

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:30:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223446969

# Documents (100)

1. UN urges Israel to reopen crucial Gaza crossings

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

2. Israel vows to shelter soldiers from prosecution; UN interviewing Gaza residents; European Union calls on Palestinian factions to unite so that border can be reopened

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

3. <u>Peres: 'Our image is important, but not as important as defending our lives'. President says countries hit by terrorism 'completely understood Israel 's policy'</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

4. Brown: Israel shelling of UN 'indefensible' PM tells UN chief Britain will 'step up' efforts for ceasefire in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

5. 'Song for Gaza' captures hearts of YouTube viewers



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

6. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

7. Don't count on Egypt to stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

8. Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

9. Addressing Muslims, a Blunt Obama Takes On Mideast Issues

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

10. Ex-Spy Turned Negotiator Sits Down With Islamists and the West

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 11. Ex-spy turns Mideast mediator Former British agent uses backdoor meetings to reach out to Islamists

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

# 12. <u>END BLOCKADE, BLAIR TELLS ISRAEL ON FIRST GAZA VISIT 7 SHOT WOMEN DESERVED TO DIE</u> HARIRI TRIBUNAL OPENS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

# 13. Hard-liners hold edge in Israeli election

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 14. Will Israel be brought to book?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

### 15. 'Seven British Children': An Israeli response

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

16. Gazans emerge to search for the dead Palestinians stunned by Israeli ferocity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

17. My Say: Palestine 's Warsaw ghettos

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

18. A country stumbling, blinded by anger

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

19. Feature - Smoke and mirrors Ruling-class ideology turns workers into shirkers and civilians into 'our

enemies'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

20. Israel denies killing fleeing Gazans

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 21. Plots, sense and nonsense: the view from the post bag Robert Fisk's World

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 22. Turkish PM and Israel 's Peres clash over Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 23. Aid agencies call on Israel to end blockade of Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

# 24. We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 25. Families emerge to find homes in rubble

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 26. My Say: The struggle for Palestine

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 27. 'Jones has every right to be aggrieved at that foul' JOIN THE ONLINE DEBATE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 28. We need to live within our means

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 29. PM candidates hold virtual debate. Internet surfers put questions to Netanyahu, Barak and Livni

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 30. Refugee numbers dipped in '08

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 31. Eat up, National Post tells LTTE hunger strikers



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

32. Evil's insidious nature

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

33. Introverted Israelis always see themselves as victims

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

34. Balad candidate could become first woman MK from Arab party. 'A woman represents the struggle of Arab

society just as the man represents it'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

35. In Israel, detachment from reality is now the norm

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

36. Foul play in the Gulf

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

37. Esau and Ishmael allied

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

38. World - Palestinian kids 'pay price of occupation'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

39. Many truths, one secret

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

40. World - Amnesty calls for Israel arms embargo

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

41. Our readers | have their say

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

42. If you like Hamas, you'll love the Taliban

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

43. A show of Israeli unity raises a chorus of protest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

44. Wrong Yardstick for Measuring Gaza Toll

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

45. In Israel, Jew and Arab Sing, But Political Chorus Is Heard

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

46. Livni, Netanyahu both claim victory in Israeli election

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 47. A chorus of protest over an Israeli choice

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

# 48. <u>Netanyahu stokes fears to take poll lead Election Israel 's right-wing hawk is striking a chord with voters who</u> mistrust peace with Palestinians, writes Marie Colvin in Jerusalem

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 49. Self-defence is no defence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 50. Obama's skilful Cairo speech

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 51. From Gaza to Jerusalem: the impact of war on the Israeli election

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009



#### 52. Fury over 'anti-Semitic' Oliphant cartoon on Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 53. Picking up the pieces

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 54. Israeli shells blast UN headquarters Residents flee blazing Gaza City

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 55. Vent line

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 56. Palestinians seek to open war crimes case against Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 57. Set the people free Public take to streets against conflict



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

58. Foreign ministers call on Israel to allow in more aid

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

59. Antisemitic Incidents Rise in France as Worry Increases About Ethnic Divisions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

60. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

61. Israel shields troops from prosecution

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

62. Letters

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 63. Obama shouldn't forget the democrats

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 64. PALESTINIANS MUST END HATRED

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 65. Diaspora Jews and the war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 66. Diskin, Dekel fly to Cairo for decisive talks on Schalit. Prisoner swap may be approved by cabinet tomorrow

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 67. Obama gives hope President voices desire for 'new beginning'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

68. World datelines

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

69. There's no hiding from the truth German myths are challenged at the Royal Court, but Gaza's are not, says Christopher Hart

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

70. PALESTINE MASSACRE MUST BE STOPPED

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

71. Feature - Young Palestinians find their voice Amid the shattered world of a people under siege, Jordan

Flaherty uncovers a vibrant young hip-hop scene that has become the news outlet of a generation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

72. International: Two parties claim Israel victory - but the kingmaker will be the man in third place: Centre-left is

crushed, and right disappointed. Now Lieberman waits in wings

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

73. Southern residents launch aid drive for Gaza civilians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

74. UN vote provokes passion on both sides of the fence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

75. Aviva Schalit: This nation's unwritten covenant is cracking

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

76. Quiet but no peace in border town

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

77. Some truths about Palestinian Christians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

78. Why pour money into Gaza before the rockets stop, Netanyahu asks donors. Secretary Clinton to join representatives of 80 countries gathering in Sharm for Gaza reconstruction conference

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

News

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 79. LETTERS FROM READERS Your Views STLOPINION

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 80. Grim testimony on Israeli assault Soldiers report killing of unarmed civilians in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 81. Letters

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 82. Leader: Anomalies are a blemish on Scots education

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 83. My Say: Obama in a fix over Gaza attack

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 84. VOTERS BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, TOO

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

# 85. <u>Gaza: our common humanity Pregs Govender dissects the turmoil in the Palestinian - Israeli conflict and</u> 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

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 86. Israeli use of phosphorous shells angers Lib Dem defence secretary Harvey

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 87. Israeli use of phosphorous shells angers Lib Dem defence secretary Harvey

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 88.\_Utter silence worldwide

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 89. Israeli use of phosphorous shells angers Lib Dem defence secretary Harvey

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 90. Educating a generation of jihadists

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 91. Canadian speaks out for Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 14, 2009 to

Jun 30, 2009

#### 92. PM resists as world changes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

#### 93. Pondering about a Pope called Pius

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

94. Soldiers protected from war crimes charges; Israel makes promise as UN gathers evidence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Jun 30, 2009

95. US journos given 12 years' labour in North Korea

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

96. Voter turnout in Israel election defies predictions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

97. Holocaust row sours Jewish-Muslim ties

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

98. International briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

99. What the hell! A big day out for grown-ups ROCK

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009

100. Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Jun 30, 2009



# UN urges Israel to reopen crucial Gaza crossings

Irish Examiner
January 23, 2009 Friday

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Section: WORLD Length: 340 words

# **Body**

"If you want to have reconstruction, you have to have cement and construction materials and pipes and spare parts," said UN humanitarian chief John Holmes at a UN-run school hit by an Israeli missile in the northern town of Beit Lahiya.

"Everything has got to come in; that is one of the things we will be insisting on strongly [in discussions with Israel]," said Holmes who was touring Gaza along with UN Middle East envoy Robert Serry.

Since the bombing began on December 27, the army said it had allowed 2,284 truckloads of humanitarian supplies into Gaza, where the 1.5 million population relies on the border crossings for virtually everything.

"It is particularly saddening and sickening to see a school destroyed like this," said Holmes at the site of one of four UN-run schools hit by Israeli strikes during the 22-day war that left much of Gaza in ruins.

Speaking a day after new US President Barack Obama called Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Serry said: "I very much hope that very soon... with vigour a peace process will be renewed because the only reasonable way out is a two-state solution."

<u>Hamas</u>'s chief has called on the West to lift a ban on contacts with his Islamist movement, which is banned as a terror outfit by Israel, the US and most of Europe.

