seven children - from the same family.

Tanks backed by helicopter gunships rolled into Khan Yunis before dawn, to be met by return fire from <u>Hamas</u> and its allies, witnesses said.

Four Israeli soldiers were killed by their own side's fire in two incidents during the overnight surge in fighting, the army said. Five have now died since Saturday.

Around 12 <u>Hamas</u> rockets were fired over the border, one landing 45km inside Israel - the deepest yet - and lightly wounding a baby, the military said. Three civilians and one soldier have been killed by rocket fire inside Israel since the offensive began.

Israel launched Operation Cast Lead on December 27 with a massive air bombardment of Gaza, and sent in thousands of ground troops a week later. Since then, 660 Palestinians have been killed, including more than 160 children and 98 **women**, with more than 2 700 wounded, Gaza medics say.

'After this bombing, we are scared of dying at any moment'

Israel has denied that a humanitarian crisis exists in Gaza, but the International Committee of the Red Cross said there is a "full-blown" crisis and people are dying because ambulances cannot reach them.

Pierre Kraehenbuehl, the ICRC director of operations in Geneva, said ICRC staff in Gaza described Monday night as "the most frightening to date".

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

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Western complicity in Israeli massacres; We cannot claim to really not know the answer when |indignantly asking, 'Why do they hate us?'

The Mercury (South Africa)
January 09, 2009 Friday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 947 words **Byline:** Robert Fisk

Body

So once again, Israel has opened the gates of hell to the Palestinians - 40 civilian refugees dead in a United Nations school, three more in another.

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Have we forgotten the 17 500 dead - almost all civilians, most of them children and <u>women</u> - in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon; the 1 700 Palestinian civilian dead in the Sabra-Chatila massacre; the 1996 Qana massacre of 106 Lebanese civilian refugees, more than half of them children, at a UN base; the massacre of the Marwahin refugees who were ordered from their homes by the Israelis in 2006 then slaughtered by an Israeli helicopter crew; the 1 000 dead of that same 2006 bombardment and Lebanese invasion, almost all of them civilians?

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"Israel makes every possible effort to avoid civilian casualties," yet another Israeli ambassador said only hours before the Gaza massacre. And every president and prime minister who repeated this mendacity as an excuse to avoid a ceasefire has the blood of this week's butchery on their hands.

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What happened was not just shameful. It was a disgrace. Would war crime be too strong a description? For that is what we would call this atrocity if it had been committed by *Hamas*. So a war crime, I'm afraid, it was.

After covering so many mass murders by the armies of the Middle East - by Syrian troops, by Iraqi troops, by Iraqi troops, by Iraqi troops, by Israeli troops - I suppose cynicism should be my reaction. But Israel claims it is fighting our war against "international terror". The Israelis claim they are fighting in Gaza for Western ideals, security, safety. And the West is also complicit in the savagery now being visited upon Gaza.

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Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Politics

Cape Argus (South Africa)

December 29, 2008 Monday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6 Length: 887 words

Body

I No matter what "good" the communist ANC tries to sell the voters, history will judge them on the destruction of a country and the burning to death of a man by a horde of rampaging savages.

I If Mugabe was white, can you imagine the reaction of the ANC. Instead they send him millions in aid.

I Trying to get rid of Mugabe is like trying to alleviate constipation. No matter how hard you push, he just won't budge.

I The ANC will govern the country after 2009 election. The majority of South Africans have faith in the movement.

I Cope, you were like a breath of fresh air. For the first time in years there was a party I could vote for. A glimpse of hope for SA. Then a bad odour was smelt. Boesak and Marais. These two will lose you many members. - D Muller

I Bet your bottom dollar the ANC's R300 million aid package will be used by Mugabe for the fresh elections he has threatened to hold.

I The ANC has managed to keep the upper hand with the race card. This tactic no longer works, as the opposition is now getting support from people of all races who can now see through this meaningless rhetoric.

I Since the formation of Cosatu, no member of DA, ID or the ANC had to declare their political affiliations before they joined the union federation or an affiliate, but with Cope it is the opposite. Workers need to belong to a trade union, if Cosatu doesn't accept Cope members, they must tell the workers. - Kennedy Rampeng

I Firstly, to all at the Cape Argus I hope you had a peaceful Christmas. Secondly, with trying to get mad Bob unseated, has anyone thought about the good old "sniper"? - Harry

I I cannot understand how a country that suffered oppressive rule, such as South Africa, can do nothing while the people in Zimbabwe suffer. Oppressive rulers must be removed, whatever the colour of their skin.

I For as long as there is an oppressive apartheid-style two state situation in Palestine, there can't be peace. Apartheid has been declared a crime against humanity. Why is it allowed to continue in Israel?

I Israeli attacks on Gaza is terrorism at its ugly worst..

Politics

I I'm just wondering how many <u>Hamas</u> rockets Israel is expected to take before they fight back? Yet, brace yourselves for another load of biased anti-Semitic, one-sided reporting from the media. Israel has a right to exist and defend its people.

I The double standards and skewed logic shown by our government never cease to make me angry. Motlanthe calls for action in Guinea and Israel but refuses to take action against Mugabe. We are surely doomed.

I Why does the world condemn Israel when it *Hamas* started it?

I How long is the rest of the world going to allow the Zionists to carry on with their aggression? - A M Jassiem.

I <u>Hamas</u> has no respect for the lives of its own people. They knew what the consequences would be by not continuing with the truce and attacking Israel. Now they are looking for world sympathy. Can they be called Muslims?

IThe Israelis were sick and tired of rockets being fired on them from Gaza. No wonder they retaliated. The media is biased toward the Arab world. Israel has never employed such murderous tactics as suicide bombers.

I <u>Hamas</u> knows that its hold on power will weaken if relations with Israel improve. Therefore they must make trouble regularly to remain in control in Gaza.

I Shame on Israel, cowards. Does murdering innocent <u>women</u> and children make you feel powerful? Have you forgotten what Hitler did to your ancestors? You are no better than he was. No one deserves what you have done. Why do Palestinian lives have any less value than yours? You have gone too far.

I When is e.tv going to get its act together? Advertised programs versus what is actually shown, please fire the person responsible for this.

I e.tv's Brain Box competition advert talks about a "caller" being randomly selected and not a "winner". I've yet to see a winner being advertised. The whole setup sounds like a big scam.

I When did the cellphone companies take over e.tv? I never want to hear about Michael Jackson or Will Smith or R35 000 again and please don't mention ringtones.

I "Thank you for paying your TV licence"? What a joke. My sister received a "final reminder" to pay her TV bill of R0.00, and unless she pays this amount within a limited period, legal action shall be taken against her. Wake up SABC, 2009 is upon us.

I Trevor and Maria, we wish you so much joy as you are definitely the couple of the year. - Sally

I Camping and caravaning at Soetwater is being marred by the authorities. I wonder what their ultimate agenda is because they are making certain that decades of tradition and spirit are stopped. So where and when do we start lobbying?

I Not everyone employed at Pick n Pay is Christian. Raymond Ackerman isn't either. So why moan? What has shopping got to do with Jesus?

I To the foreign thieves who broke into our home in Elfindale at 4am and traumatised our family, especially our 16-year-old teens and left with their Christmas gifts and other valuables, you have succeeded in making us xenophobic. Please go home and take your crime and your attitude with you.

I I've made my New Year's resolution - I'm going to be the grumpiest bastard on the planet. You don't need my name. You'll know when you meet me.

I To the reckless drivers, it is better to be late at the golden gate than to arrive in hell on time.

Politics

Load-Date: December 29, 2008



Israel agrees to daily combat halt; Aid supplies to be allowed into Gaza during 3-hour breaks

The International Herald Tribune
January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 990 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem. Reporting was contributed by Steven Erlanger in Jerusalem; Michael Slackman from Cairo; Neil MacFarquhar from the United Nations; Alan Cowell and Katrin Bennhold from Paris; and Graham Bowley from New York.

*

Israel pressed on with its 12-day bombardment of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, despite a brief suspension of fighting to permit humanitarian aid to reach the beleaguered population and a French assertion that a cease-fire proposal by France and Egypt had been accepted by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The afternoon lull in the fighting suggested Israel might be responding, if only tentatively, to diplomatic pressure, a day after Israeli mortar shells killed as many as 40 Palestinians, among them <u>women</u> and children, outside a United Nations school in Gaza.

In a further apparent diplomatic gesture, the Israeli security cabinet postponed a vote authorizing a further stage of the ground operation.

But while Israel said it thanked France and Egypt for their cease-fire initiative, it said talks were continuing. With any truce still far from imminent, Israel was due to send officials to Cairo for further discussions.

Amid the fighting in Gaza, Israel said the three-hour lull would be repeated every other day from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. to allow Gaza's population to seek medical help, buy food and receive supplies.

While the guns fell silent for several hours Wednesday, news reports from the Israel-Gaza border area said a string of explosions was soon heard after the three-hour lull ended.

In Paris, President Nicolas Sarkozy, who toured the region this week in a diplomatic drive for a cease-fire, issued a statement welcoming what he called "the acceptance by Israel and the Palestinian Authority" of what he called a "French-Egyptian plan" put forward Tuesday by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in the resort of Sharm el Sheikh.

Sarkozy said he was urging the implementation of the plan "as soon as possible for the suffering of the population to stop."

Israel agrees to daily combat halt Aid supplies to be allowed into Gaza during 3-hour breaks

But the status of the proposal was far from clear and some Palestinians remained skeptical.

Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian legislator, said on the BBC that the plan fell short of a cease-fire. "Israel is still buying time to create facts on the ground," she said.

Details of the French-Egyptian plan were not made public. Reuters reported that Mark Regev, the spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said: "We welcome the French-Egyptian initiative. We want to see it succeed."

But, he added, "The talks continue on the basis of that initiative. A sustainable calm in the south will be based upon the total absence of hostile fire from Gaza into Israel and an effective arms embargo on <u>Hamas</u> that enjoys international support."

A <u>Hamas</u> official in the Gaza Strip was also quoted by Reuters as saying that the Egyptian proposal was "still under discussion," suggesting that a cease-fire was further away than the French statement seemed to imply.

Regev spoke earlier about the three-hour lull in attacks on Gaza and said Israel wanted to open relief corridors to permit a flow of food and other aid to a population said by United Nations officials to be facing a humanitarian crisis.

A statement Tuesday from Olmert's office said the pause would "entail opening geographic areas for certain periods of time during which the population would be able to equip itself and receive the assistance."

International relief agencies have warned that the humanitarian situation in Gaza was dire: Three-quarters of the 1.5 million residents were without power and hundreds of thousands were without running water.

John Ging, chief of operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, said the pause was "not a solution but it's a first step."

In Gaza City, some still reeled from events Tuesday when Israeli mortar fire struck near a United Nations school where many people were taking refuge. The Israeli military contended that <u>Hamas</u> fighters had fired mortars from the school compound, and UN officials called for an independent inquiry.

The civilian death toll in crowded Gaza heightened international urgency to end the combat. Israel has said repeatedly that it will not end its operation until it has crushed *Hamas*'s ability to fire rockets into its civilian areas.

That has not happened. The Israeli military reported Wednesday that a rocket fired from Gaza landed in a yard in the southern city of Ashkelon and that nine people were treated for shock. Three other rockets landed elsewhere.

On Tuesday, one rocket reached deeper than ever into Israeli territory, only about 30 kilometers, or 20 miles, from Tel Aviv, and wounded an infant.

The death toll in Gaza reached around 660 on Wednesday, Palestinian health officials said. The United Nations has estimated that about one-fourth of those killed were civilians, though there have been no reliable figures in recent days.

International efforts to halt the violence appeared to be moving into a higher gear. At the United Nations, the Security Council held a high-level meeting attended by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and many foreign ministers to discuss the situation in Gaza. Abbas and other senior Arab officials supported a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, which was introduced by Libya.

But some members of the Security Council, including the United States, withheld support for any resolution because of efforts in the Middle East to achieve a cease-fire.

Mubarak said at a news conference in Sharm el Sheik with Sarkozy that the Israelis and the Palestinians should accept a truce to give Cairo time to continue its efforts toward a durable long-term solution.

Israel agrees to daily combat halt Aid supplies to be allowed into Gaza during 3-hour breaks

Israeli and American officials insist that a cease-fire would have to await guarantees that no more weapons would be smuggled into Gaza through tunnels from Egypt; a possible mechanism for that is the stationing of international observers along the border with Egypt.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Gaza bloodshed continues despite UN calls for ceasefire

Guardian.com January 9, 2009

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theguardian

Length: 735 words

Highlight: Military offensive enters 14th day as Israeli jets and naval ships fire on targets while Palestinian militants

continue rocket attacks

Body

Israeli forces pressed on with their offensive in Gaza today despite a UN security council resolution calling for an "immediate" and "durable" ceasefire.

Seven Palestinians from one family, including an infant, were killed early today, the 14th day of the conflict in Gaza, when Israeli jets bombed a five-storey building in Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza. There was heavy aerial bombing on the outskirts of Gaza City, and Israeli naval ships shelled Deir el-Balah, in central Gaza.

Palestinian militants continued to fire rockets into southern Israel. Four grad missiles landed near Be'er Sheva and other rockets were fired at Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ofakim, though there were no reports of injuries.

The security council vote was passed 14 to nil, with the US abstaining. The resolution "stresses and calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza".

The US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, said the US "fully supports" the resolution but abstained "to see the outcomes of the Egyptian mediation" with Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist movement that controls Gaza. Neither Israel nor <u>Hamas</u> were parties to the vote and it is not yet clear how quickly the conflict will stop.

Israel's security cabinet was due to meet today and there were reportedly still differences between senior cabinet figures over whether to press on with the operation or to stop now.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF), said it struck 50 sites in Gaza overnight, including rocket-launching sites, buildings storing weapons, <u>Hamas</u> "command buildings" and groups of armed gunmen. "The IDF will continue its operations against all terrorists and those who support them," it said in a statement early today.

The UN put the Palestinian death toll at 758, of whom it said 42% were <u>women</u> and children - 60 <u>women</u> and 257 children, according to figures from the Palestinian health ministry. There had been a dramatic increase in the number of deaths since Israel's ground invasion began last Saturday night, it said. Around 3,100 Palestinians have been injured.

Among the dead in Gaza, was a Ukrainian woman, Olvera al-Jarou, who was killed with her two-year-old son by an Israeli tank shell on Thursday, east of Gaza City. She was married to a Palestinian doctor who had trained in the Ukraine and is the first foreign national to be killed in the latest offensive in Gaza.

Gaza bloodshed continues despite UN calls for ceasefire

Three Israeli soldiers were killed in fighting in Gaza yesterday in separate incidents, bringing the Israeli death toll to 13, of whom three were civilians.

"There is no safe space in the Gaza Strip - no safe haven, no bomb shelters, and the borders are closed and civilians have no place to flee," said a report from the UN office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs. It said three quarters of Gaza's 1.5 million people had now been without electricity since Sunday, and that 800,000 Gazans had no running water.

The UN relief and works agency, by far the largest humanitarian agency in Gaza, suspended its operations yesterday, after Israeli forces opened fire on a UN-contracted convoy collecting food aid from the Erez crossing in north Gaza. One man was killed and two others injured. Later, a marked UN convoy of two armoured vehicles was hit by Israeli troops when they stopped to try and recover the dead body of a Palestinian UN staff member during a scheduled three-hour ceasefire.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has also protested against Israel's military operations, describing the lack of medical access to the injured as "unacceptable". One of its convoys came under Israeli fire yesterday, also during the scheduled three-hour pause in fighting.

Israel announced a two-day closure of the occupied West Bank, starting at midnight last night, , apparently to prevent demonstrations during Friday prayers. Israel's foreign ministry said it would lodge a protest over the firing of four rockets from southern Lebanon into the northern Israeli town of Nahariya yesterday, in which two Israelis were injured.

Israel said the rocket fire was a "gross violation" of the UN security council resolution that established a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon after the 2006 war. "Israel views the Lebanese government as responsible for maintaining quiet in southern Lebanon and from it, as well as for preventing the smuggling of weapons into its territory," the foreign ministry said.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Gaza massacre

The Nation (AsiaNet)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 772 words

Byline: USMAN KHAN

Body

For the past fortnight we have been horrified by the images of bloodied bodies of innocent Palestinian men, <u>women</u> and children, brutally killed by the military might of the state of Israel. These images show the fraction of the destruction being caused due to the ban by the Israeli government on the foreign journalists and reporters in Gaza, despite of the ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court to allow access to the foreign journalists into Gaza. Moreover, the delayed intervention by the international community has compounded the misery of the Palestinians.

After winning the elections <u>Hamas</u> has sought international credibility but its political position of refusing to recognise Israel and renounce violence was not acceptable to the west and left it isolated. Two years ago Israel declared Gaza as a Hostile Territory. Since then, Israel had planned to collectively punish the people of Gaza by putting the Strip under siege by isolating it economically, commercially, politically and diplomatically.

The political position of the Fatah movement controlling the West Bank didn't help much in curbing the isolation of Gaza due to the differences between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah movement. There is a need to understand this crisis in the context of Israeli power politics and the prestige of the Israeli armed forces. After the humiliating defeat of Israel by a guerrilla force Hezbollah there was an immense Public pressure on the Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who belongs to Kidima party, to resign. The Israeli armed forces also got their share of humiliation.

Elections are due in February, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni (former Mossad operative) and Defence Minister Ehud Barak both belonging to Kidima party are the front runners in the race to become prime minister. As the incumbent Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is a lame duck due to corruption charges, both Barak and Livni are trying their best to prove tough enough to ensure Israeli security by bombarding innocent Palestinian civilians. We should not be surprised if they open another front in the north with Hezbollah. In this particular way they want to win over the support of the Israeli public from their main contender "the notorious Benjamin Netanyahu" and to give an opportunity to the Israeli armed forces to restore their pride and prestige by heavily bombarding and using indiscriminate force against the innocent people of Gaza. Israeli hue and cry about rockets being fired at them from Gaza is merely an excuse to carry out their heinous design.

All this will have far reaching repercussions for Israel's closest ally the United States, whose new administration's focus is on winning hearts and minds of the people in the Muslim world. President elect Obama is considering number of options to portray a positive image of his administration in the Muslim world. Two of them are: i) to close down Guantanamo Bay prison and ii) give his first foreign policy statement in a Muslim country after swearing in an as president (Pakistan was one of the country being considered but it was dropped due to security concerns). Such kind of symbolic gestures won't make a big impact, as many in the Muslim world believe that the united state is

Gaza massacre

supporting Israel and they have a reason to believe it. The United States has blocked all the UN resolutions condemning Israeli aggression.

Recently the US has abstained in a voting for the resolution based on the French-Egyptian ceasefire plan which will definitely be violated by Israel till its objectives are achieved .The US administration has to understand that its all out support for all kind of Israeli action will further radicalise the streets of Arab and Muslim world, extremely marginalising the moderates and making it difficult for the US to sell its foreign policy in the region.

Trying to insure peace and security through indiscriminate force will create a vicious cycle of violence and give way to the emergence of non-state actors. When the international community which is lead by the US fails to stop these atrocities then it gives an excuse to these non-state actors to fill that void and their only mean is violence.

The Europeans have realised that violence feed violence and the only way to curb terrorism and extremism is through political dialogue. Voice of descend has started coming from Israel its leading newspaper Haaretz has advised the government to stop the military incursion and negotiate. At the end of the day Israel has to ensure its security through political dialogue with its Arab neighbours including *Hamas*. The writer is a research coordinator at the Institute of Public Policy, BNU

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



International: Gaza: Fighting intensifies as Olmert says Israel is nearing its goal: Civilians in suburbs try to find shelter in city centre: Mortar shell that killed 43 in UN school was off target

The Guardian - Final Edition
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 14

Length: 705 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem and Ed Pilkington, New York

Body

Israeli troops were last night pushing towards Gaza's towns and cities amid heavy fighting as Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said Israel was nearing its goals in the conflict.

Many Gazans in the outlying suburbs of Gaza City were moving into the centre, desperately looking for apartments or shelter to escape the combat. Israel and Egypt have refused to open their borders to allow Gazans to flee the fighting.

About a dozen Palestinians, among them several gunmen, were killed early yesterday in Sheikh Ajleen, close to the north of Gaza City, and troops were reported to be less than a mile from the city's southern neighbourhoods last night. Tanks had moved towards the city, but then pulled back by the end of the day. At least 27 Palestinians were killed.

In a sign that a new phase of the offensive was near, Israel's military last night sent reserve units into the Strip. Brigadier General Avi Benayahu, the top military spokesman, said the units were already in Gaza, but he would not say if this meant the next stage was imminent - an invasion deep into the main towns and cities.

Olmert said the war in Gaza, now in its third week, would continue and he spoke out defiantly against the growing international criticism of Israel's killing of hundreds of Palestinians, many civilians. A UN security council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire late last week did nothing to halt the conflict and diplomacy has moved only haltingly since.

"No decision, present or future, will deny us our basic right to defend the residents of Israel," Olmert told a cabinet meeting in Jerusalem.

Defence officials said <u>Hamas</u> had been damaged but that it was unlikely ever to admit defeat. Some Israeli generals were eager to invade Gaza's urban areas.

International: Gaza: Fighting intensifies as Olmert says Israel is nearing its goal: Civilians in suburbs try to find shelter in city centre: Mortar shell that

Major General Yoav Galant, head of southern command, said an escalation was a "once in a generation" opportunity to strike at *Hamas*. "If we don't do that we'll be missing an historic opportunity," he was quoted as saying in the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper.

Khaled Meshal, the leader of <u>Hamas</u> who lives in exile in Damascus, said the offensive had ended any chance of a broader peace deal with the Palestinians.

Addressing Israel, Meshal said in a televised speech on Saturday: "You have destroyed the last chance for negotiations. No one will now believe you. What is needed is fierce resistance in Gaza and fierce support from the Arab, Islamic and international street until the aggression ends and the enemy withdraws."

Palestinian militants continued to fire rockets into southern Israel, several hitting the town of Be'er Sheva, though there were no serious casualties.

The Palestinian death toll rose to around 870 dead, of whom nearly half were <u>women</u> and children, with about 3,700 injured. On the Israeli side 13 people have been killed, three of them civilians.

The US president-elect, Barack Obama, described the death of civilians in the conflict as heartbreaking after being asked if his silence over the crisis could be interpreted as callousness.

"When you see civilians, whether Palestinian or Israeli, harmed, it's heartbreaking. Obviously what that does, it makes me much more determined to try and break a deadlock that has been going on for decades," he said on ABC television.

He vowed to act quickly after his inauguration to position the US as a trusted third party that could act as an interlocutor between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel's military admitted its bombing of a UN school last week, which killed 43 and injured 100 others, was the result of an Israeli mortar shell that missed its target by 30 metres. Previously the military had said militants inside the school compound were firing at their troops and that the troops simply returned fire.

Military sources were reported as saying that the UN school was clearly marked on the maps used by the troops.

Human Rights Watch said its researchers had seen Israeli forces using artillery-fired white phosphorus over densely populated residential areas of Gaza in violation of international humanitarian law. The weapon, used as a smokescreen, can cause serious burns. Israel has refused to detail which weapons are being used in the Gaza war, but says all its weapons are used within international rules.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

The Irish Times

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 11

Length: 419 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN

Body

HUMAN RIGHTS:THE ISRAELI onslaught on Gaza threatens the very existence of both the secular Fatah movement and the Palestinian National Authority recognised by the international community, a Jerusalem representative of Fatah in the Palestinian legislature and a leading representative of the Palestinian Christian community.

It puts the authority in a deep, deep corner, said Bernard Sabella.

He blamed the Israelis for the weakness of the Palestinian Authority. If there had been real progress in negotiations for a Palestinian state and improvements in living conditions, President Mahmoud Abbas, would have been stronger. Israel s policies have also weakened all secular groups in Palestinian society, said Dr Sabella, making people turn to *Hamas* and Islamic jihad.

He castigated the EU for rewarding Israel by pledging to upgrade relations and then hoping that the Israelis will be magnanimous by offering things to the Palestinians. Israel has taught us that if we are strong, they will listen to us. If they cannot listen to us, they II fight us to the bitter end. And if we are too peace-leaning like Abu Mazen [Mr Abbas], then we are nobody. Unfortunately, this is the message our people are getting. So when they talk about Abu Mazen being a weak person and the authority being weak, [the Israelis] are to blame.

He said Israel had told Abu Mazen that it was ready to negotiate peace but then kept arresting his people and not allowing them to move freely by setting up 600 checkpoints in the West Bank and besieging and attacking Gaza.

What the people have been seeing for the last 16 days has made them so angry that some of them will be prepared to do anything against Israel.

The call for <u>Hamas</u> to be more practical, realistic, and to take on the Israeli agenda is nonsense. Why don t they [westerners] ask the Israeli right to do likewise?

Why is that when some Israelis say not enough people have been killed in Gaza, the international community does not make an outcry?

Dr Sabella, who is also director of service for Palestinian Refu- gees for the Near East Council of Churches, said that its clinic for pregnant <u>women</u> and children had been bombed and destroyed on Saturday night.

Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

The clinic, established in 1968, was in a poor district. The 2,500 Christians in Gaza are being subjected to the same treatment the rest of the inhabitants of the Strip, he said. They cannot leave their homes and, in spite of calls from our foreign partners, we cannot distribute aid because it is too dangerous.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Koreans Advised Not to Travel to Gaza

Korea Times

January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 447 words

Byline: By Kim Sue-young

Body

Staff Reporter

The government has advised Koreans to refrain from traveling to all areas within 40 kilometers of the Gaza Strip where Israel and Palestinian militant group <u>Hamas</u> have clashed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Thursday.

"Recently, 50-70 rockets have been fired daily on average into the southern part of Israel, about 40 kilometers away from Gaza, which could cause casualties," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young told reporters.

No South Korean nationals are so far known to be in the area, he added.

The conflict area had already been designated a travel restricted zone since March 2006.

However, the government elevated the warning telling South Koreans not to visit the designated area.

The measure is not legally binding but under the higher warning, violators could face punishment.

In regard to Seoul's aid for Palestinians in Gaza, \$300,000 will be provided through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) due to difficulty in access and assessment, the spokesman said.

According to reports, other countries such as Norway, Germany and Spain are also joining the relief activities for Palestinians via the international organization.

Korean lawmakers Submit Resolution for Truce

Meanwhile, a group of 18 lawmakers from the governing and opposition parties submitted a resolution to call for a truce between the two sides to the National Assembly Thursday.

Earlier, 81 legislators of the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) also presented a similar resolution to the legislature.

"Due to the armed conflict between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, children and <u>women</u> are suffering," said Rep. Hong Jungwook of the ruling Grand National Party (GNP). "For peace in the Middle East, the resolution calls for a truce and the protection of civilians."

Pointing to the recent physical clashes over some contentious bills at the Assembly here, he added that he expects the passage of the resolution to help parties have the same voice for pending issues as well.

Koreans Advised Not to Travel to Gaza

Lawmakers of the Assembly Unification Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee also urged the Seoul government to join the international move to stabilize the troubled area and protect civilians there.

According to reports, the Palestinian death toll from the attacks has risen to 600. A quarter of them are known to be **women** and children.

Nearly 2,800 have been wounded, mainly civilians, reports said.

After days of fighting, Egyptian Ambassador to the United Nations Maged Abdelaziz said the two sides have agreed to meet Thursday for talks in Cairo.

Details have yet to be revealed but the initiative calls for a limited ceasefire in the fight to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, the Associated Press reported.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

The Weekender (South Africa)

January 7, 2009

Business Day Edition

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Section: POLITICS Length: 455 words

Byline: Hopewell Radebe

Body

Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Diplomatic Editor

THE African National Congress (ANC) yesterday called on South Africans to donate humanitarian aid to the besieged Palestinians in Gaza as Israeli forces continue their attacks there.

The Israelis launched their assault on the Gaza Strip 11 days ago. At least one-fifth of the estimated 600 victims are children and a large number of **women** are among the dead.

"Surely Israel is in violation of international laws governing retaliatory engagements and is creating a deep humanitarian crisis," ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe said.

The ANC condemned Israel for using brute force against unarmed civilians in a bid to root out <u>Hamas</u> insurgents in Gaza, describing the war as horrendous. It said it was time for the Israeli government to accept that there would be no peace or a lasting solution in the region as long as it continued to occupy land that rightfully belonged to the Palestinians.

Mantashe urged South Africans to show solidarity with destitute Palestinians who had lost everything in the past few days, by helping with donations. He also urged the government to co-ordinate the resources and find ways to distribute them to deserving families.

Asked about the sentiments expressed by local activists, who described SA's reaction to Israel as weak and said the government should be recalling SA's ambassador, Mantashe said the ANC's reaction had not differed from that expressed by the international community and the United Nations.

"We are condemning the collective punishment of hundreds of civilians who are paying with their lives and thousands more who have been injured because we do not believe this will resolve the enmity between Palestine and Israel," Mantashe said. "What will move the peace process forward is addressing the root cause of the conflict." He also said that only the government had the right to recall the ambassadors and it would do so within proper protocol and guidelines.

Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Speaking at the same press conference, Ali Halimeh, Palestinian ambassador in SA, said Israel's action had brought together Palestinians from various political backgrounds. They were all condemning the attacks and calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Asked why he was serving the president of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas of the Fatah movement, instead of the ruling <u>Hamas</u>, he said at this point in Palestine's history, all parties in his country were serving one agenda - that of standing up against Israeli.

Palestinian ambassador in SA Ali Halimeh, right, and ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe urged South Africans to help Palestinians affected by the Israeli offensive in Gaza. Picture: TYRONE ARTHUR

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

The Irish Times

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 11

Length: 419 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN

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Onslaught threatens very existence of Fatah, says its Jerusalem representative

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Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Can Middle East suffering be measured in numbers?

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 10

Length: 432 words

Body

When the Soviet Union attacked Chechnya, then proceeded to destroy its capital, Grozny, killing at least 50,000 Chechen civilians, where were the thousands of demonstrators throughout Europe and Australia condemning such carnage?

Where are those same thousands demonstrating against the thousands being murdered and raped, the populations being ethnically cleansed in Darfur, even today?

For the thousands dying of cholera, AIDS, hunger and torture in Zimbabwe due to one sick despot, where are those thousands of good and concerned world citizens?

They are busy demonstrating and condemning Israel for killing 450, mostly combatant Palestinians in a week-and-a-half of action in an effort to stop seven years of missile attacks on its citizens.

That is the meaning of disproportionate.

Danny Kidron Tamarama

Could I suggest to Simon Benstock (Letters, January 1) that a really good start for Israel might be, first, a commitment to withdraw from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territory in compliance with UN resolutions 446 and 452; secondly, immediately lifting all bans on humanitarian and food aid to Gaza and the Palestinian territories; and thirdly, recognition of the rights of a Palestinian state in exchange for rights of Israel to exist? The refusal of Israel to even countenance the rights of others in the region, when the state itself was created as an acknowledgement of the rights of the Jewish people, simply beggars belief. It is way past time for the world to tell Israel that its "poor me" stance no longer garners support. The attitude and approach of Israel itself are indeed part of the problem.

Russell Mills Redfern

Paul McGeough asks us to "measure it by the number of rockets - 8000 plus over eight years" (Mission revealed: destroy <u>Hamas</u>", January 5), then asks us to consider that a death toll of 20 over that time is not a case for war. How many Israelis need to die before they have a "just" casus belli? Please quantify it for us.

How many rockets would have to be indiscriminately fired from (say) Indonesia, East Timor or PNG into Australia before we would respond with as much military force as we could muster? Or should we just curl up into a ball, do nothing and wait for the missiles to more accurately facilitate our annihilation?

Can Middle East suffering be measured in numbers?

Robert Zukerman Barden Ridge

Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, denied their was a humanitarian crises in the Gaza strip ("*Hamas* urges suicide bombings as attacks escalate", January 3). For many of us, such callous disregard for the death of scores of noncombatant *women* and children is unacceptable.

Peter le Marquand Castle Hill

Graphic

CARTOON: Alan Moir

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Victims in school bombing were all civilians, says UN

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A18

Length: 407 words

Byline: Adel Zaanoun, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

UNITED NATIONS -- Israel was slammed yesterday by the United Nations, which demanded an independent investigation after military strikes on three UN-run schools in Gaza on Tuesday killed 48 people.

The Israeli army said militants had fired at Israeli forces from inside one school, at Jabaliya refugee camp, and <u>Hamas</u> militants were among those killed.

But the the UN agency for Palestinian refugees adamantly denied that claim.

"Following an initial investigation, we are 99.9 per cent sure that there were no militants or militant activities in the school and the school compound," said Christopher Gunness, spokesman for UNRWA.

The 43 Jabaliya victims included women and children.

Meanwhile, Israeli jet fighters bombed suspected arms-smuggling tunnels in southern Gaza early today, as diplomats worked to secure a ceasefire in an offensive that has killed 700 Palestinians.

After a brief lull yesterday to allow Gaza's beleaguered population to gather food, Defence Minister Ehud Barak was given the green light for a deeper offensive into Gaza as part of the campaign to halt *Hamas* rocket attacks.

A senior Barak aide was due in Cairo today to get details on an Egyptian ceasefire plan, which secured widespread international backing amid mounting concern about the scale of civilian casualties.

Warplanes hit a house and a suspected tunnel in an open area of Rafah near the Egyptian border.

The army confirmed that strikes were taking place in Rafah, which has already been targeted repeatedly since an Israeli air offensive began on Dec. 27 and was followed up by a ground operation on Saturday.

Israeli planes had dropped thousands of leaflets in the Rafah area, warning residents to leave their houses or face air strikes. People were told they could return to their homes at 8 a.m. today.

The area is crisscrossed by what the Israeli army estimates to be some 300 tunnels from Gaza into Egypt.

They are used to smuggle supplies and arms into Gaza.

Victims in school bombing were all civilians, says UN

Ending the smuggling is a key element of a ceasefire plan proposed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

It calls for an immediate ceasefire, Israeli-Palestinian talks on securing Gaza's borders, reopening border crossings and possible Egyptian-mediated Palestinian reconciliation talks.

The Israeli offensive has so far killed 702 Palestinians and wounded 3,100, according to Gaza medics.

Rockets fired into Israel over the past 12 days have killed four people. Six Israeli soldiers have died in combat.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters; Handcuffed and blindfolded Palestinian prisoners are led away after their arrest yesterday by Israeli troops in the northern Gaza Strip.;

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Business Day (South Africa)

January 07, 2009

Business Day Edition

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Section: POLITICS Length: 452 words

Byline: Hopewell Radebe

Body

Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Diplomatic Editor

THE African National Congress (ANC) yesterday called on South Africans to donate humanitarian aid to the besieged Palestinians in Gaza as Israeli forces continue their attacks there.

The Israelis launched their assault on the Gaza Strip 11 days ago. At least one-fifth of the estimated 600 victims are children and a large number of **women** are among the dead.

"Surely Israel is in violation of international laws governing retaliatory engagements and is creating a deep humanitarian crisis," ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe said.

The ANC condemned Israel for using brute force against unarmed civilians in a bid to root out <u>Hamas</u> insurgents in Gaza, describing the war as horrendous. It said it was time for the Israeli government to accept that there would be no peace or a lasting solution in the region as long as it continued to occupy land that rightfully belonged to the Palestinians.

Mantashe urged South Africans to show solidarity with destitute Palestinians who had lost everything in the past few days, by helping with donations. He also urged the government to co-ordinate the resources and find ways to distribute them to deserving families.

Asked about the sentiments expressed by local activists, who described SA's reaction to Israel as weak and said the government should be recalling SA's ambassador, Mantashe said the ANC's reaction had not differed from that expressed by the international community and the United Nations.

"We are condemning the collective punishment of hundreds of civilians who are paying with their lives and thousands more who have been injured because we do not believe this will resolve the enmity between Palestine and Israel," Mantashe said. "What will move the peace process forward is addressing the root cause of the conflict."

He also said that only the government had the right to recall the ambassadors and it would do so within proper protocol and guidelines.

Mantashe urges SA to give aid to Palestine

Speaking at the same press conference, Ali Halimeh, Palestinian ambassador in SA, said Israel's action had brought together Palestinians from various political backgrounds. They were all condemning the attacks and calling for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Asked why he was serving the president of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas of the Fatah movement, instead of the ruling <u>Hamas</u>, he said at this point in Palestine's history, all parties in his country were serving one agenda - that of standing up against Israeli.

Palestinian ambassador in SA Ali Halimeh, right, and ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe urged South Africans to help Palestinians affected by the Israeli offensive in Gaza. Picture: TYRONE ARTHUR

Load-Date: January 10, 2009



Protesters here implore Israel to halt offensive

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

January 4, 2009 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: METRO; Pg. E1

Length: 1088 words

Byline: Sylvester Brown

Body

"We want to talk. Interview us."

The three little girls were too adorable to resist. Their olive-colored skin accented their deep chocolate eyes and dark hair. Ayah, 8, the leader of the group, tapped me on the leg with a pink gloved hand. Her companions, Juhaina, 9, and Asalla, 7, stood with her, nervously bouncing on tiptoe at the idea of being interviewed.

It was cold Thursday, the first day of the new year. I had driven to the corner of Lindell and Grand boulevards to attend the Instead of War Coalition's demonstration in "solidarity with the people of Gaza."

It was the seventh day of the military blitz Israeli officials say they launched in retaliation of rockets fired by the militant group *Hamas*. The tally that evening left 420 dead and more than 2,000 wounded, according to Palestinian emergency services. United Nations officials said about 25 percent of the dead are civilians. According to international aid agencies, hundreds of homes have been obliterated, and food, fuel and medical supplies are all running short.

"We want all them to stop the bombing now," said Ayah. "We don't want any more Palestinian people to die."

Juhaina was a bit more shy. After I asked why she had attended the demonstration, the girl struggled for words before settling on a somewhat lyrical response:

"Um, 'cause we're from Palestine, too, and 'cause, um, we just want to say... Gaza, Gaza, don't you cry, Palestine will never die."

A wave of shame rushed over me. I had no intention of using Juhaina's poem. Her words indicate favoritism for the people of Gaza. Columns I have written in the past about the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis have received voluminous, angry responses. Critics claim that I'm not versed enough on the decades-long turmoil in the region to speak authoritatively. That may be true. But the columns certainly didn't fit the "anti-Semitic" or "pro-Muslim" labels some had attached.

The responses are somewhat predictable. President George W. Bush has repeatedly stated unconditional support of Israel. Western media seem to side with the country, often citing the terrorists acts of groups like <u>Hamas</u> as precursors to retaliatory strikes. To many Americans, "Muslim" automatically equates with "terrorism." They don't consider the vast divide between violent extremists and innocent civilians.

Protesters here implore Israel to halt offensive

Considering the passionate division regarding the conflict and the "with us or against us" rhetoric, I sometimes find myself hesitant to step into the fray.

However, it was the question of "loyalty" that drew me to the rally.

Local activist Hedy Epstein is part of the Instead of War group. Epstein, 84, is a Holocaust survivor who consistently speaks out against what she perceives as injustices afforded Palestinians by the Israeli government. The diminutive activist didn't blanch when I asked if solidarity with Gaza meant automatic denouncement of Israel.

"No, it is not. I am not anti-Israel. I am anti-Israeli government policies and practices," Epstein responded. "I know there have been rockets shot into Israel ... that, too, must stop. But, in Leviticus it says you should not stand idly by when people are being hurt and killed. So standing with the Palestinians in Gaza is not anti-Semitic."

The Rev. Elston K. McCowan, who's running for mayor of St. Louis, also attended the rally. When asked the "solidarity" question, McCowan pointed to people in the crowd: "Jews, Christians and Muslims are among us," he said. "This is not anti-Israeli, it's anti-war."

McCowan asked whether it's "anti-American" when United States citizens protest against their government. His campaign, he added, is a protest of sorts against Mayor Francis Slay's administration, McCowan said: "We're not anti-St. Louis. It's just something we ought to do."

The little girls I met Thursday brought me face-to-face with my own cowardice and what I "ought to do." How dare I fret about angry readers when innocent children who look like Ayah, Juhaina and Asalla are losing their lives?

No matter how uninformed I may be about the nuances of tyranny in Gaza and Israel, I instinctively know that bombing kills, not only the "bad guys" but innocent men, **women** and children, too.

It's a point Faten Salem, another local Palestinian-American at the rally, graciously articulated:

"I'm a mother of four. I hate to see any mother - no matter race, religion, color, background or culture - go through this. In Gaza, there's no medicine and no food. It breaks my heart as a mother," Salem said.

Official versions of Salem's observations have been echoed by spokesmen for the U.N. Security Council, the Arab League, the European Union and other international voices calling for a cease-fire.

That night, I also met sisters Banan and Badia Ead. Both were born in the United States but lived in Ramallah in the West Bank during heavily restricted, but less deadly, times. Banan, 30, and Badia, 24, described the bombings as "a completely disproportionate use of force against a civilian population."

"The people dying over there are not <u>Hamas</u>, they're Palestinians, and they're human beings," Banan explained. "I can't imagine how the people feel right now to have bombs dropped on them and then to be blamed for those bombs."

Badia is aware and empathizes with the fear Israelis experience from <u>Hamas</u>-launched rockets. However, she said "We always hear that Israelis are living in fear and want security, but we never hear that the Palestinians are living in fear, too, and our greatest fears are coming to fruition. We actually are dying, and our buildings are being destroyed."

Bombing Gaza or Israel will not bring about peace, the sisters insist. Badia prays that "voices of reason" from U.S. leaders will help stem the violence. Banan wants both the bombings and rocket attacks that are "killing children, killing people, human beings ... to just stop."

The sisters' plea matched comments from others I met Thursday night, including an 84-year-old activist and Holocaust survivor, a grieving Palestinian mother and three, dark-eyed, precious little girls.

Protesters here implore Israel to halt offensive

Their innocent faces override my	petty concerns abo	ut misplaced loyalty	and vicious reade	er response. I do	n't need
a depth of understanding to confid	ently repeat Avah's	s wish:			

"Stop the bombing now."

To view interviews with

Ayah, Juhaina, Asalla and

others in this column go to:

http://gik.com/stltoday.

No matter how uninformed I may be about the nuances of tyranny in Gaza and Israel, I instinctively know that bombing kills, not only the "bad guys" but innocent men, *women* and children, too.

Notes

sylvester brown, jr.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Daily Mail (London)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

IRE Edition

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Section: Pg. 55

Length: 1648 words

Body

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed reading Desmond Morris's praise of Charles Darwin and reminding readers of a double ancestry (Mail).

In fact Darwin never stated that men came from monkeys. What Darwin actually said was that humans and apes are both descended from a common ancestor, but separated by random variations and natural selection.

The theory of common descent has since been almost universally accepted by scientists, with strong biological support provided by modern genetic research. It is also true that most theologians no longer believe in the myth of Adam and Eve, which is a nice fairytale.

What a pity that the majority of Americans believe in creationism. As a sceptic I don't believe any moral man would allow his son to be crucified for whatever reason and I can't help thinking all a supreme being needed to have done was infect humans with a gene to be good, and he'd have saved himself a lot of unnecessary grief.

The constant indoctrination of children with a religious belief seems to me like infecting them with a deadly virus which affects their minds for life.

GORDON CUNNINGHAM, Donaghmede, Dublin.

Redouble our energies

THE Government thinks we should be patriotic, yet its members carry on like the pigs did in George Orwell's Animal Farm.

They say one thing to the public about tightening belts and taking pay cuts and do the opposite by way of wasting money on expenses that do not even have to be receipted.

They pay bonuses to managers in the HSE who have made a mess of the health system, bail out the banks and let the management that created the mess off scot free, and pay millions to consultants without a sod being turned in the actual real world.

They treat us like a bunch of idiots and unfortunately that is what the vast majority of the public are acting like.

Yes, I agree that it is now time to be patriotic, stand together and rebel against the 'wasters' that have messed up our economy and given away our natural resources.

Remember the value of the gas and oil discovered off our coast would wipe out our national debt. Those who signed away our rights will never have to scrimp and save to make ends meet like the ordinary hardworking person as nests have been feathered.

Remember that there is no recession in their lives, never has been. They never had to leave Ireland to find work and come back when the economy improved like so many decent people had to until the upturn in the world economy helped the 'Celtic Tiger' materialise.

The people charged with leading the country now haven't a clue, the damage was done by the time they got control. The smart ones had got out – perfect timing again!

Of course, the present incumbents were party to the shenanigans but kept their mouths shut. The greed and opportunity to pocket riches was too much to squeal on.