"Now it is time to start to talk to <u>Hamas</u>", which has controlled the Gaza Strip since June 2007, exiled Khaled Meshaal said.

A senior aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that the Islamists will not be allowed to turn Gaza into a separate entity in the wake of the war.

"We will not allow the creation of a separatist entity, no matter what the price," Yasser Abed Rabbo told a press conference.

Two <u>women</u>, two children and an elderly man were wounded yesterday by fire from Israeli navy boats patrolling the Mediterranean, medics said. The army said it fired warning shots at a fishing boat.

# UN urges Israel to reopen crucial Gaza crossings

Gaza medics said the Israeli offensive had killed 1,330 people, at least half of them civilians including 437 children. Another 5,450 were wounded, including 1,890 children.

Load-Date: January 23, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Israel vows to shelter soldiers from prosecution; UN interviewing Gaza residents; European Union calls on Palestinian factions to unite so that border can be reopened

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 606 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, Canwest News Service; AFP

Dateline: AZBET ABADRAPOH, Gaza Strip

# **Body**

With the UN gathering information that may be used as a starting point for investigations into whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza this month, the Israeli cabinet decided yesterday that all military personnel who fought in the *Hamas*-run Palestinian enclave would be given state protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defence Forces have been made by the UN and agencies such as Amnesty International. Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore the brunt of attacks by Israeli ground forces, artillery and warplanes.

One of the areas is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp. This weekend, as residents combed through the ruins of scores of homes flattened in the neighbourhood, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadallah said as a crowd of people swarmed around her and an associate. "It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to <u>women</u> and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled. For Awadallah, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far was the case of a mother who died while breast-feeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law. While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war,

Israel vows to shelter soldiers from prosecution; UN interviewing Gaza residents; European Union calls on Palestinian factions to unite so that border can be re....

the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they cannot be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

Meanwhile, the European Union nations called yesterday for divided Palestinian factions to unite so border crossings in the war-torn Gaza Strip can be opened and aid distributed.

EU foreign ministers, at talks in Brussels, also urged Arab nations to use their influence with <u>Hamas</u>, after its 22-day war with Israel in Gaza, and the Fatah faction of president Mahmud Abbas, the bloc's main interlocutor.

"The reunification of the Palestinian people with a single voice to speak to them, to speak for the West Bank and for Gaza is absolutely essential," British Foreign Secretary David Miliband told reporters.

Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said: "If we can't overcome the divisions in Palestinian society, it will be very difficult to move forward both with Gaza and the peace process," he said.

<u>Hamas</u> has control over the impoverished coastal strip of land - Fatah controls the West Bank - but was rocked in recent weeks by the massive Israel assault aimed at stopping militants firing rockets at civilians.

More than 1,300 Palestinians were killed and some 5,300 people wounded in Operation Cast Lead, launched on Dec. 27. More than 4,000 homes were destroyed and 17,000 damaged.

Israel lost 10 soldiers and three civilians.

Load-Date: March 22, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Peres: 'Our image is important, but not as important as defending our lives'. President says countries hit by terrorism 'completely understood Israel's policy'

The Jerusalem Post
January 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 308 words

**Byline: GREER FAY CASHMAN** 

# **Body**

While the Foreign Ministry is working with numerous institutions, organizations and individuals in a desperate attempt to salvage Israel's image in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, President Shimon Peres believes that saving lives is more important.

He said as much on Monday in reply to a question from the parents of Sec.-Lt. Aharon Karov, who was seriously wounded in Gaza only two weeks after getting married.

Rabbi Ze'ev Karov and his wife Chaya, referring to the lightning visit on Sunday by several heads of European nations, asked Peres, who was visiting wounded soldiers at Petah Tikva's Beilinson Hospital, why a group of world leaders had chosen to come to Israel now instead of during the past eight years, when Kassam rockets were landing in Israel.