Remember this was their rain-bow's end and they would never be poor if they reached it, the pot of gold would be secure for them.

Take a 10 per cent pay cut and add 15 per cent on to expenses should fool a lot of people.

Increase VAT and chase everyone across the border where the rate had decreased.

It is indeed time now for the Irish people to be patriotic.

We can start by recognising the fact that we do have the billions needed to not only pay off our e13billion shortfall for this year.

Still, we have the funds by way of a renegotiation of our natural resources giveaway to pay off in full our total national debt.

In the first instance we must all write to the Minister for Energy and Natural Resources to get the wheels in motion.

If we wait any longer we may sink without trace.

My fellow country people, it is surely time for us to stand up and be counted.

GERRY CONWAY, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

Newyear, new leadership

IN THE latter half of the last century, we saw the collapse of communism. Given the fact that the current recession affects so many countries worldwide and to such an enormous extent, are we also seeing the collapse of capitalism? Isn't it time therefore we looked for a new model to conduct business?

Secondly, in the run up to Christmas, just about anyone I talked to spoke of their utter frustration with the current political leader-ship.

While the Government itself is preparing for the European and local elections and, of course, Lisbon II, isn't it time our politicians sought a fresh mandate from the people? Isn't it time we had a General Election?

FINTAN J. POWER, Waterford

Nazi invasion of Ireland

IT MAY be true that Ireland's neutrality in World War II saved Irish lives.

It is most definitely true, though, that the lives of countless other nationals were sacrificed to defeat Germany and thus protect Ireland from invasion.

Had Britain fallen, Ireland would have become part of the Third Reich within weeks and the inadequacy of the term 'Emergency' would have become all too apparent.

GERALDINE ARMSTRONG, Dublin.

Crying foul over dog dirt

CONGRATULATIONS to Howth on being named the cleanest town in Ireland. And well done too to the two-thirds of Irish towns that are now classified as litter-free.

However, we should not rest on our laurels as there are other areas where we could clean up our acts.

The organisers of the campaign, the Irish Business Against Litter, have identified chewing gum as its next target.

I wonder if those who tread gum into the floor and under seats behave in the same way at home.

Still, worse even than that is the complacency regarding dogfouling on our streets. Since I arrived in this country three years ago I have never seen anybody clean up their dog's muck and have even been verbally abused when I implored someone to do so.

ANTHONY MURPHY, Limerick.

The forgotten war

ABOUT 500 people have died in recent days at the hands of an army. The dead people hadn't voted for a terrorist organisation and Annie Lennox didn't 'cry them a river'.

There were no mass demonstrations on the streets. Many of the dead <u>women</u> were found naked, their children abducted.

These dead people hadn't launched rockets on a civilian population. Governments the world over weren't in uproar.

The dead were all civilians – not terrorists. Civil society groups didn't launch national appeals.

Why on earth do the Palestinians garner such attention while the Congolese do not?

S. GROSS, Urmston, Manchester.

Supremacist ideology

DR ABOU-SALEH is being more than disingenuous to compare IRA terrorism with *Hamas* terrorism (Letters).

The IRA had a political objective and had no ideological motive to destroy Britain or Ireland as <u>Hamas</u> has in its charter to destroy Israel. The good doctor needs to recap on the history of the Arab attacks on Israel since it was established by UN mandate. Israel has only retaliated.

He is in the same mode in implying that peace might prevail if Israel stopped retaliating to *Hamas* rockets.

Since the Koran is the basis for the <u>Hamas</u> charter Dr Abou-Saleh will know that peace with Islam will never prevail while Jews occupy and govern Israel, and not only the territories occupied after Arab attacks.

Can he ensure that <u>Hamas</u> will cancel the requirement in their charter to destroy Israel? Will Muslims around the world stop listening to President Ahminenjad of Iran when he calls for Israel to be wiped off the face of the earth? Will they stop believing the Koranic verses that refer to Jews as pigs and swine, not to mention the killing verses?

Dr Saleh must well know that the supremacist ideology of the Koran will never allow peace between Islam and Israel, except for the Islamic version, Pax Islamica, with Jews and Christians as second-class dhimmis.

The real tragedy is that for reasons such as, inter alia, the EU's political motives in supporting <u>Hamas</u> and allying itself with the Arab oil producers, Israel will find itself isolated and if it goes down, who will be next in this jihad?

ANDREW LAWSON, Dundee.

The rogue state

THE ISRAELIS have always used violence and terror since they ripped off three-quarters of Palestine 60 years ago. In the months up to November 1947, when Israel came into being, more than 700 British personnel and civilians were killed by Israeli terrorists including Sergeants Martin and Paice who were hung from a eucalyptus tree, had their bodies booby-trapped and the area around mined for squaddies when they came to take them down.

Israeli terror continues in Gaza today. Screaming bombers destroy buildings, naval guns blow <u>women</u> and children to bits, tanks shell civilian areas, pilotless drones wait to strike overhead. The hospitals are overflowing with wounded, lack enough surgeons, doctors, nurses and medical supplies.

There is no water, no food, no electricity and a humanitarian crisis is occurring now. The borders are controlled by Israel so there is no escape from this hellhole. From being a concentration camp Gaza has become a death camp.

Is there any wonder that this rogue state is hated so much the world over?

WILLIAM LONESKIE, Lauder, Scottish Borders.

Straight to the POINT

■ IS IT just me or is January the very worst time for detoxing? With the winter chill still in the air these long evenings don't lend themselves to much other than curling up in front of the TV with a large bag of buttered popcorn. My New Year's diet is on hold until at least March.

MAUREEN COLLINS, Co. Sligo.

■ WITH so many more Irish people travelling to exotic locations, there needs to be much greater awareness of tropical illnesses – as highlighted by the tragic Lisa McMurray who contracted rabies in Africa.

DANNY SMYTH, via email.

■ I HAD hoped that the economic downturn would stop such nonsense as anti-depressants for dogs. I am obviously – and tragically – very mistaken.

BETTY EGAN, Dublin.

■ HOW many Doctor Who fans does it take to change a light-bulb? Two: one to change the bulb and one to say: 'It's not as good as the last one.'

PAUL BRITTER, Essex.

■ SO GORDON Ramsay's alleged 'professional mistress', says she'll be sticking to single men from now on... what a champion.

JOE O'MAHONOY, Co. Wexford.

Graphic

Evolution: But creationists cling to the idea that men and apes are not descended from a common ancestor

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



<u>UNDER ATTACK: GAZA; 13 DEAD IN FAMILY HOME AS GAZA ATTACK</u> RAGES ON PEOPLE PINNED DOWN IN HOMES

The Mirror

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 404 words

Body

THE BBC has spoken to ordinary people 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. In our part of Gaza we haven't had electricity for four days. We are trying to save water in the tank. We still have some, but as long as there is no electricity, we get no water. My family is OK, we don't put ourselves in danger.

TAMER, Beit Lahiya Can you hear it outside? The Israeli army 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 <u>Hamas</u> 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. It's absolutely not safe to leave the house. It's a real war going on. We are all in shock, very scared. We haven't slept for days.

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 local radio and say: "Oh, our turn is coming soon, the Israelis are coming."

Israel is destroying every building that they think may belong to <u>Hamas</u> or any Islamic movement, even if it includes some normal civilians.

UNDER ATTACK: GAZA 13 DEAD IN FAMILY HOME AS GAZA ATTACK RAGES ON PEOPLE PINNED DOWN IN HOMES

But I think they are escalating things in vain - with no benefit.

Graphic

GRIEF Palestinian women mourn dead

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Column: US should stand up for civilians in Gaza

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 Daily Bruin via U-Wire

Length: 488 words

Byline: By Nabil Ahmad, Daily Bruin; SOURCE: UCLA

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

The Gaza Strip is being wiped out and destroyed. Innocent people, including <u>women</u> and children, are dying. Is this really happening? Pictures of dead bodies, people bleeding to death, people becoming paralyzed and losing their family members (not to mention their homes). I ask if this is really happening because it seems like a horror movie.

It has now been two weeks since Israeli air raids and ground forces have been massacring innocent Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. According to the latest U.N. statistic, the Israeli Army has left more than 800 Palestinians dead and upward of 3,000 wounded, many among them <u>women</u>, children and civilians. And the numbers continue to increase.

Whatever little economic activity the Palestinians had has been destroyed and more than 1.5 million Palestinians are running short of food, fuel, medicine and basic supplies needed to live. The Israeli government has rejected a cease-fire plan, preventing the possibility of a quick end to the violence and bloodshed. In fact, for the last 18 months, Israel has blockaded Gaza, starving its Palestinian residents, depriving them of fuel, medical supplies and basic humanitarian aid. Israel's refusal to accept a cease-fire must be condemned in the strongest possible way by all people globally. Israel must be compelled to an unconditional cease-fire, and to lift the blockade of Gaza.

I find it so inhuman and disgusting that Israeli officials stated that the rejection to the cease-fire was justified in order to maintain pressure on <u>Hamas</u>, the democratically elected government of Palestine. One should ask the Israeli government how dropping bombs on innocent civilians (including <u>women</u>, children, and the elderly) constitutes putting pressure on <u>Hamas</u>? It only makes the situation worse. Israel's strategy of changing the model of the Palestinian government by killing innocent civilians is not only counterproductive, it is inhumane and barbaric.

It is evident that the mentality of the Israeli government to use violent force has only created more victims who are reacting in a hostile manner. By hurting the entire population of Gaza, Israel produces more hatred toward itself and its ally, the United States of America. This cycle of hatred and the atmosphere of revenge make it impossible to sustain any sort of diplomatic negotiations.

We as both UCLA Bruins and Americans (regardless of our ethnicity, religion, gender, level of education, profession, or socioeconomic backgrounds) must stand up against this injustice - these inhumane acts - and demand dignity for the Palestinian people who, just like all human beings, have the right to live and to live peacefully. The occupation continues to brutally kill, oppress and starve the Palestinian people, and we must not wait silently for change.

Palestinians are desperate for what we as Americans cherish the most, which is freedom and the right to live.

Column: US should stand up for civilians in Gaza

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Websites and TV spur flood of donations

Financial Times (London, England)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

USA Edition 1

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Section: MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT; Pg. 5

Length: 482 words

Byline: Abeer Allam in Riyadh and Simeon Kerr in Dubai

Highlight: Fundraising backed by governments

Body

Until two years ago most charitable donations for political causes in the Arab world were channelled through private networks or religious institutions. Arab governments, stung by criticism that their citizens had provided money to extremist groups such as al-Qaeda, were nervous of such gifts.

But Israel's invasion of south Lebanon in 2006 changed that as Arab satellite TV channels raised public outrage and provided the focus and technology for donations. Three years on, the machinery to raise funds for the Palestinians of Gaza is even better oiled.

Citizens across the Gulf, organising through television programmes and social networking websites, have donated millions of dollars to Palestinian causes.

The drive is backed by governments that feel under tremendous political pressure to appear supportive of Palestinians and yet are powerless to stop the Gaza war. Fundraising is encouraged particularly in Gulf countries where public protests are often banned.

After Israel's offensive into the Gaza Strip, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah launched a national fundraising campaign with an \$8m (EUR5.9m, £5.3m) donation that was later followed by another \$1.3m from Prince al Waleed bin Talal.

Saudi state television showed thousands of the country's citizens and Palestinian expatriates giving money and other items. *Women* donated jewellery, a businessman offered to buy 30 ambulances and cars were handed over.

While Arabs have taken to the streets in countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Jordan, few public protests have been allowed in the Gulf, where governments are generally suspicious of <u>Hamas</u>, the militant group under Israeli assault in Gaza.

In Saudi Arabia, the ministry of the interior rejected a request by activists to organise a rally, saying that protests were against the law, according to Mohamed al-Qahtani, an activist.

There was, however, a rally in Abu Dhabi in support of the Palestinians on Saturday. Another in Dubai, however, was poorly attended. In Qatar, which has an Israeli representative office but which is also close to <u>Hamas</u>, a small demonstration was allowed after Friday prayers last week.

Websites and TV spur flood of donations

Websites have also played a pivotal role, co-ordinating groups of young people who donate money to the United Nations' relief effort, the Red Crescent Society and other organisations.

In Dubai and Jordan, Aramex, a regional courier, is leading a fundraising campaign with a large UAE retailer to collect and deliver medicine, food and other aid to Gaza.

Aramex has responded to previous disasters across the Middle East and south Asia, including the 2004 tsunami and previous Palestinian intifadas. But Fadi Ghan-dour, Aramex's chief executive, says the response to the Gaza initiative has overshadowed previous efforts.

"The feedback has been overwhelming, not only in contributions but in volunteers coming to work with us in our warehouses in Jordan and the UAE," he says.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



UNDER ATTACK: GAZA; CITIZENS PINNED DOWN IN HOMES

The Mirror

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 407 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. In our part of Gaza we haven't had electricity for four days. We are trying to save water in the tank. We still have some, but as long as there is no electricity, we get no water. My family is OK, we don't put ourselves in danger.

TAMER, Beit Lahiya Can you hear it outside? The Israeli army 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. It's absolutely not safe to leave the house. It's a real war going on. We are all in shock, very scared. We haven't slept for days.

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 actually. They listen to the local radio and say: "Oh, our turn is coming soon, the Israelis are coming."

Israel is destroying every building that they think may belong to <u>Hamas</u> or any Islamic movement, even if it includes some normal civilians.

But I think they are escalating things in vain - with no benefit.

Graphic

GRIEF Palestinian women mourn dead

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Global activists defend terrorists by condemning Israel

The Australian

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 11

Length: 768 words **Byline:** Ralph Peters

Body

Ralph Peters in the New York Post says the isolated nation's leaders are damned if they do but dead if they don't

DEAD Jews aren't news, but killing terrorists outrages global activists. On Saturday, Israel struck back powerfully against its tormentors. Now Israel's the villain. Again.

Israel's airstrikes against confirmed <u>Hamas</u> terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip were overdue, discriminating and skilful.

So far, this retaliatory campaign has been a superb example of how to employ postmodern air power.

Instead of bombing empty buildings in the dead of night in the hope of convincing bloodthirsty monsters to become peace-loving floral arrangers, the Israeli Defence Force aimed to kill terrorists.

Given the fact that <u>Hamas</u> adheres to the terrorist practice of locating command sites, arsenals and training facilities in heavily populated areas, the results suggest that the IDF may have executed the most accurate wave of airstrikes in history, with a 15-to-1 terrorist-to-civilian kill ratio. The bad news is that it still won't be enough. While Israel has delivered a painful blow against <u>Hamas</u>, it's still not a paralysing hit.

Israel's crime isn't striking back at terror but demonstrating, year after year, that a country in the Middle East can be governed without resorting to terror.

Israel's crime hasn't been denying Arab rights but insisting on human rights for women and minorities.

A day after The Sydney Morning Herald's Peter Roebuck called for cricket's chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch to consider his position, News Limited's Ben Dorries goes in with both feet, writing in The Daily Telegraph, The Advertiser, The Courier-Mail and the Herald Sun:

MATTHEW Hayden ... is almost certain to be sacked ... Andrew Symonds must now be dropped ... Cricket Australia have defended Hilditch but he now must himself be sacked if he does not wield a super-sized axe to get rid of the deadwood in an Australian side that is stuck in a deep abyss.

Malcolm Conn in The Australian put his opinion at the top of his match report:

Global activists defend terrorists by condemning Israel

NOT even Ricky Ponting's tragic heroics can avoid the reality that if the selectors do not make wholesale changes for the last Test in Sydney then they, too, should be sacked.

An editorial in The Washington Times notes that 50 years of communist dictatorship in Cuba has done little to benefit ordinary Cubans:

FIFTY years ago, on January 1, 1959, Fidel Castro and his guerilla band took over Cuba, a day after its dictator president, Fulgencio Batista, fled the country.

At the time, Castro, then 32, painted himself as a sort of Jeffersonian democrat, and he was given a ticker-tape parade in New York and spoke at Harvard. It was not until June 6, 1961, [that] the liberals' darling acknowledged that he had been a communist since he was 17 years old.

Castro has not changed one iota in the past half-century. Nor has he changed the iron grip he has imposed on the 11.2 million Cuban people still on the island, which excludes untold thousands who have fled or drowned trying.

Toilet paper is in short supply, the internet is generally unavailable, people can eat meat only a few times each month, mobile phones were banned until recently. Civil and political rights are simply not alive.

There have been increasing calls for a change in US policy. Unfortunately, president-elect Barack Obama may have joined the chorus. While it sounds plausible that ending the embargo will help push Cuba towards a Chinese model of authoritarian capitalism, assist Cuban people and perhaps ultimately lead to greater freedoms, the reality is that Cuba has not in 50 years shown one meaningful sign that anything positive will change under Castro or his brother Raul.

Obama has said he wants to improve relations with Cuba and is willing to talk. He would be wise if he took a long, hard look at Cuba under the Castros before making any concessions. Since the Cuban leopard hasn't changed its spots in the past half-century, there is virtually no reason to believe it will be so charmed by Obama's smiling visage that it will suddenly do so and purr like a kitten.

Business writer Robin Bromby in The Australian a year ago today:

WILL this be the year we scream ``sell, sell" and then take to our beds, pulling the covers over our heads until the sky stops falling? Considering all the carnage, forecasts remain surprisingly calm. But then perhaps we should always temper our trust in market commentators by remembering the words uttered by the US's then most eminent economist, Irving Fisher, in September 1929: ``There may be a recession in stock prices, but not anything in the nature of a crash."

Load-Date: December 30, 2008



Chicago Daily Herald
October 27, 2008 Monday
L2 Edition

Copyright 2008 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 747 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

JERUSALEM — The leader of Israel's ruling party, Tzipi Livni, gave up her attempts to form a coalition government Sunday, setting the stage for early elections and diminishing hopes for stalled peace talks with the Palestinians.

Israel now appears to be headed toward months of political paralysis, and opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, a critic of the peace process, is in a strong position to become the country's next leader. It would be the third national election in six years, reflecting the instability of Israel's fractious political system.

Livni, who hopes to become Israel's first <u>female</u> prime minister in three decades, has been trying to put together a government since she replaced Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as head of the ruling Kadima Party last month. But partners in the current coalition, which took power in May 2006, pressed new demands.

In a meeting with President Shimon Peres, Livni said she did everything she could to keep the government intact but would not give in to what she termed political blackmail.

"Even at the last moment, I was not prepared to mortgage Israel's economic and political future or the hope for a better future and a different kind of politics," she said.

She told Peres "we'll go to elections ... and I intend to win them."

Peres, whose responsibilities include setting election dates, could ask another politician to try to form a government. But as leader of Israel's largest party, Livni is the only candidate with a realistic chance of getting a parliamentary majority.

Elections for the 120-seat parliament will likely take place in February or March, a year and a half ahead of schedule.

Early elections had appeared likely since Friday, when the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party announced it would not join a Livni-led government. Without the support of Shas, it became impossible for Livni to maintain her party's majority.

Livni resisted Shas' demands for hundreds of millions of dollars for social welfare programs, which are popular among the party's impoverished voter base. She also refused to rule out negotiations with the Palestinians on a power-sharing agreement, as Shas had demanded.

As foreign minister, Livni has been Israel's chief peace negotiator with the Palestinians for the past year. The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war and later annexed, as the capital of a future state, and Livni has acknowledged that Israel must find a settlement for the conflicting claims to the holy city.

Peace talks were relaunched last November at a U.S.-hosted summit. At the time, both Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas pledged to try to reach a final peace accord by the end of 2008.

Abbas aide Nabil Abu Rdeneh warned that the Israeli political turmoil threatened the fragile peace efforts. "Time is precious. The next few months will be wasted because of new elections and the U.S. elections," he said.

Most recent opinion polls have predicted that Netanyahu, leader of the hardline Likud Party, would win the next election, with Livni's centrist Kadima coming in a close second.

Livni might try to use the next few months to reach a breakthrough with the Palestinians. But the talks so far appear to have made little progress, and Livni may be wary of bold moves during a campaign.

Livni also could benefit from a cease-fire that has nearly ended rocket barrages from the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza Strip. That cease-fire, however, is set to expire in December, and a resumption of fighting would bolster Netanyahu.

Peacemaking foundered during Netanyahu's three-year tenure as prime minister in the 1990s, and his election would likely spell the end of the current peace talks.

Netanyahu accepts the idea of a Palestinian state, but rejects negotiations with Abbas, claiming the Palestinian leader is too weak. He says the Palestinians must do more to crack down on militants and rules out any talk of sharing sovereignty of Jerusalem.

Peacemaking has been further hobbled by the dueling Palestinian governments in the West Bank, which Abbas rules, and the Gaza Strip, controlled by the Islamic militant *Hamas* since a violent June 2007 takeover.

Ismail Haniyeh, head of the <u>Hamas</u> government, said the coming elections reflected "the depth of the leadership crisis" in Israel.

"We are not building many expectations on the changing of faces in the political map of the occupation, because changing the faces does not reflect any change in the attitude of the occupation," Haniyeh said.

Graphic

ASSOCIATED PRESS Israeli Foreign Minister and Kadima Party leader Tzipi Livni shrugs Sunday after admitting she had failed to put together a coalition.

Load-Date: December 23, 2008



Chicago Daily Herald
October 27, 2008 Monday
L2 Edition

Copyright 2008 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 747 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

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Graphic

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Load-Date: December 23, 2008



<u>Israel rejects ceasefire calls, bombs UN schools; ANC condemns 'slaughter</u> of the innocents' as dozens die

The Star (South Africa)

January 07, 2009 Wednesday

e4 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 484 words **Byline:** Sapa-AFP

Body

Israeli tanks and troops have blazed into towns across the Gaza Strip, striking *Hamas* targets, but hits on three United Nations-run schools killed at least 48 people and sparked urgent appeals for a ceasefire.

While troops yesterday battled Islamist militants along the back alleys of Gaza's main city in the heaviest fighting of the 11-day-old offensive to halt cross-border rocket attacks, *Hamas* made its deepest rocket strike yet into Israel.

As the Palestinian death toll hit 660, Arab nations pressed for a UN Security Council resolution condemning the onslaught. But Israel rejected ceasefire calls by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and others.

"Europe must open its eyes," Israeli President Shimon Peres told an EU ministerial delegation that demanded a truce. "We are fighting against terror and we have every right to defend our citizens."

The UN demanded an investigation after tank and air assaults hit three schools run by the UN Palestinian relief agency, UNRWA.

At least 43 people who had taken shelter at the Jabaliya refugee camp school in northern Gaza were killed, according to emergency services. The UN confirmed at least 30 dead after the tank shells hit.

Earlier, two people were killed when an artillery shell slammed into a school in the southern city of Khan Yunis. Three people also died in an airstrike on another school in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, medics said.

Heavy fighting raged in Gaza City and around nearby Deir al-Balah and Bureij. One air raid killed 12 people, including seven children, from the same family in Gaza City.

Four Israeli soldiers were killed in two "friendly-fire" incidents overnight, the army said. This brought the death toll since Saturday to five.

The military said another soldier was killed in a clash near Gaza City.

Three civilians and one soldier have been killed by rocket fire inside Israel since the offensive began.

Israel rejects ceasefire calls, bombs UN schools ANC condemns 'slaughter of the innocents' as dozens die

Israel has denied there is a humanitarian crisis, but the International Committee of the Red Cross stepped up pressure on the government with a rare public statement.

"We are dealing with a full-blown and major crisis in humanitarian terms. The situation for the people in Gaza is extreme and traumatic," said Pierre Kraehenbuehl, the ICRC's director of operations.

Meanwhile, the ANC has described Israel's "horrendous attacks" on Gaza as a "slaughter of the innocents" and called on the international community "to do more than condemn the ongoing hostility against the people of Palestine".

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe said Ali Halimeh, the Palestine Authority ambassador to SA, had described the assault by the Israelis as a "slaughter of the innocent people of Gaza".

Most victims were civilians, many were <u>women</u> and children, and only "a very insignificant number" were fighters. "That's why he described it as a slaughter. And the ANC agrees with him," Mantashe said. - Additional reporting by Peter Fabricius

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



BALDWIN MISSES CHANCE TO PROMOTE PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

The Capital Times (Madison, Wisconsin)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

ALL EDITION

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Section: OPINION; Pg. WEB; JOHN NICHOLS

Length: 1252 words **Byline:** John Nichols

Body

After weeks of neglecting the issue, the U.S. House finally addressed the crisis in Gaza.

But the overwhelming majority of members -- including Madison Democrat Tammy Baldwin -- abandoned Israelis and Palestinians who are seeking peace in the region and endorsed an over-the-top "Supporting Israel in Its Battle With Terrorist <u>Hamas</u>" resolution that a statement from Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich's office criticized as "incomplete because it does not address the humanitarian crisis of Palestinians in Gaza, fails to insist on an immediate cease-fire, and neglects Israel's potential violation of the Arms Export and Control Act which governs U.S. arms exports to foreign countries."

In a letter sent Jan. 6 to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Kucinich expressed particular concern about Israel's possible violation of AECA and more generalized concern about the U.S. response to the crisis.

"In Gaza, the United Nations gave the Israeli army the coordinates of a U.N. school, and the school was then hit by Israeli tank fire, killing about 40. The U.N. put flags on emergency vehicles, coordinating the movements of those vehicles with the Israeli military, and the vehicles came under attack, killing emergency workers. The Israeli army evacuated 100 Palestinians to shelter, and then bombed the shelter, killing 30 people," Kucinich wrote in that letter to Rice.

"Emergency workers have been blocked by the Israeli army from reaching hundreds of injured persons. Today's Washington Post: 100 survivors rescued in Gaza from roads blocked from Israelis. Relief agencies fear more are trapped, days after neighborhood was shelled," Kucinich continued. "Today, the U.S. Congress is going to be asked to pass a resolution supporting Israel's actions in Gaza. I'm hopeful that we don't support the inhumanity that has been repeatedly expressed by the Israeli army. The U.S. abstained from a U.N. call for a cease-fire. We must take a new direction in the Middle East, and that new direction must be mindful of the inhumane conditions in Gaza."

Kucinich cited the letter in explaining his vote against the House resolution, which was backed by 390 House members (Baldwin and 221 other Democrats, along with 168 Republicans).

Only four members joined Kucinich in voting against the resolution: Milwaukee Democrat Gwen Moore, California Democrat Maxine Waters, West Virginia Democrat Nick Rahall and Texas Republican Ron Paul.

Another 22 Democratic members voted "present." They included: Arizona's Raul Grijalva; California's Sam Farr, Barbara Lee, George Miller, Loretta Sanchez, Pete Stark, Diane Watson and Lynn Woolsey; Georgia's Hank

BALDWIN MISSES CHANCE TO PROMOTE PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

Johnson; Hawaii's Neil Abercrombie; Michigan's John Dingell and Carolyn Kilpatrick; Minnesota's Keith Ellison and Betty McCollum; Oregon's Earl Blumenauer and Pete DeFazio; Maryland's Donna Edwards; Massachusetts' John Olver; New Jersey's Donald Payne; New York's Maurice Hinchey; Virginia's Jim Moran and Washington's Jim McDermott.

Grijalva and Woolsey are the co-chairs of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Kucinich and Lee are former cochairs. And Waters, Moore and most of those voting "present" are members.

Many of those who voted "present" Friday expressed concern about the resolution's language.

Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, told the House: "Madame Speaker, I come to the floor today torn about this resolution.

"Though I welcome resolutions by Congress to express support for the people of Israel and Gaza at this difficult time, this resolution does little to move toward a stable and durable peace in the Middle East.

"I cannot vote against this resolution because I believe every country in the world has the right to defend itself.

"I have been to Sderot and I have seen first-hand both the physical and emotional destruction caused by the rocket attacks launched by *Hamas*.

"Israeli citizens living near the Gaza border have been repeatedly harassed and live daily in fear. <u>Hamas</u>, a terrorist organization founded with the goal of destroying Israel, has launched more than 6,000 rockets and mortars into Israel since 2005.

"Last fall I voted for a resolution specifically condemning these rocket attacks into Israel.

"At the same time I cannot vote for this resolution because it barely mentions the human suffering of the Palestinians in Gaza.

"Over 750 people have been killed, including 250 children and 50 women, with over 3,000 people injured.

"And even before the recent Israeli military operation, life for the people of Gaza had become increasingly unlivable -- with shortages of food, fuel and basic medical supplies.

"The 1.4 million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip existed in a state of dreadful isolation, cut off from the world, often including the world's media.

"Earlier this year the people of Gaza broke through the walls separating Gaza and Egypt simply to purchase groceries.

"We need to have compassion for the people of Gaza and the tremendous human suffering there.

"That is why I will vote 'present' on this resolution concerning the current conflict in Gaza.

"History has shown that ground troops and air strikes have not resolved conflict in the Middle East. If we try to resolve conflict with military might and nothing else, then we will be no safer than we were before.

"Diplomacy is necessary to save lives and yield a lasting peace with security.

"The United States government, together with international partners, must play an active role in pursuing real peace with security in the Middle East."

Even some members of the House who voted for the resolution seemed ill at ease with the message it sent.

Baldwin, a frequent ally of Kucinich, Ellison and other Congressional Progressive Caucus members on foreign policy issues, voted for the resolution and then issued a statement that seemed to distance herself from it: "The

BALDWIN MISSES CHANCE TO PROMOTE PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST

current violence in Gaza is of great concern to me and many of my constituents who have called or written to express their opinions and sorrow. Today, I voted in support of H. Res. 34, recognizing Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza, reaffirming the United States' strong support for Israel, and supporting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. I want to be clear that my vote in no way condones the loss of innocent civilian lives or any disruptions in humanitarian assistance reaching Gaza. I firmly believe it is imperative that both Israel and Hamas work together toward a durable and sustainable cease-fire, and I am hopeful that the incoming Obama administration will lead an effort to forge a lasting peace in the Middle East. My heart goes out to the many innocent victims of this conflict."

Unfortunately, such nuances get lost when headlines around the world read: "U.S. House Backs Israel Over Gaza," "U.S. Congress Votes to Back Israel" and "U.S. House Overwhelmingly Passes Resolution Supporting Israel's War."

Those in Israel and Palestine who have been trying to promote both a cease-fire and renewal of the Middle East peace process got no help from Congress Friday.

Keith Ellison explained the unsettling nature of the signal that was sent when he noted that, while he believes Israel has a right to defend itself and that he has in the past voted for resolutions highlighting that right: "For the U.S. Congress to simply reiterate its statement that Israel has a right to defend itself, to me misses the critical issue before the world at this moment, which is the humanitarian crisis."

John Nichols is associate editor of The Capital Times.

John Nichols - 1/13/2009 5:25 am

Notes

To view the Web version of the story, go to -http://www.madison.com/tct/opinion/column/432261

Graphic

TAMMY BALDWIN

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



Attacks condemned as supplies dwindle and deaths rise

The Irish Times

January 2, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved **Section:** WORLD; Attack on Gaza; Pg. 11

Length: 504 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN

Body

DEPOSED PALESTINIAN prime minister and <u>Hamas</u> leader Ismail Haniyeh yesterday called for an immediate halt to the Israeli attack on Gaza, lifting of the siege and opening of all crossings.

"This war does not target just <u>Hamas</u> and the government, it is targeting Palestinians and their cause," he stated in a televised address as Gaza's death toll rose to 417.

Some 2,070 Gazans have been wounded since Israel's offensive began on Saturday. Among the latest targets were the Palestinian legislative council building and a complex housing the ministries of health, education and transport, all facilities belonging to the Palestinian National Authority and built with donations from Europe and elsewhere.

Dr Ziad Abu Amr, an independent legislator from Gaza, said he and colleagues had made fruit- less protests against the "total destruction" of Gaza but there is international "complicity" with Israel. He said these institutions will have to be rebuilt before governance can be restored.

A doctor who lives in Gaza city asserted, "We have never, never, never heard such explosions." His family survives by staying home. They eat rice and vegetables. Meat cannot be stored because there is no electricity: "I managed to get a small bag of bread because the lady [at the bakery] had promised me a few loaves."

His specialised clinic does not have equipment to treat wounded. "They all go to the [government] Shifa hospital. But it does not have the means to deal with all the casualties . . . Many doctors and nurses cannot reach the hospital because of the bombing," he said.

He planned to walk to his clinic to conduct emergency surgery, although he was uncertain whether anaesthetic was available.

Dr Mads Gilbert, a Norwegian physician who reached Gaza on Wednesday, said Gaza is a "complete man-made disaster. It's cold, there's no food, no fuel. At the main hospital [Shifa] all the windows have been blown out."

At the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza, he saw two field hospitals and 30 tonnes of medical supplies waiting to enter Gaza. He said the Israelis are using outlawed fuel air bombs and depleted uranium warheads. Many bodies are shredded and burnt.

While <u>women</u> and children comprise 25 per cent of the fatalities, they make up 40 per cent of the wounded. "Civilians are the targets, they are the victims," said Dr Gilbert.

Attacks condemned as supplies dwindle and deaths rise

Although the UN yesterday opened ration distribution centres for refugees for the first time in two weeks, humanitarian co-ordinator Maxwell Gaylard warned, "Without the violence stopping, it is extremely difficult to get food to people who need it. We cannot assess where the most urgent needs are. And it is too dangerous for civilians to leave their homes to seek urgent medical treatment, buy supplies and assist people in distress."

Israel has to open goods crossings for wheat, grain and other basic foods to feed the 1.1 million civilians dependent on food aid and to allow fuel to flow.

"Gaza's hospitals are facing their largest-ever trauma caseloads . . . They must have reliable power."

Load-Date: January 2, 2009



Dartmouth community caught up in Gaza war

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 The Dartmouth via U-Wire

Length: 854 words

Byline: By Fan Zhang, The Dartmouth; SOURCE: Dartmouth College

Dateline: HANOVER, N.H.

Body

Bilal Mahmoo had never participated in a demonstration before he learned about the current conflict between Israel and *Hamas* and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"I'm actually a first-year medical student, and I read about the situation in Gaza," Mahmood said. "The major hospital there has 600 beds. There are over 3,000 wounded, and the hospital doesn't have medicine. They barely have any energy and food."

Mahmood joined community members and other students in a demonstration on Friday at the intersection of Main and Wheelock streets. Protesters carried signs that called for peace in Palestine and cited the number of Palestinians wounded or killed as a result of the violence. Demonstrators said they were motivated primarily by humanitarian - not political - concerns.

"We are demonstrating for a humanitarian issue," Tafaoul Abdelmagid '11 said. "Nothing about this is political. We feel it's our duty and role to support peace in Palestine."

Mackenzie Howell '10, who is currently volunteering at a home for the disabled in Jerusalem, described the current mood in Israel as subdued and restrained.

"The war had begun a few days prior to when I left, and my parents freaked out and asked me not to go, but the danger was mostly in the south of Israel," Howell said in an e-mail to The Dartmouth. "I am in Jerusalem for the term, so I felt comfortable coming. I couldn't be happier that I am here."

Israelis in Jerusalem have been paying close attention to the news, Howell said. All Israelis serve in the military - <u>women</u> for two years and men for at least three - so everyone in Israel knows someone currently serving in Gaza, she added.

"Nobody wants this war, but most people here understand that it is necessary," Howell wrote. "They hate that they are perceived by much of the world as aggressors, as Israelis really are a peaceful people who wish that the rest of the world would just leave them alone to live their lives without being afraid. The unfair media coverage really bothers me, and I'm not even Israeli."

Rabbi Moshe Gray, the director of Dartmouth's Chabad chapter, said he observed similar sentiments among the Israeli people when he recently visited the country. Gray led approximately 40 students for a 10-day annual birthright trip, which takes Jewish youth to Israel, from Dec. 15 to Dec. 25. The group left before the violence began.

Dartmouth community caught up in Gaza war

"The mood was more or less that something has to happen," Gray said. "There were more rockets coming in further and further into Israeli territory, being fired sort of indiscriminately into Israeli towns. People wanted an end to this because the attacks were more brazen than ever before."

Gray estimated that five to seven Dartmouth students are from Israel.

Julie Norman, a visiting fellow at the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding who researches non-violent resistance in the Palestinian territories, has found similar frustrations in her research working with young Palestinian refugees. She described the conditions in Gaza as urgent and deteriorating.

"I have interviews with citizens that are finding very creative, non-violent ways of directly resisting the occupation," Norman said. "This goes beyond rocket attacks because they are going to great lengths to improve their lives ... I know from Palestinian friends and contacts that there are a lot of feelings of frustration, deep sadness and sympathy for the people [in Gaza]."

Norman spoke to one U.S. family living in Gaza that said the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip had made it difficult for them financially. The family told Norman that they are approaching the situation with "soummoud," an Arabic word meaning steadfastness and survival despite difficulties, she said.

"I think obviously the conflict has caused a lot of suffering for civilians in both communities for the duration of the conflict," Norman said. "Because of the media, we see it from the point of those in command, not so much the people most affected on the ground. It is often so hard for people depending on their location and ideologies; they are caught in the middle without anything to do with politics."

The Dickey Center is coordinating a Middle East Forum in response to the current increase in violence, according to Norman, who is helping to organize the group.

The lunchtime discussion will allow students to articulate their views about the Middle East. Norman said she would like to bring in Dartmouth professors and outside speakers to share their expertise at the discussions.

The current violence began after a six-month truce between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> expired on Dec. 19, 2008. <u>Hamas</u> fired rockets into Israel's southern towns and cities on Dec. 24 after Israel did not lift its blockade on Gaza. Israel retaliated with airstrikes on Dec. 27, and Israeli Defense Forces began a ground invasion on Jan. 3. Both sides rejected a truce recommended by the U.N. Security Council last Friday. Approximately 900 Palestinians have died in the current conflict, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as well as 13 Israelis, according to Israeli officials.

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Israel's 'victories' in Gaza come at a steep price

Christian Science Monitor January 2, 2009, Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 858 words

Byline: Sara Roy

Dateline: Cambridge, Mass.

Body

I hear the voices of my friends in Gaza as clearly as if we were still on the phone; their agony echoes inside me. They weep and moan over the death of their children, some, little girls like mine, taken, their bodies burned and destroyed so senselessly.

One Palestinian friend asked me, "Why did Israel attack when the children were leaving school and the <u>women</u> were in the markets?" There are reports that some parents cannot find their dead children and are desperately roaming overflowing hospitals.

As Jews celebrated the last night of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights commemorating our resurgence as a people, I asked myself: How am I to celebrate my Jewishness while Palestinians are being killed?

The religious scholar Marc Ellis challenges us further by asking whether the Jewish covenant with God is present or absent in the face of Jewish oppression of Palestinians? Is the Jewish ethical tradition still available to us? Is the promise of holiness - so central to our existence - now beyond our ability to reclaim?

The lucky ones in Gaza are locked in their homes living lives that have long been suspended - hungry, thirsty, and without light but their children are alive.

Since Nov. 4, when Israel effectively broke the truce with <u>Hamas</u> by attacking Gaza on a scale then unprecedented - a fact now buried with Gaza's dead - the violence has escalated as <u>Hamas</u> responded by sending hundreds of rockets into Israel to kill Israeli civilians. It is reported that Israel's strategy is to hit <u>Hamas</u> military targets, but explain that difference to my Palestinian friends who must bury their children.

On Nov. 5, Israel sealed all crossing points into Gaza, vastly reducing and at times denying food supplies, medicines, fuel, cooking gas, and parts for water and sanitation systems. A colleague of mine in Jerusalem said, "this siege is in a league of its own. The Israelis have not done something like this before."

During November, an average of 4.6 trucks of food per day entered Gaza from Israel compared with an average of 123 trucks per day in October. Spare parts for the repair and maintenance of water-related equipment have been denied entry for over a year. The World Health Organization just reported that half of Gaza's ambulances are now out of order.

Israel 's 'victories' in Gaza come at a steep price

According to the Associated Press, the three-day death toll rose to at least 370 by Tuesday morning, with some 1,400 wounded. The UN said at least 62 of the dead were civilians. A Palestinian health official said that at least 22 children under age 16 were killed and more than 235 children have been wounded.

In nearly 25 years of involvement with Gaza and Palestinians, I have not had to confront the horrific image of burned children - until today.

Yet for Palestinians it is more than an image, it is a reality, and because of that I fear something profound has changed that will not easily be undone. For how, in the context of Gaza today, does one speak of reconciliation as a path to liberation, of sympathy as a source of understanding? Where does one find or even begin to create a common field of human undertaking (to borrow from the late, acclaimed Palestinian scholar, Edward Said) so essential to coexistence?

It is one thing to take an individual's land, his home, his livelihood, to denigrate his claims, or ignore his emotions. It is another to destroy his child. What happens to a society where renewal is denied and all possibility has ended?

And what will happen to Jews as a people whether we live in Israel or not? Why have we been unable to accept the fundamental humanity of Palestinians and include them within our moral boundaries? Rather, we reject any human connection with the people we are oppressing. Ultimately, our goal is to tribalize pain, narrowing the scope of human suffering to ourselves alone.

Our rejection of "the other" will undo us. We must incorporate Palestinians and other Arab peoples into the Jewish understanding of history, because they are a part of that history. We must question our own narrative and the one we have given others, rather than continue to cherish beliefs and sentiments that betray the Jewish ethical tradition.

Jewish intellectuals oppose racism, repression, and injustice almost everywhere in the world and yet it is still unacceptable - indeed, for some, it's an act of heresy - to oppose it when Israel is the oppressor. This double standard must end.

Israel's victories are pyrrhic and reveal the limits of Israeli power and our own limitations as a people: our inability to live a life without barriers. Are these the boundaries of our rebirth after the Holocaust?

As Jews in a post-Holocaust world empowered by a Jewish state, how do we as a people emerge from atrocity and abjection, empowered and also humane? How do we move beyond fear to envision something different, even if uncertain?

The answers will determine who we are and what, in the end, we become.

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Sara Roy is a senior research scholar at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, and the author, most recently, of "Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict."

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Load-Date: December 31, 2008



A woman on the political front line; For Tzipi Livni, rising star of Israeli politics, security was the stumbling block on the path to becoming prime minister. But not after Gaza, Dina Kraft reports from Tel Aviv

The Sunday Telegraph (London)

January 4, 2009

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The Sunday Telegraph

Section: NEWS; Pg. 18 Length: 1474 words Byline: By Dina Kraft

Body

Tzipi Livni was born of tough stock. Her mother, a militia fighter for Israeli independence in the Forties, is said to have injected milk into her veins to feign illness while under arrest by the British, then escaped from 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 February 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 battle rages on 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 no longer be delayed.

"Israel wants to live in peace but there are certain things that nobody can accept," she told journalists last Wednesday. "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." Shortly beforehand, she had toured a school in Beersheba that was hit by a *Hamas* rocket, one of hundreds fired from Gaza into Israel since a shaky six-month ceasefire collapsed into war.

A woman on the political front line For Tzipi Livni, rising star of Israeli politics, security was the stumbling block on the path to becoming prime minister. B....

A photograph on the front of the Haaretz newspaper the following day showed her looking up at the hole where the long-range rocket had crashed through, leaving a tangle of metal rods and dangling plaster. Though surrounded by security guards, she looked a lonely figure, almost startled by the scope of the destruction.

Livni, who has spent only a decade in politics, enjoyed a rapid rise under the tutelage of the 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.

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, the Israeli parliament.

But from a Right-wing tradition that considered settlement of "Greater Israel" the Jewish birthright, she drifted towards 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 that 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 key place in the all-city basketball team and a reputation as a bookworm; Gal says that she reserves her full warmth for those closest to her.

"I think she's very human," says Gal, who worked with Livni when she was Minister of Immigrant Absorption. "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 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 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.

A woman on the political front line For Tzipi Livni, rising star of Israeli politics, security was the stumbling block on the path to becoming prime minister. B....

"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, 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. Like Meir, Livni has largely steered clear of <u>women</u>'s' issues.

"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 specialises in gender issues. "It's a type of Thatcherism."

The Gaza crisis 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 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 military action 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 air strikes, Kadima's support had lagged behind. And in a poll in the Maariv newspaper on Friday, 27.9 per cent said her performance over <u>Hamas</u> has improved their opinion of her.

Recently some young Livni supporters got together to make a YouTube video called "Livni's Boy", a take-off of the "Obama Girl" video that was a hit during the US 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."

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



Palestinian football team held to draw, but scores a victory; They play their first home game in their home stadium, in the shadow of Israel's barrier. Ben Lynfield reports

The Independent (London)
October 27, 2008 Monday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 30

Length: 852 words **Byline:** Ben Lynfield

Body

A home advantage was never something the Palestinian national football team could count on, given that even their home games were played away. Yesterday's international friendly against Jordan in a West Bank stadium changed all that, and while the boost from their first outing on home soil might not have been reflected in the final scoreline, it was writ large on the faces of the Palestinian players and their fans.

"When you are playing here, in front of your own people, in your land it makes a huge difference," the stand-in captain Ayman Hindi said before kick-off. "We will play better."

For a nation whose statehood drive is stalling amid apparently fruitless peace negotiations with Israel and a devastating internal split between its two main political groups -- Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> - hosting the match was something to cheer about.

"Our national team, in our stadium, means we exist no less than any other nation in the world," said Mohammed Suhsa, a 45-year old mechanic who was in the 6,500-strong crowd, with his 11-year-old son, Mustafa.

Forming a circle and momentarily praying on the pitch in their white and green strip, the Palestinian national football team briefly injected a degree of normality and hope into morose Palestinian life by doing what in any other country would seem routine. "Filastin [Palestine], Filastin, Filastin", roared the crowd to drumbeats after Ahmed Kashkash's 10th-minute goal edged the home side in front. "God willing, another one," they chanted. It was not to be - the team is ranked 180 out of 207 by Fifa, after all - and Jordan equalised for a 1-1 draw.

The much-anticipated fixture marked the end of years of athletic homelessness. The Palestinian national team's matches had until now been played in Jordan or the Gulf because there was no home stadium that met Fifa standards. And training was in Egypt because the team was split between the West Bank and Gaza, and Israeli travel restrictions made it difficult to gather in either part of their fragmented homeland.

Palestinian football team held to draw, but scores a victory They play their first home game in their home stadium, in the shadow of Israel 's barrier. Ben Lynf....

The venue for yesterday's match was a newly refurbished stadium, on the edge of the east Jerusalem area the Palestinian Authority envisions as the capital of a future state. Fifa had stumped up some of the cash for the \$4m renovation, and its president, Sepp Blatter, deemed the match a "historic event" and the realisation of a Palestinian dream.

But reminders of the tense political situation hovered at the edge of the celebrations. Yards from the stadium lies the daunting wall of the separation barrier Israel has erected ostensibly to keep out suicide bombers. And although Israeli authorities allowed 11 players to travel from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, the Palestinian captain, Saeb Jundiya, was barred from leaving the Strip, with the Israeli authorities citing "security concerns".

He said: "I've waited all my life for this. Imagine what it's like. The whole world is coming. The head of Fifa is coming; it is the first match on Palestinian land. I'm the captain and I can't play." He said he would watch the match on TV with family and friends. He denied he was a security threat. "All of my life has been devoted to sports." The West Bank government affiliated to President Mahmoud Abbas, and the chairman of the Palestinian Football Association, Jibril Rajoub, had worked hard to bring football home for the Palestinians fans. And at a pre-match press conference, the Prime Minister Salam Fayyad urged more foreign teams to come and play. "This is a sign of solidarity, it's a message of solidarity with the Palestinian people during a time of hardship," he said.

The match also had the blessing of <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic movement based in Gaza that is engaged in bitter infighting with Mr Abbas's Fatah movement. Fawzi Barhoum, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, termed the hosting of Jordan "a good step", adding that such ties with Arab countries "should be encouraged".

Ismail Abu Sura, a goalkeeper for a local team near Bethlehem, who was among the spectators, said he hoped the match would generate international funding for Palestinian football so that players could devote their energies to the sport. "We do not have specialty professional players in Palestine," he said. "I work in construction and after I finish my job I play football."

In his opinion, the future of Palestinian football depends on stability and security, two variables that appear elusive. Four members of his team were wounded during the second intifada and three imprisoned, he said. "If there is intifada and clashes, sports don't develop. If your brother is martyred, you won't feel like playing."

Sport and war

When two sides collide

Georgia v Russia

Beijing Olympic Games 2008

When Russia and Georgia were at war over South Ossetia, they met in the <u>women</u>'s 10m air pistol contest. But as Russia took silver and Georgia took bronze, the <u>women</u> shared a hug and kiss on the podium.

Hungary v Soviet Union

Melbourne Olympic Games, 1956

They met in men's water polo three weeks after the Soviet Union invaded Budapest. Shouting spectators spat on Soviet players. Police stopped the violence and the game was called off.

Load-Date: October 27, 2008



WE HAVE ENOUGH FUEL FOR 2 DAYS.. WHEN IT'S GONE, 6 BABIES WILL DIE; GAZA DOCS' GRIM POWER-CUT WARNING

The Mirror January 10, 2009 Saturday 3 Star Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 519 words

Byline: BY VICTORIA WARD IN JERUSALEM

Body

INFANTS will die as hospitals in Gaza run out of electricity, medics warned last night.

Large swathes of the territory have been left without power by the Israeli bombardment.

Hospitals warn they are low on fuel needed to power standby electricity generators and they fear a catastrophe when supplies are exhausted.

Staff at Naser Hospital in Gaza City are particularly anxious over the fate of tots battling for life in intensive care.

One doctor there said: "Our fuel will be finished within two days.

If the fuel runs out at least six children will die within a few hours."

The shelling has left many Palestinians who need treatment too scared to brave the journey to hospital until it is almost too late.

The Naser Hospital doctor added: "People are bringing their babies to us only when they are seriously ill.

"Four days ago an 11-month baby was brought in with meningococcal septicaemia.

"He was already very sick and died three hours later."

One of his colleagues at Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, said mums-to-be were not getting the attention they needed. The medic told UK charity Save the Children: "Pregnant <u>women</u> are not able to get to hospital. Newborns may die. It is very simple."

Gaza hospitals have just over 2,000 hospital beds but are having to cope with more than 3,100 wounded. Half their 140 ambulances are out of action.

Meanwhile, a storm erupted yesterday over UN claims that Israel shelled a civilian shelter after herding 110 Palestinians inside. Thirty were killed.

WE HAVE ENOUGH FUEL FOR 2 DAYS.. WHEN IT'S GONE, 6 BABIES WILL DIE GAZA DOCS' GRIM POWER-CUT WARNING

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs called the incident in Zeitoun, south-east of Gaza City, "one of the gravest" in the conflict.

It said: "According to several testimonies, on January 4 Israel foot soldiers evacuated approximately 110 Palestinians into a single-residence house in Zeitoun (half of whom were children), warning them to stay indoors. Twenty-four hours later Israeli forces shelled the home repeatedly, killing approximately 30."

Survivors had to stagger for more than a mile before being found and taken to hospital. Three children later died, one aged five months. Israel denied the claim.

There was no let-up in fighting as both Israel and <u>Hamas</u> ignored UN calls for a ceasefire yesterday.

One Israeli strike flattened a five-story building killing seven, one a baby.

Israel said *Hamas* fired 30 rockets.

Some Palestinians are sheltering their kids in different safe houses to avoid entire families being wiped out.

Dad-of-four Abdel Karim Ashour, 51, said: "Many families are doing this. We fear the worst and can only do what we can not to lose everyone together."

As the death toll climbed to 770 Palestinians and 14 Israelis, aid workers told of the increasingly grim conditions. Save the Children's Salwa Tibi, 43, said: "Two children were killed when a bomb hit a mosque near my father's house. Two of my neighbours were also killed but there is no time to grieve.

The bombs keep coming."

Elena Qleinbo, 49, added: "It's horrific. More than 50,000 people have been made refugees. Even we who are here to help are at a loss.

Yesterday saw violent anti-Israel demonstrations in Egypt and Jordan.

Graphic

ATTACK Smoke billows over Gaza after another strike; TRAGIC END Girl lies dead in a Gaza hospital yesterday Pictures: IAN VOGLER; DEFIANT Jerusalem Muslims pray on street after mosque ban

Load-Date: January 10, 2009



Mid-East war is not simply a case of right vs wrong

Cape Argus (South Africa)
January 05, 2009 Monday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 518 words

Body

War is an abomination that nobody should ever dare boast about. That's why war, no matter where it occurs, tears at the heart, especially where the innocent are concerned. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no different. What is indeed different is the number of hypocrites who come out of the shadows to condemn Israel.

Like millions of non-Muslims across the world, I have an extremely difficult time understanding the psychology and behaviour around radical Islam. And sadly it is they who call the shots in Islamic countries. Israel is by no means innocent. But radicals push even those of us who wish to stand over the cultural precipice.

To Muslims, Israel is wrong and they are right. Of course this is nonsense. Most Muslims understand the state of Israel merely came about in 1948. Before that, so they assume, all the Middle East belonged to Muslims. But this is not what history says. History tells us there was a Jewish state 3 000 years ago peopled by famous characters whose names still live in the religions of today.

There's Moses, the law-giver, and Abraham, the great patriarch and father of Jews, Christians and Muslims; King David, of whom we have not only Solomon but that Hebrew rabbi who changed the face of the western and indeed eastern world: Yeshua (Joshua in English) but better known by his Greek name, Jesus.

If Muslims denounce the state of Israel and wish it no longer exists then they should also denounce these Jews who are part of their Qur'an. Of course such a concept is madness. But madness is indeed what we are dealing with here. Either Israel has legitimacy or it has not. If not, then the Qur'an must be denied.

For the SA Council of Churches the same logic applies. It can't willy-nilly condemn Israel yet forget which God they pretend to worship. Jesus was a Jew, not a follower of Christianity. Surely these learned men of the Bible should know this. But the SACC makes itself guilty of gross hypocrisy and indeed blasphemy by equally calling for Israel to be reprimanded.

Where was the SACC when thousands of Zimbabweans and other victims of war were butchered? Where are they to chastise the ANC for siding with tyrants and dictators? This sickening bunch of clerics should rend their clothes and hide under rocks. They disgrace their congregations and are an insult to the God of Israel.

By all means let us criticise. But let's be fair too. Radical Islam is as much to blame for the terrible war. Eight hundred missiles were fired into Israel in one month. Multiply this by 10 in one year and then ask yourself if this is not sheer madness and gross irresponsibility. What nation can continue to endure such relentless provocation?

Mid-East war is not simply a case of right vs wrong

By firing their missiles from within densely populated areas, surely <u>Hamas</u> should know what the consequences of Israeli retaliation would be. Yet they persist in exposing their <u>women</u> and children to death. What madness is this? Where are the demonstrations in the Muslim world to tell <u>Hamas</u> to stop this insanity? Where are the Muslims to stand up for countless Islamic bombings of mainly innocent victims across the world?

CB Jantjies

Rugby

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Only at montrealgazette.Com; Inside today'S GAZETTE; tomorrow in the GAZETTE

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 489 words **Byline:** The Gazette

Body

Howie Mandel has a deal for you: Watch his new show, Howie Do It, and you're guaranteed plenty of laughs. The comic's latest venture is a hidden camera series premiering Friday on Global and NBC. (It's a joint production by the two networks.) Learn more at montrealgazette.com/arts;

Videos, Slideshows and More;

Conflict Continues in Gaza;

View photos of the conflict between Israeli forces and *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip.;

The Images of Sport;

Enjoy some of the world's best sports photographs taken in the past 24 hours. Workers hit by chunk of mountain; At least 34 people were killed and up to 60 were missing after a huge chunk of mountain collapsed on to coffee farm workers walking home along a road in northern Guatemala. Details, Page A9; Come for dinner Friday!; Saturday-night dinner parties invariably turn into way too much work. But Friday night dinners are something else entirely, as Bonnie Stern writes in her lovely new book, Friday Night Dinners: simple meals prepared at the end of a work week. Stern and a selection of Montreal cooks and chefs offer tips on how to do them well.; Exposing Hugh Hefner; He's slept with over 1,000 <u>women</u>, but Playboy founder Hugh Hefner claims he's a romantic who learned everything he knows about love from Hollywood. So he's relishing the fact that a biographical film on him is ramping up in Tinseltown, possibly with Robert Downey Jr. in the lead role.;

DROPDOC

All Day, Every Day

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Hidden-Camera Howie

Only at montrealgazette.Com; Inside today'S GAZETTE; tomorrow in the GAZETTE

Howie Mandel has a deal for you: Watch his new show, Howie Do It, and you're guaranteed plenty of laughs. The comic's latest venture is a hidden camera series premiering Friday on Global and NBC. (It's a joint production by the two networks.) Learn more at montrealgazette.com/arts

Watch Multi-Media

Videos, Slideshows and More

Conflict Continues in Gaza

View photos of the conflict between Israeli forces and *Hamas* in the Gaza Strip.

The Images of Sport

Enjoy some of the world's best sports photographs taken in the past 24 hours.

See What's New From the Gazette's Bloggers

Herb Zurkowsky says the agent for Alouettes receiver Jamel Richardson is entertaining an offer from the NFL's Minnesota Vikings. Find out more at The Snap.

Denise Duguay has the latest on the television shows making their debuts this month. Get the scoop at Inside the Box.

Peter Cooney reports the FA Cup has regained its stature among professional soccer players. Read why at Goal Posts.

Share Your Views

On Today's Hot Topics

Snow Will Have Potholes Covered

"It's amazing how inept both the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec are at basic road maintenance."

End of the Trail for Ski Resort

"My family has been going to Gray Rocks for eight years and now we are all, like, 'Well, where do we go now?' Maybe if people had put more effort into advertising Gray Rocks and the ski school it would be getting more business and money."

Graphic

Photo: Hidden-Camera Howie;

Load-Date: March 23, 2009



Seven days

The Courier Mail (Australia)
January 3, 2009 Saturday

1 - First with the news Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 77

Length: 551 words

Byline: Graham Clark

Body

SATURDAY

CAROLINE Kennedy, pictured, daughter of slain US president John F. Kennedy, said she wanted to become a senator for New York, replacing Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama's pick for Secretary of State.

PAKISTAN moved thousands of troops to its border with India as tension rose in the wake of the Mumbai terror attacks, while the US called for calm.

BANK executive Brian West, 51, was killed by a 4m shark while snorkelling with his son off Port Kennedy beach, 30km south of Perth.

SUNDAY

ISRAEL warned it could send ground troops into Gaza as its planes pounded <u>Hamas</u> targets inside the enclave, pictured, where more than 280 Palestinians were killed in 24 hours.

THE majority of southeast Queenslanders started tasting fluoridated water as the Bligh Government stepped up its dental health campaign.

A CYCLIST died after being struck by a man who jumped from the 35th floor of a high-rise in the Chinese city of Shenzhen. The jumper also died.

MONDAY

PREMIER Anna Bligh, pictured, called on the Rudd Government to apologise to former terror suspect Dr Mohamed Haneef over the bungled handling of his case.

PAPUA New Guinea's autonomous Bougainville region elected James Tanis as its new president in a by-election to replace the late leader Joseph Kabui, who died of a heart attack in June.

QUEEN Elizabeth II banned all her staff from revealing details of their work in a bid to prevent more embarrassing bad press for the British royal household.

TUESDAY

Seven days

SHEIKH Hasina Wajed, pictured, the former leader of Bangladesh, secured a landslide victory in the country's first election in seven years.

THE Defence Department revealed an Australian soldier serving in Afghanistan had been seriously wounded during a Taliban attack in the Chora Valley.

CANADIAN police said they had found the bodies of seven snowmobilers who had disappeared at the weekend in avalanches in the Rockies.

WEDNESDAY

AN INDONESIAN court cleared the former deputy of the country's spy agency, Muchdi Purwopranjono, pictured, of masterminding the 2004 fatal poisoning of human rights activist Munir Said Thalib.

BRITISH missionaries David and Fiona Fulton were sentenced to 12 months' jail in Gambia for circulating critical emails about the country's hardline president Yayha Jammeh.

WILDLIFE officers said they were searching for an escaped male beaver felling trees on the River Tamar in Devon, UK.

THURSDAY

A REFUSE collector died and six people were injured when a garbage truck and the Sunlander train, pictured, collided at a rail crossing near Innisfail.

AUSTRALIA'S Department of Foreign Affairs said three Australians had been injured when fire swept through a Bangkok nightclub, killing 61.

<u>WOMEN</u> in Naples opposed to illegal fireworks said they had issued an ultimatum to their menfolk: no sex if they dared set off crackers on New Year's Eve.

FRIDAY

ISRAELI Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, pictured, rejected calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza after hardline <u>Hamas</u> leader Nizar Rayan was killed along with four wives and two daughters in a missile strike on his five-storey home in the Jabaliya refugee camp.

SNOWBOARDER James Martin, 21, was found "frozen stiff" but alive after three days lost on a Canadian mountain as temperatures dropped to -21C. Authorities said he had suffered frostbite and was unable to walk, but would recover.

Load-Date: January 2, 2009



Your say

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: ED; Pg. 16 Length: 522 words

Body

Young refuse to adhere to laws

SO the governments are wanting to ban the smacking of children by parents (Herald Sun, January 5).

Teachers (and other adults) are expected to tolerate even worse verbal and physical abuse through school-age years.

If other types of ``rehabilitation" cannot be accomplished with children before they leave school then it is far too late for the courts to begin their softly, softly approach once they become adults.

We are raising a lawless society of young people who refuse to acknowledge the laws created to allow all people to live together in peace and harmony.

Just when, and at what age, are the ``lessons" for wayward children/adults supposed to begin?

In the meantime, law-abiding citizens are expected to bear the pain brought about by uncontrollable children.

Nola Martin, Preston

De facto families could cause harm

RATHER than introducing a total ban on smacking children to reduce child homicide rates (Herald Sun, January 5), perhaps it would be more productive to look into factors more likely to cause such tragedies.

Surely young <u>women</u> subjecting their offspring to one de facto relationship after another, often with young men hopelessly ill-equipped for the demands of parenthood, pose a far greater risk of harm to children than the odd disciplinary smack administered by a responsible parent or carer.

Joan Thomas, Kew

Drought, not cattle, the problem

JOHN Brumby and learned colleagues, could you please inform me why you are stopping cattle grazing and timber industries in the Barmah State Forest?

Any child could tell you lack of water through drought is the major problem here.

Your say

As an experienced worker with cattle and timber, I assure you that you are making a very big mistake.

George Thomas, Mordialloc

More to aged care than just centres

BUILDING extra aged-care facilities is welcomed, but not enough. Proper training of truly caring staff who look after our elderly with compassion, know-how and love, is also in great need.

Current training of some aged-care staff is insufficient, even dangerous.

We are caring for human beings, people who in their younger years contributed greatly to our country and our society.

They deserve care of a much higher standard than the current one.

It all sounds excellent on paper and in the procedures, but not all care is what it should be.

Anne Markic, Croydon

Silence over Palestinians

READING the letters pages certainly gives meaning to the phrase "blinkered view".

Years of rocket attacks on Israel without a peep but when Israel finally responds, out come the sobs of outrage.

Where is the outrage that Palestinians are kept in camps as refugees decades after all other refugees from other conflicts have been settled by the UN?

The outrages the Palestinians have allowed themselves to have perpetrated on them by their own people is the greatest outrage.

Jon Sackville, Caulfield

Concern for deaths one-sided

AT the pro-<u>Hamas</u> rally in the city, there was not one call from speakers or any placards calling for <u>Hamas</u> to stop its rockets on Israel, which is odd if the Palestinian supporters are so concerned about the deaths of civilians.

Michael Burd, Toorak

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

End of Document



Media: Press analysis: Why we have to let pictures tell the real story

The Guardian - Final Edition
January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN MEDIA PAGES; Pg. 2

Length: 946 words **Byline:** Peter Wilby

Body

British media coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict has changed radically over the past five years. From broad sympathy for Israel, the tone has become critical and hostile. This has been evident during the invasion of Gaza, just as it was during the Israeli incursion into Lebanon in 2006. Media attitudes are largely dictated by what makes good drama and, above all, by pictures. The violent death of 700 people in a week - in the midst of shattered homes and schools - is a bigger and more shocking story than the same number of deaths on, say, 30 or 40 separate occasions. The Independent's Robert Fisk said on the BBC that "it is the job of journalists to be impartial on the side of those who suffer most". But as Fisk knows, it isn't like that: journalists are impartial on the side of those who suffer most visibly and dramatically.

Since the beginning of the second intifada in 2000, Palestinian casualties have exceeded Israeli casualties by four to one. But for several years, this was obscured by the attention given to suicide bombings inside Israel, which reached a peak of 55 in 2002. Suicide bombing, always a story, became a bigger one after 9/11, when it was believed Britain faced similar threats. Even in 2002, Palestinians suffered at least twice as many casualties, but not in the same dramatic manner. Now suicide bombings have virtually disappeared - there was only one in 2007 - and rocket attacks from Gaza have killed just 14 Israelis in four years.

What such figures do not reveal, argues the Daily Mail's fiercely pro-Israel columnist Melanie Phillips, is how, in parts of Israel, "traumatised children" are "all but living in bomb shelters". In the same way, Palestinian supporters used to complain that nobody reported how suicide bombings were prompted by the daily misery of military occupation in Gaza and the West Bank. As Israeli opinion sees it, rocket attacks from Hizbullah and <u>Hamas</u>, both allies of Iran, pose far more of an existential threat than suicide bombing did. But no amount of lobbying and PR can get away from a simple truth: Israelis no longer appear as victims.

So, always excepting Phillips, Israel has had little support even from usually reliable quarters. Stephen Glover, while endorsing nearly all arguments in Israel's favour, also insisted in the Mail: "We cannot . . . defend what is happening. The disproportionality is too great." In the Mail on Sunday, Peter Hitchens, describing himself as "a consistent hardline supporter of the Jewish state", argued that there was "no important way" in which Israel's bombing and shelling differed from Arab murders of Israeli <u>women</u> and children.

Media: Press analysis: Why we have to let pictures tell the real story

The Daily Telegraph's Middle East correspondent, Tim Butcher, based in Jerusalem, argued that the Israeli attacks were driven by politicians looking ahead to February's elections. This was billed as "a personal view", a newspaper's way of signalling that the editor - or at least the proprietor - doesn't agree. But Butcher's piece - and the accompanying picture of a Palestinian child leaving his bombed home - must have had more impact on readers than a leader headed "Peace in Gaza is in the hands of <u>Hamas</u>". Only Rupert Murdoch's papers tried to show Israel in a more positive light, but they struggled. The day after Israel bombed UN schools, the Sun splashed on "Extremist threat to UK Jews", with a picture of Alan Sugar. The schools were at the bottom of page 9, below further details of the "Hate Hit List".

Earlier, the Sun thought it worth reporting that the British embassy in Tehran had been "stormed". The paper has form on this: the day after Israel killed 56 people in Qana, a Lebanese village, in 2006, it gave 10 paragraphs to the massacre, 11 to the protests (headlined "Hate in the raw") and 41 to Tony Blair's address to News International executives in California. But this time, the Sun ran pictures captioned "Devastation . . . mushroom cloud rises after bomb" and "Fireball . . . family flee".

Last Tuesday, it had a long report from Sderot - to which numerous journalists were shepherded by Israeli government spin doctors - headed "I felt blast as rockets hit homes of Israelis", along with a tiny picture of a middle-aged white man standing in what looked like a patio extension abandoned by cowboy builders. But whatever the effect on readers, it would have been overwhelmed by the picture opposite, showing a father in Gaza grieving over his three dead children.

Newspapers are supposed to be better than TV at putting over context. But they rarely are. This has always been a problem in the Israeli-Arab conflict where, as Jonathan Freedland observed in the Guardian, there is a "Newtonian chain of claimed action and reaction that can stretch back to infinity". Lack of context normally works against Palestinians who are portrayed as "terrorists" and wild "bomb-throwing militants" bent on undermining a well-ordered, western-style state. By banning foreign journalists from entering Gaza, Israel helped turn the context problem against itself. Nearly all the stories and pictures came from local Palestinian reporters and photographers. They were not likely to investigate Israeli allegations that <u>Hamas</u> deliberately based its fighters among civilians and fired mortars from the UN schools. Such stories had to remain as nothing more than Israeli "claims".

Not that the results of any journalistic investigation would have been acceptable to both sides. One side's context is the other side's lies and distortions. As any journalist knows, attempts at fairness and balance in the Middle East are doomed. Allowing the drama of visible events to dictate the coverage is probably the best course after all.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

End of Document



Aid agencies report horrific scenes in Gaza

Sunday Business Post January 11, 2009

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Section: IRELAND **Length:** 947 words

Body

The United Nations is adding its voice to calls for the investigation of an incident in which wounded Palestinians were left for days without treatment in Gaza city.

Yesterday, Israel pressed on with its offensive and defied a call from the UN to end the war. Islamic group *Hamas* also fired more rockets into the Jewish state.

Medics from the International Red Cross said they found the bodies of 12 dead Palestinians in one house in Gaza city last Thursday, during the three-hour lull in fighting by Israel to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Four young children were lying next to the bodies of their dead mothers, too weak to stand.

"It makes you feel sick - knowing those people were there without food or water. They were waiting for help and they died waiting for help," said Iyad Nasr, Red Cross Gaza spokesman, in Gaza.

In an unusually blunt statement, the Red Cross called the episode "unacceptable" and said the Israeli military had "failed to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded".

The Red Cross accused the Israeli military of preventing its ambulances reaching the wounded for four days. It said it had requested safe passage to enter the neighbourhood on January 3, but had only received clearance from the Israeli army during the IuII in fighting on the afternoon of January 7.

When Palestinian medics reached the site, in Gaza's Zeitun neighbourhood where there had been fierce fighting, Israeli soldiers allowed them in only on foot. In the end, they removed the wounded on a donkey and cart.

"If the Israeli army doesn't want to help, it should allow us - the international relief organisations - to help. That is our job and we should be allowed to do it," said Nasr.

He said the children's condition was not known. Due to the chaotic conditions at the hospital, it had been difficult to track their progress. The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA] stepped in last Friday, and called for an investigation of this case, after receiving reports from Palestinian eye-witnesses.

Aid agencies report horrific scenes in Gaza

They said that, on the previous Sunday, Israeli troops had entered the Zeitun neighbourhood and moved Palestinian civilians from their homes into a single residence. The next day, that house was shelled by Israeli artillery. They estimated that at least 25 people had been killed and others injured.

"Survivors contacted our office from the hospital and told us of events as they saw them," said Allegra Pacheco from OCHA's Jerusalem office. She did not name them, saying only that they were adults who had fled the area on foot, carrying out children wounded in the shelling. When they reached the hospital, the children were pronounced dead.

The people left behind were those the Red Cross was unable to reach for four days.

"This raises our concern about the evacuation of wounded people, a fundamental tenet under international humanitarian law," said Pacheco. "We are not making accusations of any deliberate actions at this time, but certainly this incident needs to be investigated."

A spokesman for the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) declined to comment on these allegations, but issued a general statement saying the Israeli military had demonstrated "its willingness to abort operations to save civilian lives and to risk injury in order to assist innocent civilians. Any serious allegations against the IDF's conduct will need to be investigated properly, once such a complaint is received formally."

The incident occurred on the 13th day of the conflict. Palestinian medical sources said almost 800 Palestinians had so far been killed and more than 3,000 wounded. It is also estimated that thirteen Israeli citizens have been killed to date.

Some 40 per cent of the Palestinian casualties are reportedly <u>women</u> and children. <u>Hamas</u> has continued firing rockets into Israel throughout this period. It also disrupted the three-hour ceasefire last Thursday and Friday by firing mortars as aid trucks were coming into Gaza from Israel. Israel said it began this offensive to stop the rocket fire into its southern towns, which had continued for eight years.

Another branch of the United Nations, the UN Relief and Works agency [UNRWA], has suspended its aid operations in Gaza, because of Israeli attacks on its staff and installations. The move came after the driver of a UN truck was killed by Israeli tank fire near an Israeli border crossing last Thursday morning. He was on his way to collect humanitarian aid.

Later that day, a convoy of three UN vehicles came under fire from Israeli forces, as it drove into Gaza to collect the body of a colleague killed earlier in the week. There were no casualties.

"As a result of all of these incidents, we have been forced to make a very difficult and regrettable decision to suspend all our aid operations," said UNRWA spokesman Christopher Guinness. "They are suspended until the Israeli army can guarantee the security of our staff. We need to have a mechanism in place which doesn't breakdown." He said that three UN staff had been killed in Gaza since the Israeli offensive began.

A spokesman for the Israel army said it was looking into the incidents. The UN said the number of civilian casualties had increased by 250 per cent since Israel began its ground offensive eight days ago. Irishman John Ging, UNRWA's director of operations in Gaza, described the operation as unprecedented in its ferocity and futility.

All aid agencies working out of Gaza are calling for an immediate end to hostilities. They were supported by a UN Security Council resolution last Friday. But, so far, neither Israel nor *Hamas* has agreed to ceasefire terms.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



AID GROUPS LASH OUT AT ISRAEL; U.N., RED CROSS AMONG CRITICS OF WARFARE IN GAZA

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 9, 2009 Friday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 874 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner, The New York Times

Body

JERUSALEM -- International aid groups yesterday lashed out at Israel over the war in Gaza, saying access to civilians in need is poor, relief workers are being hurt and killed, and Israel is woefully neglecting its obligations to Palestinians who are trapped -- some among rotting corpses in a nightmarish landscape of deprivation.

The United Nations declared a suspension of its aid operations after one of its drivers was killed and two others were wounded, despite driving U.N.-flagged vehicles and coordinating their movements with the Israeli military. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an investigation by Israel for a second time in a week following the more than 40 deaths near a U.N. school from Israeli tank fire Tuesday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reported finding what it called shocking scenes Wednesday, including four emaciated children next to the bodies of their dead mothers. In a sharply critical statement, it said it believed that "the Israeli military failed to meet its obligation under international humanitarian law to care for and evacuate the wounded."

Israeli officials said they were examining all allegations, that they did not aim at civilians and were not certain that the source of fire that killed and wounded the U.N. drivers was Israeli.

"We do our utmost to avoid hitting civilians, and many times we don't fire because we see civilians nearby," said Maj. Avital Leibovich, chief army spokeswoman for the foreign media. "We are holding meetings with U.N. officials to try to work out a mechanism so that their work can go forward."

She said the army learned of the Red Cross allegations in a media report, and that the Geneva-based committee had not yet presented to the army evidence of what she called "these very serious allegations."

Red Cross spokeswoman Anne-Sophie Bonefeld added that when the children and others were rescued Wednesday, workers had to leave behind a number of bodies. Yesterday, she said, 100 civilians were rescued from the same Gaza City neighborhood. They were not wounded but were weakened because of being without food or water for two days.

At the end of the 13th day of the war aimed at stopping <u>Hamas</u> rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, Gaza authorities said the death toll passed 750, with <u>women</u> and children making up about 40 percent of the dead.

AID GROUPS LASH OUT AT ISRAEL U.N., RED CROSS AMONG CRITICS OF WARFARE IN GAZA

For the second day in a row, Israel held its fire for three hours in the afternoon to allow in aid. During that pause, local ambulance crews and the Red Crescent found dozens of bodies under a collapsed building.

Three Israeli soldiers were killed in combat; seven other soldiers have died during the military campaign, and three civilians have been killed by rocket fire.

More rockets flew into Israel and -- for the first time since the operation against <u>Hamas</u> began -- three Katyusha rockets were shot from Lebanon into northern Israel. But Hezbollah, which fought a war with Israel in 2006 that included thousands of rockets, said it was not responsible.

Efforts to negotiate a cease-fire continued. At the United Nations, Security Council members agreed on the text of a resolution calling for "an immediate, durable and fully respected cease-fire" that would lead to the "full withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Gaza, the passage of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and an end to the trafficking of arms and ammunition into the territory. But the resolution left murky how such a cease-fire would be enforced. Two Israeli officials went to Cairo, Egypt, for talks.

But attention was increasingly focused on the growing humanitarian crisis and on the increasing anger abroad. Israel condemned a high-ranking Vatican official for comparing Gaza to "a concentration camp."

"Look at the conditions in Gaza: more and more, it resembles a big concentration camp," Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said in an interview Wednesday in an online publication. Yesterday, he defended his comments in the center-left Italian daily La Repubblica. While noting that <u>Hamas</u> rockets into Israel were "certainly not sugared almonds," he called the situation in Gaza "horrific" and said conditions there went "against human dignity."

Israel sharply condemned the cardinal's use of World War II imagery. "We are astounded that a spiritual dignitary would have such words that are so far removed from truth and dignity," Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said.

U.N. emergency relief coordinator John Holmes said in New York that the three-hour daily pause in Gaza fighting permitted by Israel was insufficient. He said Gaza authorities counted 758 fatalities, among them 257 children and 56 **women**.

Antoine Grand, head of Red Cross operations in Gaza, said his organization's workers came under Israeli fire yesterday. He said a convoy of two trucks, one marked as Red Cross and the other from the Health Ministry, were taking medical equipment to the city of Khan Yunis, followed by 13 ambulances heading to the Egyptian border.

He said the convoy's movement was "fully coordinated with Israel. I did it myself." It was during the three-hour lull, at 3:30 p.m., he said, when they stopped in front of the checkpoint that the Red Cross vehicle was shot at from a tank.

Graphic

PHOTO: Agence France-Presse/Getty Images: In a photo released by the Israeli Army, blindfolded Palestinian prisoners are detained by Israeli troops during a military operation yesterday in northern Gaza.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Obama keeps observers guessing on Middle East

Sunday Business Post January 4, 2009

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Section: IRELAND Length: 906 words

Body

Barack Obama and the people closest to him have repeated one phrase like a mantra since his election last November: "There is only one president at a time."

The saying has been used to bat back the media's questions about everything from the economy to the situation in Iraq. The intention has been to avoid appearing presumptuous or cutting across the authority of the current president during George W Bush's final weeks in office.

But Obama's key advisers have also been utilising the same phrase when asked about the crisis in Gaza, while the president-elect has so far refrained from any public comment on the issue. The consequence is that almost everyone has been left in the dark as to how Obama will handle one of the most urgent foreign policy situations likely to confront him when he takes office on January 20.

"The Bush administration has to speak for America now, and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to opine on these matters," David Axelrod, Obama's chief strategist, told CBS's Face The Nation show last week. Axelrod did, however, acknowledge that Obama "recognises the special I relationship between the United States and Israel. It's an important bond; an important relationship".

Obama is generally perceived to have become more supportive of Israel over the course of his rise to the presidency. As a young politician in Chicago, he had a number of close acquaintances within the city's Arab-American community.

In one instance - which seemed innocuous at the time but later became a mini-controversy during the presidential election campaign - he attended a farewell party for Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian scholar who was leaving the University of Chicago for a new post at Columbia University in New York.

According to an account of the party published by the Los Angeles Times, Obama reminisced about visits to the home of Khalidi and his wife, Mona, and added that their conversations had been "consistent reminders to me of my own blind spots and my own biases".

Obama keeps observers guessing on Middle East

The problem - at least as far as the most strongly pro-Israel US voters were concerned - was that Khalidi had been identified as far back as the 1970s as a de facto spokesman for the PLO (which he denies), and had advised the Palestinian delegation during peace talks in the 1990s.

Another Palestinian activist in Chicago, Ali Abunimah, has said that he thought of Obama as broadly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. Abunimah further claimed that, when Obama was running to become a US Senator in 2004, he told Abunimah that he could not speak out more frankly on the Israeli-Palestinian issue for the time being, because of the political implications of doing so.

The Obama team has denied that any such exchange took place.

The sense of unease about Obama among some Jewish American voters was further heightened when he remarked in 2007 that "no one has suffered more than the Palestinians". His advisers argued that this remark was taken out of context, and that Obama was merely lamenting the poor quality of political leadership under which he believed the general Palestinian population had suffered.

In any case, his campaign later made great efforts to reassure Jewish-Americans. His campaign website, for instance, described America's commitment to Israeli security as "incontrovertible". But even his strongest pro-Israel moves have sometimes backfired. Last summer, he told a pro-Israel lobby group that Jerusalem should always be the capital of Israel, and added that "it should remain undivided".

This statement put Obama even to the right of most Israeli groups, and contravened the broad US position (dating back to the Clinton administration's efforts to broker a Middle East peace deal) that Jerusalem is a so-called "final status" issue, to be decided by representatives of the Israelis and the Palestinians alone. Obama advisers quickly walked back the "undivided" remark.

Last summer, Obama visited the southern Israeli city of Sderot, which has been the target of <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks, and seemed to come close to offering carte blanche to the Israelis.

"If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that," he said. "And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing."

The remark was cited approvingly by Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister, when speaking to the Knesset last Monday.

Obama is not the only American politician who has laboured to put the doubts of Jewish-American voters to rest. Hillary Clinton infuriated pro-Israel groups in 1999 when she gave Suha Arafat a kiss on the cheek after a speech in which the wife of the now deceased PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, accused Israel of using

"toxic gases" against the Palestinians, an action which she alleged had increased cancer rates among Palestinian **women** and children.

Since then, however, Clinton has come to be seen as a trenchant supporter of Israel, and exit polls during last year's Democratic Party primaries indicated that Jewish voters backed her ahead of Obama by a significant margin.

The Bush administration, even in its twilight days, is as forceful a backer of Israel as ever. While other major power-brokers like the EU and the UN called on both sides to end the violence last week, Bush administration spokesman Gordon Johndroe said that any resolution of the Gaza crisis "all begins with *Hamas* agreeing to stop firing rockets. The onus is on *Hamas*".

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



UN halts Gaza aid work after driver killed

The Independent (London)
January 9, 2009 Friday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 904 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre IN JERUSALEM and David Usborne IN NEW YORK

Body

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza deepened yesterday after the main UN aid agency suspended its operations in the strip, saying staff were at risk from the Israeli army after one of its drivers was killed by a tank shell.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was also restricting its operations from today after one of its drivers in a convoy of 13 ambulances was injured when Israeli troops fired on it, in what the ICRC said was an "extremely serious" incident. The convoy was travelling south from Gaza City, carrying intensive care patients to Egypt through Rafah.

John Ging, the director of operations in Gaza for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), said that the decision to suspend deliveries of humanitarian aid was taken because the system of liaison between his agency and the Israeli forces had utterly broken down. Talking to reporters in New York via video link, a clearly exasperated and angry Mr Ging said the Israelis had given the necessary clearance for his convoy to proceed into Gaza and that thereafter that very same convoy had come under fire.

"We have lost confidence in the mechanism that is there," he said. "We are perfectly prepared to take reasonable risks in this conflict, but something has to change with regard to our being able to rely on the liaison that we do with the Israeli military. If they give us clearances to move then it is fully unacceptable that their soldiers on the ground are going to fire on our workers.

"Believe me, the verbal assurances [from the Israelis] have run out in terms of credibility. We have been getting them repeatedly and still these losses of life have occurred."

The UN decision to halt aid came on the 12th day of Israel's offensive against Gaza. The second three-hour ceasefire allowed rescue workers and local medics to access some of the most heavily targeted zones and retrieve about 50 bodies, bringing the Palestinian death toll to 758. The UN, which has repeatedly said that civilians have "borne the brunt" of the bloodshed since Israel's ground invasion began on Saturday night, said 257 fatalities were children or youths under 18, and 56 were *women*. The dead UN worker was named as Bassem Kuta.

UN halts Gaza aid work after driver killed

Other aid agencies voiced their concern that, with the suspension of UN operations, the people of Gaza were now in for even tougher times. Salam Kanaan, Save the Children's Gaza programme director, said: "This is desperate news for the three-quarters of a million people in Gaza who are dependent on aid from UNRWA to survive. This suspension means hundreds of thousands of families will be left without crucial food and medicine. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is now completely overwhelming."

The Israeli offensive against Gaza militants continued unabated yesterday despite intensive discussions in Cairo on an outline peace plan. The Israeli military said it had attacked 25 targets, including <u>Hamas</u> weapons stores, rocket-launching sites and a junction rigged with explosives to blow up advancing troops. It had also hit three Islamic Jihad militants involved in launching rockets on Israel in previous days. The army said another Israeli soldier was killed yesterday in Gaza, bringing the total military casualties to eight in the current offensive.

Meanwhile at least three Katyusha rockets were fired into northern Israel from southern Lebanon, injuring six Israelis. It appeared to be an isolated attack, for which both Hizbollah and <u>Hamas</u> disclaimed any responsibility. Israeli troops responded with artillery fire. Israeli security forces heightened their alert and ordered Israelis into bomb shelters along the northern border area.

New York was the scene of frenetic diplomatic activity yesterday after the United States dropped its earlier opposition to the adoption by the UN Security Council of a binding resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. The change of tack, which took even its allies by surprise, very rapidly produced a new draft text, composed largely by the British, represented in New York by the Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

A large delegation of Arab foreign ministers had by last night made their own amendments to the text and both sides appeared to be drawing closer to adopting at a Security Council session, possibly very late last night or this morning. "The search for consensus in New York is bearing fruit," said a senior UK official.

The Arab ministers were being driven by an urgent desire to produce a ceasefire resolution before Friday prayers across the region today. The US, meanwhile, had apparently calculated that it was better to support a text drafted by the British than be forced into vetoing an earlier version that had been drafted by Libya. It is thought that Washington received a clear warning from Arab allies that the wielding of a veto by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice could have had disastrous diplomatic consequences.

Hopes of the passage of a resolution last night were in jeopardy, however, amidst signs that the Arab amendments went too far for the Americans. They included a request that explicit references to the blocking of tunnels used for arms smuggling be removed from the draft - words that remained important for the Americans and for Israel.

On other pages

Rocket attacks raise fear of second front for Israel

World, page 27

Four children found next to bodies of dead mothers

World, page 28

Hamas and Fatah unite

World, page 29

PLUS Letters, page 42

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End of Document



Stanford students react to violence in Gaza

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

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Byline: By Nikhil Joshi, The Stanford Daily; SOURCE: Stanford

Dateline: STANFORD, Calif.

Body

At a protest Friday, Stanford students supporting both Palestine and Israel filled White Plaza with signs crying, "The Real Terrorists U.S.-Israel" and "Ceasefire Now," as well as numerous Israeli flags. Evident that day and many others recently, campus groups on both sides have been galvanized by Israel's recent campaign in Gaza and are quickly taking action. Though the Stanford Jewish community shares the global community's regret for civilian casualties, many feel that Israel's actions are justified as self-defense. Justin Hefter '11, vice president of the Stanford Israel Alliance, shares this view. "It's terrible when there's a war for any reason, and it's also terrible that innocent civilians are dying, which is hard to deal with for anybody who cares about human life," Hefter said.