Peres did not answer the question per se but said that if all those now demonstrating against Israel had demonstrated against <u>Hamas</u> during the past eight years, there would have been no need for Israel to launch Operation Cast Lead.

"Our image is important, but not as important as defending our lives," he said.

In various meetings over the past week, Peres has reiterated several times that in its media campaign, Israel could not compete with the gruesome images coming out of Gaza. While Israel strongly regretted civilian casualties, he said, it was very difficult to convince people that <u>women</u> and children had been killed because <u>Hamas</u> used them as human shields.

On Monday he again made the point that there was more to world opinion than CNN or the BBC, and that countries hit by terrorism completely understood Israel's policy.

"We have support from the United States, India and various European countries," he said. "The Americans were always with us, as were many European leaders. There are some strange people like Chavez against us, but I wouldn't pay too much attention to him."

Peres: 'Our image is important, but not as important as defending our lives'. President says countries hit by terrorism 'completely understood Israel 's policy'

# **Graphic**

Photo: PRESIDENT SHIMON Peres shakes the hand of Ido Ander, who was wounded in Gaza, at Beilinson hospital yesterday. (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

**End of Document** 



# <u>Brown: Israel shelling of UN 'indefensible'; PM tells UN chief Britain will 'step</u> up' efforts for ceasefire in Gaza

The Western Mail

January 16, 2009 Friday

Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 797 words

Byline: Andrew Woodcock

# **Body**

GORDON BROWN condemned Israel's shelling of the United Nations HQ in Gaza yesterday as "indefensible".

The UN building was set alight by the bombardment as its Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, visited the area on a mission to secure a ceasefire.

The Prime Minister assured Mr Ban, in a phone conversation following the incident, that Britain would "step up" its efforts for an immediate ceasefire. And he said that British humanitarian aid would go into Gaza "immediately there is a ceasefire". Speaking in 10 Downing Street shortly after talking to Mr Ban, Mr Brown described the UN chief as "properly angry" about the attack.

The Prime Minister said: "When the United Nations is doing such vital work - humanitarian work amongst <u>women</u> and children in Gaza - no-one can defend this attack by Israeli forces on the compound.

"The Israelis have now admitted it is a serious mistake. I have said to Ban Ki-moon this afternoon we will step up our efforts for an immediate ceasefire.

"I believe that the proposals that we and others have put to the Israelis and the Palestinians are proposals - about the crossings, about arms trafficking and about proper monitoring - that can be accepted.

"We have said that we will provide British - and other countries, France and Germany, have said that they will provide European - support for these things to happen. I hope these events will convince everybody that an immediate ceasefire is absolutely essential."

UN officials said yesterday that hundreds of tons of emergency rations for civilians were destroyed when a food warehouse was set alight by the attack on the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) HQ in Gaza City.

Israel said its military fired artillery shells after Palestinian militants opened fire from the compound, but the claim was dismissed by UN official John Ging as "nonsense".

Mr Ban, who was meeting Israeli PM Ehud Olmert in a bid to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's *Hamas* rulers, expressed "outrage" over the attack, which injured three people.

Brown: Israel shelling of UN 'indefensible' PM tells UN chief Britain will 'step up' efforts for ceasefire in Gaza

Mr Olmert described the shelling as a "sad incident" but said militants were responsible.

Later, <u>Hamas</u> confirmed that its interior minister Saeed Seyyam - in charge of 13,000 security and police in the tiny territory - had been killed by an Israeli air strike.

Middle East Minister Bill Rammell told MPs in the House of Commons yesterday that Israel's response to *Hamas* rocket attacks had been "disproportionate".

The air and ground offensive, now reaching the end of its third week, has killed more than 1,000 Palestinians, including around 300 children. In the first Commons debate on the conflict since Israeli air strikes began on December 27, Mr Rammell told MPs: "We recognise Israel's right to self-defence but the Israeli use of force is disproportionate."

The current Israeli offensive was an indictment of the "international community's failure over years and decades" to bring about a two-state solution, he said.

Warning that the violence risked making extremism worse in the region, Mr Rammell said: "All of this has to stop."