"The thing is, Israel has been pushed into the situation after enduring eight years of rocket fire, and anyone who values human life and dignity understands that. No country should have to endure something like that." SIA President Lexi Shechtel '10 sees the recent conflict as a necessary last resort to dealing with *Hamas* attacks. "I wish there was a diplomatic solution, but *Hamas*'s charter is sworn to the destruction of Israel," she said. "It's impossible to negotiate when you have nothing to offer but your own destruction." Nada Ramadan '10, president of the Muslim Students Awareness Network, is very disturbed by the events in Gaza. "Right now, I support the Palestinian people," she said. "I am just worried about the human rights of every civilian. Almost half of the Palestinians who have died are women and children who have no responsibility in the actions of Hamas." Fadi Quran '10, president of Students Confronting Apartheid by Israel, was home in the West Bank when the fighting began. "I saw a lot of things unfold, and the saddest of them all was how people were being treated in Gaza," Quran said. "I have friends and families that work for the NGOs, and none of them were getting in. Foreign journalists were not allowed into Gaza, but Palestinian journalists were taking footage of the action. The brutality of it made me very sad and afraid for the people in Gaza." Taking Action Humanitarian efforts, though supported by both camps, are coming along slowly due to difficulties in delivering aid to Gaza. "We know that even organizations like the Red Cross are having trouble delivering resources to the Palestinians," Ramadan said. "Our ultimate goal would be to try to meet those basic needs." According to Hefter, SIA is working with MSAN and the Coalition for Justice in the Middle East on a charity drive. Educating the community is also a priority of both sides. And due to what many are saying is a lack of media coverage, campus pro-Palestine groups consider outreach very important. "Since not a lot of journalists have gotten in to Gaza, it should be our duty to educate people," Quran said. "I believe people on campus are under-informed." Quran said he was concerned that students aren't getting the whole story. "Especially since there are no journalists in Gaza, and the media here in the U.S. believes that Israeli sources are more reliable, they propagate more of the Israeli propaganda machine," he claimed. Quran was most supportive of an unorthodox news source-Comedy Central TV host John Stewart, who has come out strongly against Israel's actions in Gaza. Stanford's pro-Israeli community is also seeking to educate. "We want people to know how to deal with situations where they hear hateful or untrue things about Israel," Hefter said. "Our goal is to get people to leave

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Stanford with a more nuanced understanding of the Middle East, and educate people about Israel's contributions to global society as a whole." Several film screenings are also being planned by campus groups. Stanford Says No to War plans to host a film screening and discussion of the documentary "Death in Gaza." Students for an Open Society, a Stanford student organization dedicated to educating the Stanford community on oppressive Middle East political movements, is organizing a joint movie screening with MSAN of "Islam vs. Islamists," a documentary that deals with how moderate Muslims are persecuted by Islamic extremists in the Middle East. "Our main focus is to spread awareness about radical Islam and how failure to recognize the danger of radical Islam impairs the safety of all open societies," said Jonathan Gelbart '11, president of SOS. There are other ways campus groups hope to make an impact. SCAI is currently seeking divestment from companies that are manufacturing the weapons used by Israel in Gaza. "Most of the weapons that have been used are weapons that have been given to Israel from the U.S.," Quran said. "We need to let people know about that, and most importantly we need to continue with our effort to comply with what it is on paper [in regards to investment responsibility]." Frayed Relations Relations between pro-Israel and pro-Palestine groups on campus are seriously frayed, and the recent events in Gaza haven't helped, but members of both groups insist that personal relations between students remain intact. On Friday, SCAI organized a protest against Israeli actions in the Gaza region, while SIA members arrived to hand out pro-Israel information sheets to onlookers during the event. "SIA has said it does not want to associate with SCAI," Quran said. "On an organizational basis, we haven't spoken that much, but on a personal basis, we have spoken. We are friends." Hefter asserts that the SCAI "promotes inflammatory rhetoric," and that the SIA "[doesn't] want to associate themselves with a group like that." "If they softened their rhetoric and behaved more amicably toward other student groups, it would be easier to work with them," Hefter added. "But by nature, our goals conflict." SCAI has partnered with one Jewish organization in the past. "We have interacted with the Jewish Coalition for Human Rights, and we meet with them sometimes and we discuss some issues, and we plan events," Quran said. "Last year, we planned a whole series of events about a Jewish woman who was protesting what Israel was doing." SIA is partnering with two Muslim groups, MSAN and CJME, for the charity drive. Though members of the Stanford Arab and Jewish communities disagree on a number of issues, their interactions have remained civil throughout the crisis. "We're trying to work with the Muslim groups because we're all students, we're all rational people and we shouldn't let this come between us as human beings and as individuals," Hefter said. Looking to the Future With all the attention surrounding Gaza and the incoming Obama administration, student leaders from both the pro-Israel and pro-Palestine sides said they expect that the situation could soon improve. "America unrelentingly supports Israel and doesn't question the reasons it does," Ramadan said. "Hopefully the new Obama administration can bring some change in its policy toward Israel." "I think the Obama administration is going to push really hard for a ceasefire," Hefter said, "and I think that would provide the U.S. a lot of positive opportunities to broker a ceasefire." Mostly, students are eager to see how the situation will evolve once Obama takes office. "I'm apprehensive to see what the new administration's policy would be," Shechtel said. "I would love if there were negotiations with Palestinian leadership and a viable two-state solution was proposed. I don't know how likely that is when the negotiating partner is *Hamas*, but I'm eager to see what Obama does." (C) 2008 The Stanford Daily via UWIRE

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Israel should be punished

Irish Independent

January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Independent.ie

Section: LETTERS
Length: 1302 words

Body

Since Israel began its bombing of Gaza, with all the might of a superpower and all the ruthlessness of a terrorist state, the reaction of other powerful forces in the world has been shocking.

At first there was no outright condemnation of the aggressor, only weak appeals for a ceasefire. The later condemnations have been brushed aside by this arrogant state as if they had not happened.

And there is no sanction on Israel for this defiance of the international community. Only recently, the EU had given special privileges to Israel on arange of issues, including trade and commerce with the EU.

Because of Israel's refusal to respond to the EU's most reasonable call to stop the aggression against Gaza, these privileges should now be withdrawn

Comments about the enormity of Israel's acts of aggression are being countered at every available opportunity on all world media outlets, including our own, and even on the electronic media.

The well-known Israeli lobby of propagandists was ready from day one to saturate the media, knowing that a lie repeated often enough can eventually be believed as truth.

The argument is being posited that <u>Hamas</u> is responsible for all the killings that the Israeli army has carried out in Gaza over the past five days (without any sanctions from the EU or UN) and this unbelievable argument is fully supported by the United States and, to a lesser extent, by Britain. This is, of course, one of their lies.

Foreign Minister Micheal Martin has been courageous enough among his EU counterparts to condemn the Israeli aggression from the beginning.

I have written to the minister asking him to call in the Israeli ambassador as a matter of urgency and advise him to return to Israel for as long as Israel flagrantly continues with the wanton destruction of lives and property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

It appears that nothing shortof drastic action will make Israel listen to the voice of reason and humanity.

Palestinians'

war of hatred

Hamas uses Palestinian civilians as human shields.

These Arab terrorists locate launching pads and weapon storage in homes, schools, hospitals, mosques and community centres, while the Arab terrorists hide underground.

<u>Hamas</u> knows that Palestinian Arab civilians injured in the fire will be damaging to Israel, while the Arab terrorists murderinnocent Israeli <u>women</u> and children.

Moreover, <u>Hamas</u>, Hizbollah and the PLO Arab terrorists teach Arab children to hate all Israelis and teach that murder of Israelis is a grand goal, thus developing terrorists for future generations, blocking any chance for peace.

Bishop Magee must step down

Bishop John Magee's sheltering of guilty priests was not surprising -- there has been a long history of clerical coverups in all areas, including sexual abuse. The Catholic club adopts a minimalist reaction to all kinds of misbehaviour by its own members, criminal and otherwise. Reputation is paramount.

There are many members of that Church, probably a large majority, who do not support this approach. But if one rotten apple is allowed to taint the barrel, the blame must be shared by all who allow it. Silence is complicity. Bishop Magee did not make mistakes. He made decisions. These decisions were a damage limitation exercise, made in the full knowledge of what he was doing.

His apologies are meaningless as long as he insists on protecting his own position above all else. If he is allowed to retain his position it can only be seen as support from the Catholic Church for his actions.

Irish retailersfight to survive

Lisbon II will prove a trivial test of our loyalty to Europe. The real vote of confidence in Europe will be with our pocketbooks as we start to see the effects of a common market.

Lower retail prices might seem a blessing, but having a weaker pound may not be all the goodness we might think it will be. UK retailers have been earning exceptionally strong profits, but so too have Irish retailers. We, as consumers, have been far too accepting of the 'sticker price' for far too long, and this has contributed in no small way to the absurd prices we pay for goods and services.

The exchange rate disparity, if it holds over a number of months, will prove devastating to Irish producers. Consider the choice a shopper at Tesco might face in the near future -- 1 kg of Irish beef mince for EUR4 alongside 1 kg of British beef mince for EUR2.50. Now multiply that choice across a range of Irish-produced products, and pretty soon you find that Irish producers will face an even further squeeze on their prices.

What's more, Irish retailers with Irish suppliers will either need to find British suppliers or face a huge price disparity, which will ultimately put them out of business as nouveaux price-sensitive shoppers shift their spending to British retailers with British suppliers.

A weak pound will, in the long term, result in fewer Irish retailers and more British retailers establishing or expanding their presence in our economy. It will send more and more farmers and other Irish producers to the wall.

It is this which becomes our true test of commitment to Europe: are we willing to accept a common and open market when it is accompanied by real economic pain?

Banks must take share of pain

David McWilliams has been very accurate in predicting and interpreting the economic crisis.

Israel should be punished

His column 'Nationalisation of Anglo could actually be ahelp' (Irish Independent, December 31) points the way out of the current swamp of the banks, albeit a longer term solution not a quick fix.

McWilliams' prescription closely echoes the opinion of Nils Lundgren and Lars Wohlen, two MEP colleagues of mine, one of whom was chief economist of a Swedish bank and the other head of a mortgage bank during Sweden's bank rescue 15 years ago.

Unlike our ill-thought-out bank guarantee scheme, the Swedish rescue required banks to give equity (in the form of preferred shares) to the State in return for protection.

Since the Swedish bank crisis was caused mostly by property excess, just like ours, a bank was used to take the 'toxic' assets from the other banks. This bank then managed the disposal and sale of these assets.

This is what McWilliams is proposing for Anglo. It is a radical move, but the State is already committed to guaranteeing not just the deposits but also the loans of the banks. None of this can be done without a lot of pain for the banks and the developers.

By following this course we hopefully cannot just get out of the crisis we are in, but also see that the taxpayers getreimbursed in due time for the funds we provide for the rescue.

RTE's New Year show was woeful

It is difficult to remember a more imbecilic collection of substandard programming from our national broadcaster than on New Year's Eve.

We had -- among others -- an attempt (failed spectacularly) at humorous dubbing and 'lever' editing falling flat on its face presented as the 2008 TV highlights package.

It says a lot about RTE's annual offering that they clearly could not scratch together even a few genuine TV highlights.

I honestly think it was the worst thing they have ever committed to screen.

And as for Ryan Tubridy's pot pourri of 'special guests' to ring in the New Year, I felt particularly sorry for a genuine Ireland hero, Kenny Egan, catapulted in between the squabbling egotistical forum of George Hook, Liz O'Kane and Brendan O'Connor.

The last thing the Irish viewing public wanted to hear about in the dying moments of 2008 was a loosely thrown away attack on various Dail party leaders along with a moan about how bad everything is.

I have heard far more reasoned debate in a chipper at closing time

I am tired of the wailing and gnashing of teeth within RTE about their cutbacks whenthey continue to dish out drivel with absolutely no regard for quality.

Load-Date: January 3, 2009



Gaza: our common humanity; Pregs Govender dissects the turmoil in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and offers the voice of solace as a reminder of our nation's troubled past - that hate dehumanises us

Daily News (South Africa)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 11

Length: 1641 words

Body

On New Year's Eve, I received a message sent by my friend, Margo, who works in Palestine, about the indiscriminate and deadly attacks by the Israeli army on civilians, including children and babies.

On television, I watched Benjamin Netanyahu, a candidate in the upcoming elections. Asked about the large number of Palestinian children and babies who had been killed by Israel's army, he said the worst thing now would be international sympathy with the Palestinians - of course, there would be casualties in war.

In one of the newspaper, there was a photo of three toddlers. At first glance they appear to be asleep, until your eyes take in the horror of the blood, the weeping father and the words beneath the photo.

A press statement was issued by the South African Zionist Federation, the Jewish Board of Deputies and the chief rabbi in which they support Israel's military offensive on Gaza. They asked that the conflict not be "imported" into South Africa.

In the meantime, the South African arms company Denel was implicated in supporting Israel's military and Jews in South Africa continue to enlist in its army.

I watched again the video report of our SA Human Rights delegation to Israel and Palestine in mid-2008 (which included Muslims like Farid Essack and Zubeida Jaffer and Jews like Dennis Davis and Janet Love).

In our video report, Barbara Hogan echoes Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge's comment in another interview, that what we see is worse than apartheid.

This cannot be reduced to a conflict between two religions.

There are many Jews in Israel and South Africa who actively oppose Israel's war on Gaza. I have met Palestinians who are Muslims, Christians and atheists and Israelis who are Jews, Christians and atheists. Religion is all too easy an explanation for the complex question of land and essential resources such as water.

In another of Margo's e-mails was an analysis of the role of Israel and the United States by Stephen Zunes, (professor of politics at the University of San Francisco).

"Indeed, were it not for misguided Israeli and American policies, <u>Hamas</u> would not be in control of the territory in the first place.

"Israel initially encouraged the rise of the Palestinian Islamist movement ... beginning in the early 1980s, with generous funding from the US-backed family dictatorship in Saudi Arabia. The antecedents of <u>Hamas</u> began to emerge through the establishment of entities that stressed an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam, which up to that point had not been very common among the Palestinian population.

"The hope was that if people spent more time praying in the |mosques, they would be less prone to enlist in left-wing nationalist movements challenging the Israeli occupation. While (at that time) supporters of the secular PLO were denied their own media or right to hold political gatherings, the Israeli occupation authorities allowed radical Islamic groups to hold rallies, publish uncensored newspapers and even have their own radio station.

"For example, in the occupied Palestinian city of Gaza in 1981, Israeli soldiers - who had shown no hesitation to suppress peaceful pro-PLO demonstrations - stood by when a group of Islamic extremists attacked and burned a PLO-affiliated health clinic in Gaza for offering family planning services for **women**."

The problem, (Israeli peace activist Uri) Avnery wrote at that time, is that "now, when it seems that this aim has been achieved, they have no idea what to do about the <u>Hamas</u> victor". Since then, the Israeli strategy has been to increase the blockade on the Gaza Strip, regardless of the disastrous humanitarian consequences, and more recently to launch devastating attacks that have killed hundreds of people, as many as a quarter of whom were civilians.

THE Bush administration and leaders of Republicans and Democrats in Congress have defended Israeli policies on the grounds that the extremist <u>Hamas</u> governs the territory. Yet noone seems willing to acknowledge the role the United States had in making it possible for <u>Hamas</u> to come to power in Gaza in the first place.

It is a pattern that Africa is familiar with: US intervention that destroys legitimate leaders - the assassination of Patrice Lumuba, the first democratically elected prime minister of the Congo and his replacement by men the US and its allies thought they could manipulate. Part of this is a lesson that has not been learnt: be careful of what you unleash - it may cause destruction beyond imagining.

The second part of the pattern is that those who bear the brunt of reprisals are the most innocent - children. In Iraq, the US initially provided Saddam Hussein with military and financial backing.

When (US President George) Bush and (vice-president Dick) |Cheney decided on "regime change", massive numbers of children were and continue to be the "collateral damage".

The Israeli army intensifies its onslaught against Palestinians in Gaza. There is an election in Israel and the candidates appear on television - showing how tough they are - how ready they are to kill - that the woman too can be as hard as nails. Is this what it takes for **women** to hold power - that they must act violently and brutally?

Will Barack Obama, president-elect of the United States, have to prove that he, the first black president - can act as Bush and all those before before him have - to support Israel in its worst brutality?

And what do we do? What do the millions of young people in the US who voted for peace and an end to war, for hope for our planet and for the human race ... what do we all do, to make sure those who cynically manipulate the world into war are stopped, once and for all? It's time to be insubordinate to the hate, greed and fear that permeate our hearts and our world.

For the sake of humanity and the future of our planet, we can no longer allow a handful of greedy people to spiral us into war.

Any of the countless children who die every day could share the logic that waging war is not the way to build peace.

There must be another way - in Israel, in Zimbabwe, in Sri Lanka, in all the killing fields across our planet. Ordinary human beings like you and me have to connect the dots.

IT is possible - there are many examples of people owning and asserting their power. In December, for example, in relation to the crisis in neighbouring Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean Feminist Education Project (Fepep) convened a workshop of Zimbabwean activists and feminists in the region, to share what was happening in Zimbabwe, to reflect, to strategise and to take action. Solidarity is possible, even in the most soul-destroying moments.

In the video report of our trip to Palestine and Israel there is the young Jewish man protesting with a Palestinian farming community against the occupation by Jewish settlers of their farms. The occupation wall that the Israeli army has built and continues to build cuts through Palestinian land, separating farmers from their farms. Palestinian farmers experience the daily torture of trying to get to their farms.

They have to go through checkpoints that are opened and closed at unpredictable times to tend their olive trees. Many times they are not allowed through and they watch through the barbed wire as their olive trees die - as they and their families are reduced to poverty.

The young Jewish man is bandaged and bruised from being attacked by the Israeli soldiers. When asked why he joined the peaceful protest by the villagers, he said he could not remain silent and passive at the apartheid that was happening.

"If a peaceful Palestinian demonstrator had been caught by the soldiers, he would have been killed, not just wounded." He said he came to the Palestinian village and was not killed by the Palestinians, contrary to the fear and hate sold every day to the Jewish citizens of Israel.

The Jewish woman told us of the death of her son by a sniper - he was a peace activist before his call-up by the Israeli army. She has taken up his commitment to peace by working for an end to the occupation of Palestine. The man on her right is a Palestinian who lost his brother, shot at point blank range at an Israeli checkpoint by a soldier.

They both want peace - they both want an end to the madness of the occupation and the hate that it spreads. They know how easily hate can take control of our hearts and minds and they fight against being dehumanised as they work to build peace.

THE respected Palestinian atheist, Edward Said, who was born into a Christian family, noted in his book The Politics of Dispossession "the Zionists came to Palestine, found another people there and then for several decades dispossessed, alienated and brutalised that people, the Palestinians, with the moral approval and support of the West generally and the US in particular.

"As Israeli prime minister - Golda Meir - could ask in 1969, 'Who are the Palestinians? There are no Palestinians.' - we have had a slew of Israeli officials calling Palestinians 'two-legged vermin' ... 'roaches' ... enjoining Israeli troops and illegal settlers to break their bones and use systematic beating and crushing."

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In my book Love and Courage, A Story of Insubordination, I quote an Iraqi woman I met as part of an international solidarity mission just before the war there. After describing the slow death of her child from leukemia, she said to us: "I do not want your tears. Take my words into the world. I want to hear the echo of what you do."

What will we - Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists - do in 2009 to take us out of this tragic, downward spiral - into humanity's full creative potential?

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Gaza: Our common humanity

Cape Argus (South Africa)
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Gaza: Our common humanity

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Gaza: Our common humanity; It's time to resist the hate, greed and fear that permeate our hearts and our world, says Pregs Govender as she dissects the politics and human turmoil involved in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with the latest strife having claimed 900 lives

The Star (South Africa)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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A press statement is issued by the South African Zionist Federation, the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Chief Rabbi in which they support Israel's military offensive on Gaza. They ask that the conflict not be "imported" into South Africa.

In the meantime the SA arms company Denel is implicated in supporting Israel's military and SA Jews continue to enlist in its army.

I watch again the video report of our SA Human Rights Delegation to Israel and Palestine in mid-2008 (which included Muslims like Farid Essack and Zubeida Jaffer and Jews like Dennis Davis and Janet Love).

In our video report Barbara Hogan echoes Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge's comment in another interview, that what we see is worse than apartheid (and both of them spent years in apartheid's jails).

This cannot be reduced to a conflict between two religions. There are many Jews in Israel and South Africa who actively oppose Israel's war on Gaza. I have met Palestinians who are Muslims, Christians and atheists and Israelis who are Jews, Christians and atheists. Religion is all too easy an explanation for the complex question of land and essential resources such as water.

In another of Margo's e-mails is an analysis of the role of Israel and the US by Stephen Zunes, (professor of politics at the University of San Francisco).

Gaza: Our common humanity It's time to resist the hate, greed and fear that permeate our hearts and our world, says Pregs Govender as she dissects the politics

"Indeed, were it not for misguided Israeli and American policies, <u>Hamas</u> would not be in control of the territory in the first place.

"Israel initially encouraged the rise of the Palestinian Islamist movement ... beginning in the early 1980s, with generous funding from the US-backed family dictatorship in Saudi Arabia, the antecedents of <u>Hamas</u> began to emerge through the establishment of entities that stressed an ultraconservative interpretation of Islam, which up to that point had not been very common among the Palestinian population.

"The hope was that if people spent more time praying in the mosques, they would be less prone to enlist in left-wing nationalist movements challenging the Israeli occupation. While (at that time) supporters of the secular PLO were denied their own media or right to hold political gatherings, the Israeli occupation authorities allowed radical Islamic groups to hold rallies, publish uncensored newspapers and even have their own radio station.

"For example, in the occupied Palestinian city of Gaza in 1981, Israeli soldiers - who had shown no hesitation in brutally suppressing peaceful pro-PLO demonstrations - stood by when a group of Islamic extremists attacked and burned a PLO-affiliated health clinic in Gaza for offering family planning services for **women**."

The problem, (Israeli peace activist Uri) Avnery wrote at that time, is that "now, when it seems that this aim has been achieved, they have no idea what to do about the <u>Hamas</u> victor". Since then, the Israeli strategy has been to increase the blockade on the Gaza Strip, regardless of the disastrous humanitarian consequences, and more recently to launch devastating attacks that have killed hundreds of people, as many as a quarter of whom were civilians.

The Bush administration and leaders of both parties in Congress have defended Israeli policies on the grounds that the extremist *Hamas* governs the territory.

Yet no-one seems willing to acknowledge the role the US had in making it possible for <u>Hamas</u> to come to power in Gaza in the first place.

It is a pattern that Africa is familiar with: US intervention that destroys legitimate leaders - the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected prime minister of the Congo and his replacement by men the US and its allies thought they could manipulate. Part of this is a lesson that has not been learnt: Be careful of what you unleash - it may cause destruction beyond imagining.

The second part of the pattern is that those who bear the brunt of reprisals are the most innocent - children. In Iraq, the US initially provided Saddam Hussein with military and financial backing.

When (US President George Bush) and (vice president Dick) Cheney decided on "regime change", massive numbers of children were and continue to be the "collateral damage".

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And what do we do? What do the millions of young people in the US who voted for peace and an end to war, for hope for our planet and for the human race ... what do we all do, to make sure those who cynically manipulate the world into war are stopped, once and for all. It's time to be insubordinate to the hate, greed and fear that permeate our hearts and our world.

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It is possible - there are many examples of people owning and asserting their power. In December 2008, for example, in relation to the crisis in neighbouring Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean Feminist Education Project convened a workshop of Zimbabwean activists and feminists in the region, to share what was happening in Zimbabwe, to reflect, to strategise and to take action. Solidarity is possible, even in the most soul-destroying moments.

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They both want peace - they both want an end to the madness of the occupation and the hate that it spreads.

They know how easily hate can take control of our hearts and minds and they fight against being dehumanised as they work to build peace. The respected Palestinian atheist, Edward W Said, who was born into a Christian family, noted in his book The Politics of Dispossession: "The Zionists came to Palestine, found another people there and then for several decades dispossessed, alienated and brutalised that people, the Palestinians, with the moral approval and support of the West generally and the US in particular.

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009

End of Document



Gaza: our common humanity; Pregs Govender dissects the turmoil in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and offers the voice of solace as a reminder of our nation's troubled past - that hate dehumanises us

Daily News (South Africa)
January 13, 2009 Tuesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9 Length: 1641 words

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Load-Date: January 12, 2009

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<u>AID REACHES DIRE GAZAN BATTLEFIELD</u>

Metro (UK)
January 13, 2009 Tuesday
Dublin Edition

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Section: Pg. 8

Length: 210 words

Byline: ELAINE ENGELER

Body

AID agencies have resumed relief operations in Gaza, but fighting still prevents them from evacuating the sickest people and reaching all those who need help.

The Red Cross brought in seven truckloads of medical supplies, while the UN Relief and Works Agency brought food and other aid to about 10,000 people on Sunday.

But UNRWA spokesman Johan Eriksson said the situation was extremely dire with 1million Gazans without electricity.

The Palestinian death toll since Israel launched its bombing campaign on December 27 has passed 900, while 13 Israelis ten soldiers and three civilians have been killed.

More than 4,000 Palestinians have been injured, including at least 1,419 children and 596 women.

Thousands of Israeli reservists began moving into Gaza yesterday as the military intensified its fight against the *Hamas* militants it blames for the conflict for firing rockets across the border.

About 5,000 soldiers entered the region to back up troops as the Israeli military said the war was entering end game. After meeting Egypts president, Hosni Mubarak, Middle East Quartet envoy Tony Blair said a ceasefire agreement was possible. I am hopeful we can put an agreement together but its going to have to be worked on very hard and its got to be credible, he said.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Pondering about a Pope called Pius

The Jerusalem Post
January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 2871 words

Byline: GREER FAY CASHMAN

Highlight: GRAPEVINE

Body

THE ISRAEL, Britain and the Commonwealth Association started off 2009 on the right foot by having Rabbi David Rosen explain some of the controversy related to Pope Pius XII, whose canonization has been delayed pending investigations as to the role he actually played in World War Two. IBCA's new chairman Austen Science said that judging by the number of people who had come to greet Rosen personally, he did not really feel there was a need to introduce him. Rosen himself said how glad he was to meet so many people whom he had known during various stages of his career.

A leading figure not just in Israel, but in the world at large, in working towards reconciliation between Christians, especially Catholics, and Jews as well as Muslims and Jews, the erudite and eloquent Rosen has a particularly close relationship with the Vatican and is arguably the best qualified person - at least the best qualified Jewish person - to discuss the controversy. The topic was so fascinating that Brenda Katten, the immediate past chair of IBCA, played hookey from the World WIZO conference in order to attend.

Much of the controversy surrounding Pius derives from an inscription at Yad Vashem stating that his record was controversial, but not explaining why. The inscription goes on to state that he negotiated a concordat with the Nazis, maintained Vatican neutrality during the war and took no initiatives to save Jews. For all that noted Rosen, when Pius died both Moshe Sharett and Golda Meir sent telegrams stating that when darkness reigned over Europe, he was one of the few who raised his voice in protest. "What Yad Vashem says is not necessarily wrong," conceded Rosen, "but it doesn't give us all the information." Rosen then proceeded to list some of the arguments of both the defenders and the detractors of Pius XII, and also quoted eminent historian Martin Gilbert, who says that Pius saved thousands of Jews.

- * THIS WAS backed up to some extent by Lenny Maxwell, one of those attending the IBCA luncheon. Maxwell, who served with the British forces in Italy during World War Two, recalled that he and some other members of his unit had met with Pope Pius XII at the Vatican in 1946, at which time the Pope had thanked them for what the British had done during the war. Unlike the others in the group, Maxwell put out his hand instead of kissing the Pope's ring, whereupon the pontiff asked his religion. Maxwell told him that he was Jewish and that his parents were Jewish, to which the Pope responded that he had a lot of Hebrew artisans working for him and that they had been with him for a long time.
- * TRUE PHILANTHROPY, according to Jewish tradition, is bestowed in secret. While much of the outpouring of generosity towards soldiers and residents of southern communities is altruistic and a genuine expression of solidarity, it does not conform with Jewish tradition, in that no-one wants to keep it a secret. Inundated with e- mails

Pondering about a Pope called Pius

from organizations, individuals and public relations firms from all over the country as well as from abroad, journalists are fearful that their computers will crash because of the overload. With rare exceptions, the donors of time, goods, care and other services are terribly disappointed when told that journalists have much more information on moral, financial and physical support activities than they can ever use. However, it would be improper not to mention at least some of them.

Chabad is sending out 'Get Involved' e-mails, with the slogan spread in huge letters across a tank, alongside which a man in a prayer shawl is engaged in prayer. Within the body text is another slogan, 'United we will overcome.' Headlined 'War in Gaza,' the e-mail is intended for people who want to do something but don't quite know what. It offers extensive news coverage of the war, human interest stories, ways in which to write to a soldier, do a mitzvah, send a package, etc.

* Former Miss Israel Nicole Halperin, who is the presenter for Gigi Cosmetic Products, initiated a day of pampering in Tel Aviv for a busload of some 40 <u>women</u> from the South. Participants in the venture included A-Z Hairdressing, located in Tel Aviv's upmarket Kikar Hamedina, which gave the <u>women</u> free hair treatments, manicures, pedicures, facials, eyebrow shaping, permanent make-up et al.

Emunah has launched an appeal to help defray the extra costs incurred in family counseling around the clock for traumatized families; additional youth leaders to care for the emotionally disturbed children in the Emunah Neve Landy Children's Village located within the 40 km radius of fire; extra hours for staff in Emunah children's homes and schools replacing those on reserve duty; and additional expenses incurred by Emunah personnel traveling to work from within the 40 km radius.

- * Hilton Tel Aviv General Manager Ronnie Fortis, on learning that a young couple from the South were urgently seeking a venue for their wedding because they could not have it in the hall near Netivot that they had originally booked, offered them the use of the hotel on the house. Sharon and Gilad Yaacobi of Kibbutz Gevim didn't mind postponing the festivities, but they didn't want to defer the wedding itself. So the Hilton provided a bar of alcoholic and soft drinks, lots of finger food and an impressive wedding cake. The hotel would have been happy to provide a fancy bridal canopy and musical entertainment as well, but the couple wanted a simple canopy held up by their friends and no music. They'll have plenty of music, they said, when the war is over. Then they'll go to the original hall and have a banquet for hundreds of their relatives and friends. As it was, some 100 of their nearest and dearest came to celebrate with them at the Hilton.
- * Motorola President and CEO Elisha Yanay, together with Mirs CEO Abrasha Burstyn, toured Ashkelon and Ashdod and met with Mayors Benny Vaknin and Yehiel Lasri. They also took a close-up look at how Motorola and Mirs equipment operated under emergency conditions. While in the area they made a point of visiting the Barzilai Medical Center where they chatted with soldiers and heard some soul-stirring personal stories. They also brought multi- tray gifts for hospitalized soldiers who had been wounded in Gaza. The trays include a pillow, a reading lamp and a stand for a book or a newspaper. Yanay and Burstyn also brought toys for the children of hospital workers who have to spend time in bomb shelters while their parents are at work.
- * THE EL AL Board of Management headed by CEO Haim Romano visited areas in the South to promote a little morale among people in the travel industry as well as to meet with mayors and assure them of their support. In addition to the mayors of Ashdod and Ashkelon, they also met with David Bouskila, the Mayor of Sderot. The warning siren was sounded while they were in Sderot, and they were quickly hustled into the bomb shelter, learning first hand what it is like several times a day for residents of Sderot to receive a rocket alert. Romano promised Bouskila that El Al would continue to support Sderot and as a symbol of this pledge gave him a model of a 777 aircraft.

Businessman Haim Pinchas, who was born in Ashdod, and who inter alia owns the Coliseum Club in Tel Aviv, decided to invite 3,000 youngsters from Ashdod to come and enjoy themselves at the Festigal in Tel Aviv. The tickets cost him NIS 150,000, but he thought it was money well spent.

* AMERICAN ASSOCIATES of Ben-Gurion University have launched a \$10 million BGU-Negev Emergency Fund to address the growing crisis at the University and surrounding Beersheva community due to the Gaza conflict. BGU

Pondering about a Pope called Pius

Board of Governors Chairman Roy Zuckerberg of New York and Carol Saal of Palo Alto, California are leading the effort.

- * SEVERAL BUSINESS people are 'adopting' merchants from the south of the country and giving them space in their own enterprises to sell their wares. One such person is Tomer Goldberg, the proprietor of the Horkonos Cafe in Tel Aviv, who via Keren Shemesh, which encourages young entrepreneurs aged 20 -35, invited Eitan and Meital Ankri, from a moshav in the vicinity of Ashkelon, to come and sell their baked goods on his premises. Among the customers who eagerly snapped them up was super model Shiraz Tal.
- * CRITICISMS LEVELLED at Israel in recent days were not forthcoming from a 10 member delegation of the Parliament of Europe, as well as of national parliaments in Europe that met with President Shimon Peres on Thursday night. The meeting was initially delayed by the late arrival of the group and further delayed because Peres was on the phone speaking to French President Nicholas Sarkozy. Peres also left abruptly in the middle of the meeting to speak to another political leader, but did not disclose who it was.

Led by Elmer Brok of Germany, who is a member of the European Parliament, the delegation included European Parliament members Nicolay Mladenov, Bulgaria; Ryszard Czarnecki, Poland, and Corina Cretu. Romania, along with Richard Mellie, Claude Goasguen, Patrick Beaudouin and Marcel Bonnot of the French National Assembly, Dennis Ducarme of the Belgian National Parliament and Marie Cecile Royen, a Belgian journalist traveling with the group.

Brok told Peres that the delegation had come at short notice to see the situation at close hand and to report back to the European Parliament, as well as to the national parliaments in their respective countries. "We want to ensure a secure state of Israel," he said.

The delegation visited Sderot and came away with an understanding of the security problem, said Brok, who reiterated "the security of the State of Israel is our number one priority."

Goasguen made it clear that the delegation understood that <u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organization which is responsible for the present situation, and that Israel had no choice but to respond to <u>Hamas</u> attacks.

Charging that <u>Hamas</u> prevents the creation of a Palestinian state, Peres said that Gaza should be under Fatah authority. There was absolutely no reason for <u>Hamas</u> to attack Israel after Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and the dismantling of settlements, he said. Gaza was free of an Israeli presence and the passages were open. Yet <u>Hamas</u> decided to fire on Israel and continues to do so.

Alluding to those who find fault with Israel's response, Peres queried: "What would the reaction be in London, Paris or Bonn if 90 missiles a day were fired at them?"

He also made the point that <u>Hamas</u> uses children as human shields, mosques as arsenals and hospitals as hiding places. "If they win," he warned, "it will be a catastrophe for the whole world." He described <u>Hamas</u> as "fanatic and irresponsible," and declared that if <u>Hamas</u> does not respect the call for an end to terror, "we will continue to defend ourselves."

Israel already has a million people in shelters he said, and has no intention of putting the whole population in shelters.

He wondered aloud whether those people demonstrating against Israel's operation in Gaza could stop the firing of missiles if Israel put a halt to its retaliation. "What we did in 10 days took other nations years to do," he said.

* IN OCTOBER, 2006, Robert Rosenberg, successful author, internet pioneer, social activist and journalist who once worked for The Jerusalem Post, died of cancer. A month later, at the invitation of his widow Sylvia, scores of his friends and acquaintances gathered at a night club on the Tel Aviv Port to pay tribute to him in song, poetry and reminiscences. It was the kind of send-off that he would have enjoyed if his spirit had been hovering around to take note. Unfortunately, the beautiful, vivacious and dynamic Sylvia Rosenberg, who had often freelanced for The Jerusalem Post, writing about fashion and interior decor, was also stricken with cancer soon afterwards, but did not

Pondering about a Pope called Pius

tell her friends just how sick she was. In fact, after undergoing treatment, she pretended that everything was fine. While Robert had been sick for a long time, giving people a chance to come to terms with the fact that his illness was fatal, Sylvia died suddenly, a little under a month ago.

Her passing was a terrible shock and many of those who would have wanted to honor her by attending her funeral were informed too late to be able to do so. For that reason, some of her friends have organized a memorial evening to be held next week on Thursday, January 22 at the Herzliya Pituah home of cartoonist Ya'akov Kirschen and his artist wife, Sali Ariel. The evening will be similar in many respects to the memorial that was held for Robert.

* THE TURNOVER in visiting dignitaries including presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, defense ministers, et al is so frequent that occasionally one gets mixed up, which is what happened to your faithful scribe last week, when commenting on the visit of Czech Foreign Minister Karl Schwarzenberg at the head of a European Union delegation.

While it was true that his previous visit to Israel last month was at more or less the same time as that of Austrian President Heinz Fische, he did not, as was published in error, accompany him.

Of course no journalist likes to make mistakes, but the best way to find out who is reading the column is to occasionally err. Czech ambassador Michael Zantovsky, who used to be a journalist himself and knows the pressure of heavy deadlines, was fairly understanding when he called to point out the faux pas, and didn't even ask for an apology - just a correction.

* THOSE PEOPLE who have tried to portray former Meretz leader Yossi Beilin as an ignoramus on Jewish heritage, typical of the Tel Aviv left, might be surpised to learn that until age 25, he was religiously observant, praying daily, donning phylacteries and even leading the synagogue services and reading the Torah portion of the week for the congregation. He stopped being observant during the Yom Kippur War, when so many of his friends and students fell in battle, but did not lose his love for the Bible, the Talmud or the Mishna, which he continues to study to this day.

As his mother Zahava Beilin was a Bible scholar and broadcast twice a week on radio talking about the Bible, Beilin imbibed the Bible with his mother's milk.

The story came to light last week when Beilin appeared on Dov Elboim's 'Welcoming the Sabbath' program on Channel One. Elboim, who comes from an even more religious background, has also had a lapse in faith, but who has not forsaken his love of Jewish teachings, had a wonderful time with Beilin because, in a sense, they were both on the same page - a factor that made for excellent entertainment, and enabled viewers to see a different side of Beilin not only in terms of his grasp of Torah, but his enthusiastic interpretations of it. The program is pre-recorded, and after Beilin, Elboim invited Big Brother celebrity Shifra Kronfeld. That particular episode was recorded at Beit Avi Hai in Jerusalem, and soon after the new celeb's arrival, scores of her fans broke into the premises, and when they found their path blocked stormed the windows, begging her to come out and give them her autograph. In the final analysis, the regular security detail at Beit Avi Hai had to be augmented to facilitate the dispersal of the people who wanted to get close to Shifra. Such is the price of fame.

- * IF SINGING Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach were still alive today, he would be celebrating his 84th birthday. Yehuda Katz, lead singer of Reva L'Sheva, who frequently appeared with Carlebach in the US, Europe and Israel, is hosting tonight, together with his wife Michelle, a Carlebach memorial jam session in which other musicians who played and sang with Carlebach will bring their instruments to the Katz home in Ramot and join together in bringing out the sweetest Carlebach harmony.
- * WAR OR no war, life goes on and many of the activities that people engage in during peace time continue even in war time. A public auction of Israeli art to benefit cancer research was conducted by Meni Pe'er at the Hamam in Old Jaffa. Haim Katzman, chairman of the Cancer Door Knock Appeal, invited art lovers and people concerned about cancer to come and buy. Among those who attended were MK Ophir Pines-Paz and his wife Orly, Leon Recanati, Chairman of the Israel Cancer Association, and his wife Dr. Shula Recanati, Haim and Edna Romano, Ronen and Vered Ashkenazi, Tammy Mozes, Danny and Orna Brenner, Ishai and Shira Davidi, and of course

Pondering about a Pope called Pius

Katzman and his wife Dr. Shulamit Katzman. In addition to the original works of art, there were albums of 12 signed prints selling for \$3600 per album. As is his usual practice, Haim Romano, in his capacity as EL AL CEO, produced two business class tickets to New York for the raffle. Raffle tickets usually sell at somewhere between NIS 10 - NIS 25, but this time anyone wanting to participate in the raffle had to part with \$300. Proceeds from the event amounted to \$50,000.

* AN EXPENSIVE bottle of perfume still remains one of the most popular gifts that a man buys for the most important woman or <u>women</u> in his life. Singer and composer Zvika Pick is no exception. While in Eilat, he picked up a bottle of Linga Sharira for his significant other, lanky model Shira Manor. The price tag: NIS 799.

Graphic

3 photos: MODEL SHIRAZ TAL and friends give support to merchants from the South. EL AL CEO Haim Romano with Mayor of Sderot David Bouskila and Sderot police station commander. GILAD and Sharon Yaacobi thank Hilton General Manager Ronnie Fortis

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



A fight, too, over David and Goliath

The Toronto Star January 11, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A19

Length: 596 words

Body

For almost all of their history, Jews have identified with the biblical David who, in defence of his people, defeated the mighty Goliath with a simple slingshot. Today Jews, particularly those living in Israel, are more likely to be compared to Goliath who confronts the new David - the Palestinians. Reports about the war in Gaza often make this point.

Even some Jews, though relieved at no longer having to wander the world in their quest for survival, are nevertheless distressed when Israel is styled as the Goliath-like bully of the Middle East and not the "light unto the nations" that the Hebrew prophets foresaw and the founders of the state hoped for. It seems the Jewish <u>women</u> who last week staged a sit-in at the Israeli consulate in Toronto to protest Israel's action in Gaza hold this view.

For most Jews, however, the extermination of a third of the Jewish people by the Nazis made it obvious that only normal existence in a sovereign state could ensure our future. The Holocaust thus became the final, albeit tragic, argument in favour of the establishment of Israel.

The overwhelming commitment to Israel by Jewish communities everywhere reflects this consensus. But two minority groups see things differently. First, many ultra-Orthodox Jews maintain that the only legitimate role of the Jew is meticulous observance of all laws as they interpret them. Nothing else than patient waiting for messianic redemption can guarantee Jewish continuity.

The second group consists of Jews who maintain that total integration into Western society is the answer. In their view, Jews are to be the exponents of the ethical, not the ritual, aspects of their tradition. Whereas the ultra-Orthodox envisage the Jew as the perennial outsider, the other fringe group sees the Jew as the prototype for all humanity. Whereas the ultra-Orthodox advocate maximum isolation, the others want assimilation. Both wish to retain the image of young David.

Many anti-Semites like this image. Even though they despise advocates of isolation - "the cliquey Jew" - and exponents of integration - "the pushy Jew" - they seem to be less troubled by them than by the alleged transformation of the Jew into Goliath. Perhaps their consolation is the biblical tale about the sorry end of the giant in the hope that soon the same will happen to the "new Jew" of Israel.

This framework may be helpful to those who try to understand and assess the current reactions to yet another war Israel is fighting. As much as the media seek to acknowledge that Israel didn't start it and that no sovereign state can allow terrorists relentlessly to bomb its citizens, they still speak of Israel's "disproportionate" response and the humanitarian tragedy that only it - never <u>Hamas</u> - is creating. Many calls for a ceasefire seem implicitly to begrudge Israel its right to defend itself.

A fight, too, over David and Goliath

Jews who believe in either of the two cited versions may share this view. But the majority, both in Israel and outside, believe Israel had to confront *Hamas* and that any other country would have acted with even less regard for the humanitarian tragedy. Though I anticipate the usual spate of invective responses, I'd like to think that the thoughtful reader will recognize the problem.

I derive comfort from the fact that history and mythology see David not as taking the place of Goliath after defeating him but as the sensitive and pious author of the Book of Psalms who sought to defend his people as their king, albeit a flawed one.

Dow Marmur is rabbi emeritus at Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple. His column appears every other week.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009



'Free Gaza' boat en route with 16 journalists on board. Reporters from Sky News, CNN, BBC attempt to circumvent IDF ban

The Jerusalem Post January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 587 words

Byline: ABE SELIG, AP contributed to this report.

Body

Mounting their fifth attempt to enter the Gaza Strip by sea, the Free Gaza group - an organization of pro-Palestinian activists that opposes the ongoing blockade of Gaza - departed Cyprus on Monday, carrying humanitarian supplies, doctors, lawyers and 16 journalists from international news organizations.

Reporters from Sky News, the BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera and Spain's El Mundo newspaper are among some of the boat's media-affiliated passengers.

Israeli authorities have maintained a general blockade of the Gaza Strip, which includes naval access, since <u>Hamas</u> wrested control of the territory from the Palestinian Authority in June 2007. Israel has also prevented foreign journalists entering Gaza from Israel since it launched its assault on <u>Hamas</u> there 17 days ago.

A spokesman for CNN's Jerusalem bureau told The Jerusalem Post on Monday that the CNN employees on board - a reporter and cameraman from Italy - were there as "journalists only" and would fulfill their role as objective observers as the boat made its way into Gaza.

A female employee from Sky News echoed that position, telling the Post, "We go wherever the story takes us."

This is the second time since the beginning of Operation Cast Lead that protesters from the Free Gaza group have tried to break the blockade. Last month, the group's boat turned back after being damaged when it collided with an Israeli vessel.

Free Gaza organizers accused the Israel Navy of ramming the boat, but officials said the collision occurred when the protesters' boat tried to outmaneuver the Israeli vessel.

This time, a 20-meter, Greek-flagged boat is carrying 36 passengers, including doctors and Greek, Belgian and Spanish lawmakers, as well as dried food, flour, baby formula, diapers and medical supplies. It is expected to enter Gaza waters on Tuesday.

Free Gaza organizers said they had notified Israeli authorities of the trip.

The IDF told the Post on Monday that all responses to the possibility of another attempt by the group to enter the Gaza Strip were being handled by the Foreign Ministry. A response from the Foreign Ministry had not been made available by press time.

'Free Gaza' boat en route with 16 journalists on board. Reporters from Sky News , CNN , BBC attempt to circumvent IDF ban

Free Gaza members expressed uncertainty as to what the Israeli response would be, but said they were carrying on nonetheless.

"I can't anticipate what the Israelis are going to do, but I know we won't be turned back easily," said Free Gaza organizer Huwaida Arraf. "If they ram us again or use force against us, it will be nothing less than a premeditated attack against a defenseless boat."

Arraf said organizers had been told that Israel had sent a message to Larnaca authorities saying the boat would be turned back.

Greek Socialist party deputy Sofia Sakorafa, 51, said she was fearful but wanted to show solidarity with those who were suffering.

Dubai-based eye surgeon Ali Dabbagh, 54, a Palestinian raised in Glasgow, Scotland, said he planned to work in Gaza for four weeks. "I'm not afraid," he said. "There's more fear of me looking back in the mirror and seeing someone who hadn't done anything."

Free Gaza spokeswoman Angela Godfrey-Goldstein told the Post on Monday evening that she was worried for the well-being of her colleagues, and said that their choice to continue with the journey was nothing less than "risking their lives."

"They are that committed to what they believe in," Godfrey-Goldstein said. "On other voyages, people have been prepared to risk their lives. But on the other hand, I don't know what the government is thinking now that they've seen the list of passengers."

Graphic

Photo: ACTIVISTS WORK yesterday loading boxes of medical supplies aboard a vessel set to sail to the Gaza Strip from Larnana, Cyprus. (Credit: Petro Karadjias/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Vent line

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia)

January 12, 2009, Monday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P8B

Length: 546 words

Body

- -To the venter who actually had the gall to claim that there is no Al-Qaida in Iraq: There are very few Al-Qaida operatives there now, after our brave troops cleaned up the place. It's truly amazing how totally out of touch with reality you liberals are. You may want to examine your own attitudes against the liberation of millions of people. Why are you so opposed to it?
- -Obama promised to bring our troops home, but I seriously doubt it. Politicians will tell people anything to get elected.
- -Yes, the Democrat party brought us Social Security and other programs. Only thing today's Democrats have in common with the ones of yesteryear is the name of the party. Today's Democrats have ruined the Social Security program by turning it into another welfare program for people who haven't paid a dime into it.
- -To the venter who refuses to admit how hateful Sarah Palin was during the campaigns: I'm sorry that you won't admit how horribly she behaved. Her entire demeanor, the way she spoke to reporters, her way of talking about Barack Obama and anything Democratic was awful and she's supposed to be a Christian. If that's Christianity, I don't want anything to do with it.
- -There is a natural gas leak in front of my neighbor's house. I called Mountaineer Gas the week before Christmas and they came out and found the leak and said they couldn't get to it right now and that they had thousands of leaks like this to take care of. Who is paying for this?
- -So some liberal judge says that teachers don't have to take a drug test and we are supposed to support it. No way. I don't care what any judge says, if teachers don't have to take a drug test, then nobody should. They teach and are responsible for our children end of story.
- -To the wannabe sports expert saying WVU shouldn't have lost to a Conference USA team: Early in the season East Carolina had an experienced senior-laden team. WVU was starting freshmen and sophomores in their first game. It wasn't coaching that lost the game. It was lack of experience.
- -Let me get this straight. It's OK for <u>Hamas</u> to fire into Israel unprovoked, OK to use roadside bombs, OK to hide weapons in mosques and use <u>women</u> and children for shields. But 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.
- -I'm not a teacher but admire them greatly. I have no opinion on the drug-testing issue, but nobody took prayer out of the schools. You can pray silently and should often. Somebody took discipline out of schools but I don't think it was the teachers.

Vent line

- -I'm really tired of venters saying that we'll rue the day Obama gets in office. I see no other reasons why people say that about Obama other than his name and his skin color. Have you been asleep for the last eight miserable years? I'm very glad that McCain, another angry, war-eager Republican, didn't get in office. John McCain and Sarah Palin were the scary ones, not Barack Obama.
- -You can't be pro-life if you're pro-war. I've seen the bumper sticker: Abortion stops many beating hearts. What do you think war does? It not only kills those who enlisted, but it also kills innocent children, babies and adults. Why is that acceptable to people who call themselves pro-life? Why is war more humane to you?

Load-Date: January 13, 2009



Close US bases call by MPs

Gulf Daily News January 14, 2009

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Length: 618 words

Byline: MOHAMMED AL A'ALI

Body

OUTRAGED MPs in Bahrain yesterday demanded that all US military bases in the region be closed, in protest over Israel's onslaught in Gaza.

They voted to seek help from other parliaments to create a united front seeking the closure of bases throughout the Arab world.

MPs also voted to put an urgent request to the government to reopen the Israeli Boycott Office, closed as a condition of Bahrain's Free Trade Agreement with the US.

They also drew up a new condemnation of the attacks, saying a similar statement issued two weeks ago was too soft.

MPs also condemned the "silence" of Arab leaders, saying it amounted to tacit approval for Israel's actions.

MPs voted at their weekly session to send aid to Gaza out of parliament's budget, the figure for which will be set later.

They also urged the government to increase its aid to the besieged Strip, where hundreds of men, <u>women</u> and children have been killed in the onslaught.

A parliamentary delegation is set to visit the <u>Hamas</u> political office in Syria, while two thank you letters will be sent to Turkish Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, for their stand in support of Gaza.

Parliament is also to write to international and regional parliament associations and federations urging them to take action.

MPs praised His Majesty King Hamad for holding an urgent Cabinet session last Thursday to discuss the Gaza situation.

Close US bases call by MPs

They called for punishments to all hotels and nightspots which went ahead with New Year's Eve celebrations, despite orders from His Majesty to stop concerts in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza.

MPs also demanded the immediate release of Palestinian parliament president Dr Aziz Al Dowaik, of <u>Hamas</u>, from prison in Israel.

The Arab Parliamentary Federation is planning to take the case to the International Court, based on a request from Bahrain.

But a move to nominate Dr Al Dowaik as the winner of an award for the top Arab parliamentarian, instead of Bahrain's parliament chairman Khalifa Al Dhahrani, resulted in a stalemate vote.

Mr Al Dhahrani is tipped as the favourite to win the award, as he is backed by all GCC countries, in addition to other Arab countries.

MPs stood for a minute's silence at the beginning of the session, wearing pro-Palestinian scarves and with placards in front of their desks depicting Israel's atrocities.

Parliament's Palestinian Support Committee chairman Nasser Al Fadhala said that Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni must be happy with Arab leaders' silence.

"Israel is using unsanctioned weapons, as Arab leaders give their approval to what's going on with their continued silence," he said.

"Livni is happy with their silence, because without it, they wouldn't have killed so many people in Gaza, or be able to continue."

"While Arab leaders are quiet, non-Arabs like Erdogan and Chavez are doing their best to highlight the case and ask for action against Israel."

He said American military bases had to be closed, because they were a potential threat.

"They are not here to protect us, they are here to protect and serve Israel, which is testing American weapons on the Palestinians," said Mr Al Fadhala.

"One day those bases will be used to kill us, considering that the US would do anything for Israel and Arab people are and will always be a target."

Al Wefaq MP Jalal Fairooz blamed the Arab world for doing business with Israel and the UN for failing to act.

"There is no stand against Israel despite its breach of international conventions, simply because of US protection," he said.

"The Arab world is also to blame, considering that BD1.5 billion of Israel's revenue comes from their pockets, as 300 companies operate in Arab countries."

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Load-Date: January 20, 2009



Conventional news sense is nonsense

Sunday Times (South Africa)

January 04, 2009

MainBody Edition

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Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 593 words

Byline: Andrew Donaldson

Body

Conventional news sense is nonsense

I HAVE a dreadful confession. I've been mired in this business for more than a quarter of a century and yet I've just discovered I do not understand journalism's principle commodity; I have no news "sense" whatsoever.

This may be old hat to colleagues. They've no doubt suspected this for years now, but personally speaking, the realisation came as something of a shock. It was, you could say, news to me.

It began innocently enough. I recently rewatched Geldof in Africa, a BBC documentary series made in 2005 to focus attention on the continent at the time of the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland.

Now, I know it's fashionable to loathe Bob Geldof. Local filmmakers, in particular, despise him for this eloquent series and how it has simplified apparently complex issues about poverty, trade and famine. His worst crime, of course, is that he is a foreigner who has made effective television about stuff in their own back yard.

Anyway, in an episode highlighting the plight of Ugandan children who are abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army and forced to become soldiers and sex slaves, Geldof wonders why an international military force cannot track down LRA leader Joseph Kony and simply kill him.

I know that sounds a bit harsh - rule of law, justice and all that - but Kony is the stuff of Kurtz; way off the map concerning such civilities.

The thought occurred to me: what had happened to the LRA in the four years since that episode was filmed?

I did an Internet search and found they were still very much active and had, according to reliable sources, slaughtered at least 500 civilians in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo as they made their way towards the Central African Republic over the Christmas period. Thousands more have been displaced in the carnage.

One UN emergency worker put it thus: "The villages are getting burnt, the people are getting killed. We are getting reports that all the <u>female</u> bodies found are naked, so we assume they were raped before they were killed. There is a lack of food and there is a danger of a medical and a nutritional emergency in the area."

This is the work of a group that has as one of its declared aims the establishment of a theocratic state based on the Ten Commandments and the traditions of northern Uganda's Acholi tribe.

Conventional news sense is nonsense

Kony, incidentally, has proclaimed himself the "spokesperson" of God - dig, if you will, the alleged non-gender specific political correctness in that - and a spirit medium, primarily of the Christian Holy Spirit which the Acholi believe can present itself in many manifestations including, presumably, stone killer and butcher of children.

What bothered me, though, was that none of this was in our newspapers.

Instead we have devoted all our attention on the violence in the Middle East. Granted, the Israeli offensive on <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza is cause for global concern. But why no mention of events in the troubled Great Lakes region, where Africa's longest-running conflict has now moved into its 21st year?

I entered "*Hamas* Israel" into an Internet search engine on Friday. There were more than 37000 news articles on the conflict. By contrast, a search on "Lord's Resistance Army" found just 1112.

I was puzzled. Surely there's something wrong here, I thought. More people died in the eastern DRC at the hands on the LRA on Christmas Day alone than in Gaza this past week. Why wasn't this in our newspapers? What gives?

But they're Africans, I was told. Surely you should know that they don't count? My God, have you learnt nothing as a journalist?

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



ISRAEL DEFIES WEST AND SENDS IN TROOPS; 10,000 SOLDIER MASS AS BROWN CALLS FOR PEACE Protests held in UK support Palestinians

Sunday Mercury January 4, 2009 First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 22

Length: 579 words

Byline: ADAM ASPINALL

Body

ISRAEL sent gound troops into Gaza last night as it stepped up its military action against Palestinian targets.

More than 10,000 soldiers massed on the border began moving into the <u>Hamas</u> stronghold at around 7pm, with Israeli television broadcasting live images of tanks crossing into Gaza.

The move came as Prime Minister Gordon Brown appealed to Israel to end its military action in a phone call with his counterpart Ehud Olmert.

Despite the Prime Minister's intervention Israeli artillery bombarded the Gaza Strip yesterday as the bloody offensive against the Palestinians entered a second week.

A mosque was struck in attacks in the Beit Lahiya area during evening prayers and at least 10 people are reported to have been killed, including **women** and children.

Last night, a spokesman for 10 Downing Street said: "The Prime Minister has spoken again today to Prime Minister Olmert, and is pressing hard for an immediate ceasefire.

"Rocket attacks from *Hamas* must stop, and we have called for a halt to Israeli military action in Gaza.

"Too many have died and we need space to get humanitarian supplies to those who need them.

"We are working urgently with international partners to address the underlying causes of the conflict, including trafficking of arms into Gaza.

"Action is necessary to reopen the Gaza/Egypt border, but in a way that does not undermine Israel's security. As the Prime Minister has made clear, moderation must prevail."

Thousands of protesters marched through British cities such as Manchester, Hull, London and Glasgow yesterday to denounce the Israelis.

Up to 7,000 people marched along the Embankment in central London towards Trafalgar Square.

ISRAEL DEFIES WEST AND SENDS IN TROOPS 10,000 SOLDIER MASS AS BROWN CALLS FOR PEACE Protests held in UK support Palestinians

Some of the protesters in London were chanting "Free, free Palestine" and "Israel terrorists" while others allegedly threw a firework at police officers.

In Whitehall, hundreds of shoes were thrown at the gates of Downing Street, echoing the protest of an Iraqi journalist who recently threw his shoes at US President GeorgeWBush.

Campaigner Shobhana Mukhi, from Beirut, said she had brought along a pair of trainers to throw because: "I wanted a physical sign of protest, people can talk about the numbers who attended, but if there's a physical representation of all of the shoes, then it sends a louder message.

"I would have liked there to have been many more - if everybody on the march had thrown a shoe, it would have been a much louder demonstration."

Israel's government has said it is defending its citizens from Palestinian rocket attacks, but scores of civilians have so far been killed in air raids on the heavily populated Gaza Strip.

It launched the offensive after Palestinian rockets were fired into Israel's southern regions, breaking a six-month truce.

But Lyndsey German, of the Stop the War Coalition, said Israel's actions were not "a defence measure."

She said there would be "tens of thousands" of people in London alone in the protest and this "is just the start of the campaign."

The UN has reported that some 2,000 Palestinians have been wounded since the airstrikes began last Saturday. More than 400 people have been killed including 60 civilians - 34 of them children.

Four Israelis - three civilians and one soldier - have been killed by rockets fired into Israel from Gaza, which have hit towns up to 25 miles from the narrow coastal strip.

Both sides have so far resisted international calls for a ceasefire.

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Graphic

ATTACK: A Palestinian man surveys the damage to the American International School after it was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike in the northern Gaza Strip

MARCH: Protests outside the Egyptian Embassy in London

ARTILLERY: An explosion from an Israeli airstrike

Load-Date: January 4, 2009



Ongoing attacks on Gaza - Thousands call for Middle East peace

Irish News

January 12, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 12

Length: 630 words

Byline: John Manley

Body

Thousands of people gathered in Belfast city centre on Saturday to hear Church leaders, trade unionists and politicians call for an end to violence in the Middle East.

As Israel's bloody bombardment of Gaza continued, a crowd estimated by organisers to be around 5,000 strong marched down Royal Avenue and Donegall Place to a rally outside City Hall.

Organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the event was addressed by representatives of the north's four main Christian Churches, Belfast lord mayor Tom Hartley and ICTU assistant general secretary Peter Bunting.

Among the protesters were prominent republicans such as Brighton bomber Patrick Magee and Maze escapee Bobby Storey.

Also there was convicted Basque bomber Jose Ignacio 'Inaki' de Juana Chaos.

Speakers at the rally condemned violence by *Hamas* and Israel and called for an end to the conflict in Gaza.

Donal McKeown, auxiliary bishop of Down and Connor, told the crowd - which included families with children - that young people in Gaza were the victims of a wider conflict.

"We know what it is like to live in a war situation," the Catholic clergyman said.

"We know from our bitter experience here that good can never be created from evil.

"Peace is possible in the Middle East if the powerful want there to be peace."

Church of Ireland representative Archdeacon Billy Dodds and Methodist Church representative Rev Derek Johnson called for an end to hostilities on both sides.

Rev Dr Mark Gray of the Presbyterian Church expressed concern at the levels of violence.

"We must work for the dignity of all people," he said.

Sinn Fein lord mayor Mr Hartley called for an immediate end to the war.

"The full-scale military assault on Gaza has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people, including the slaughter of <u>women</u> and children," he said.

Ongoing attacks on Gaza - Thousands call for Middle East peace

"Our demands today are simple - the war in Gaza must end now."

ICTU spokesman John Corey said trade unionists he represented had given £10,000 in humanitarian aid to the region.

Marchers carried banners from trade unions, Amnesty International, Palestine solidarity groups, the SDLP, Sinn Fein and other republican organisations.

The rally was also addressed by the Muslim Family Association in Belfast and the Peace People.

Unionist politicians had expressed concern over the staging of Saturday's rally but Mr Bunting of the ICTU said divisions in the north should not be reflected in debates on the Middle East.

"There are some politicians who attempt to portray the Israel and Palestine issue as a mirror of the sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland," he said.

"It is our humanity which is affronted by the images from in and around Gaza, not our narrow identities in divided Belfast."

The DUP condemned the march as pro-Hamas.

In Dublin several hundred protesters marched from the Central Bank to the Israeli embassy.

ACTIVISTS TAKE ISRAELI GOODS OFF SHELVES

Some of the protesters at Saturday's peace march in Belfast targeted Marks & Spencer and another city centre shop that had Israeli goods on sale.

At the end of the rally, which was held just yards from Marks & Spencer's Donegall Place outlet, several people entered the premises and began removing goods from the shelves.

"We can confirm that Gaza protesters were in the Donegall Place store yesterday for a few minutes. No product was removed from the store," a Marks & Spencer representative said.

Republican group Eirigi yesterday claimed responsibility for targeting both Marks & Spencer and a shop in the CastleCourt centre.

"One of the key elements that ended apartheid in South Africa was the widespread boycott of South African goods," Eirigi said.

"This is what needs to happen in relation to Israel."

Police confirmed that a number of officers had been called to deal with the demonstrators but no arrests were made.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



NEWS IN BRIEF

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

December 25, 2008 Thursday

1 - Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 6

Length: 225 words

Body

Irish kidnap drama

THE director of an Irish security firm was forced to steal \$2.5 million from his company and deliver it to an armed gang that had kidnapped his wife and daughter, police in Dublin said yesterday. The <u>women</u> freed themselves and raised the alarm -- more than an hour after the unnamed man had handed over the cash.

Gaza truce hopes hit

GAZA Strip militants hit southern Israel with mortars and rockets yesterday, burdening diplomatic efforts to revive a truce that expired at the weekend. Two militants were killed when explosives went off prematurely. <u>Hamas</u> said the strikes were in retaliation for the deaths of three fighters in a border clash.

Investor's tragic end

FRENCH investment fund manager Rene-Thierry de la Villehuchet, 65, who lost more than \$2 billion in the \$73 billion Bernard Madoff scandal, has committed suicide in his New York office.

Panda diplomacy

TWO giant pandas settled into a new home in Taiwan after a historic trip from China, in the latest sign of thawing ties between the two rivals. The pandas' combined names of Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan mean ``reunion".

Bush pardons 191

US President George W. Bush yesterday commuted one jail term and granted 19 pardons, including one to Charles Winters, who helped ship arms to Jews trying to found Israel in the 1940s. Winters died in 1984. Bush has now granted 191 pardons.

Load-Date: December 24, 2008



Activist Group Pledge New Gaza Boat Mission

RTT News (United States)
January 8, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 237 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Defying an Israeli blockade, activist group, Free Gaza Wednesday pledged a new boat mission with doctors and medical aid to the beleaguered Gaza Strip this weekend, media reports said.

Free Gaza said that the Greek-flagged Arion will leave the Cypriot port of Larnaca Saturday with 30 passengers and more than three tons of aid and travel into international waters, then directly into Gaza territorial waters, never nearing Israeli waters.

The group said the ongoing Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip have killed over 640 Palestinians, including many children and **women**, and injured thousands.

These acts by Israel are severe and massive violations of international humanitarian law as defined by the Geneva Conventions, both in regards to the obligations of an Occupying Power and in the requirements of the laws of war, it added.

The latest moves came after Israeli forces last week prevented a similar mission from reaching Gaza. The group alleged that the Israeli navy rammed and heavily damaged the SS Dignity in the early hours of Tuesday, December 31, while Israel maintains the boat tried to outmaneuver a navy vessel and crashed into it.

Free Gaza has made five boat deliveries of aid to Gaza since August, defying the blockade Israel imposed when *Hamas* won control of the territory in 2007.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 16, 2010



Christmas shoppers victims of Philippine blasts

Cape Times (South Africa)

December 19, 2008 Friday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 228 words

Body

Two crude bombs packed with nails exploded minutes apart at two stores packed with Christmas shoppers in Illigan in the southern Philippines, killing two people and wounding 48. Muslim rebels have been blamed for similar attacks in the region.

Chinese authorities have curbed visits to imprisoned dissident Hu Jia Jinyan, who was awarded the European Parliament's top human rights award, his wife Zeng said. Her visit was cancelled.

A <u>Hamas</u> spokesperson ruled out renewing the truce in the Gaza Strip and insisted the Palestinian Islamist movement had a duty to respond to any attack by Israel.

Reconstruction in areas of Indonesia's coastline devastated by the 2004 Asian tsunami is nearly complete four years after the disaster, a key group of international donors said.

Two small planes collided in mid-air in Sydney's south-west suburbs, killing two <u>women</u> in their 20s - a flight instructor and a student pilot. Two men in the other plane landed safely.

Time magazine named US president-elect Barack Obama its 2008 "Person of the Year" and praised him "for having the confidence to sketch an ambitious future in a gloomy hour, and for showing the competence that makes Americans hopeful he might pull it off".

Bangladesh troops started deploying across the country ahead of the December 29 election, tightening security amid threats by Islamist militants, officials said.

Load-Date: December 18, 2008



The Australian

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 11

Length: 2577 words

Body

Palestinians reduced to Third World living standards

MOST TALKED ABOUT

GAZA OFFENSIVE

ISRAEL is a wealthy Western country and, for years, the largest recipient of overseas aid in the world. Under international law, the Israelis are responsible for the welfare of all people they forcibly occupy. They have occupied the West Bank since 1967 and controlled Gaza for 38 years until their withdrawal in 2005. During their custodianship they have reduced the living standards of the people in these areas to third world conditions.

Through sanctions, curfews, wholesale land confiscation, repeated bombing of infrastructure, arbitrary detention, an elaborate system of checkpoints and embargoes that totally control the movement of goods, labour, relief supplies and medical treatment, as well as the supply of power, Israel has strangled the economy of the Palestinians making them highly dependent on UN relief.

Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world but, despite this, over the past five years Israel has bulldozed whole suburbs, pushing the already crowded population into more intolerable living conditions. So when Israel talks about the 20Israelis killed by rockets in the past eight years, it is asking us to isolate those figures from the approximately 5000 Palestinians that have been killed in that period. When Israel talks about Palestinians wanting to push Israel into the sea, it ignores the fact that Palestinians have been dispossessed of almost 90 per cent of their land since World War II. Israel trumpets its democracy yet almost half the population under its control don't have a say in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The living conditions in the Occupied Territories are an indicator of the Israeli people's humanity towards their fellow man. The way Israel handles people under its control will ultimately shape Israel's image in history. Israel needs to implement a peace plan based on the 1967 border before it further succumbs to the inevitable corruption that epitomises long-term occupations.

John Haag

Red Hill, Qld

ISRAEL and <u>Hamas</u> are as guilty as each other and should be roundly condemned. They will never live in peace until both sides recognise each other's right to exist. Both sides seem to want to maintain the status quo for their

own unique and selfish reasons. The sooner they realise that they have more in common than not, the sooner there will be a lasting peace. Unfortunately, this will not occur in our lifetime, if ever. Stupidity and ignorance are something that both sides have in absolute abundance. The US should also be an honest broker rather than blindly supporting Israel in the false belief that it is in its national interest to do so.

Brendan Clements

Applecross, WA

JOSEPH Wakim (``Middle East bullies on road to nowhere", Opinion, 5/1) is entitled to his view, but how has he missed the fact that hundreds of missiles fired by his brethren have assailed Israel over many months? At least Moshe Dyan wore a patch to warn he was one-eyed.

Grant Gascoigne

Mitchelton, Qld

JOSEPH Wakim's article supporting a change in Australia's position on the Middle East is conspicuous for its failure to make a case for an alternative policy. Wakim provides no guidance on how Israel or the US or Australia should deal with <u>Hamas</u>. The sad truth is summed up in your editorial of the same date (``<u>Hamas</u> has the power to stop the shooting", 5/1): `` ... an enemy that does not care what happens to the people it rules is a hard foe to force to the negotiating table".

David Gyorki

Melbourne, Vic

CONTRARY to your editorial, arguing about the rights and wrongs of Israel's origins is not a waste of time, because it is the root cause of the conflict. The fact that this has not been addressed and that all peace negotiations are conducted outside the framework of international law in order to avoid having to address the original and ongoing injustice to the Palestinian people, means that the conflict will go on ad infinitum. Israel's crushing of <u>Hamas</u> will not bring it peace, precisely because the rights and wrongs of Israel's origins continue to be swept under the carpet.

Dora McPhee

Parkville, Vic

THE Australian Muslim groups now holding prayer and protest gatherings in support of <u>Hamas</u> and the Palestinians have selective sympathies. Muslims murder fellow Muslims by cowardly bombings on a daily basis in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan (including the murder of young girls for simply attending school) and they remain silent. <u>Hamas</u> ignored repeated warnings by Israel to cease the rocket attacks so they are responsible for the consequences.

Mick Whybrow

Birkdale, Qld

IT is outrageous to claim, as does your editorial (``Israel in not the cause of terror", 3-4/1), that Israel's actions over the past 60 years have been in ``self-defence". Israel's actions over the past 60 years are that of an occupier that seeks to solidify control of occupied territory, its resources and people. Before the firing of rockets into Israel, there was the Occupation. Before the election of *Hamas*, there was the Occupation. Before suicide bombings, there was the Occupation. The expectation that people would roll over and accept occupation is incredible.

Ngaire Aboud

Toowong, Qld

NIMBY stance is the only response to Gitmo request

CONGRATULATIONS on your editorial (``Gitmo good riddance", 5/12) on the Bush administration's request that Australia accept inmates from Guantanamo Bay. It was an excellent piece of penetrating comment.

However, while you reported that the Rudd Government had no intention of taking any inmates, I note from the front page of the same edition of The Australian that the Government would give consideration to any new request from the incoming administration of President-elect Obama. This, I believe, is the Government's fourth change of mind on this matter and, as such, represents a new record in political flexibility which would have earned any previous government the title of ``flip floppers".

Perhaps they were spooked by last week's wedge from Malcolm Turnbull or perhaps Kevin Rudd has recovered from the Christmas spirit and wants to be involved in the issue. Whatever the reason, the power of opinions expressed in editorials such as yours and the fact that the proposal has little appeal for Australians in general, will be hard to ignore and will force the Government to see that the NIMBY stance is the way to go.

John Mitchell

St Kilda East, Vic

TERRY Hicks is reported as saying ``I can't see any difference from Guantanamo people and people we bring in from overseas through the settlement process". So David Hicks went to a holiday camp and not an al-Qa'ida training camp?

Roseanne Schneider

Yeronga, Qld

I ASSUME the somewhat hysterical people complaining about the Gitmo ``terrorists" are the same ones who swallowed the ``children overboard", ``weapons of mass destruction" and other fantasies put out by GeorgeW. Bush and his good friend John Howard.

Many so-called terrorists captured in Afghanistan were sold to the Americans with no evidence of anything against them other than being in the wrong place at the wrong time. If the Americans couldn't find anything to charge them with after torturing them, I doubt we would have much to be concerned about should any of them be resettled in Australia. If there were any justice, those responsible for the illegal invasion of Iraq would be the ones under the microscope.

Margaret Stead

Sorrento, Vic

GITMO inmates would pose a greater threat to Australia than if they were resettled in their homelands or in other Islamic countries. After several years in Guantanamo Bay, they will be even more bitter and hate-filled than when they entered it. Migration patterns indicate that they would settle within Islamic communities in Australia and thus have the perfect setting to infuse an already disaffected community with their hatred. Public opinion on this issue says No, Kevin, No, No and No. Please take notice of our sentiments.

Steve Jeffery

Rockhampton, Qld

The Vatican's big surprise

IN the World section of The Australian yesterday were two stories side by side about the papacy. One described the plummeting numbers of Catholic followers turning up in St Peter's Basilica to see the Pope (``Benedict's lack of charisma shrinking his flock", 5/1). In the second article, a wildly unscientific report from the Vatican says that

oestrogen in what is to the Vatican the great Satan of our times, the pill, is getting into the environment and causing widespread male infertility (``Pill hurting environment: Vatican", 5/12).

Could it be that stories like the second are the cause of stories like the first? That environmental oestrogen is a cause of male infertility is a surprise to scientists around the world, where oestrogen occurs naturally in meat, vegetables and materials. It must be an even bigger surprise in over-populated Asian nations such as China, where soybean, high in oestrogens, forms a large part of the everyday diet. Scare stories like these are all that is left to an organisation that is, in educated society, largely ignored on matters of sexuality. One hopes that one day, the Catholic Church will understand that people enjoy sex for a purpose other than procreation.

Lindsay Wu

Randwick, NSW

WHEN the Roman Catholic church makes pronouncements which drip with ignorance and stupidity and especially misogyny, it becomes clear what kind of society the Vatican really wants. Why don't these blokes in the Vatican go and live with their ``brothers" in mountain-top retreats, away from all things repulsively <u>female</u>? In their absence, the rest of the civilised world can do its best caring for the poor and marginalised.

Anne Cooper

Callala Beach, NSW

JOHN Follain's article attacking the Pope's alleged lack of charisma is arrant nonsense. The UK Sunday Times at this time of year is filled with lazily penned balderdash but that is hardly a reason for The Australian to reprint the same tripe for our consumption.

John Dorman

Carnegie, Vic

An unsustainable argument

PETER Lalor (``Requiem for a heavyweight: A once great team fighting on past glories", Sport, 3-4/1) suggests opposing cricket nations can draw scant consolation from defeating the current Australian Test team, weakened by the retirements of Warne, McGrath and Gilchrist. This is hardly a sustainable argument. As Australia rose from the rubble of the 1980s, having lost Lillee, Marsh and Chappell, to once again dominate world cricket, it eventually faced the following sides: England without Botham, Gower or Gooch; South Africa without Donald or Cronje (and a quota system imposed upon it); New Zealand without Hadlee, Wright or Crowe; the West Indies without Richards, Lloyd, Marshall and Garner to name just a few.

Using Lalor's logic, Australian cricket supporters should have shelved the accolades heaped upon their heroes because the opposition was sub-standard. The international cricket world is justified in exploiting, and indeed enjoying, the demise of the Australian cricket team. It's been a long wait for them, after all. Australian cricket has been very reluctant to invest in its youth.

Crispin Walters

Chapel Hill, Qld

GRAEME Smith and his team deserve the accolades they are receiving for the cricket they have played on this tour of Australia. Captains Smith and Ponting and all their players are to be congratulated for the high standard of onfield behaviour in a Test series where no quarter was asked, or given.

This summer I have enjoyed picking up newspapers and reading analyses on the state of play and the implications that struggling form could have on the Test careers of heroes from Australia's recent golden era. This is much more enjoyable than reading about who might have said what to whom in on-field sledging.

Martin McGready

Canberra, ACT

You've aged me 10 years

I DON'T disagree with everything Peter van Onselen says about the ageing of the federal Coalition (``Coalition benches clogged with MPs who are old and in the way", Inquirer, 3-4/1) but he does somewhat stretch the evidence to fit his conclusions.

For example, he claims I am aged 60. Though prematurely grey in the service of my party, the claim is untrue. My age -- 50 -- is in fact only slightly greater than the mean age of federal MPs.

Gary Humphries

Senator for the ACT

Work a tonic for mentally ill

ONE of the most important factors in combating the effects of mental illness is stable and meaningful employment. It is also true that employers often discriminate against those with mental health issues when making hiring decisions. We therefore welcome the Rudd Government's \$41 million commitment to supporting the long-term unemployed, with particular recognition of the needs of those with mental health conditions (``Rudd puts \$41 million on table for long-term unemployed", 5/1).

All businesses, large and small, can play a significant part in recovery for the one Australian in every five who will experience mental illness. It is encouraging to see that the Rudd Government has recognised this fact and is taking appropriate action.

Fred Kong

CEO, The Richmond Fellowship of NSW

FIRST BYTE

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If we took any Gitmo detainees, would we have to provide two burly carers for each one to help them to walk?

Barry Lamb

Cairns, Qld

Small grocers' shops that don't introduce unit pricing (``Corner stores to duck unit pricing'', 5/1) will be giving customers yet another reason to shop at supermarkets that do.

Norm Neill

Darlinghurst, NSW

So Graeme Smith has a broken metatarsal, has he? (``Clarke, Johnson pummel tourists", Sport, 5/1). I was sure he was

hit on the hand, not the foot? Try metacarpal as a more likely bone for Johnson to have struck.

Tony Milln

Kyneton, Vic

Greg Soulos (Letters, 5/1) is right about one thing: scratch a climate change sceptic and you are likely to find someone opposed to government interference. Conversely, scratch a true believer and you are likely to find some devout totalitarian loser desperate to be told what to do

and think.

Mike Alder

Nedlands, WA

Oh, the irony. Your story ``Airlines blast `dishonest' exit tax" (2/1) has the airlines ``slamming the Rudd Government's failure to rule out an increase in the departure tax". Yet until very recently the airlines continued to impose a ``fuel surcharge" even though their fuel costs had fallen to less than when the surcharge was introduced.

Craig Welch

Bellthorpe, Qld

A big thank you to the TV program directors for forcing me to read some very good books in 2008.

Taffy Morgan

Acacia Ridge, Qld

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Egyptians struggle over response; Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far

The International Herald Tribune December 31, 2008 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 1014 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: EL ARISH, Egypt

Body

Nadim Audi contributed reporting.

*

Egyptian ambulances have brought at least 43 wounded Palestinians from Gaza to the general hospital in this southern city, with 15 of them needing mechanical respirators to keep them alive, said Muhammad al-Gabr, a doctor who has been trying to keep them alive and get them to more sophisticated surgical hospitals in Cairo.

Nine remained here Tuesday, including a young boy. They all were in critical condition with blast and fracture wounds, and Gabr hoped to medivac them out Tuesday night. "The doctors in Gaza are very talented," he said with some admiration. "They've had a lot of experience."

He said that as far as he knew all the patients sent here were civilians.

He said he felt he was trying to do his part for Gaza, though he recognized that Egypt and its longtime president, Hosni Mubarak, faced a difficult political dilemma - needing to show solidarity with the Palestinians under attack while refusing to open the border between Egypt and Gaza to anything but carefully monitored humanitarian missions, like the 30 ambulances this reporter saw Tuesday heading toward Gaza.

"Gaza was part of Egypt if you go back in history, so there is a special feeling," Gabr said. "But we don't look at borders this way. We are helping the people."

But some here, where an important part of the economy is based on smuggling food, supplies, weapons and explosives to Gaza, feel that Egypt 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."

Open criticism of Mubarak was rare Tuesday in southern Egypt, where the landscape and the architecture are nearly identical to that in Gaza. There is a heavy presence of police, military and secret police, the Mukhabarat, and numerous checkpoints along the roads on the way to Rafah, which has been declared a military zone.

Egyptians struggle over response Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and his ally, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, have called on Egypt to open the barriers to Gaza and the Egyptian people to break them down. But Mubarak's forces have already clashed with Palestinians trying to leave Gaza, and he has said that the border would remain closed.

Egypt would only reopen the Rafah crossing when the Palestinian faction <u>Hamas</u> reconciles with the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and allows him to reassert his authority over all of Palestine, including Gaza, Mubarak said Tuesday in a nationally televised speech.

"We in Egypt are not going to contribute to perpetuating the rift by opening the Rafah crossing in the absence of the Palestinian Authority and European Union observers," as called for in a 2005 agreement opening Rafah that was negotiated with Abbas, Israel and the United States.

Mubarak condemned Israel's "savage aggression," said Israel's "blood-stained hands are stirring up feelings of enormous anger" and called for an immediate cease-fire.

But in a riposte to Arab critics who live at a distance, 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." He told the Palestinians "to restore your unity" and said he had warned <u>Hamas</u> leaders that ending the six-month truce with Israel would bring new Israeli attacks.

Bakr, the war veteran, refused to believe it when told of Mubarak's speech. "Mubarak could not say something so wrong," Bakr said. "The Palestinians are his brothers."

There have been attacks, meanwhile, on Egyptian diplomatic missions in Beirut and in Aden, Yemen. Egypt will act as host of a meeting Wednesday of Arab League foreign ministers before a summit meeting on Friday in Doha.

Muhammad Ahmad, 25, who owns the Farha(Happiness) dress shop, said he felt that 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."

Hassan Salem, 22, said he and Khaled Kamal, 25, had traveled the 35 kilometers, or 20 miles, from Rafah to this seaside city "to look at young <u>women</u> and to rest my head." Kamal said that when the Israelis were bombing near Rafah to try to destroy the smuggling tunnels that run between the Egyptian and Gazan side of the once-unified city, "we were almost knocked out by the noise."

Everyone in Rafah has family on both sides of the border, Salem said. "So there's a lot of worry - everyone on both sides of Rafah is worried."

They sat in a tea shop, eyes glued to Al Jazeera and its nonstop coverage of the wounded and dead in Gaza, with a special focus on two dead sisters, 4 and 11, shown lying in shrouds side by side.

"When you see small children dying like that, why did they die?" Kamal said passionately. "What did they do?"

Both were careful in discussing the tunnels, but 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."

Salem said that all Arabs should help the Palestinians, but he was less clear about how.

As for Egypt, he said that Mubarak was "doing all he can to help them." Kamal remembered how <u>Hamas</u> blew up the border between Gaza and Egypt last year, and how the first days of celebration were followed by resentments and the denuding of southern Egypt of goods meant for Egyptians. "After three days, there was nothing left for us to buy," he said.

Egyptians struggle over response Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far

The military men in Rafah, 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."

Load-Date: December 31, 2008



Candals lit in gaza protest

The Gloucester Citizen January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 235 words

Body

Candles were lit in Gloucester city centre yesterday in an attempt to raise awareness about ongoing troubles in Gaza.

Led by the Gloucester Peace Group, people came together to stand in solidarity against the Israeli-Hamas conflict.

People of all ages from pensioners to a sleeping baby carried banners and handed out information and laid out candles to spell the word Gaza.

Joan Perkins from the Peace Group said the event in Eastgate Street had seen a good turn-out of protesters.

She said: "We are here to raise awareness. We want people to be aware of what is going on and hope something can be done about it.

"There were many members of the regular Peace Group that meets here in Gloucester once a month and we have also had tremendous support from the Muslim community, especially the *women*."

Fellow member David Perkins said: "The communication between the two communities have become very strong over and we stood together with a common concern about the current situation."

At the end of the vigil both Christian and Muslim prayers were read.

The event was in advance of a Peace march which will be held in Gloucester on Saturday.

People from across the South West will march to call for an end to violence.

Images of people in the region enduring heavy Israeli bombing inspired Safiya Abdullah to organise the rally which will start at Shire Hall in Westgate Street at 11am and make its way to Eastgate Mall.

Load-Date: August 21, 2009



Egyptians struggle over response; Sympathy for their 'brothers' apparently goes only so far - Correction Appended

The International Herald Tribune December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Correction Appended

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

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Correction

An article 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 3, 2009

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Middle East

Cape Argus (South Africa)
January 05, 2009 Monday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 969 words

Body

I Strange how the our local Jewish community who supported the apartheid regime are now also in support of Israel's murderous slaying of innocent civilians. They have become so audacious that they even label Tutu a liar for condemning Israel's human rights record. Shame on them!

I The anger in the Muslim world is palpable. The initial blockade and this current invasion of Gaza may just be the spark that topples those corrupt Arab regimes siding with the US/Israel axis - N Omar

I The Jews came from Europe en masse and stole Arab land. They must go back to Europe and create an Israeli state in Germany where the Holocaust occurred!

I Does Allah (peace be unto Him) approve of Muslims inciting hatred and murdering others?

I Why is Meshal, the leader of <u>Hamas</u>, in "exile" in Syria? He should have been in Gaza if he were worth anything, sharing responsibility for his rocket-firing policies.

I To Mr Gentile, we are not only Muslims in Palestine, we are also Christians. All with inter-religious family ties. - Sam

I I totally agree with Gentile. The whole world condemns Israel for the attack on Palestine but forget that the Palestinians are directly responsible for thousands of Jewish lives lost through what they call Jihad. Muslims are ordered to kill the "infidels" in the Qur'an. Mohamed(PBUH) ordered Jews to be killed in Medina more than 1 000 years ago. Regrettably lives are lost, but no matter what anyone says, God gave the Jews that land, as prophesied in the Holy Bible. - Gentile for Jews

I So, Gentile, reading your SMS, I assume you feel Israel has every right to murder people ill equipped to defend themselves? I refer to **women** and children. - Sumaya C

I Why don't those corrupt Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, stop the supply of oil temporary until those cowards (Israelis) cease to bomb from the air? - Solly

I Rabbi Yisroel Weiss, an anti-Zionist Jew, spoke in front of 6 000 mosque worshippers. His message: Zionism is a political entity and has nothing to do with Judaism, which is a pure faith. It (Zionism) must be disbanded peacefully and we must encourage dialoque between peace-loving Jews and Muslims and Christians. Zionism is bound to fall.

Middle East

I All Israel will achieve is more hatred and more calls to wipe out the state of Israel. How does this create security for Jews in Israel and everywhere else?

I If you want an end to the war in Gaza, then tell <u>Hamas</u> to stop firing rockets. Why pick on Israel? They are the defenders, <u>Hamas</u> are the aggressors. - Rob Gould

I We salute Helen Suzman, who was an anti-apartheid fighter. She was against racism and by nature against Zionism, which is based on the same principles of apartheid.

I As a tribute to a wonderful lady who would not have wanted an official funeral but rather have spent the money on homes, I would like to see her bench in Parliament, as she sat alone, engraved with her name.

I I am all for the Klopse Carnival as a traditional spectacle and tourist- attracting event. Unfortunately, it has become a huge disruption in the lives of city dwellers, going on for weeks and weeks, causing chaos and unpleasantness, and is not done justice by the arrogant, belligerent and selfish attitudes displayed by too many of the people associated with it! I say hold the carnival in all its glory on the first three days of the year and then give the city its streets back!

I Why is it that the family politics of Jake White's wedding be published? Surely they deserve privacy and it is no one else's business what his children are feeling and what they did on the day. Cut the families of public figures some slack please!

I My daughter had yet another cellphone stolen out of her bag - this time at FTV cafe. She reported it to the manager, who didn't give a fig! Says it happens all the time. She phoned her cell number a few times and the thief had the gall to answer!

I Although by no means well-off, I give R25 every month to the SPCA to feed an animal! I challenge other animal lovers to do same. Don't talk, do. - Lucille

I Beware of TV adverts which say SMS whatever, because one can hardly read the cost of responding. For example it says R5 a day or R10 a week and then you have to unsubscribe to a number which is hardly visible and it says errors will be charged for. So if you find your air time has disappeared, don't wonder why. These ads should be stopped or hidden costs high-lighted!

I How can we call ourselves proudly South African when we expect others to pick up our trash after a fireworks display? Or our soft drink and liquor bottles at the beach after a day in the sun? If you can carry your stuff to picnic or braai spots or the beach, why don't you take them home with you in the same bags? Stop complaining that there aren't enough bins. We always take a few black bags with us wherever we go and take our trash home with us.

II had lunch with my family at Canal Walk's Spur. I must say the condition of their crockery is pathetic!

I wonder if the supermarkets advertising "special offerings" in the Cape Argus realise how much it peeves country-dwelling folk to read "except in ... Oudtshoorn, George, Mossel Bay ". - Boet

I Why does Pick n Pay not just lower their prices at the shelf instead of including coupons in newspapers since it does not benefit the poor as they do not buy newspapers. In any case, many shoppers usually forget their coupons at home, so who actually benefits?

Thanks go out to all the police and other essential services people who were on duty over the festive season. Your work and efforts resulted in a very pleasant and generally crime-free period. We could finally have some fun in the sun. The only people complaining are those who drink too much and normally spoil it for others. So thanks very much. The majority of families are truly grateful and wish you all well in 2009.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



How many more?

The Scotsman

January 7, 2009, Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 1

Length: 1031 words

Byline: Brian Ferguson

Body

ISRAEL last night took a step back from all-out war in Gaza after agreeing to a United Nations plan to suspend some attacks and open an "aid corridor" into the stricken territory.

Ehud Olmert, the prime minister, signalled an apparent softening of his stance just hours after an Israeli bombardment left at least 30 civilians dead at a UN-run school, sparking international outrage.

There were also hopes last night that Israel might be prepared to accept a ceasefire proposal put forward by France and Egypt to bring the escalating conflict to a halt.

The school attack was seen as a major setback to the Jewish state's attempts to win the PR battle over its Gaza incursion. Hundreds of Palestinians had sought safety in the building when it came under attack yesterday.

Many <u>women</u> and children were reported to be among the dead after shells struck outside the Fakhura school in the Jabaliya refugee camp, leading to renewed international demands for an end to the bloodshed. The Israeli army claimed two *Hamas* militants were among the dead and accused the group of using civilians as human shields.

Under last night's plans tabled at the UN Security Council in New York, Israel would suspend attacks in some areas of Gaza to allow civilians access to supplies.

While Israel had not responded to calls for a complete ceasefire in the early hours today, a statement from Mr Olmert's office said the proposal to create an aid corridor had been accepted to "prevent a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip".

Israel insists it has allowed enough supplies into the territory during 11 days of conflict, but the UN says there is already a crisis there because of shortages of food, fuel and medicine.

In the school attack, three mortar shells landed at the perimeter of the building. As well as the dead, 55 people were injured.

The explosions - which resulted in shrapnel being sprayed over victims inside and outside the building - marked the second Israeli attack on a UN-run school. Earlier, at least three Palestinians were killed when a school was hit in the Shati refugee camp.

How many more?

Outside the Fakhura school, the target of the second attack, bodies could be seen scattered on the ground amid pools of blood, while torn shoes and clothes littered the scene.

Fares Ghanem, an official at Kamal Radwan Hospital, said: "I saw a lot of <u>women</u> and children wheeled in. A lot of the wounded were missing limbs and a lot of the dead were in pieces."

Majed Hamdan, a news photographer, said he reached the scene shortly after the attacks, and stated that many children were among the dead. "I saw <u>women</u> and men - parents - slapping their faces in grief, screaming, some of them collapsed to the floor. They knew their children were dead," he said.

"In the mortuary, most appeared to be children. In the hospital, there was not enough space for the wounded."

John Ging, the top UN official in Gaza, said: "There's nowhere safe in Gaza. Everyone here is terrorised and traumatised.

"I am appealing to political leaders here and in the region and the world to get their act together and stop this," he said. "They are responsible for these deaths."

In a statement, the Israeli army said an initial investigation had found "mortar shells were fired from within the school at IDF [Israeli Defence Force] soldiers. The force responded with mortars. The <u>Hamas</u> cynically uses civilians as human shields".

However, hospital officials insisted they had not seen any gunmen among the casualties.

It was the deadliest attack since Israel sent ground forces into Gaza last weekend. The assault has left nearly 600 Palestinians dead.

The rising death toll has drawn international condemnation and raised concerns of a looming humanitarian disaster in Gaza, which is home to 1.5 million people.

Many Gazans are without electricity or running water, thousands have been displaced from their homes and food supplies are running out.

"This is not a crisis - it's a disaster," said Munzir Shiblak, an official with Gaza's water utility body. "We are not even able to respond to the cry of the people."

A senior UN official in Gaza said 350 people had been sheltering at the Fakhura school and the UN gave the Israeli army exact co-ordinates to protect them from attack.

UN staff estimate that 15,000 people have fled to 23 of its schools that have been turned into makeshift refuges.

The school deaths in Gaza took the number of Palestinian civilians killed yesterday alone to 77, according to medical officials.

Earlier yesterday, Israel said it would not stop the overall assault until its southern towns were freed from the threat of Palestinian rocket fire and there were guarantees *Hamas* would not restock its weapons.

The growing number of civilian casualties could prove to be a turning point in Israel's "Operation Cast Lead", which was launched on 27 December.

The killing of 28 unarmed Lebanese during Israeli bombing of the village of Qana in the 2006 Lebanon war drained foreign support for its campaign against Hezbollah guerrillas. Israel said it had not known civilians were in the area.

Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister, last night

said the situation in Gaza was a "humanitarian crisis", and went on: "This is the darkest moment yet for the Middle East and it affects the whole of the world.

How many more?

"It's because of that we must get humanitarian aid that we are promising in."

The US state department said it wanted an immediate ceasefire but stressed it would not alter its stance that it must be sustainable and indefinite.

Meanwhile, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, said he supported a proposal by Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, for an immediate truce between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza. The plan was also backed by the United States last night.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, said he would travel to Israel and the Palestinian territories next week, adding it was vital to reach a ceasefire in Gaza before then.

Barack Obama, the US president-elect, said he was "deeply concerned" about civilian casualties in Gaza.

United Nations officials pleaded with world leaders to unite in a bid to end the carnage, while the International Committee of the Red Cross warned of a "full-blown humanitarian crisis".

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Protest elsewhere

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A13; Inbox: Your Space - Your Time

Length: 202 words

Byline: Platoon Werbicky, Calgary Herald

Body

Re: "Thousands gather in protest of Israeli offensive in Gaza," Jan. 4.

If there is one thing that bothers me, it's all the demonstrations against Israel for defending itself. These people come to Canada for a better life and all they do is cry about what is going on with the life they left. It's just another example of people coming here out of convenience rather than wanting to become Canadian. I do not feel sorry for anyone in Gaza. They may not belong to *Hamas* or Hezbollah, but by keeping silent they might as well belong.

The Arab terrorists have always hidden among civilians, knowing perfectly well some of these civilians will get killed.

They are trying to use a sympathy card with the rest of the world. If they feel this collateral damage is acceptable, so be it. Don't cry to me about the dead **women** and children because it's you who allowed this to happen.

There's a commercial about spousal abuse that states if you keep quiet about the problem, it's like encouraging the problem. Same with the Palestinians in Gaza. If you want to protest what's going on in Gaza, get on a plane and go protest where the terrorists are so I don't have to watch you parading down our streets.

Platoon Werbicky,

Calgary

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Made in Canada

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
January 7, 2009 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: Q: QUERIES - QUIBBLES - QUIRKS; Pg. A13; Inbox: Your Space - Your Time

Length: 239 words

Byline: Syed Soharwardy, Calgary Herald

Body

Friday, I attended a rally in front of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's constituency office to protest Israel's attacks on Gaza. After the rally ended, I saw many people walking toward their vehicles with Palestinian flags and placards condemning Israel for killing innocent children and **women** in Gaza.

Some of them had parked in the Jewish centre's parking lot, across from the Glenmore Landing shopping area. Some of them had to walk a little farther in the residential area, which is a very strong Jewish neighbourhood. They had parked in front of houses. I saw many onlookers, most probably Jewish, watching protesters walking through their neighbourhood. Some of them even smiled.

I enjoyed this scene more than the protest rally. I said to myself, I wish the Israeli government and <u>Hamas</u> officials could see this scene --Palestinians and Muslims walking through a Jewish neighbourhood condemning Israel openly while the people in the Jewish neighbourhood with very strong support for Israel remained peaceful. Pro-Palestine demonstrators walked through a pro-Israel neighbourhood in peace and without fear. I asked myself, why people cannot behave the same way in the Holy Land? My heart replied, this is Calgary. This is Canada. There is no place like Calgary and Canada. May God bring peace for every human being on Earth. Amen.

Syed Soharwardy,

Calgary

Syed Soharwardy is an Imam and founder of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Candals lit in gaza protest

The Gloucester Citizen January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 235 words

Body

Candles were lit in Gloucester city centre yesterday in an attempt to raise awareness about ongoing troubles in Gaza.

Led by the Gloucester Peace Group, people came together to stand in solidarity against the Israeli-Hamas conflict.

People of all ages from pensioners to a sleeping baby carried banners and handed out information and laid out candles to spell the word Gaza.

Joan Perkins from the Peace Group said the event in Eastgate Street had seen a good turn-out of protesters.

She said: "We are here to raise awareness. We want people to be aware of what is going on and hope something can be done about it.

"There were many members of the regular Peace Group that meets here in Gloucester once a month and we have also had tremendous support from the Muslim community, especially the *women*."

Fellow member David Perkins said: "The communication between the two communities have become very strong over and we stood together with a common concern about the current situation."

At the end of the vigil both Christian and Muslim prayers were read.

The event was in advance of a Peace march which will be held in Gloucester on Saturday.

People from across the South West will march to call for an end to violence.

Images of people in the region enduring heavy Israeli bombing inspired Safiya Abdullah to organise the rally which will start at Shire Hall in Westgate Street at 11am and make its way to Eastgate Mall.

Load-Date: June 11, 2009



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The Gloucester Citizen January 9, 2009 Friday

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Section: Pg. 11

Length: 235 words

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Load-Date: January 10, 2009



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; Pg. A-5

Length: 653 words

Body

GUV'S CAREER STALLED, NOT ENDED

Regarding "Governor shelves D.C. hope" (Jan. 5): Setback? No, courageous. The application for CDR Financial Products had been submitted prior to the monies to Moving America Forward. The process involves a merit system in order to be hired, not one that any person can interfere in, including the governor. This is only a slight delay before our governor can be in a position to aid President-elect Obama and a positive for us in New Mexico to have him with us a bit longer.

Victoria Murphy

Santa Fe

Gaza concerns grow

As someone usually critical of Israel, it is distressing to see the nearly universal condemnation of Israel's incursion into Gaza. There is no country that would ignore the constant threat to its citizens by a neighboring state shooting rockets across the border, and in this case, Israel's patience has been extraordinary. While we all mourn the loss of civilian life, it is a fact that *Hamas* has made a practice of firing rockets from, and hiding munitions in, mosques and among the civilian population, endangering the very innocents whose lives are being lost. It has become evident that there is no solution to this conflict, and that Elton John is correct when he states that only the universal abandonment of organized religion will bring peace to the world.

Caroline Cassagnol

Santa Fe

In his Jan. 4 letter, "Never-ending cycle," Brian O'Keefe compares the American Indians to the Palestinians. He forgets that, while the European colonialists had no historical connection whatsoever to America, the Jews became a people in what later became known as Palestine. Also, nobody gave a choice to the American Indians to establish their own state. The United Nations voted in 1947 to establish two independent states in Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish. The Jews accepted the partition. The Arabs did not. Had they accepted the U.N. plan, today their independent state would have been 60 years old, side by side with Israel. Today, <u>Hamas</u> is not fighting to end the occupation. It is fighting to end the existence of Israel. That is why Israel reacted as any other state would have. Mr. O'Keefe's comparison is totally incorrect.

Jacob Amir. M.D.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Santa Fe

We're culpable in the Gaza genocide, and we provided the killing machines -- Apache helicopters, F-16s, bunker-buster bombs. President-elect Obama promises Israel more military aid (up to \$3 billion annually). Nor can we say we didn't know this time. Hideous online pictures and videos scream barbaric atrocities inflicted on Palestinian civilians -- men, <u>women</u> and children;

15 mosques destroyed; schools and an Islamic university flattened; paramedics and ambulances targeted by Israeli troops. Look in the mirror, America. We've been there, done that -- in Iraq. Or are we too "shocked and awed" to remember, or to hold ourselves (and our leaders) accountable in this ethnic cleansing, along with our proxy, Israel? As a nation, we just blocked a cease-fire to this carnage in the U.N. Security Council. What will the Obama administration do to help bring peace to the Middle East? That's the only change I can believe in.

Linda Epton Wenrick

Santa Fe

All of the elation I experienced on Nov. 5 has been erased -- wiped away by the sound of bombs destroying the Gaza Strip, the cries of innocent <u>women</u> and children, the sounds of genocide committed by a country with no regard for international law, funded by America. My pride in America has been replaced by a deep and abiding shame that the U.S. alone has refused to condemn Israel for violations of the Geneva Conventions, collective punishment, targeting of civilians, ignoring the obligations of the occupying power and refusal to allow even the most necessary humanitarian supplies into Gaza. We are culpable. We are complicit. And until we stop all military aid to Israel and demand an end to the genocide in Palestine, the blood is on our hands.

Elena Ortiz

Santa Fe

Graphic

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

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



Region rallies to raise funds for Gaza

Financial Times (London, England)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: MIDDLE EAST FOCUS; Pg. 11

Length: 653 words

Byline: Abeer Allam in Riyadh and Simeon Kerr in Dubai

Highlight: News Analysis

TV networks and websites provide a focus for giving, write Abeer Allam and Simeon Kerr

Body

Until two years ago, public fundraising in the Arab world was a limited phenomenon. Most charitable donations were channelled either through private networks or religious institutions. And Arab governments, stung by criticism that their citizens had channelled money to extremist groups such as al-Qaeda, were nervous of such gifts.

Israel's 2006 invasion of south Lebanon, however, changed that as Arab satellite television channels raised public outrage and provided the focus and technology for money giving. Now, two years on, the business of raising funds for the beleaquered Palestinians of Gaza has become better oiled.

Citizens across the region are organising through TV programmes and social networking websites in order to donate millions of dollars to Palestinian causes.

Following the start of Israel's military offensive into the Gaza Strip, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia quickly donated SR30m (\$8m) in emergency aid to the Palestinians and ordered a national fundraising campaign that began on January 3. Saudi state TV showed thousands of Saudis and Palestinian expatriates, including men, <u>women</u> and children wearing the black-and-white chequered keffiyeh, giving money and other items. <u>Women</u> donated jewellery, a businessman offered to buy 30 ambulances and cars were handed over.

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, the high-profile businessman, gave \$1.3m.

Up to SR96m was raised in 11-hour telethon, all intended to provide medical equipment and medicine.

On the streets, activity has been muted. Gulf governments in general are suspicious of <u>Hamas</u>, the militant group that controls Gaza and whose fighters are the main target of Israel's incursion. A rally in support of the Palestinians was well supported in Abu Dhabi on Saturday but one in Dubai was poorly attended, according to witnesses.

In Qatar, which has an Israeli representative office but which is also close to <u>Hamas</u>, the authorities permitted a small demonstration following Friday prayers. In Oman, passions surrounding the attacks on Gaza reverberated round the Gulf Cup, the biannual regional football championship currently being held in Muscat. There, fans have interspersed team chants and pledges of solidarity with the Palestinians.

But in Saudi Arabia, the ministry of the interior rejected a request by activists to organise a rally in support of the Palestinians, saying that protests were against the law, according to Mohamed al-Qahtani, an activist.

Region rallies to raise funds for Gaza

In this latest round of fighting, websites have played a pivotal role, coordinating groups of young people who pray or donate money to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the Red Crescent Society and other relief organisations.

Many Palestinian supporters have changed their website profile pictures and descriptions to read "Support Gaza" or "We are all Gaza", or to show the Palestinian flag. Members of such websites urge others to donate money because that is "the least we could do", as one Facebook user wrote.

In Dubai and Jordan, Aramex, a regional logistics and courier service, is leading a fundraising campaign with a large retailer to collect and deliver medicine, food and other aid to Gaza.

Collection points have been set up at outlets of the Majid Al Futtaim company, such as the Mall of the Emirates and Deira City Centre. The aid is being delivered via the officially monitored Hashemite Charity Foundation, based in Jordan.

Aramex has responded to previous disasters in its core area of operations across the Middle East and south Asia, such as the Asian tsunami, earthquakes in Pakistan, the 2006 invasion of Lebanon and previous Palestinian intifadas.

But Fadi Ghandour, Aramex's chief executive, says that the response to the Gaza initiative has overshadowed these previous efforts.

"The feedback has been overwhelming, not only in contributions, but in volunteers coming to work with us in our warehouses in Jordan and the UAE," he says.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



My son is a reservist in the Israeli army. He is a gentle person . . . but he had to do his best to defend Israel; A SCOTTISH MOTHER'S STORY

Sunday Herald

January 11, 2009 Sunday

FINAL Edition

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sundayherald

Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 595 words

Byline: JOHN BYNORTH

Body

EVELYN goes to bed every night lying next to a framed photograph of her smiling son, Adam, proudly wearing the unmistakable bright green beret of the Israeli Defence Force.

The Glasgow mother, who has three other sons and a daughter, finds sleep almost impossible as the guilt kicks in over the ifestyle she enjoys while her 24-year-old Scottish-born-and-bred son waits to find out if he will be called up to the war in Gaza.

Adam is a reservist like hundreds of other young people who have completed their compulsory military service in Israel, where he moved to be closer to his Jewish faith in 2006.

Evelyn, 56, a local government clerical worker who doesn't wish to be fully identified in case she suffers ill feeling from the public, is proud of his desire to serve Israel.

Adam worked at a fruit-growing kibbutz near the Lebanon border before signing up for the army after leaving Glasgow in 2006.

He is studying business at a college where he lives in an Israeli seaside resort.

Evelyn told the Sunday Herald: "Usually they do three years, but because Adam had already started his course, they said he could do two years of training, and he chose to become a combat soldier.

"Every young man once they complete military service are reservists and can be called up at any time until they are 45. All his friends are still serving which makes it quite hard for Adam.

"I am like all mothers, from whatever side.

Nobody wants their children to go into war or become a soldier."

My son is a reservist in the Israeli army. He is a gentle person . . . but he had to do his best to defend Israel A SCOTTISH MOTHER'S STORY

Evelyn denied that Adam left with the "specific purpose" of becoming an Israeli soldier, but once he realised it was his duty, he threw himself into his tasks and was last year closely involved in the arrest of a pro-Israeli terrorist who later confessed to training a suicide bomber to kill his fellow citizens.

She added: "This man had caused the death of Israeli citizens and trained and motivated a suicide bomber. I asked if he felt hatred.

He replied 'I don't feel hatred, just immense relief that we caught him .'

"He was also involved in searching homes for arms on the West Bank. He found arms in the homes of so-called "ordinary citizens". He also manned border check-points, searching Palestinians who were coming in and out of Israel to work.

"Sometimes I phoned him while he was doing that and it was the strangest feeling as I could hear him asking people to open bags which could be carrying bombs.

"I felt very frightened at the sort of things he was involved in, but that's what goes on there. We don't realise it because we live very sheltered lives in Scotland."

Evelyn said that many people in the UK don't understand the situation; BBC coverage of the conflict was "biased" against Israel and that anti-war protestors, including George Galloway and Annie Lennox, should first understand that Israel's existence has been threatened by years of attacks from <u>Hamas</u> and other pro-Palestinian militia aimed at innocent people.

She asked: "Is it really any different [from the Gaza invasion] when <u>Hamas</u> targets innocent people, including <u>women</u> and children?"

She added: "Adam is a gentle person. He is not capable of feeling hatred. He had to do his best to defend Israel.

"I keep reassuring myself that Israel wouldn't exist if it wasn't for all the parents like myself, who allowed their kids to go there, because it has been fighting for survival since it was born 60 years ago."

But Evelyn reflected: "The bottom line is that my heart bleeds for people on both sides. I am very optimistic a solution will be found and that in time, goodness will prevail, and a ceasefire will be achieved."

Graphic

Calling of faith: Adam, born and bred in Scotland but a reservist in the Israeli military

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



No one has the right to murder

Pretoria News (South Africa)
January 08, 2009 Thursday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9 **Length:** 619 words

Body

Anger and emotion is running high following the death of hundreds of Palestinians and the injury of many more. Israel started a series of air strikes on Gaza more than a week ago and a ground invasion got underway at the weekend. This is in response to rocket attacks from *Hamas*.

The majority of those killed by Israel are civilians - men, <u>women</u> and children. Locally, we have seen a number of protests.

The United Nations (UN) has once-again shown the world how toothless it is. It has failed hopelessly to bring an end to the bloodshed. It could not even agree on a statement calling for a ceasefire.

US President George W Bush says Israel is within its rights to attack Gaza because it has to fight "terror." The Israeli Defence Force has killed more than 600 people and the body count is rising by the hour. Do you call this tit for tat?

The world cannot sit back and watch the madness continue. Those countries that condone the attack on Gaza have blood on their hands. Israel cannot be above international law.

A few weeks ago, in response to the Mumbai attacks, I argued that the killing of civilians can never be condoned be it in the name of the war on terror or terrorists themselves. But, it appears, it is okay for some countries to kill civilians if it is done by governments like Israel who have the military muscle and the support of the US. It's shocking.

The attack by Israel on civilians is nothing more than terrorism. No sensible person can ever say Israel is within its rights to attack Palestinians when you see the innocent lives harmed. Mosques, schools and even a shopping area have been attacked.

In South Africa, Muslims and Jews work closely together. Religious leaders meet regularly and try to find common ground. But, the latest developments in the Middle East have caused some tension.

We must also be cautious when we generalise. I heard a comment by a Muslim the other day saying all Jews should be punished for the Gaza attacks. I am sure there are some within the Jewish faith who feel the same about Muslims.

No one has the right to murder

Let's not forget that Muslims who kill innocent people do not represent the entire Muslim community. The same applies to the Israeli attacks. Not all members of the Jewish faith support Israel's attack and it's wrong to place blame on all of them.

Former Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils among others, for example, is a Jew who has compared Israel to the apartheid government. Therefore, be very careful before you generalise.

The reality is that the people of Palestine are being harassed, intimidated and imprisoned on a tiny strip of land.

Why is Israel not allowing the media into Gaza? They are obviously afraid because the world would see the truth.

Let it also be placed on record that rocket attacks or suicide bombs by Palestinians which kill innocent civilians can never be condoned. It is wrong, just as the Israel government is wrong in attacking innocent civilians.

However, the time is long overdue for an independent Palestinian state to be created. <u>Hamas</u> was elected democratically.

There needs to be a ceasefire immediately. The humanitarian crisis is horrendous. The borders of Gaza should be opened without delay to allow the free flow of medical supplies and food. The world cannot sit back.

The South African government has condemned the violence. Cosatu and other groups have also been very vocal in their support of the Palestinians. Some have even called on South Africa to cut all economic ties with Israel. This should now be seriously considered.

n Yusuf Abramjee is Group Head of News and Current Affairs for Primedia Broadcasting, owners of Talk Radio 702, 94.7 Highveld Stereo, 567 Cape Talk and 94.5 Kfm. He writes this column in his personal capacity.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Wake up or it would be too late to mend

The Nation (AsiaNet)

December 29, 2008 Monday

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Length: 690 words **Byline:** SAJID ZIA

Body

LAHORE - The killings of hundreds of Palestinians at the hand of Israel, has clearly exposed the double standard maintained by the United Nations, United States and European countries towards the Muslims. The UN and US act in unison where the question of killing Muslims arises and by that they both are not only unleashing state terrorism in the world against the Muslims but are also making things easy for America to firms up its hold on resources of the Muslim states, commented lawyers in the City on what most of them said, the holocaust wreaked on the Palestinians.

The way UN and the US have reacted to the killings of Palestinians and their siding with Israel, clearly shows that they are least concerned to protect the Muslims and they wanted to see the Muslims being crushed and curbed, said Member Pakistan Bar Council Hafiz Abdul Rahman Ansari. He said it was pitiable that the Muslim rulers were still not awakened when the anti-Muslim forces had lined up to first weaken the Muslims and then to abolish them one by one. The Muslims should create greater unity and make their joint forums pro-active against what the rival forces have designed against them, he added.

Member Punjab Bar Council Atir Mahmood also resented the Israeli aggression on the innocent Palestinians and posed a query that why America and UN are mum and siding with Israel against a gross terrorist act by her, when in case of Pakistan they took no time to put ban on the public welfare outfits terming them terrorist sponsoring ones. What Israel has done to Palestinians has once again provided opportunity to the Muslims all over the country to take a serious stock of things and understand what game is being executed against them. Atir said this could be possible only when the Muslims would unite to protect themselves and instead of wasting away their means and energy in their internal disputes they would spend the same on understanding the moves of the rivals against them.

President Lahore High Court Bar Association Anwar Kamal and Secretary Rana Asadullah Khan strongly condemned the Israeli bombardment on the <u>Hamas</u> Camp, police headquarters and residential areas which killed hundreds including <u>women</u> and children and leaving injured hundreds others.

They said <u>Hamas</u> had come to power through a democratic process but Israel and America never recognised its government in spite of their tall claims of democracy and sustaining its norms. The Bar leaders said it was notable and regrettable that the whole civilised world condemned the Israeli action but the US never did it which clearly demonstrated that America is out to eliminate the Muslims.

The Bar leaders have also condemned the pro-Israeli statements by the American President and the Secretary of State and counted weakness and apathy of the Islamic world whereof the Palestinians are still deprived of their legitimate state and right to live. They said it was the time that the oil-rich states of the Middle East and other

Wake up or it would be too late to mend

Muslim states must come out of the slumber and adopt solid and concrete measures to check the hand of America and Israel which they said, are one by one reaching out to every Muslim country. They said if Israeli aggression was ignored like the way it was done in the past, the whole Muslims world would continue to be the target.

Chairman Save Judiciary Committee, Abdul Rashid Qureshi condemning the Israeli air attacks on Gaza said had the UN acted to implement its resolutions to settle down Palestinian and Kashmir issues, there would have been no 9/11 in America, nor the American had taken to aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan. He said if the Arab countries continued to keep up the present silence on what has been meted out to the Palestinians, Israel would also not spare them. He called for convening an Islamic Summit Conference on the issue to evolve a common strategy against the collaboration of US, Israel and India against the Muslim states.

He said if the 57 Muslim states hold attack on any of them as attack on all, no one would dare cast an evil eye on them. He also called for establishing a common army of the Islamic states.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Huge melamine toll

The Star (South Africa)

December 02, 2008 Tuesday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4 Length: 689 words

Body

Beijing - China said yesterday that a total of 294 000 children had fallen ill from consuming dairy products tainted with the industrial chemical melamine, with 154 of them still in serious condition. The Health Ministry also indicated the number of dead may rise from the four previously announced, saying six deaths since September 10 may be linked to the melamine-laced milk.

Siegen, Germany - A court has sentenced a mother to four years and three months in prison for killing two of her baby girls and stashing them in the family's freezer - in one case for 20 years. Monika Halbe (44) was found guilty of killing the children, born in 1988 and 2003, by suffocation or neglect. The bodies were found in May by her 18-year-old son, who was searching for a frozen pizza.

Venice - Tourists take photos of each other in the flooded Saint Mark's square. Large parts of Venice were flooded yesterday as heavy rains and strong winds lashed the lagoon city, with sea levels at their highest level in 22 years. Ferry and water taxi services were suspended. The Centro Maree, which forecasts water levels, said sea levels in the Adriatic rose 1,56m - a level not seen since 1986.

Addis Ababa - Teddy Afro, one of Ethiopia's most popular singers, was convicted yesterday of manslaughter and fleeing the scene of a car accident in November 2006 that left a homeless man dead. Afro - real name Tewodros Kassahun - was also found guilty by the federal high court of driving without a permit. He could spend between five and 15 years behind bars.

Geneva - The UN Human Rights Council yesterday condemned abuses against civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially sexual attacks, and called on government and rebel forces to allow humanitarian aid to reach those in need. At an emergency session, the council also backed a stronger mandate for the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC.

London - A 2,5% cut in value added tax came into force yesterday as British retailers geared up for what they hope will be a pre-Christmas shopping rush. The move effectively cuts the price of goods by 2,1% and will cost the government an estimated £12,4-billion in revenue until it is withdrawn in January 2010. To counter the loss, the government put up duties on alcohol and tobacco.

Amman - A Jordanian court has sentenced a man to seven-and-a-half years in prison for strangling his 16-year-old sister in a so-called honour killing. The court said the man had confessed to the police, said he had no regrets and had killed his sister to cleanse the family honour. He strangled his sister after she refused to explain absences from her marital home. It later emerged that she had seen a *female* friend.

Huge melamine toll

Gaza City - The Israeli Navy yesterday turned away a Libyan ship heading to Gaza with 3 000 tons of humanitarian aid, ending the most high-profile effort yet to break a blockade of the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled territory. Gaza's borders have been largely sealed by Israel and Egypt since the Islamic militant <u>Hamas</u> group seized control by force in June last year.

Tokyo - Japan's Sanyo Electric Co yesterday unveiled a new electric hybrid bicycle that can triple the user's pedal power to make it easier to climb hills. Equipped with a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, the "eneloop bike" takes the crossover between a normal bicycle and a moped one a step further, aiming to tap growing interest in tackling global warming.

Beijing - Three rescuers died in a cave-in yesterday while attempting to extract the bodies of 15 miners killed in an explosion at a coal mine in north-east China, Xinhua news agency said yesterday. The rescuers were from a professional mining accident rescue team owned by Longmei Colliery Group in the city. More than 100 rescuers were involved in the rescue operation.

Madrid - Spanish police said yesterday they had arrested 40 people in nationwide raids as part of an operation against Internet child pornography in which 25 000 photographs and over 9 000 videos were seized. Another 35 people who are suspected of owning and exchanging pornographic images involving minors over the Internet were placed under investigation, they said.

Load-Date: December 2, 2008



Secretary of State Clinton

Pretoria News (South Africa)

December 02, 2008 Tuesday

e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 676 words

Body

Chicago - President-elect Barack Obama announced yesterday that his former campaign rival, Senator Hillary Clinton, will be his secretary of state. The incoming president also revealed that Robert Gates would remain as defence secretary, making President George Bush's Pentagon chief his own as he seeks to wind down the US's role in Iraq.

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Secretary of State Clinton

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Load-Date: December 2, 2008



The Jerusalem Post January 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 2209 words

Byline: LARRY DERFNER

Highlight: As missiles land in Rahat, the Beduin capital of the South, a tempered condemnation of Hamas is

prevalent among the country's Arabs

Body

The southern half of the Israeli Arab sector is a wide scattering of poor Beduin towns and tent camps; its "capital," Rahat, lies within rocket range of Gaza, a little over 20 km. away. In November the Islamic Movement's "southern faction" - which, unlike the northern faction, officially recognizes the State of Israel, but which is far from being a Zionist party - took over city hall from Kadima. On Sunday, the second day of Operation Cast Lead, the parking lot and courtyard of the local police department were crowded with extra cops who had been brought in as part of the nationwide security reinforcement in the Israeli Arab sector. In his office, Supt. Eyal Azulay, chief of Rahat police, said the city was maintaining its usual calm.

"There was a demonstration in the central square yesterday, about 400 people were there, but there were no disturbances, no incitement, no extremism," said Azulay. The only sign of violence anywhere in the region was one burning tire left at the entrance of a nearby Beduin village.

The evening before, several hours after IAF jets began bombing Gaza, 10 Rahat tribal sheikhs came to Azulay's office. "They agreed that no one had any interest in violence, and that they would make this clear to everyone in their tribes. One of them said, 'Eyal, if anyone here gives you any trouble, you tell us and we'll take care of it."

Azulay noted that many of Rahat's 52,000 residents serve in the IDF and police. He also pointed out that with a few marginal exceptions, Negev Beduin did not join in the Israeli Arab riots in October 2000, sparking off the second intifada. "There was one incident of stone-throwing at the police station here, and the Beduin themselves got control of the situation." Rahat does have a small "radical element," he said, "but the police and the Shin Bet are keeping an eye on them. On the whole, though, the Beduin have their own tribal interests, they have a different way of looking at things than the Arabs in the North. Rahat is a symbol of tolerance, of coexistence - of all those corny expressions, but it's true."

Theoretically, Rahat was taking part in the nationwide one-day solidarity commercial strike in the Arab sector, but while most shops around city hall closed up, many on the dusty, disheveled streets in the town's periphery stayed open. Unemployed men sitting on the steps of the tall mosques, or outside the little sandwich stands, or in the yards of garages all said the same things: They were pained by the televised images from Gaza, it was just as bad for Jewish children to be killed as Arab children and that, God willing, the fighting would end soon.

Azulay said he and the new mayor, Fayez Abu Sehiban, sent out that message in a joint interview on a Negev radio program. "The mayor said he was sorry for the people being killed in Gaza and for the people under fire in Sderot.

Remember, this is a man from the Islamic Movement." By telephone, Abu Sehiban, a former education official, told me that during the rally in Rahat's central square, "we expressed solidarity with the people of Gaza, and we also demanded an end to the Kassams." The main worry on the minds of Rahat residents is the fate of their family members living in Gaza, he said, adding that phone conversations with relatives there have stopped out of fear that the Gazans' phones are being tapped by Israel.

In the week before the war, said Abu Sehiban, Home Front Command installed air raid sirens in Rahat and instructed city officials on what to do in an emergency. This is a jerry-built town without public shelters. Still, the mayor was confident that "if, God forbid, any rockets fall on Rahat, we will be prepared." The next day, a rocket landed near an Ashkelon building site, killing a construction worker and wounding several others. The man killed was a Beduin from a Negev village, and three of the wounded are Beduin who live in Rahat. "Two of them are relatives of mine," said Abu Sehiban, who visited them in the hospital.

And on Tuesday, a rocket landed at the edge of the city, hitting only the ground, but this was an extremely close call. "The rocket landed about 50 meters from a tin shack. A woman was inside with her seven children," the mayor reported. Since the air raid sirens were installed only in the center of town, the woman and her children didn't hear the warning because they live too far out.

I asked him Tuesday night if this had altered his view. "Just the opposite," he said. "This is all the more reason why I say the Israeli government and *Hamas* should sit down and talk and end the fighting, end the bloodshed. I don't want to see any Beduin getting hurt, I don't want to see any Jews getting hurt and I don't want to see any Palestinians getting hurt."

For all the talk about Israeli Arab radicalization, the level of violence in the air, not to mention on the ground, has in fact gone down radically since those days of rage eight years ago.

Asked why, University of Haifa professor Sammy Smooha, a leading authority on Israeli Arabs, said it was partly because "they remember the very harsh steps the state took in response to the events of October 2000, so they've become extremely cautious about getting involved in any kind of violence or lawbreaking. But also, Israeli Jews make a mistake when they think Israeli Arabs support *Hamas* in this war. Israeli Arabs are opposed to the Israeli attacks on Gaza, which they see as disproportionate. They identify with the Palestinian people, and they empathize with what the people in Gaza are going through. But that doesn't mean Israeli Arabs identify politically with *Hamas* or support their use of violence."

However, because of the strike in the Arab sector, along with the many solidarity-with-Gaza demonstrations, a few incidents of stone-throwing in Galilee, and the furious condemnations of Israel's actions in Gaza by Arab Knesset members, the country's 1.3 million Arab citizens are being watched with great suspicion. The fear among Jews is that Arabs may riot again like they did a couple of days after the outbreak of the intifada.

At that time, masses of Arabs, having watched televised scenes of Palestinian rioters being killed by troops on the Temple Mount, in the West Bank and in Gaza, poured out of their Galilee homes and blocked highways, threw rocks at police and started forest fires while according to the Orr Commission police reacted with often excessive, indiscriminate force. After nine days, 13 Arabs had been killed, along with one Jewish driver hit by a rock. Some police officers suffered minor injuries.

THE NINE-DAY riots began at the highway intersection at the entrance to Umm el-Fahm. Besides throwing rocks at police, the mobs there torched a gas station and an empty bus, then went into the downtown area and burned banks and government offices.

On Monday, day 3 of the IDF operation in Gaza, the TVs on the walls in the cafes and grocery stores in Umm el-Fahm all seemed to be tuned to Al-Jazeera. It was a cold, gray, rainy day, and countermen and customers were watching the scenes of Gazan corpses being carried away, of <u>women</u> screaming hysterically, of crowds running, of jets in the sky, of Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah preaching interminably.

"You go into every house in Umm el-Fahm, every Arab house in Israel, and you'll see people crying," said Abdel Basit Mahajna behind the counter of his grocery store. "Look what they're saying on the news: 330 dead, 1,450 injured," as Arabic text ran across the bottom of the screen.

On one of the alleys in this sprawling, jumbled hillside city, Ali Igbariya, a clothing store owner, stood talking with his assistant outside the entrance door he'd draped in black fabric bordered by little Palestinian flags. Black flags and Palestinian flags were a common sight; the day before, thousands of local residents had marched through these alleys in a show of solidarity with Gaza.

"I stay up until 2 a.m. watching the news," said Igbariya. "I'm an old man, I'm 55, and it tears me up. What must it be doing to my son? He's 16. That's what I'm worried about."

Umm el-Fahm, a city of more than 40,000 in the Arab "Triangle" east of Hadera, is the nerve center of Islamism in Israel. This is the capital of the Islamic Movement's "northern faction;" its charismatic founder, Sheikh Ra'ed Salah, preaches at the taller of two towering mosques at the city's summit, just above the narrow alley where Igbariya's clothing store stands.

"I've voted for the Islamic Movement five times. They do things to help the people. They're loyal," he says. "We're very proud of Sheikh Ra'ed," says his assistant, Muhammad Ahmed Muhammad.

The very name "Umm el-Fahm" fills Israeli Jews with fear; the city is seen as an outpost of <u>Hamas</u>, a place Jews shouldn't enter. And on the third day of the fighting, Igbariya told photographer Jonathan Bloom and myself: "I'm worried about you two wandering around here today. People are really in a horrible mood."

However, except for some idle adolescent boys, no one in the alleys and shops of Umm el-Fahm treated us seemingly the only Jews in sight - with anything but courtesy. The shopkeepers and young men watching Al-Jazeera's coverage had no objection to being photographed. After the noon prayers inside the cavernous Abu Rubeida Mosque, where Salah preaches, two elderly men sitting inside welcomed us in and spoke with us as much as their limited Hebrew would allow. In the clinic downstairs, a devout Muslim nurse in robes and head scarf said the scenes from Gaza "were painful to watch," but she said it shyly, without a hint of accusation against us. Seeing a cut on Bloom's hand, she taped a bandage to it.

On another twisting alley near the top of Umm el-Fahm, a pickup flying a black flag moved slowly forward, and the driver agreed to stop and talk. "No, no, no, no, there's not going to be any trouble like there was back then [in October 2000]. People have more common sense," said Abed Abdel Fattah, a salesman and father of six. He said he put up the black flag after watching "all the scenes of children being killed. I couldn't stand it. But it hurts me the same way when I see innocent Jews killed by Palestinians." While he sympathized with the Gazans and opposed Israel's attacks, Fattah had no complaints about the country's treatment of him as an Arab citizen. "Israel gives me all democratic rights I can ask for," he said. "It just doesn't give them to the Palestinians."

The evening before, a crowd of local demonstrators had gathered at the highway junction down the hill at the entrance to the city, and some threw stones at police. "Those were just teenage boys," stresses Igbariya. "I grabbed hold of my son and told him not to go down there." Otherwise, the solidarity march by thousands in Umm el-Fahm went off without violence. "The mayor gave a speech and repeated 1,000 times that no one should fight with the police or soldiers," added Igbariya, referring to Mayor Khaled Hamdan, a member of the Islamic Movement's northern faction that has long ruled the city.

The October 2000 riots stand in stark contrast to the Arabs' reaction this week to the outbreak of the fighting in Gaza. Except for a few boys hanging around a grocery store who called out "yahoodi, yahoodi" when we walked in (and just as soon walked out), in Umm el-Fahm, the country's most radical Arab city, there wasn't so much as an unfriendly glance aimed in the direction of two Hebrew- speaking Jews carrying a notebook and a camera and asking people's opinions about the war.

Three days into the 2000 intifada, Umm el-Fahm and the entire north were under siege, off-limits, a closed police zone. Three days into the 2008 operation in Gaza, the highway junction at the entrance, after one brief episode of stone-throwing, was empty of rioters and police; the only action was the flow of traffic.

AS NIGHT was falling Monday, a couple of dozen riot- equipped police were passing the time in a muddy field at the side of the Arara junction not far from Umm el-Fahm. "Nothing's happened, we're just part of the security reinforcement," he said. "Just maintaining a presence."

In his grocery store in Umm el-Fahm, his TV tuned to Al-Jazeera, Abdel Basit Mahajna spoke of "watching little children lying there in pieces, their faces burned. Oh God. If Israel were only killing fighters, that would be one thing, but they're killing <u>women</u> and children, too." His voice was rising in anguish. The same change came over Ali Igbariya, the clothing store owner, as he went on about what they were seeing in Gaza. They agreed that the Kassams weren't right, either, that a Jewish victim was no less a tragedy than an Arab victim. Yet because of their ethnic identity, and because it is the Palestinians who are getting so much the worst of this war, the Israeli Arabs' hearts are with Gaza and their resentment of Israel is rising.

For now, that resentment is being channeled into peaceful protest. But if Israeli Arabs are still seeing shattering images from Gaza on their TV screens in the days and weeks to come, their emotions will put their common sense to the test. And then what?

"I don't know," said Mahajna. "This is a disaster. It can't go on."

And if it does?

"If it does, then I don't know what to tell you."

Graphic

8 photos: Rahat, now in missile range. The very name 'Umm el-Fahm' fills Israeli Jews with fear; the city is seen as an outpost of <u>Hamas</u>, a place Jews shouldn't enter. Men in Umm el-Fahm are glued to their televisions, not taking to the streets. Abed Abdel Fattah put up a black flag on his car after watching 'all the scenes of children being killed' in Gaza. Pastoral Rahat's silence was shattered Tuesday by a missile launched from Gaza. A black flag in front of Ali Igbariya's clothing store in Umm el-Fahm. Dozens of riot police at the ready at the Arara junction. So far they've mostly remained idle. (Credit: Jonathan Bloom)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Gaza conflict stirs emotions for Arabs in Israel

The Jerusalem Post November 17, 2008 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 622 words

Byline: BRENDA GAZZAR

Body

As the truce in the Gaza Strip unravels, Arabs in Israel are sympathetic and angry about the plight of the Palestinian residents. But, many say they blame both sides for the deterioration seen in the past few weeks.

Even in Umm el-Fahm, which is known to be a stronghold of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, residents acknowledged what they described as missteps or violations by both sides.

"Israel is very tough on Gaza - at the same time, <u>Hamas</u> isn't blameless for what is happening," said Yasser Farahat, 30, a clothing store employee who lives both in Umm el-Fahm and in Jenin.

"If they had sided with the Palestinian Authority, peace would have continued and these problems against the people of Gaza would have ended," he said.

M'haameed Tawfek, who owns a religious <u>women</u>'s clothing store near city hall, said the situation appeared to be deteriorating more and more in the absence of a lasting peace agreement.

"Each time we go backwards and things become worse from an economic and security perspective in Gaza, and these things breed violence for the new generation," Tawfek, 36, said.

"Every family in Gaza, he said, had lost a relative in the conflict with Israel, "and I think there are people that take advantage of this situation and fire missiles."

In addition to personal revenge, he said, some people encourage violence since they benefit economically from weapons production and smuggling in the poverty-laden coastal strip.

Although Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005, its presence is still felt strongly there via collaborators, restrictions on the entry of goods and supplies and frequent Israeli military operations, he said.

"The two sides need to sit down together, both Israeli and Palestinian, and solve their problems in an official way," he said.

"The only solution is dialogue, peaceful negotiations and a return to the pre-1967 borders," he added

As an Arab Israeli, Tawfek said he sympathized with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza since they were Arabs and Muslims, but said he also felt sympathy when an Israeli was killed by a missile or by a terror attack.

Gaza conflict stirs emotions for Arabs in Israel

"If there is a suicide bombing or a certain operation in Israel, I am affected," he said. "Just as I am affected when it happens in Palestine, I'm also affected when it happens on the Israeli side... Our humanity is affected."

Sheikh Hashem Abdel Rahman, the outgoing mayor of Umm el-Fahm and a member of the Islamic Movement, said notwithstanding the rockets being launched from Gaza, he thought "it is a big mistake" on Israel's part to have launched military operations on militants there in recent days.

"I now blame the minister of defense who decided to go with an operation," he said in a telephone interview. "Israel is a strong state. There was a possibility to handle this in a diplomatic way."

He added that <u>Hamas</u> leader Ismail Haniyeh's recent words to an Israeli journalist about accepting a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders were encouraging and should not be dismissed.

"These are new things that we haven't heard before," he said. But he also stressed that "both sides need to stop" the violence.

"What we need to do now is to stop the military activities and very simply begin to talk."

But many residents of Umm el-Fahm, particularly **women**, declined to comment on the situation in Gaza.

One veiled woman, who works at a spice store and identified herself only as Lubna, insisted that "she doesn't get involved in politics."

"Our situation is sensitive," she explained. "We are not recognized as Palestinians or as Israelis. We are the Arabs of 1948," a label often used by Arab-Israelis to describe themselves. "We sympathize with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, but we can't do anything" for them, she said.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



Rice reflects on the world Obama will inherit; From The New York Times Magazine

The International Herald Tribune November 15, 2008 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1940 words

Byline: Helene Cooper and Scott L. Malcomson - The New York Times Media Group

Body

On Jan. 20, Barack Obama will inherit a world very different from the one his predecessor found in January 2001. Over the past eight years, the Bush administration has faced great challenges and nurtured grand ambitions; it has tried hard to remake the world. Condoleezza Rice has been a central player in that effort since becoming the candidate Bush's chief foreign-policy adviser in 2000, so we arranged to interview her at the State Department late last month. The interview turned into a wide-ranging discussion of where this government has taken the United States and what sort of world it will leave for the next president.

The highlights of her remarks follow.

*

America and democracy

What an Obama presidency means to everybody else.

Electing a black president says around the world that you can overcome old wounds. I've said in our case, we have a birth defect, but it can be overcome.

What the election that he won means.

I've heard people commenting on how in this election, in far places, people talk about what is a caucus and how does that differ from a primary. I think that links up with the fact that the United States under this president has been more active and more insistent that democracy is not just something for a few. People are watching, and I think they're trying to learn from democratic experience.

What American promotion of democracy can do.

I think that over the last several years, because of a more assertive American voice on this, there have been some real gains - like <u>women</u> in Kuwait voting or like Iraq, which is an imperfect and fragile and still-emerging democracy but one that is multiconfessional, multiethnic and in the center of the Arab world.

And why America should not stop promoting it.

Rice reflects on the world Obama will inherit From The New York Times Magazine

If the U.S. doesn't remain that lodestar, then I think democracy moves off the international agenda at a time when you're beginning to see, for instance, the Europeans unafraid to give their award to a Chinese dissident, despite the blowback from Beijing. (Last month the European Parliament awarded its Andrei Sakharov prize to Hu Jia, a dissident who is serving a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence for his human rights advocacy.) The Egyptians know that their next election is going to be an important transitional election. I think they're going to insist on a different kind of election.

*

The fate of superpowers

The problem Russia has.

They've got problems, and the basis of this is that the legitimacy of the Russian government is not ideology; it is not a pretension to a different route for human development as Communism was. It is the ability of Russians to, if they can't afford those Cartier shops near Tverskaya, to be able instead to go to the Ikea store that now completely dominates the Tank Trap Monument that celebrates the repulsion of the final push of the Germans into Moscow.

The bigger problem Russia has.

Russia has an aging population that's not being replaced and unfortunately a sickly population, and an economy that did not take advantage of higher oil prices to diversify. It's still an infrastructural nightmare if you get outside of major cities and certainly if you start going toward the Far East. So I think we should be calm.

How Bush held the West together.

It's a myth that we have poor relations with the Europeans. We have excellent relations with all European states at this point. Now, it may be that we still have some disagreements, but even on something like how to fight terrorists, I think there's a growing recognition that this isn't just law enforcement and that it puts difficult questions on the agenda about the relationship of gathering information to civil liberties and so forth.

*

The Middle East and beyond

How we change the conversation.

There have been some real gains, but there also has been a complete change in the conversation, particularly in the Middle East, where some form of popular legitimacy is being sought in almost every country. The American voice has got to stay strong in that conversation.

How to move the conversation forward.

I really think we have the best atmosphere between Palestinians and Israelis since the mid-'90s, so I'm very gratified that that has come into place. The Palestinian leadership is avowedly in favor of negotiations, renounces violence, recognizes the right of Israel to exist. There is a robust negotiating process, and they have made a lot of progress on how to get to a two-state solution.

Why speed is essential to dealing with *Hamas*.

The <u>Hamas</u> takeover of Gaza is a problem, but thanks to good Egyptian work, at least there is calm for now. One reason to try and get an agreement done pretty quickly is that I think Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas needs to be able to take an agreement to the Palestinian people through either referendum or elections in order to sideline <u>Hamas</u> politically or to have <u>Hamas</u> buy in, which I think is unlikely, or to sideline <u>Hamas</u> by demonstrating that they don't have a solution for the Palestinian problem.

How to change a regime.

Rice reflects on the world Obama will inherit From The New York Times Magazine

We have said to Iran that this is about changing your regime's behavior, not changing your regime. That has been the message all along. Would we hope that the Iranian people ... do they deserve to have a different regime than they've got? Absolutely. But the way that we have tried to help with democracy in Iran is to help indigenous forces there, to bring everyone from people who do disaster relief to artists to sending our wrestlers there.

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Twilight of the institutions?

Where "never again" never quite got done.

I have regrets about Darfur, real regrets. I don't know that there were other answers. The president considered trying to do something unilaterally - very difficult to do.

Discovering whether the "responsibility to protect" means anything.

I think we thought the Responsibility to Protect meant something. (In 2006, the United Nations adopted this principle, which stipulates that the international community must protect the rights of people inside a sovereign country if the government of that country is failing to protect them.) I remember when the responsibility-to-protect language came up at the 2006 United Nations General Assembly, and I remember thinking at the time: If this turns out to be nothing but words, the Security Council is going to have a real black eye, and in the Darfur case it has turned out to be nothing but words. I think it has been an enormous embarrassment for the Security Council and for multilateral diplomacy.

Why the Security Council neglected Darfur.

We worked day in and day out. Almost not a day passes in this office that we're not trying to find some way to get more forces into Darfur. To make the Sudanese government live up to the multiple agreements that it has made and then walked away from. We go to the Security Council, and nobody wants there to be consequences, well, not nobody, sorry, some don't wish there to be consequences. And so we end up sanctioning again, unilaterally. The Europeans do some things but other interests seem to then trump the responsibility to protect.

How NATO really works.

First of all, the NATO alliance took on this mission in Afghanistan by consensus. It only operates by consensus. And I think what you see is steadily increasing alliance participation. The French have increased their numbers; most of the small states have increased their numbers over time.

An alliance of democracies is never simple.

There's this past image of NATO as in total, complete unity with exactly the same views during the Cold War. Simply fiction. Fiction. Do you remember that in 1989 the big NATO 40th-anniversary summit was going to see a breakdown around short-range nuclear forces being deployed? So, NATO has always been an alliance of democracies ... Yes, I'd like to see NATO do more. Yes, we push hard for NATO to do more. Yes, we don't like the caveats, and some of them have come off in time. (NATO countries operating in Afghanistan have frequently insisted on conditions of service, or "caveats," rather than agreeing simply to place their forces at the NATO commander's disposition.) But you look at what this alliance is doing, it's impressive.

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Legacy of the Bush agenda

Why Bush set the freedom agenda.

George W. Bush deserves credit for recognizing that the terms were now going to be set for the next big historical evolution. The president recognized that freedom was something that was not just desirable but essential for the

Rice reflects on the world Obama will inherit From The New York Times Magazine

United States; that it meant not just freedom from tyranny but also freedom from disease, from poverty. And that if you were going to have democratic leaders, they had to be able to deliver for their people. Thus the president supported the Millennium Challenge and the HIV/AIDS and malaria projects. (Bush announced the Millennium Challenge initiative in 2002. It emphasized good governance and accountability in the structuring of foreign aid and resulted in the formation of the Millennium Challenge Corp. in January 2004.)

And linking up the great compassion of the United States with our security interests. Making it about democracy, defense and development. We're at the beginning of that historical transformation, and yes, sometimes it's lonelier at the beginning than at the end.

It's really recognizing that this is about a single answer to what is the right form of government, and that's democracy. It takes different forms: There is Japanese democracy, and there's American democracy, and there are fragile democracies, and there are emerging democracies, and there are states that are trying to find some form of popular legitimacy.

Immigration policy is foreign policy.

We didn't get comprehensive immigration reform ... I think everybody knows that this president tried. I remember the first foreign-policy meeting that I went to with the then-governor, before he was inaugurated, was with the then-governor, soon to be president of Mexico, Vicente Fox, and they talked about the need to fix this problem. I am a firm believer in defending our laws and defending our borders ... But it's also true that there are a lot of hardworking people in this country who live in the shadows.

Immigrants are central to American identity.

I was a major proponent of the temporary-worker program and finding some way to normalize the status for these people. I think that it goes to the core of who we are.

What should not be abandoned.

The other thing that I'm worried about out of this current global financial crisis and whatever economic fallout there may be is, I really hope we don't sacrifice foreign assistance. The Millennium Challenge and programs like it say: Invest in your people, fight corruption, be democratic, and we'll help you. If you can't fulfill that promise, then good governments around the world that have staked their futures on that argument are going to be in very deep trouble. And so I hope that foreign assistance, if anything, continues to increase.

We found it flat. The president doubled it in Latin America, quadrupled it in Africa, tripled it worldwide. The president authorized 300 new U.S. AID officers and 1,100 new Foreign Service officers, because we believe that transformational diplomacy is a word for not thinking that your job as a diplomat is to sit in the capital and talk to other governments. It's to get out and help those governments. Without the tools of foreign assistance, we won't be able to do it.

*

(Helene Cooper is diplomatic correspondent for The New York Times and author of "The House on Sugar Beach." Scott L. Malcomson is an editor of The New York Times Magazine and author, most recently, of "One Drop of Blood: The American Misadventure of Race.")

Load-Date: November 21, 2008



Call to PM to censure Israelis

The Nelson Mail (New Zealand)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; NATIONAL; Pg. 3

Length: 242 words

Body

The Nelson Peace Group is to ask Prime Minister John Key and the New Zealand Government to state its disapproval "in the strongest terms possible" to the Israeli Government over the actions of the Israeli military against Palestinian people in Gaza during the past few days.

Israeli leaders said the campaign that began on Sunday morning (NZ time) was a response to almost daily rocket and mortar fire that intensified after *Hamas*, an Islamist group in charge of the coastal enclave Israel quit in 2005, ended a six-month ceasefire a week ago.

Nelson Peace Group secretary Anne FitzSimon said the group wanted the New Zealand Government to withdraw all ties and support of Israel immediately.

A candle vigil was to be held at the Church Steps in Nelson's Trafalgar St at midday today in protest against Israel's actions, and a letter to Mr Key would be available for members of the public to sign, Ms FitzSimon said.

"We believe a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Gaza from which <u>women</u>, children and an entire civil society may never recover."

She said that at the same time, the group did not condone the actions of Palestinian groups in retaliation against innocent Israeli people.

"All violent actions must cease in the whole region, including those of legitimate protest," Ms FitzSimon said.

She said the peace group was "sickened by the disproportionate level of violence by Israel with the complete disregard of any peace process in the Middle East".

Load-Date: January 1, 2009



<u>Israel's Livni has politics in her blood; Foreign minister can be moderate but</u> isn't afraid of tough decisions

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 5, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Byline: Dina Kraft, Sunday 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 "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 last Wednesday. "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." Shortly beforehand, she had toured a school in Beersheba that was hit by a <u>Hamas</u> rocket, one of hundreds fired from Gaza into Israel since a shaky six-month ceasefire collapsed into war.

A photograph on the front of the Haaretz newspaper the following day showed her looking up at the hole where the long-range rocket had crashed through, leaving a tangle of metal rods and dangling plaster. Though surrounded by security guards, she looked a lonely figure, almost startled by the scope of the destruction.

Israel's Livni has politics in her blood; Foreign minister can be moderate but isn't afraid of tough decisions

Livni, who has spent only a decade in politics, enjoyed a rapid rise under the tutelage of the 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 it brings. 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 towards 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 that 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 that she reserves her full warmth for those closest to her.

"I think she's very human," says Gal, who worked with Livni when she was minister of immigrant absorption. "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, 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.

Israel's Livni has politics in her blood; Foreign minister can be moderate but isn't afraid of tough decisions

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 <u>women</u>'s issues.

"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 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 on Friday, 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 take-off 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: stephane de sakutin/afp/getty images; Tzipi Livni's parents fought for their country's right to exist. She has followed in their footsteps.;

Load-Date: January 5, 2009



Faltering prospect of peace; MIDDLE EAST

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First Edition

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Byline: Jason Koutsoukis, Jerusalem - Jason Koutsoukis is Middle East correspondent

Body

The political limbo created by the collapse of Israel's ruling coalition raises the spectre of more violent conflict with Palestinians.

HOW MUCH longer will Palestinians be prepared to wait for an end to Israel's 40-year occupation of the West Bank before they contemplate a return to open violence? Hagit Ofran is a senior member of Israel's oldest peace movement, Peace Now, and his reply is unambiguous. "Unless we move quickly towards the two-state solution, we face disaster. We have no choice."

It's a year since the US-backed Middle East peace conference at Annapolis promised an actual withdrawal from the West Bank territory Israel has occupied since the Six Day War of 1967. If anything, Israel's occupation of the West Bank has grown stronger. Commitments at Annapolis to reduce the number of roadblocks and military checkpoints maintained by the Israel Defence Forces across the West Bank, which severely impede the movement of Palestinians, have been ignored.

Indeed, according to the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there are now about 610checkpoints and roadblocks across the West Bank, compared with about 580 last year. The growth of Israeli settlements there has also continued unabated, despite promises to freeze, or at least reduce, new settlements. Ofran says Israel has nearly doubled the rate of settlement construction since Annapolis, with 1000 new buildings including 2600 housing units - currently being built. And searches of Palestinian homes in the West Bank by IDF troops have continued to average more than 100 a week since the beginning of the year.

The collapse this week of Israel's ruling Kadima-led coalition, with elections set for February 10, has increased fears of a renewed outbreak of violence because it has delayed the chance of meaningful negotiations until March at the earliest.

"This is it, our final moment of truth," says Dr Anat Kurz, director of research at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies, a widely respected think tank established by Australian billionaire Frank Lowy. "Israelis will either vote for peace, or not. But this is our last chance," she says. "When we vote next year, we have to decide what we want."

Kurz, who has lectured and published extensively on the Israel-Palestinian conflict and is a regular participant in the ongoing dialogue to resolve it, believes tensions within the West Bank and Gaza are at a flashpoint.

Faltering prospect of peace MIDDLE EAST

"We are talking about another cycle of violence which can explode at any minute. It will not take much from someone who wants an attack, to commit such an act, and trigger a whole chain of responses that could set the territories on fire."

In his office in the West Bank, Palestinian political science professor Saad Nimr is unable to contain his frustration at the continuing delays to a final status agreement between Israel and Palestinians. "No more of these meaningless talks, we are up to here with this!" he says, pointing to his chin. "The 'peace process' is simply a way for Israel to pretend that it is doing something, while it continues to build the occupation."

Nimr, who is director of the campaign to free jailed Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti - the man whom many Israelis and Palestinians believe is the one person capable of uniting Palestinians into a stable political entity - believes a return to open violence is certain unless progress is made soon. "We know what we want: an end to the occupation. Now, Israel must make up its mind. They can either get out of the West Bank or annex us completely."

Nimr advocates an economic blockade of Israeli goods and services - the West Bank and Gaza are huge markets for Israeli wholesalers - which he says has the capacity to seriously damage Israel's economy. "But armed resistance remains our right as long as the occupation continues," he says.

In Gaza, Taher al-Nunu, political spokesman for the Islamist party <u>Hamas</u>, also talks openly of the prospect of violence. Despite <u>Hamas</u>' truce with Israel, which has been in place since June and will expire in December, Nunu suggests that there are few incentives for Palestinians in Gaza to extend the truce. "What has it achieved? Nothing. There is no improvement to life here. Without improvement, without freedom to develop an economy and live normal lives, a return to violence is inevitable, and it will be worse than ever before."

Not that the conflict is free of violence now. The week ending October 21 highlights the toll ongoing clashes are taking on Palestinians and Israelis: two Palestinians killed and 22 injured, with six Israelis injured in the West Bank. During the same week, the IDF conducted 89 military search operations, arresting 37 Palestinians, and maintained 43 "flying checkpoints" randomly across the West Bank in addition to the 610 permanent roadblocks and checkpoints already in place.

And in Jerusalem, an 86-year-old Jewish man died after he was stabbed by a Palestinian who also seriously injured a 30-year-old policeman. So far this year, more than 500 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict, while 20 Israelis have lost their lives as a result of deliberate attacks by Palestinians or Arab Israelis, including eight students shot dead by an Arab gunman at a prominent Jewish seminary in March.

ANAT Kurz says that despite the obvious reasons for pessimism, she hopes a final status agreement with Palestinians can be reached. "On the one hand, I believe that <u>Hamas</u> will extend the current Gaza truce in December for another six months," she says. "On the other hand, I believe that Fatah (the Palestinian faction in control of the West Bank) is definitely not interested in an upsurge of violence ... on the contrary, we are seeing a concerted effort by the Palestinian authority to use newly trained Palestinian police and security forces to crash terror schemes by Islamic Jihad and **Hamas** in the West Bank."

Kurz argues that the chances for securing a long-term peace now rest firmly with Israel.

"All of us know what the general outline of the final status agreement should look like - but our problem is that we don't know how to get there. So we must work out a way, because if Israel continues to actually rule the West Bank then there is the danger that the Palestinian leadership will simply give up on the two-state solution and push forward with the idea of one state."

Kurz points out that with nearly 4.5million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and a further 1.5 million Arabs who are already citizens of Israel, a so-called "one state solution", with full democratic rights for all, would tip the demographic balance in favour of the Arabs and virtually spell the end of Israel as a Jewish nation.

"This is clearly unacceptable, so that's the incentive for Israel to do everything possible to negotiate a settlement," she says.

Faltering prospect of peace MIDDLE EAST

What will happen when Israelis go to the polls on February 10 is still anyone's guess, but according to the latest opinion poll published in the liberal daily newspaper Haaretz on Thursday, if an election were held yesterday the centrist Kadima Party led by current Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and the right-wing Likud Party led by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, would have ended up with 31 seats each in the 120-member Knesset. Labor - the left-of-centre party of such political giants as David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres - faces the humiliating prospect of being reduced to just 10 seats.

If the Haaretz poll is right, then Netanyahu, considered a hawk when it comes to peace negotiations, would be best placed to lead a new government. In a speech to the Knesset this week to mark the opening of the winter session - a speech that was effectively the launch of his election campaign - Netanyahu left no doubt about what path he intends to follow.

Dismissing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's plan to withdraw from the West Bank to the 1967 lines, and allow shared sovereignty of Jerusalem, Netanyahu said such moves would "inevitably create in the centre of the country a third Iranian base that will threaten Jerusalem and the entire coastal plain".

Netanyahu repeated his demand that the whole of Jerusalem remain under Israeli control, and suggested that the best way to improve the lives of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza was by encouraging economic development.

"No one has the moral right to frivolously and irresponsibly concede the most precious assets of the Jewish nation," he thundered.

While those on the left of Israeli politics might shudder at the thought of a Netanyahu-led government, it is an irony that Israel's most dramatic steps towards peace were negotiated by the right.

It was Menachem Begin who signed the historic peace accords with Egypt in 1979, and Ariel Sharon who pulled more than 8000 Jewish settlers out of Gaza.

Netanyahu himself, in his previous incarnation as prime minister from 1996 to 1999, also proved himself a pragmatist, negotiating the Wye River accords with then Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat. To the lingering ire of many on the right, Netanyahu also turned over most of occupied Hebron to Palestinian control.

"Who is the best Israeli leader for us?" asks Palestinian academic Saad Nimr. "Perhaps it is Netanyahu. He is stronger than the rest. I don't imagine anyone else carrying the rest of Israel along with them."

Jason Koutsoukis is Middle East correspondent.

Graphic

PHOTO: Palestinian <u>women</u> in the occupied West Bank village of al-Yamoun watch the funeral of a 68-year-old Palestinian man, shot this week by Israeli soldiers. PICTURE: REUTERS

Load-Date: October 31, 2008



<u>Canadians turn out in droves to rally against attacks on Gaza;</u> Demonstrations from Halifax to Victoria mirror protests around the world

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

Final Edition

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Byline: Canwest News Service

Dateline: OTTAWA

Body

Thousands of Canadians gathered across the country yesterday to rally against the continued Israeli-<u>Hamas</u> war in Gaza.

In Ottawa, hundreds of protesters waving placards, Palestinian flags and banners on Parliament Hill.

Chanting "Free, Free Gaza," the group called on the Canadian government to intervene in the escalating situation in the Middle East.

"We're here to remind [Stephen] Harper that this is Canada and it is not in our culture, history, law that we support Israel here," said Walid Madhau, who came to the rally with his wife and their young children. "Harper should remember who the Canadians are and that we are not going to vote for him again."

Madhau wants the prime minister to pressure the Israeli government into a ceasefire.

"Harper should consider the Palestinian lives lost here as important as Israelis," he said. "By turning his eyes away from this, he is not being Canadian."

Fame Nahle said the reason she brought her son to the rally was so he could gain a better understanding of current world politics.

"What's going on there is a massacre, a genocide," she said. "We're seeing kids, <u>women</u> dying. They don't have no food, no water. It's criminal."

In Toronto, thousands of protesters rallied outside the Israeli Consulate, calling on Canada to take a stronger stand in support of the UN resolution for a ceasefire.

Palestinians, Jews and concerned Canadians all attended the gathering.

Protester Haroun Mazad said he's in constant fear for his family in Gaza. He's a familiar face at the protests against Israeli military action in Gaza -- so is Jenny Peto, a Jewish woman who was arrested last week for occupying the Israeli Consulate.

Canadians turn out in droves to rally against attacks on Gaza; Demonstrations from Halifax to Victoria mirror protests around the world

"Dissent in the Jewish community is not being heard," she told Global News. "So if it took getting arrested that's what it took because no one was listening."

Israeli supporters also showed up at the protest, resulting in angry exchanges.

Jewish Canadian Polly Miller said she's frustrated over international inaction on rockets being launched from Gaza into Jewish communities.

"Hamas is a terrorist organization," she told Global News. "Israel has been bombed for eight years and nobody has done anything."

Meanwhile in Montreal, an estimated 10,000 people marched along Ste. Catherine Street demanding an end to the Gaza assault.

Jews, Christians, Muslims, anglophones, francophones, grandmothers and children walked together in the bitter cold to call for an immediate ceasefire in the occupied territory.

They have been keeping count of the casualties: "257 children killed," read one placard.

"This is not an Arab cause," said Nina Amrov, who has family in the West Bank. "This is not a Muslim cause. It is a humanitarian cause. The siege of Gaza has gone on for 2 1/2 years now. It's unfortunate that we had to wait for a huge massacre to raise our voices."

Similar demonstrations were also held in Calgary, Fredericton, Halifax, Vancouver and Victoria.

Around the world, tens of thousands marched in the streets across Europe and the Middle East yesterday, with some rallies turning dangerous as protesters clashed with police.

Police in riot gear confronted about 20,000 protesters outside the Israeli embassy in central London, while police used tear gas as they fought activists on the streets of the Norwegian capital of Oslo.

About 30,000 took to the streets of Paris to call for an end to Israeli attacks in Gaza, with many demonstrators wearing Palestinian kaffiyeh head scarves and chanting "We are all Palestinians."

Meanwhile, a leading human rights group accused Israel yesterday of using white-phosphorus munitions during its offensive in the Gaza Strip and warned of the risk to civilians.

Human Rights Watch said in a statement that its researchers in Israel observed multiple air-bursts on Jan. 9 and Jan. 10 of artillery-fired white phosphorus near the city of Gaza and the Jabalya refugee camp.

The group said Israel's use of white phosphorus to hide military operations -- although allowed under international humanitarian law -- may cause severe burns to people and set structures and fields on fire.

Graphic

Photo: Adrian Lam, Times Colonist; People demonstrated yesterday outside the Victoria Visitor Centre, opposite the Fairmont Empress hotel, and at major intersections in the city to demand an end to the Israeli military operation in Gaza.;

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

Canadians turn out in droves to rally against attacks on Gaza; Demonstrations from Halifax to Victoria mirror protests around the world



Children caught in violent circle

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Section: AGENDA; Pg. 23

Length: 671 words

Byline: Opinion with bite by Chief of Staff Gavin King , kingg@tcp.newsltd.com.au

Body

There is a story from ancient times about a chalk circle.

But first, to the Middle East via the Far North.

Nearly 800 people have been killed in just two weeks, so I spoke to a Palestinian friend to get her very personal view on this latest conflict.

Our comfortable lives and the complexity of the IsraeliPalestinian issue can make it easy to ignore. Another day, another war.

Through the billowing smoke from mortar attacks and the rubble of bombed buildings, my friend helped to focus and shape my opinion on this new eruption of violence.

Children should be the primary concern. Dead children, and children traumatised by war.

"I see the faces of the children and I wonder what it's like to be terrified all the time," my friend told me this week.

"If the numbers were reversed, if a few Palestinians were killed and hundreds of Israelis were killed, what would happen?

"I was upset at Kevin Rudd when he supported Israel. He should've condemned the violence from both sides. What would he say if the situation was reversed?"

She hasn't been to Palestine, the home of her late father, but she recalled a disturbing visit to Lebanon during the war with Israel in 2006.

"They were firing mortar from up in the mountains down into Beirut, and the kids were sent home from school," she said.

"They had grown up in the war so I thought they would be used to it. But they were shaking and crying.

"People get used to their situation, but you never get used to war.

"Violence and war traumatises these young generations.

Children caught in violent circle

"I'm a mother, and I feel afraid for the children."

Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar cares for children too, but only Palestinian children.

"The Zionists have legitimised the killing of their children by killing our children," he said in a video message on Thursday.

And so it goes. Another day, more innocent civilians dead.

There is little hope for a lasting solution. Peace is only ever temporary.

But, to end at the beginning, I am in favour of the theory of the chalk circle.

A birth mother and a stepmother wanted custody of a baby boy, so they went to an esteemed judge to let him decide.

The judge rose from his high chair and drew a circle in chalk on the ground and placed the baby in the centre.

The judge told the two <u>women</u> to take one of the baby's arms each. Whoever pulled the child out of the circle first would keep him.

They pulled and jostled, and suddenly the birth mother realised the baby was being hurt, so she let go of his arm and relinquished him.

But the judge gave the child to her, because her compassion and love for him was greater.

Philosopher and University of London academic Slavoj Zizek believes this old tale could provide a monumental framework for peace in the Middle East. His radical idea is intriguing, though obviously unlikely.

"Imagine a Jerusalem chalk circle," he writes in his book-length essay Violence.

"The one who truly loves Jerusalem would rather let it go than see it torn apart by strife.

"What if the Jews and Palestinians were to come together on this ground: not on the ground of occupying, possessing or dividing the same territory (Jerusalem), but of both keeping their shared territory open as a refuge for those condemned to wander?

"What if Jerusalem became not their place, but a place for those with no place?

"This shared solidarity is the only ground for a true reconciliation: the realisation that, in fighting the other, one fights what is most vulnerable in one's own life."

If <u>Hamas</u> and Israelis love the holy land of Jerusalem in equal measure, would either of them love it enough to stop the conflict and prevent it being "torn apart by strife"?

The answer, I venture, is no.

Why not give up Jerusalem and make it neutral for everyone to share?

As a footnote, my Palestinian friend told me that so long as men are in control, nothing will change.

She joked that I would never publish a statement like that in this column.

Damn right, I told her. But it is hard to disagree with her take on the nature of male power and politics, particularly when children's lives are at stake.

Load-Date: January 9, 2009



Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 693 words **Byline:** Nadia Hijab

Body

There was a music school in Gaza. It was just six months old. The 31 children aged 7 to 11 could choose one of five instruments, including the guitar, oud (lute), and piano. Most of the 19 girls gravitated to the guitar and piano, while many of the 12 boys showed a preference for the oud.

First person by Nadia Hijab

There was a music school in Gaza. It was just six months old. The 31 children aged 7 to 11 could choose one of five instruments, including the guitar, oud (lute), and piano. Most of the 19 girls gravitated to the guitar and piano, while many of the 12 boys showed a preference for the oud.

The school worked out of rented premises in the Palestinian Red Crescent Society building just across the street from the Preventive Security Forces compound in Gaza City. The compound was targeted in the first wave of Israeli bombardments on December 27, and twice more the next day. The five-story building was vaporized; a flat gravel surface is all that remains.

Like other buildings in the neighborhood, the Gaza Music School was shattered; window frames and doors were blown out, and holes were punched in the walls. The force of the blast imploded the four ouds, just like it had the compound.

By some miracle, the children had not yet arrived for their lessons and so were spared the fate of those in other schools in the path of Israeli bombs.

In the midst of all the death and destruction in Gaza, the school's short life rouses particular emotion. That there was such a school at all is astonishing, not just because of the 18-month siege that followed the decades of "dedevelopment" of Gaza under Israeli occupation but also because one might expect it to be contrary to an Islamist social program.

There is almost no musical education in Gaza. The school project was developed in response to community demand, particularly from among the 11,600 children who are members of the Qattan Center for the Child. The center provides extra-curricular activities and a library for the children. It is impressive: With its 103,000 books, it is one of the largest children's libraries in the Arab world.

Israeli bombs silence Gaza music school

The children who attended the center's music workshops and concerts started asking for more.

"They said, 'We want to play instruments too,'" explained Ziad Khalaf, the Ramallah-based director of the Qattan Foundation, which established the school with co-funding from the Swedish development organization SIDA.

The music school provided a window on another world for the besieged Gazans."Many parents sat in on the theory lessons so they could better support their kids' homework," said Khalaf.

The five music teachers include two Russian <u>women</u> married to Palestinian men. They refused to leave Gaza when the border was briefly opened to enable foreigners to flee. For them, Gaza with all its misery and deprivation is still home, just as it is for the 1.5 million other Palestinians living there.

And what about <u>Hamas</u>' supposed social rigidity? Some websites did take a strong line against musical education, complaining that <u>Hamas</u> was allowing music to be taught under its rule instead of the Sharia. But they were ignored. Khalaf emphasizes that the Qattan Foundation has experienced full support from all authorities and communities in its different places of operation.

The day after the music school was hit, its coordinator called each of the children and their parents to make sure they were safe, and also to assure them that the school would be repaired, restocked, and reopened as soon as possible.

In Ramallah, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music is planning a fundraiser soon to help rebuild the school.

"Some friends from Amsterdam and London who saw the damage to Gaza music school on the Foundation's website said they will be fundraising to help," Khalaf said.

These plans, too, arouse emotion: Palestinians rebuild even as the rubble rises around them. They have had 60 years to learn how to do so, and show no signs of giving up their quest for their rights - not even the right to learn how to play a musical instrument.

Nadia Hijab is a senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies. She wrote this article for Agence Global.

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



Vent line

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia) January 10, 2009, Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 661 words

Body

- -I just wonder if the transit authorities realize that they also need to put some bike racks on the back of those buses that are running from Huntington to Charleston and back.
- -If the state is in such a good shape as they say it is, how come these businesses are laying off employees and reducing their work days?
- -In response to the venter wanting to know why people wanted to come back to West Virginia: The North Carolinians are so unfriendly and cliquish. There's no place as wonderful as West Virginia.
- -I was just looking at my 2009 Kanawha County school calendar for the upcoming months and noticed that spring break was scheduled in the middle of March this year when Easter isn't until the middle of April. I'd like to know the genius that made this up.
- -The West Virginia Department of Commerce is attempting to put a more positive image on the state. The Daily Mail runs a picture of a mother of seven competing in the "Rough and Rowdy" event on the front page above the fold. What is wrong with these two images?
- -When is Kanawha County going to get serious about domestic violence? I'm reading the papers and all I keep hearing about are people going before Kanawha County courts for domestic violence and are let go and then they go out and either beat someone again or kill someone.
- -I see gas has jumped to almost \$2 a gallon today because of the Israel-Hamas war.
- -To all those who have degraded and humiliated President Bush: Enjoy the last days before we plunge into socialism.
- -For the person venting about their feet being cold: My feet and legs were always cold and my son gave me a pair of knee-high hunting socks. With those socks and shoes that are a half-size larger, that should take care of it.
- -Why don't the Esquires have a Valentine dance at the Civic Center with the entire original group? Beni Kedem is very nice, but it could not accommodate all the Baby Boomers. We would all love to hear all the singers perform again.
- -I enjoyed Suzanne McMinn's column in the Daily Mail very much and look forward to reading her Country Living pieces again.
- -To the person who said Israel is the terrorists: Israel isn't the terrorists. *Hamas* is.

Vent line

- -After driving down 32nd Street in Nitro, I have never seen such a junky, filthy place. It's a disgrace.
- -Thank you so much to the man who works at the Home Depot in Teays Valley for finding my purse and returning it to me.
- -I would like for Kent Carper to have someone check out the Elkview trailer park. There are some old torn-down old trailers with all the stuff exposed. It's a disgrace to our neighborhood and our community.
- -West Virginia remains the envy of the country when it comes to state budget revenues. Well, what did we expect? West Virginia puts a higher tax on everything.
- -To the people who are worried about Nitro's Christmas lights staying on so long: They are being paid for by a private donation.
- -Coach Stew is bringing us the next generation spread offense. No more just spreading the defense sideline to sideline. Now opposing teams have to back off the line to defend downfield against the pass. This means more open spaces on the field for our fast backs and receivers to operate. Can't wait until next year.
- -If the Legislature reduces or eliminates the Promise Scholarships, there will be labor shortages in North Carolina and Ohio.
- -I agree with the venter about <u>women</u> with tattoos. When I was single, I always appreciated <u>women</u> having tattoos where I could see them so I could rule them out as potential dates.
- -Let's face it. Even if we all stop smoking, stop drinking, eat nothing but veggies and run 10 miles a day, we are all going to die eventually. And if the only way I'm going to live to a ripe old age is on a diet of bran muffins and eggplant casserole, why would I want to?
- -Why is it acceptable for conservatives to talk about liberals as if we were spawned from Satan? I am sick and tired of it being OK for them to belittle the beliefs of anyone who cares about this planet.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009



Israel bombs UN schools; Dozens die in Gaza sanctuary

The Star (South Africa)

January 07, 2009 Wednesday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 705 words Byline: Sapa-AFP

Body

Israeli tanks and troops have blazed into towns across the Gaza Strip, striking *Hamas* targets, but hits on three United Nations-run schools killed at least 48 people and sparked urgent calls for a ceasefire.

While troops yesterday battled Islamist militants along the back alleys of Gaza's main city in the heaviest fighting of the 11-day-old offensive to halt cross-border rocket attacks, *Hamas* made its deepest rocket strike yet into Israel.

As the Palestinian death toll hit 660, Arab nations pressed for a UN Security Council resolution condemning the onslaught, but Israel rejected ceasefire calls by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and other leaders.

"Europe must open its eyes," Israeli President Shimon Peres told an EU ministerial delegation that demanded a truce.

"We are not in the business of public relations or improving our image. We are fighting against terror and we have every right to defend our citizens."

The UN demanded an investigation after tank and air assaults hit three schools run by the UN Palestinian relief agency, UNRWA.

At least 43 people who had taken shelter at the Jabaliya refugee camp school in northern Gaza were killed, according to emergency services. The UN confirmed at least 30 dead and 55 wounded after the tank shells hit.

The Israeli military said a preliminary inquiry indicated that several mortar rounds may have been fired from the Jabaliya school.

Earlier, two people were killed when an artillery shell slammed into a school in the southern city of Khan Yunis. Three people also died in an airstrike on another school in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, medics said.

The UN humanitarian co-ordinator for the Palestinian territories, Maxwell Gaylard, said Israel |had the GPS co-ordinates of all |UN buildings in Gaza, including schools. "Neither homes nor UN shelters are safe" for civilians, he added.

Heavy fighting raged in Gaza City and around nearby Deir al-Balah and Bureij. One air raid killed 12 people, including seven children, from the same family in Gaza City.

Israel bombs UN schools Dozens die in Gaza sanctuary

Four Israeli soldiers were killed in two "friendly-fire" incidents during the overnight surge in fighting, the army said. This brought the death toll since Saturday to five.

The military said another soldier was killed in a clash near Gaza City. It also said paratroopers shot at the belt of a suicide bomber running towards them to detonate his explosives.

Three civilians and one soldier have been killed by rocket fire inside Israel since the offensive began.

Israel has denied there is a humanitarian crisis, but the International Committee of the Red Cross stepped up pressure on the government with a rare public statement.

"There is no doubt in my mind that we are dealing with a full-blown and major crisis in humanitarian terms. The situation for the people in Gaza is extreme and traumatic," said Pierre Kraehenbuehl, the ICRC's director of operations.

He said ICRC staff in Gaza had described the past night as "the most frightening to date" in the territory, where there is no electricity or water, and food rations are severely limited.

Meanwhile, the ANC has described Israel's "horrendous attacks" on Gaza as a "slaughter of the innocents" and called on the international community "to do more than condemn the ongoing hostility against the people of Palestine."

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe also appealed to all South Africans to give all possible humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and called on the SA government to co-ordinate this aid and arrange for it to be transported to Gaza immediately.

Mantashe was speaking at the ANC's Joburg headquarters with Ali Halimeh, the Palestine Authority ambassador to SA, who had just briefed the ANC about the situation in Gaza.

Mantashe said Halimeh had described the assault by the Israelis as|a "slaughter of the innocent people of Gaza". Most victims were civilians, many were <u>women</u> and children, and only "a very insignificant number" were fighters. "That's why he described it as a slaughter. And the ANC agrees with him," Mantashe said.

He urged the international community to go beyond condemnation of Israel by demanding that Israel withdraw from all occupied territories "and end the siege". - Additional reporting by Peter Fabricius

u See Page 4

Load-Date: January 6, 2009



<u>Dozens die as Israel blasts UN schools in Gaza; ANC condemns 'slaughter</u> of the innocents'

The Star (South Africa)

January 07, 2009 Wednesday

e3 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 700 words **Byline:** Sapa-AFP

Body

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Dozens die as Israel blasts UN schools in Gaza ANC condemns 'slaughter of the innocents'

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He urged the international community to go beyond condemnation of Israel by demanding that Israel withdraw from all occupied territories "and end the siege". - Additional reporting by Peter Fabricius

Load-Date: January 7, 2009



Gaza in trouble

The Nation (AsiaNet)

November 15, 2008 Saturday

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Length: 273 words

Body

ISRAEL's blockade of the Gaza Strip, and its thus cutting off food, medicine and fuel supplies to 1.5 million hapless Palestinians, will be strongly condemned. Gaza's sole power plant that relies on imported fuel, had to shut down, causing blackout. Worse still, the population is facing the menace of Israel air raids that kill non-combatants, including <u>women</u> and children. The blockade would only serve to make violence flare in the volatile region, putting into jeopardy the fate of the five-month-old truce between the two sides.

Israel has used blockades on many occasions before as a tactic to dampen the Palestinians' freedom struggle. With the death of Yasser Arafat, followed by a more moderate Palestinian leadership at the helm and with popular *Hamas* in office, it was hoped that the situation would improve. Yet the Israeli establishment did not cash in on the opportunity and preferred to continue with its policy of repression, with the aim of denying Palestinians the right to have their own state. Adopting the policy of divide and rule, it effectively created some pliable sections among the people and forced them to compromise on principles, most probably visualising a balkanised Palestinian territory, if at all it were to have a state.

The international community in general and the US, the main support of Israel, in particular, must realise that the ongoing conflict is not only a territorial but also has become an emotional, though principled, issue for the entire Muslim world, that calls for an immediate resolution in accordance with the wishes of Palestinians if the world is to see peace in that troubled land.

Load-Date: November 24, 2008



It is time to tell the truth - what Israel is doing in Gaza is wrong; Innocent men, women and children will continue to die until politicians stop wringing their hands and do something, says Mary Riddell

The Daily Telegraph (London)
January 8, 2009 Thursday

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The Daily Telegraph

Section: FEATURES; Leading article; Pg. 18

Length: 1138 words **Byline:** Mary Riddell

Body

A girl is carried from the carnage, her face invisible behind a mask of blood. The walls of the playground where she died are spattered red, and the floor is littered with shredded clothing. In a second UN schoolyard, children's bodies lie sliced like meat by falling shells.

These tableaux marked the height of the massacre in Gaza. The 40 civilian corpses were barely cold when Israel announced that it would lift its attack for three hours a day, in the first indicator that the slaughter might be reaching endgame. Israeli aggression follows a calculated pattern. Attack until global opinion becomes too restive, then do a deal.

This allows a generous helping of killing time. As the tension began to ease yesterday, more than 600 civilians had perished in Gaza, while European leaders bickered and wrung their hands. The faces of the dead are a pale reproach to a world that has erased a ground rule of humanity: we have forgotten how to condemn.

Israel has attracted much tolerance from those who don't buy the argument that there is anything disproportionate in its response to <u>Hamas</u> aggression. Some westerners have gazed at images of limp bodies as if they are the mortal remains of some lesser breed of child.

This response is not born of war fatigue or compassion deficit. It marks the passing of an age of certainty. The Bush presidency, with only days left to run, took the Manichean view that the world was an endless battle between the forces of pure good and those of pure evil. All human events could be seen through the prism of a philosophy devised in the third century BC and applied by a modern president beside whom the Prophet Isaiah looked pragmatic.

Iraq, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay were all by-products of a mindset that any action, no matter how brutal or immoral, is justified because it is being done by the righteous in the name of virtue. Under that credo, the horrors that can be perpetrated by a "good" state on an "evil" one are almost limitless.

It is time to tell the truth - what Israel is doing in Gaza is wrong Innocent men, women and children will continue to die until politicians stop wringing their....

In the dying days of his presidency, Bush stuck to his guns, condoning Israel's attack on <u>Hamas</u>. Most consider his orthodoxy discredited: they're right. The danger is that the pendulum may swing towards a world that uses Bush's tainted absolutism as an excuse to abstain ever from saying what is right and wrong. At least we knew where Bush was coming from. Behind Barack Obama's silence lies the suspicion that the incoming president will be almost as much in hock as his predecessor to the powerful Israeli lobby.

With the US economy in crisis and a \$300 billion tax cut to force through, a Middle East peace process is already being talked of as a second-term issue. In the absence of outrage, only the Lib Dem leader, Nick Clegg, has urged Britain and Europe to impose an arms embargo on Israel and accused Gordon Brown of sitting on his hands and speaking like an accountant.

This is not quite fair. Brown has called repeatedly for a ceasefire. He has worked with the French and Egyptians to halt hostilities and secure an end to the blockade that has strangled Gaza. The PM has come close to expressing the revulsion he must feel at watching families annihilated. He can fairly claim not to have sat on the fence, as Tony Blair did when Israel attacked Lebanon.

Brown, who has (limited) form on getting tough, told the Knesset last July that Israel must pursue peace with its neighbours. David Miliband, the grandson of Jews who escaped the Holocaust, recently infuriated Israel by demanding, rightly, that food and cosmetics imported by Britain from illegal Israeli settlements should be labelled accordingly.

While Brown and Miliband could, and should, have condemned Israel more directly, governments can claim diplomatic constraints. No such problems afflict oppositions, yet David Cameron - a vociferous gunboat diplomat over the Georgia crisis - has been more muted on Israel's incursion.

Silence on both sides of the Atlantic contrasts oddly with a recession-fuelled mood of public virtue. Morality, as my colleague lain Martin wrote in these pages, is back; political leaders vie to be thriftier than thou. In his speech on Monday, Cameron sketched his vision of the good existence, in which citizens live modest lives "within their means". Darn your socks and eat your leftovers. Waste not, want not, unless you're talking human life; the only commodity, it seems, that it's safe to squander.

What do other peddlers of sanctimony have to say about Gaza? Are our outspoken bishops too convulsed with the iniquity of shopping binges at the January sales to dwell on children with their limbs torn off? Britain's effete churchmen have been put to shame by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who forced his way into Gaza last year and emerged calling the Israeli blockade "abominable". Though many leading Jews agree with him, expect little echo from politicians and other public figures.

The end of the Bush/Blair Manichean foreign policy should clear the way for rich, formidably armed, serial aggressors such as Israel to be stripped of automatic righteousness. Instead, the lack of outrage over Gaza suggests the dawning of an age of prevarication, in which thousands may die, in Congo, Zimbabwe, Sudan and elsewhere, as a supine world nitpicks at the smallprint of UN resolutions destined never to be passed or implemented.

Hostilities may be winding up, for now, but the danger won't stop there. If Iran is next in Israel's crosshairs, then the Middle East may implode to the sound of international foot-shuffling. Already, al-Qaeda, starved of the lifeblood provided by the "war on terror", is using Gaza's plight to revive its flagging crusade against the West.

But this is not simply about security. It is not even just about innocent civilians who have seen their families obliterated and their land, a thin shard of hell, bombed to rubble. It is about humanity itself. As the tanks finally roll out of Gaza, the international community may congratulate itself on finessing the peace. The truth is that Israel has played its game exactly as it chose. If America had demanded a ceasefire sooner, or if the West had threatened embargoes and cried revulsion, then the schoolrooms of Gaza would not be graffiti-painted in its children's blood.

It is time to tell the truth - what Israel is doing in Gaza is wrong Innocent men, women and children will continue to die until politicians stop wringing their....

Bring back the politics of denunciation. Yes, <u>Hamas</u> is a vicious neighbour. And yes, the West also has dubious warfare on its conscience. But nothing excuses acts so sickening that, if perpetrated by a less-blessed state, they would be reviled across the globe as war crimes. Once again, the world has declined to tell Israel, in terms, that it has no divine mandate for destruction.

The dead of Gaza will be buried soon. Remember them. In this new year, when the innate goodness of the human spirit is held up as the last bulwark against debt, recession, war and adversity, their ghosts should haunt us all.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009



Separating the Terror and the Terrorists

The New York Times

December 14, 2008 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section WK; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 10; THE PUBLIC EDITOR

Length: 1193 words

Byline: By CLARK HOYT

The public editor can be reached by e-mail: <u>public@nytimes.com</u>

Body

WHEN 10 young men in an inflatable lifeboat came ashore in Mumbai last month and went on a rampage with machine guns and grenades, taking hostages, setting fires and murdering men, <u>women</u> and children, they were initially described in The Times by many labels.

They were "militants," "gunmen," "attackers" and "assailants." Their actions, which left bodies strewn in the city's largest train station, five-star hotels, a Jewish center, a cafe and a hospital -- were described as "coordinated terrorist attacks." But the men themselves were not called terrorists.

Many readers could not understand it. "I am so offended as to why the NY Times and a number of other news organizations are calling the perpetrators 'militants,' " wrote "Bill" in a comment posted on The Times's Web site. "Murderers, or terrorists perhaps but militants? Is your PC going to get so absurd that you will refer to them as 'freedom fighters?' "

The Mumbai terror attacks posed a familiar semantic issue for Times editors: what to call people who pursue political, religious, territorial, or unidentifiable goals through violence on civilians. Many readers want the newspaper, even on the news pages, to share their moral outrage -- or their political views -- by adopting the word terrorist, with all its connotations of opprobrium. What you call someone matters. If he is a terrorist, he is an enemy of all civilized people, and his cause is less worthy of consideration.

In the newsroom and at overseas bureaus, especially Jerusalem, there has been a lot of soul-searching about the terminology of terrorism. Editors and reporters have asked whether, to avoid the appearance of taking sides, the paper bends itself into a pretzel or risks appearing callous to abhorrent acts. They have wrestled with questions like why those responsible for the 9/11 attacks are called terrorists but the murderers of a little girl in her bed in a Jewish settlement are not. And whether, if the use of the word terrorist can be interpreted as a political act, not using it is one too.

The issue comes up most often in connection with the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and to the dismay of supporters of Israel -- and sometimes supporters of the other side, denouncing Israeli military actions -- The Times is sparing in its use of "terrorist" when reporting on that complex struggle.

Separating the Terror and the Terrorists

The reluctance carried over when the Mumbai attacks began. Graham Bowley, who was writing for a Times blog, The Lede, said, "I'm aware very much of the sensitivity around the word, so I knew they had to be 'attackers' " until the paper knew more. One of his editors, Andrea Kannapell, told me she was much more focused in the early hours on who the people were and what they were doing than on what to call them.

Readers like "Bill" were having none of it, and as Jim Roberts, the editor of the Web site, read their comments, he began to think they had a point. "Indiscriminately shooting civilians seems on its very face to be an act of terror," he said. How, Roberts wondered, could you separate the act from the actor?

He conferred with Kannapell, Paul Winfield, the news editor, and Phil Corbett, Winfield's deputy. Winfield talked with Ian Fisher, a deputy foreign editor. "Terrorist" became an acceptable term in the Mumbai story. "We jointly decided we didn't need to be throwing the word around flagrantly, but we didn't need to run away from it, either," Roberts said.

Ilsa and Lisa Klinghoffer, whose father, Leon, was shot and thrown from a cruise ship by Palestinian terrorists in 1985, wrote a letter to the editor asking why The Times was referring to Lashkar-e-Taiba, the shadowy group that apparently orchestrated the Mumbai attacks, as a "militant group." "When people kill innocent civilians for political gain, they should be called 'terrorists,' " the sisters said.

Susan Chira, the foreign editor, said The Times may eventually put that label on Lashkar, but reporters are still trying to learn more about it. "Our instinct is to proceed with caution, not rushing to label any group with the word terrorist before we have a deeper understanding of its full dimensions," she said.

To the consternation of many, The Times does not call <u>Hamas</u> a terrorist organization, though it sponsors acts of terror against Israel. <u>Hamas</u> was elected to govern Gaza. It provides social services and operates charities, hospitals and clinics. Corbett said: "You get to the question: Somebody works in a <u>Hamas</u> clinic -- is that person a terrorist? We don't want to go there." I think that is right.

Ethan Bronner, the Jerusalem bureau chief, said, "Our general view is that the word terrorist is politically loaded and overused." But he said that sometimes, "when a person's act has been examined and its intent and result clearly understood, we call him a terrorist." Thus, a front-page story last July called a Lebanese man about to be exchanged for two dead Israeli soldiers a terrorist. The man, a fighter for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, had slipped into Israel nearly 30 years before and murdered a man and his 4-year-old daughter.

James Bennet, now the editor of The Atlantic, was The Times's Jerusalem bureau chief from 2001 through 2004. After his return, he wrote a two-page memo to Chira on the use of "terrorism" and "terrorist" that is still cited by editors, though the paper has no formal policy on the terms. His memo said it was easy to call certain egregious acts terrorism "and have the whole world agree with you." The problem, he said, was where to stop before every stone-throwing Palestinian was called a terrorist and the paper was making a political statement.

Bennet wrote that he initially avoided the word terrorism altogether and thought it more useful to describe an attack in as vivid detail as possible so readers could decide their own labels. But he came to believe that never using the word "felt so morally neutral as to be a little sickening. The calculated bombing of students in a university cafeteria, or of families gathered in an ice-cream parlor, cries out to be called what it is," he wrote.

The memo said he settled on a rough rule: He would use the words, when they fit, to describe attacks within Israel's 1948 borders but not in the occupied West Bank or Gaza, which Israel and the Palestinians have been contending over since Israel took them in 1967. When a gunman infiltrated a settlement and killed a 5-year-old girl in her bed, Bennet did not call it terrorism. "All I could do was default to my first approach and describe the attack and the victims as vividly as I could."

I do not think it is possible to write a set of hard and fast rules for the T-words, and I think The Times is both thoughtful about them and maybe a bit more conservative in their use than I would be.

Separating the Terror and the Terrorists

My own broad guideline: If it looks as if it was intended to sow terror and it shocks the conscience, whether it is planes flying into the World Trade Center, gunmen shooting up Mumbai, or a political killer in a little girl's bedroom, I'd call it terrorism -- by terrorists.

http://www.nytimes.com

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Economic alarm bells have distinct echoes from events of late 1970s

Irish Examiner January 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: OPINION

Length: 1151 words

Body

Although I was old enough to remember the period, I was still surprised at the number of strikes in the state and semi-state sectors - the post office, CIE, Aer Lingus, RT and ESB.

While in Dublin for that year's all-Ireland football final - with the "five goals in the rain" - I got on a bus at the start of the route in Abbey Street and went upstairs. After a while somebody went downstairs to make sure the driver had not gone on strike. "You never know these days!" he exclaimed.

The upshot of all of those strikes and trade union irresponsibility was the breaking up of CIE and the privatisation of Aer Lingus. Economically, there were frightening similarities between 1978 and 2008. Both years started out optimistically, but by the end of each of them, it was clear we were in trouble.

In 1979 there were local and European elections in which Fianna Fáil fared dismally. Jack Lynch, the most popular Taoiseach in history, was essentially driven from office.

One of those who helped to drive him out was Bertie Ahern. He obviously recognised the signs in 2008 and he got out voluntarily before they turned on him within Fianna Fáil.

Looking at 1978 really highlighted the accomplishments of Bertie Ahern. There was industrial peace in this country last year, compared with 1978. Social partnership, in which Ahern played a vital role, probably played a key part in the industrial peace.

Another great contrast was in Northern Ireland where Ahern also made a tremendous difference. There was enormous hope at the beginning of 1978. The <u>Women</u>'s Peace Movement of 1977 had demonstrated a desire for peace on all sides in the North.

In 1976, almost 300 people were killed in the Troubles. That number dropped to 112 the following year and to 80 in 1978. During an RT interview on January 9, 1978 Jack Lynch suggested there might be room for an amnesty for the Provisionals and he went on to call on the British to declare an intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland.

This put the cat among the pigeons. Lynch knew a withdrawal was not on and he was not looking for one. He was asking for a pronouncement about some vague time in the future.

Economic alarm bells have distinct echoes from events of late 1970s

When he talked about Irish unity, he was always thinking this would be by agreement, with the consent of the majority of the people of Northern Ireland.

"My knowledge of the Catholic tradition in the North is really no greater than that of the Protestant tradition," the Taoiseach told Donal Musgrave of the Cork Examiner in 1978. "My contact with Northern Catholics was mainly through the GAA, although I have probably had more contact with rugby people over the years, especially since my active GAA days ceased."

Lynch first visited Belfast during World War II. "I wasn't very impressed by the city and thought how depressing it was," he said. But he visited the North on two occasions with his wife, Mairín, during the late 1940s. They were both very impressed and liked the area "immensely".

He explained: "I have always had a high regard for the business capacity of the Northern people. There is a neatness about them. I admired the way they kept their roads, their gardens and houses. I have often been anxious to go back to walk the streets of Belfast, down Royal Avenue. I believe I could walk in the Shankill or the Waterside in Derry as safely as on the Falls or the Bogside. I would like to talk to the people and I believe I would be safe."

For unionists, talk of a British withdrawal amounted to their abandonment and it was easy to see why they would have been scared about being absorbed by the rest of the island.

One of the hottest political issues at that time in the Republic was the possibility of legalising the sale of contraceptives. The Taoiseach was inundated with hysterical letters predicting dire consequences if contraception were legalised.

Vivion de Valera, the late president's eldest son, wrote to Lynch about being "bombarded with all sorts of well meaning but ill-informed representations on contraception, very largely from virgins of both sexes".

If contraception were legalised, one woman warned Lynch, Fianna Fáil would "be responsible for unseating Mary, Our Queen". It would lead to an increase in premarital sex, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, incest and "VD out of all proportion".

The Catholic hierarchy was anxious for the government to deal with the issue because the courts had essentially ruled that people were entitled to import contraceptives for their own use.

The church wished to stop this, and Charlie Haughey came up with his "Irish solution for an Irish problem". Contraceptives could be sold legally, but strictly for family planning purposes, and then only on a doctor's prescription.

The Catholic hierarchy was being allowed to rule, which helps explain why Northern Protestants were so suspicious of the Republic. We talked about seeking unity by agreement, but we showed no readiness even to listen to their concerns.

The British exhibited the same unwillingness to listen to nationalists, as if listening and surrender were synonymous. They failed to learn from past mistakes.

In 1919 Michael Collins and company deliberately provoked the crown forces in the belief they would lash out indiscriminately and, in the process, drive the Irish people into the arms of the republicans.

A relatively small clique was behind the republican violence in 1920, but the British made the mistake of overreacting in trying to teach them a lesson.

They attacked the crowd at a football game in Croke Park on what would be remembered as the first Bloody Sunday in November 1920.

They made the same mistake again in Derry on another Bloody Sunday in 1972, which was by far the worst year of the Troubles. But they did not learn from that mistake either.

Economic alarm bells have distinct echoes from events of late 1970s

INSTEAD of availing of the window for peace in 1978, the North's secretary of state Roy Mason and company were more intent on teaching the republicans a lesson. Instead of talking, they adopted an intransigent attitude during the H-Block protests. The IRA then initiated another bombing campaign in November 1978.

Ultimately it was necessary to negotiate with the republicans and the loyalists. Much trouble and strife could have been averted had the British recognised this in 1978.

The Northern peace process stands as a beacon for the rest of the world. We should be taking a lead in urging the world community to learn from the mistakes made on this island.

After the Israelis withdrew from Gaza in 2005, *Hamas* fired more than 6,300 rockets into Israel from Gaza. They killed 10 Israelis and wounded almost 800. *Hamas* was trying to provoke Israel into an overreaction.

Israel has overreacted. In three days they killed at least 320, including 62 civilians and injured more than 1,400 people. Now *Hamas*, which was despised by the Egyptian and other Arab governments, has more support than ever in the Arab world. This is at the expense of the moderates who were looking for peace.

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The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: INSIGHT; Letters; Pg. 20

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Body

DEATH ON OUR ROADS

What about the other victims?

THE fact that the 2008 death toll on Victoria's roads is at an all-time low (The Age, 1/1) is fantastic news. However, that is not really indicative of the carnage on our roads. Where are the figures for those who did not die but were disabled and injured?

Consider the damage, grief and cost that are not reported in simple road toll statistics and take more care.

Katrina Gibson, Canterbury

Safety first

EVEN though the number of road deaths was a record low in 2008, the annual toll is still appalling - more than 300 deaths, 6000 serious injuries, many more minor injuries, much property damage and untold pain and suffering.

The real tragedy is that many deaths and injuries need not have occurred because they were due largely to inappropriate road-user behaviour, such as excessive speed, alcohol, drugs, fatigue or failure to wear seatbelts. Other factors include over-confidence, peer pressures, impatience, arrogance and a sense that crashes occur only to others.

Such behaviour must continue to be addressed by education, training, publicity and enforcement programs. Unfortunately, due to the nature of human behaviour, it will not be possible to eliminate all road-user weaknesses or errors.

If there is to be further significant reduction in the toll, there needs to be greater emphasis on effective safety measures, including speed management, so that roads and vehicles are more tolerant and forgiving of drivers' lapses.

Dr Robin T. Underwood, Ringwood East

Dob them in...

WE REPEATEDLY hear that the police are concerned about drivers using mobile phones (The Age, 2/1), yet seldom a day goes by that an observant driver does not see someone flouting the law and endangering other people's lives. I have even seen a bus driver using a phone.

Drivers and passengers can be fined for littering, based on information sent by a member of the public. Why can't this practice also apply to drivers who are using mobile phones (a much more serious issue)? Unlike reports of littering, a phone-user's call and general location could be verified as having taken place at the time of the report. Incidents of this dangerous practice would drop dramatically, just as littering has.

Of course, civil liberties groups would be up in arms and the privacy laws might have to be changed. But are we serious or not about road safety?

Ralph Judd, Blackburn North

... switch off ...

IS ASSISTANT Commissioner Ken Lay able to tell us the number of pedestrian deaths caused by their own use of mobile phones, iPods and other hearing and sight-inhibiting appliances? If the number is statistically significant, then the law should be altered to ban such use on any vehicle thoroughfare, including pathways shared with cyclists.

Gordon Ortmann, Glen Iris

... and slow down

GEOFF Strong (Comment & Debate, 2/1), you use all the standard rationalisations of the speeder (limits of accuracy of the speedo, too many different zones, speed limits too low, cars too powerful) to avoid taking responsibility for your behaviour. Then you admit the prospect of losing your licence has led you to "be good". Hooray! I hope you stay that way. We might be suspicious of the Government's motives, but I am more suspicious of the motives of drivers who just want to be allowed to go out and drive as fast as they like.

John Hutchison, Mount Macedon

Respect the people's choice

SO LABOR pushes Kevin Rudd for an early vote on Australia becoming a republic and demands a non-binding and constitutionally useless plebiscite before the next general election (The Age, 2/1).

Do they vow to respect the people's choice, no matter what the outcome? To be more precise, will the republicans stop attacking the Australian monarchy when the majority says no to a republic again, or will they continue to have the people vote until they get their republic?

Harold Schmautz, Carnegie

Mr Rudd, help me become a citizen

I AM 61. I came to Australia when I was seven. I am a member of a large family, most of whom are citizens by birthright. My life, loves and passions are all Australian. When I have returned from overseas and the giant silver bird approaches Tullamarine, I have bitten my lip at the emotion of being home. Mr Rudd, I want to become a citizen.

But I cannot until we become a republic. Choosing to become a citizen, and in the process renouncing the citizenship of the state of one's birth, is a deeply spiritual decision. But the absurdity of becoming an Australian and thus owing my allegiance to a head of state who has no mandate from my fellow citizens stops me. To extend the absurdity, she is the head of state of the country I wish to renounce.

Mr Rudd, the task is yours. Ask the people if they want a republic. Ask them what kind of republic they want, then put it to them in a formal referendum. Mr Rudd, I want to become a citizen before I die.

Brian Sanaghan, West Preston

Our terrifying trip

ON NEW Year's Eve, returning from the fireworks in the city, I had the deep misfortune to travel with my partner and our three girls, aged four, five and eight, on a tram along St Kilda Road. There were 25 to 30 aggressive, loud and obnoxious drunks, males and <u>females</u>, who smashed the tram's roof and screamed obscenities all the way to St Kilda. We will not do it again.

David Dawson, Highett

Every child's right to go to school

LIKE the sons of Paige Walker (The Age, 31/12) and Belinda Everett (Letters, 31/12), ours too has Asperger's syndrome. Last July the Australian Government ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It enshrines the right to have access to a government-funded education.

Our son faced school exclusion, was misunderstood in under-resourced schools staffed by people with limited understanding of those with disabilities and was refused enrolment in government schools, to be dispatched to distance education. The burden of implementing his learning program was placed on family.

The Education Department has acknowledged to us, our advocate and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service that no government school is able to meet his needs. We have made numerous, albeit failed, attempts to work with the department and minister to ensure our son has access to his education as enshrined in the UN convention.

It is heartening to see Ms Walker and Ms Everett voicing what their children and families have had to endure in an attempt to receive an education, but they should not have to do this. A family should not have to take legal action against the state, write letters to editors or go to the UN in order for their child to receive this fundamental right.

Lisa Thomas, Highett

An artist of courage and conviction

BRITISH street artist Banksy (Opinion, 1/1) would certainly not be the slightest bit concerned at having his work defaced or removed. He has said that the only people who think it is dangerous are cops, advertising execs and other graffiti artists. I guess the sadness is that something rather beautiful is replaced with something markedly less so, and that the graffiti artist did a more thorough job than either the cops or advertising execs.

Have a look at Banksy's book Wall and Piece to see some of the breadth, power and skill of his work, also the sheer amount of it and how short-lived a lot of it is. Some of his art makes him money, but most was made for free, and no one could deny him whatever he chooses to keep of the profit he makes from it.

Hopefully the Melbourne graffiti artist with the cop aesthetic won't make it to the wall in Palestine where Banksy created a series of murals. Look at www.banksy.co.uk for a real political statement in art.

Andrew White, Upper Ferntree Gully

A plea for reason in the Middle East

ISN'T it time both Israel and <u>Hamas</u> were reminded that a war crime is a war crime? Just because weapons were hidden in synagogues in pre-state Israel does not make it OK for <u>Hamas</u> to store weapons in mosques, as alleged by Israel. Just because <u>Hamas</u> launches its rockets to coincide with Israeli children travelling to school does not make it any less repugnant for Israel to launch its own form of shock and awe at the equivalent time in Gaza.

And, yes, Israel has been using anti-personnel weapons like cluster bombs. But that is no reason for <u>Hamas</u> to pack ball bearings into its Qassam rockets as in the one that hit the house of a friend of mine in a border kibbutz. (Luckily he had left 10minutes earlier.) That <u>Hamas</u> rockets have killed 15Israelis in the past four years is no excuse to kill scores of Gazan civilians in a single week. The excuse that "they did it first" is no justification for ignoring human rights law and committing war crimes.

Sol Salbe, Maidstone

What we want from the media

TIM Costello, thank you for your sanity, wisdom and courage (Comment & Debate, 2/1). Do the media really make a buck from Paris Hilton? Do they know whether more people buy papers/tune in if she is in the content? I suspect they don't but are afraid to test alternative coverage of "thicker" stories; it's safer to wallow together in the cesspit of garbage content. Our media are a dangerous and distorted mirror thrust into our faces.

I reject their reflection and choose real life, the garden and my friends. I try to source reliable information about real issues and participate in addressing them, especially energy consumption and climate change. People will freak out when they come to really understand the dire situation we have put the planet in. They will be very angry that we were served a diet of Paris when we desperately needed to be properly informed about the climate emergency.

Georgia Darcy, Ringwood

Well-paid critic

TIM Costello is the head of a charity on a salary of some \$250,000 a year (The Age, 27/12). I think any criticism of Paris Hilton is a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Robert Bradshaw, Melton West

No, no, please no

RE "A \$1 coin with John Howard's expression?" (The Age, 1/1). It is not a good idea to put politicians on either coins or stamps. The Russian post office discovered this when it found stamps were falling off envelopes. People were spitting on the wrong side.

Elwyn Davies, Yarraville

Have we forgotten Howard's legacy?

SURELY the idea of putting John Howard's face on the \$1 coin was a joke. To do so for a man who sullied the reputation of Australia with his unconscionable actions re Tampa, his participation in the illegal invasion of Iraq and his construction of barbed-wire-fenced camps for refugees (some of which were offshore so as to be outside of Australian legal jurisdiction - think Guantanamo) would demonstrate poor judgement indeed. It will take some years for such actions to be forgotten here and abroad.

Besides all that, what's with the idea of doing it for someone who is alive? So he can walk into a shop and proudly hand over some coins with his face on them? This alone should be reason enough for not putting the image of any person who is alive onto our coins or notes.

Greg Smith, Caulfield South

Seeking an answer

WHY, oh why, does The Age have this policy of mixing up its regular offerings during the holiday period? How does it benefit anyone to receive A2 and the classifieds twice, once on Friday and then again the next day? And why do you persist in providing EG on Thursday when you are still producing a paper on

Friday?

I love The Age dearly (and am a Fairfax shareholder) but I am so befuddled by this policy that it makes me seethe with rage.

Peter Rodgers, East Malvern

A word from the wise, Ricky

I HAVE some more unwanted advice for Ricky Ponting and his team. The Inverloch cricket team was similar to the Australian Test side: we always had a side that looked very good on paper, prodigious experience with the average age of players considerably higher than their batting averages, and often long series of inexplicable and upsetting losses.

We found the way forward out of those dark times by reversing the batting order. Give it a try, Ricky.

Benedict Clark, Cape Paterson

Graphic

CARTOON BY PETTY

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A rare imam who juggles fatwas, interfaith confabs

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Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Jerusalem

Body

Sheikh Ishaq Abdel-Jawad Taha's phone is ringing off the hook.

"You're welcome, go ahead," says Sheikh Taha, sitting behind his desk at the Palestinian Authority's Al-Fatwa Council, of which he is the director. "She's still recovering, so she doesn't have to pray," he says.

The voice on the other end of the phone is that of a man, asking if his wife - who recently gave birth by Caesarean section - is required to return to five-times-daily prayers.

While a fatwa is often equated in the West with extremism, in the East it's simply a religious guideline that can be useful in daily life, especially for those who know whom to call for a ruling that fits the context of a reasonable Islam.

That's where Taha comes in. His council dispenses advice across the Palestinian territories, and across the party lines of rival Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> factions. While he commands much respect among Muslims, Taha is pushing boundaries for his ongoing conversations with others - the Israelis.

Taha is involved in dialogue forums and meetings with both Christians and Jews: a controversial practice since many of his colleagues deem such meetings as normalization, which is frowned on here and across the Arab world in the absence of a settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On one recent evening, for example, he met with an Israeli-Jewish group in a West Jerusalem neighborhood, and talked alongside a prominent rabbi on the subject of forgiveness in the Koran and the Torah. Organizers of the event said that Sheikh Taha's appearance was sensitive, and therefore asked that it not be covered by journalists.

Later, Taha explained his position: He does such meetings in his personal capacity, because an official visit would require a stamp of approval from the highest levels of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Nonetheless, he decided to yield on his official silence about such meetings.

"Had I not been convinced that these events help bring peace, I would not have attended," says Taha, an affable man who wears a trim white beard and a red-and-white headcovering that comes from the Fatamid period, and which signifies he is a distinguished scholar entrusted with legislating Islamic law.

"I look at it as an experiment," he says. "The questions that came up showed how much people misunderstand Islam."

A rare imam who juggles fatwas, interfaith confabs

Not all Islamic scholars here feel the same, but he's fine with pushing the envelope - at least somewhat.

"I don't care what people say about me," he says, his face spreading into a wide grin. "I'm following prophet Muhammad's ways, who met with Jews and Christians regularly. I'd like to mix more with nationalities. I feel an office like this one should not be operating behind closed doors."

To that end, he makes sure that the council's decisions get publicized in local newspapers and in other forms of media, and that there's a number through which to make anonymous queries - a sort of dial-a-fatwa - like that of the man who wanted to know if his wife should resume praying.

That request, he says, was actually about something more.

What the man was really asking is whether he can expect his wife to return to normal sexual relations with him: If she's able to do fulfill one duty, the logic goes, she also fulfill others. Taha's answer: No.

"He asks this way," he explains, "but it's a way of getting an answer to the question he really asked."

Such are the gymnastics involved in being a flexible religious authority who wants to uphold the values of the Koran and make it easy for people to get the religious guidance they seek.

"They consider me a modern sheikh. I'm very proud of that," Taha acknowledges, before reaching for one of the huge black-and-white binders where he keeps questions up for discussion. Almost like a presiding Supreme Court judge, he collects questions that have been submitted to him from around the country, in this case, the West Bank and Gaza.

Above and beyond fielding calls from the public, he oversees a council of 24 other religious scholars to whom he distributes a kind of dilemma du jour, giving each expert two weeks to think and research before coming to a ruling.

Despite the political split between the two territories since <u>Hamas</u> took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007, he says the system is still working: He has a number of Islamic religious authorities who are loyal to the Al-Fatwa Council, not <u>Hamas</u>.

Elana Rozenman, who runs an interfaith <u>women</u>'s group called Emun-Trust, was instrumental in bringing Taha for the evening of discussion and learning, along with Rabbi Daniel Landes, the head of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies.

"Anytime a Muslim sheikh at his level and in his position of prominence is willing to meet with and teach with someone like Rabbi Landes, it's a very encouraging sign in general, and it shows specifically that he's a very unique individual," Ms. Rozenman says.

Their first official meeting began in March, when he agreed to participate in such a bilateral study evening after the shooting deaths of eight Israeli students by a Palestinian gunman at a Jerusalem yeshiva. The meeting was charged - and the room was packed. "We jump-started the partnership at that point," Rozenman says.

On the one hand, such groundbreaking work makes him one of the more temperate imams in Middle East. On the other, on some issues involving *women*, he rules in a way that would probably make the average American feminist apoplectic.

Some of the recent questions that have come in, for example, address whether it's OK for a woman to travel alone. Their ruling: only for up to 80 kilometers (50 miles), based on the fact that in days of yore, the limit was three days and three nights.

A particularly interesting question in the docket asks how much a woman is permitted to "reveal" to a suitor who's interested in asking for her hand in marriage. His answer: everything must be covered except her face, hands, and feet.

A rare imam who juggles fatwas, interfaith confabs

"Others say she should show her neck," he explains, reading through the specifics of question. He's sent it out to eight others - a third of the council.

"This inquiry came about because people want to know," Taha says. "Some men want to see the beauty of their intended's hair, or see whether she is fit underneath her cloak. It's a problem because if he doesn't want to propose, and she agrees to be seen with no head covering, she's exposed herself to a stranger."

His opinion sounds ultraconservative, but to others, there's a wisdom in it. "I say you can only show what is allowed, the face and the hands and feet, because I don't want to give a chance to irresponsible people to make fun of <u>women</u> or take advantage of that option." This call for modesty, he notes, is very different from how things look in countries such as Saudi Arabia, where sharia, or Islamic law, rules.

"Here, fatwa is not a law," he says. "It is a sacred order for whomever wants to commit himself or herself to it."

Among those who do, in various ways, are his wife and their 14 children, seven sons and seven daughters.

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War of words ... and killing

Canberra Times (Australia)
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Final Edition

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Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

NOTHING is simple in the seemingly endless conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories. All the events since the 1947 United Nations plan to partition Palestine into two states, followed a year later by the creation of the state of Israel, are the subject of endless claims and counterclaims. The latest chapter, Israel's Operation Cast Lead, is no different.

Who broke the ceasefire: <u>Hamas</u>, by ramping up its rocket attacks in December, or Israel, with an air strike in November? Cue endless war of words. Perhaps the only uncontestable point is the magnitude of the ongoing tragedy. In the two weeks since Operation Cast Lead began, the Israeli assault on Gaza has killed more than 700 Palestinians and wounded more than 3100. On Tuesday, Israel attacked a school in the Jabaliya camp in Gaza, killing 40 and injuring 50. Six Israeli soldiers have been killed in combat, while rockets fired into Israel have killed four people and wounded dozens. Israel's stated aim in Operation Cast Lead is to stop <u>Hamas</u>'s cross-border rocket attacks.

For three Canberrans of vastly different backgrounds, there is no doubt about the guilty party: Israel. One was born in a Palestine that no longer exists; one is an Australian who has witnessed first-hand the miseries of the occupied territories; and one is an Israeli who once served with the military forces now attacking Gaza.

ALI KAZAK was born in the city of Haifa in 1947, to a Syrian mother and a Palestinian father, in the last months of Palestine as a distinct territory, when it was under British administration. A simple matter of timing meant he was to be separated from his father for 50 years. Kazak's mother had taken the infant to Damascus to be with her sick father, who wanted to see his first grandson before he died. "One week later the underground Jewish terrorist groups escalated the attack and they put their Plan D into action, which aimed to turn the Palestinian majority into a minority, making the Jewish minority a majority to declare the state of Israel," he says.

The period Kazak refers to became known as the 1948 Palestinian Exodus, in which hundreds of thousands of Arabs fled from Jewish-controlled areas such as Haifa during the war of Palestine.

It became too dangerous for Kazak's mother to return, but his father had to stay in Haifa to look after his crippled mother. Haifa was incorporated into the State of Israel, which refused to allow the return of Palestinian refugees.

Kazak's mother later snuck into Israel to see her husband, but she was caught and deported. "My father and mother realised then that it couldn't work, so they divorced. My father remarried and had six children," he says. Kazak eventually came to Australia as a refugee, where he has lived for 38 years. He became the head of the General

War of words ... and killing

Palestinian Delegation in Australia, only retiring from the position two years ago. In his study he has a framed picture of himself shaking hands with Palestinian Liberation Organisation chairman Yasser Arafat. It was the diplomatic connections he forged in this role with then Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans that enabled Kazak to return to Haifa in June 1995. He pauses, and his eyes moisten, as he remembers the first time he saw his father. "It's difficult to put into words. It was the same building where I was born. I went back, and when I arrived he was sitting near the window, waiting."

Kazak says he finds the latest Israeli attack on Gaza "heartbreaking".

With friends and relatives in Gaza and the West Bank, he is acutely aware of the day-to-day suffering of the populations.

"Every year or couple of years, Israel launches these criminal aggressions, resulting in hundreds of killed and wounded. It's been going on for the last 60 years. We go from one massacre to another.

We are asking, how long the international community is going to tolerate such Israeli war crimes?" he says.

Kazak has no sympathy for Israel, which he says is an occupying power that has "ethnically cleansed" Palestinians from their own country. "Israel is killing, oppressing, and collectively punishing our people," he says. The Western world, including Australia, must end its policy of appearament of Israel, Kazak says.

The Palestinian refugees must also be allowed to return to their homeland. "Only then will there be peace in the Middle East."

AVIGAIL ABARBANEL, a Canberra psychotherapist, has taken an extraordinary personal journey. She was born and raised in Israel and, like all Israelis, served two compulsory years in the Israeli Defence Force. She trained as a platoon commander and finished her service with the rank of staff sergeant. Now, she would like to be in the occupied territories to "spit in the face of the Israeli war criminals".

"Israeli soldiers aren't stupid, they know what they're doing. I'd like to think they believe they're defending their country I could live with that but when you go there and use bombs that are illegal in international law ... and shoot **women** and children, do you really think they believe that?" she says.

Abarbanel says that in the beginning she was a Zionist and an enthusiastic soldier. She believed that Israel was always the good guy, the Palestinians the bad guys.

But the oppressiveness of the military didn't sit well with a spirited young woman, and she began questioning the way it operated. Now, Abarbanel says Israelis are brainwashed to hate the Palestinians.

She says the attacks on the occupied territories have the overwhelming support of the Israelis because the Palestinians are "nothing to them", and their children simply "future terrorists".

What about the rockets fired by <u>Hamas</u> militants into Israel? Abarbanel has a good idea of how Israelis under fire feel, because she has been one of them.

In 1991, during the first Gulf War, she was at home when an Iraqi scud missile struck a few metres from her apartment building in Ramat-Gan near Tel Aviv. Despite having completed military service, she couldn't bear the sound of fireworks for years afterwards because it reminded her of the scud attack and the sound of Patriot missiles being fired from nearby batteries. But Abarbanel's riposte to those who emphasise the rocket attacks on Israel is to ask, if it's bad for the Israelis, what must it be like for the Palestinians? "Trauma is a complicated business, and it affects our brain. One hundred per cent of the people in Gaza suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. There's no way you can go what they've been through since 1967 [when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza], without that effect," she says.

As a therapist, she wonders how long it would take for 1.5 million people to heal if all the violence stopped tomorrow.

"My feeling is, most of them never will."

There is one more reason why Abarbanel feels compelled to speak out on Gaza. As an Israeli she grew up on stories of the Holocaust. Her own grandparents on her mother's side were Holocaust survivors. "When I realised the Palestinians were suffering under an aggressive occupation by an incredibly powerful state, armed to the teeth, if I didn't stick up for them, I was a bystander and I couldn't live that way. This is what I learned from Jewish culture."

KATHRYN KELLY is a PhD scholar in political science at the ANU who has long had an interest in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. In 2002, after Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield into the West Bank, she decided to join the Australians for Public Health and Education Development Abroad, a Sydney-based trade union aid agency, on a fact-finding mission. The agency travelled extensively in Gaza and the West Bank. Kelly recalls talking to a family about their experiences during the conflict.

"The husband went out for bread one day and while he was out the Israelis bombed their apartment block, because they were trying to assassinate somebody," she says. "Two of their children were killed."

Kelly met a physical education teacher who had become alarmed for his students' safety one day when Israeli tanks appeared nearby. While trying to gather the students and direct them to safety he was shot in the back. He is now a paraplegic. "None of these people were combatants. They were just victims of this inhumane occupation," Kelly says. She returned to the occupied territories in 2003 with the International Solidarity Movement, which she describes as an "ad hoc organisation of people from all around the world, of all ages".

People helped out in whatever way they could. In one instance she took medicine to a woman with diabetes, living in a house that had been occupied by Israeli soldiers.

"We finally convinced the soldiers to give her the medication," she says. Kelly was struck by the difficulties the Palestinians had just getting from one place to another through the military checkpoints. She saw a couple whose baby had just had an operation for a cleft palate, held up for five hours. "It was just a tank stopping people going by. The road had been dug up so people can't drive on it, so these people were walking."

In Kelly's view, the Israelis are just as much to blame for breaking the ceasefire in Gaza as *Hamas*.

She says one of the conditions of the ceasefire was that the Israelis would lift the siege of Gaza, but in fact they only allowed a "small trickle" of humanitarian aid through. Only about 80 trucks were allowed through, compared to the normal trade of 600 to 700. The Sunday Canberra Times contacted the ACT Jewish Centre for comments from Jewish Canberrans on the conflict in Gaza. A spokeswoman for the centre said, "It's a small community and nobody is interested in being interviewed by the newspaper."

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Shattered calm

The Jerusalem Post January 2, 2009 Friday

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Byline: KSENIA SVETLOVA

Highlight: Not as 'quiet' as one may think, many residents of east Jerusalem have a strong sense of solidarity with

their fellow Arabs in Gaza

Body

On Monday evening, on the third day of Operation Cast Lead, a little boy, no more than six years old, was brought into the emergency room of Hadassah-University Medical Center. His face was bleeding, and one cheek was covered with a bandage.

"What happened to the boy?" the nurse asked the father in Arabic. "He happened to be around these guys who were throwing stones at the police, and one of the stones hit his face," the father replied. He explained that he had warned his son not to go out when the violence broke out in the Silwan area, but the boy wanted to see "the action" from a closer vantage point.

An hour later I saw the pair again, waiting for the X- ray technician. They were watching Channel 2 on a large plasma screen suspended on the wall in the waiting room. The images of bombarded Gaza flickered on the screen. The patients, mostly Arabs, didn't say a thing, following the images of Gaza with their eyes and making a particular denouncing sound with the tongue.

Amid widespread condemnation of the operation and calls for a third intifada in the Arab world, east Jerusalemites have not remained indifferent to these images pouring from their TV sets, voicing their reaction loud and clear through demonstrating, stone throwing and flag burning. The first wave of violence began early on Saturday, soon after the operation in Gaza was launched.

In the Shuafat refugee camp, walking distance from Pisgat Ze'ev and French Hill, angry youths threw stones at Border Police jeeps, chanting "Death to Israel! We will redeem you, Gaza."

The next day, similar images from Silwan, A-Tur and Sur Bahir kept on coming. Dozens were arrested, others were warned by the police and by the dignitaries in their neighborhoods, but the situation continued to be tense.

Rami, a minivan driver from Beit Hanina, says that all his brothers went to the Shuafat camp on Saturday to protest against the "brutality of the state." He didn't go to the demonstration, fearing arrest.

"I already have a file with them [the police]. I was a Fatah member during the first intifada, and I can't afford to get arrested now, since I'm the only provider for my family. But my heart is with the Gazans," he says.

Shattered calm

Munir Khalil, a butcher from the Shuafat camp, echoes Rami's sentiments. "It's our brothers who are dying there. Israel says that this war is against *Hamas*, but it seems to me that they are victimizing the entire Palestinian population in Gaza. That is why I participated in the demonstrations that took place in the camp."

Khalil, a handsome bearded man of 25, denies any affiliation with <u>Hamas</u>, yet there is a huge <u>Hamas</u> poster in his shop. Green flags hanging from the rooftops are not an unusual sight in the camp streets as well. But Khalil says that it's not important. "You can be <u>Hamas</u>, you can be Fatah, you can be independent or not at all affiliated with any party, but you just can't stay calm when your brothers are being massacred in cold blood," he says, and quotes from the Al-Quds newspaper lying on the table: "The harshest attack since 1967."

Back then, Israel fought armies; now it's hitting inside the densely populated areas of Gaza, the butcher says. This is the reason for people's anger and frustration, his assistant adds. "We've never seen anything quite as brutal and horrible," he explains.

In neighboring Pisgat Ze'ev and French Hill, many were taken by surprise when they saw the images of burning Israeli flags and stones thrown at police jeeps and residents' cars. "East Jerusalem was mostly quiet during the years of the intifada," many say. "So what happened now?" they ask, having a hard time explaining the eruption of extremism.

"I never thought things would get so bad in east Jerusalem - after all, it's not Ramallah or Jenin," says Avi Ofer, a resident of Pisgat Ze'ev.

INDEED, FOR many years east Jerusalem enjoyed the reputation of being a "quiet Arab neighborhood," and many believed that the holders of Israeli ID cards in east Jerusalem who enjoyed significant benefits such as access to health funds and National Insurance Institute stipends wouldn't want to risk it all for the sake of solidarity action or violent protest.

This belief first began to dissolve last March, when Ala Abu Dhaim, a driver from Jebl Mukaber, took a gun, entered the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva and shot eight students to death. Soon after, the shocking bulldozer attacks in downtown Jerusalem followed.

Was this belief in Jerusalem's "quietness" ever true or was it based on mistaken assumptions from the beginning?

Amnon Kapeliuk, the Le Monde Diplomatique correspondent in Jerusalem, believes that the current eruption of violence was quite predictable.

"The fact that many east Jerusalemites are Israeli ID holders doesn't make them any less Palestinian. They are very attentive to what is going on in the West Bank and Gaza, especially the younger generation. And when the situation turns so bad over there, they believe that this is the least they can do for their brothers. Also, the Palestinian organizations always try to mobilize the masses in the city, since everything that happens in Jerusalem gets a lot of media coverage. Of course, many are still afraid to engage in mass demonstration for fear of being arrested or even deported to the West Bank; but still, an event of such magnitude couldn't go unnoticed in east Jerusalem."

Kapeliuk adds that the so-called "quietness" of Jerusalem during the second intifada can be explained more in terms of fear of the reaction than indifference to the situation in the Palestinian Authority territories.

A well-known Palestinian politician and lawyer Ziad Abu-Ziad, a resident of Eizariya, agrees with Kapeliuk, saying that "Some Israelis deluded themselves, imagining that the Palestinians in east Jerusalem are different because they are separated from the West Bank. But in fact they are the same people and their reaction to the killings in Gaza is the same reaction of Arabs and Muslims all over the world."

Abu-Ziad, who was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1996, representing the Jerusalem district, used to serve as minister of state, coordinator of a ministerial committee on Jerusalem, and head of the Palestinian delegation to the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group of the Middle East multilateral peace talks. He adds that the perception of "quiet east Jerusalem" so popular in Israel was also a mistaken one. "During the first

Shattered calm

intifada, the popular intifada, east Jerusalem was always active, and its residents participated in all sorts of protests and demonstrations. As for the second intifada, my personal belief is that it was a military criminal act led by the leaders [of the Palestinians], and the regular people were never actively engaged, not in Gaza nor in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem."

Gershon Baskin, the CEO of Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, says that he was not at all surprised by the outbreak of violence in east Jerusalem, yet he believes that it is not a widespread phenomenon. The number of those participating in the riots is relatively insignificant, he says, adding that there are always some young men who disobey police orders and they do not represent the majority of the population.

"I fear that as a consequence of the reaction in east Jerusalem there might be an attempt to commit suicide terrorist attacks, and this is what scares me the most, not the sporadic riots in east Jerusalem neighborhoods."

Ordinary Israelis, in particular in west Jerusalem, may have been caught by surprise by the eruption of violence in the eastern part, but those bodies responsible for security and the maintenance of order certainly were not. Moshe Finchi, Border Police spokesman, says that it was ready for any development in east Jerusalem and reinforced the presence of Border Police in the neighborhoods and on Jerusalem borders when the operation in Gaza first began. In fact, just a week ago Border Police forces in Jerusalem underwent special training aimed at improving their performance during violent demonstrations and protests.

"We knew that the launching of the operation in Gaza could evoke various reactions in the eastern part of the city, and we were ready for every possible development. We believe that we were able to control the situation quite well. Our mission is to maintain order and to prevent disorderly conduct and violence. At the same time, I would like to stress that we respect the right of the people to express their opinion and to protest, as long as they do not break the law. Those who broke the law were arrested, but we would never stop or interrupt a lawful demonstration or an act of protest," he says.

As for the future, Pinchi says that the Border Police, which works in close cooperation with the IDF and the police force, will continue its efforts to protect the citizens and maintain order in the city.

But what if the situation in east Jerusalem gets out of control? And what are the chances of that happening? Abu-Ziad believes that an expansion and the continuation of the operation will inevitably bring about a harsher reaction among the Arabs of Jerusalem who, in his words, "will not remain indifferent to the bloodshed."

Graphic

7 photos ..CPAn Arab woman holds up a banner reading 'Silence=Partnership' in Arabic and English, and another holds up her hand with red paint, signifying blood at a protest outside the US consulate in east Jerusalem on Tuesday. Jewish and Arab students holding Israeli and Palestinian Authority flags take part in dueling protests for and against the military operation in Gaza at the Hebrew University on Monday. A Border Police officer fires tear gas at stone throwers at the Kalandiya checkpoint on Sunday. Protesters throw stones during clashes with IDF troops in the Shuafat refugee camp on Monday. A border policeman fires a tear gas canister at stone throwers during clashes that erupted at the Kalandiya checkpoint on Monday. Protesters kneel behind a barricade as they hurl stones at IDF troops during clashes in the Shuafat refugee camp on Sunday. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



All out: Lebanese village empties after rocket attack from nearby

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Body

A Lebanese village from where rockets were fired at Israel yesterday resembled a ghost town after panicked residents fled or hid in fear of massive retaliation from across the border.

Lebanese soldiers and Italian troops serving with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon patrolled the streets seeking information on who fired the rockets early in the day from just outside the village of about 4,500 people.

Several missiles slammed into the northern Israel town of Nahariya, wounding two women.

"No one is left here," said Hasna Ataya, 55, one of the few residents who stayed in the border village along with her 20-year-old daughter Khadija.

"Many took their personal belongings and some rented vehicles to flee with their loved ones. I stayed behind with my daughter because we don't have a car."

Amina Rahal, 48, said she packed food for her three children before fleeing from Tayr Harfa, seven kilometres from the Israeli border.

"The last war was terrifying," Rahal said of the 34-day summer conflict in 2006 between the Shiite militant group Hezbollah and Israel that largely devastated southern Lebanon and killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

"My children can't take another war," she added. "When we saw everyone heading toward (the coastal town of) Tyre, we decided to follow their example."

Rahal said that since the early morning rocket attack and Israeli retaliation with artillery rounds, no one had dared venture into her shop. "My children are terrified," she said. "They heard the rocket fire this morning and were trembling. We saw black smoke rising from the fields after Israel retaliated."

Mohamed Akeel, 59, said he had rented a cab to flee to Tyre along with his wife and five children. "We'll spend the night in Tyre until things calm down," he said, loading their belongings.

No one has claimed responsibility for the rockets, but Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> have indicated that hey were not behind it.

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