Veteran Labour MP Sir Gerald Kaufman, who was brought up as an orthodox Jew and Zionist, called for a UK arms ban on Israel and told MPs that the current leadership in Jerusalem were "not simply war criminals, they are fools".

Recalling the murder of his grandmother by a Nazi soldier, he to provide cover for Israeli soldiers murdering Palestinian grandmothers in Gaza."

Meanwhile, Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Teather called for Israel to be referred to the International Criminal Court, while the SNP's Angus MacNeil said its actions made it look like a "rogue state".

But Labour's Louise Ellman said Israeli attacks on Gaza would cease when Hamas rockets stopped.

Gaza appeal working

Parishioners are responding to the Archbishop of Wales' urgent appeal for money for frontline medical centres under attack in Gaza, the Church in Wales announced yesterday.

The Church is raising money for medical supplies and equipment for health centres run by churches in Gaza, including a mobile dental clinic feared destroyed by a direct Israeli missile attack on a nearby family health centre on Saturday night.

Dr Barry Morgan has written to all parishes in Wales urging them to donate money to the appeal to support the Near East Council of Churches, which runs the vital health centres and clinics.

He also asked them to continue to pray for peace in the region.

He said: "We still do not yet know whether the mobile dental clinic survived the attack on the Shij'ia Family Centre on Saturday and therefore what its future, and that of the remaining health centres in Gaza City, will be.

"When they are able to function again, however, there will be a great need for money to buy supplies and equipment."

# **Graphic**

Brown: Israel shelling of UN 'indefensible' PM tells UN chief Britain will 'step up' efforts for ceasefire in Gaza

CATASTROPHE: UN workers and Palestinian firefighters try to put out a fire and save bags of food aid at the UN headquarters

ATTACK: Smoke rises from the United Nations headquarters after it was hit during Israeli bombardment of Gaza City

Load-Date: January 16, 2009

**End of Document** 



# 'Song for Gaza' captures hearts of YouTube viewers

The Jerusalem Post January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 595 words

Byline: DAVID BRINN

# **Body**

While there have been countless efforts to utilize new media to state Israel's case to the world during Operation Cast Lead, a folk-pop song that describes the suffering of the Palestinian population of Gaza has become a rallying cry for anti-Israel protesters around the world.

Written and performed by Los Angeles-based singer- songwriter Michael Heart, "We Will Not Go Down (Song for Gaza)" has been viewed on YouTube by nearly half a million people and has been sung and heard at various rallies against Israel.

The bittersweet acoustic tune contains the lyrics "You can burn up our mosques and our homes and our schools/ But our spirit will never die," and "*Women* and children alike/ Murdered and massacred night after night." The photographs accompanying the clip illustrate the destruction to property and life in Gaza caused by the Israeli operation.

The song has been played regularly on Jordan's English-language music radio station, Mood 92.

On his Web site, Heart wrote that he was overwhelmed by the response to the song, which is available as a free MP3 download.

"I would like to request that after downloading the song from this page, you kindly donate directly to a charity or an organization dedicated to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people," he said on the site. "I am grateful for every demonstration of support I have received from you, and for every thought and prayer that has gone to the people of Gaza."

Last week, during a candlelight vigil organized by students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "We Will Not Go Down (Song for Gaza)" was sung by the protesters, according to anti-war Web site Fightback.org.

According to his biography on the Web site, Heart was born in Syria and raised in Europe, the Middle East and the US.

Since 1990, he's been living in Los Angeles, working as a session guitarist and a recording engineer before releasing his debut album, Unsolicited Material, last year. Heart has not been known to have previously recorded any pro-Palestinian songs.

#### 'Song for Gaza' captures hearts of YouTube viewers

Chat groups and blogs have been full of support for the song and its sentiments, which neglect to mention the suffering of the southern residents of Israel over eight years of being on the receiving end of Kassam attacks - a point raised by one of the talkbacks on a chat group.

"I am an Israeli peace activist. Many Israelis such as me have opposed the operation in Gaza since its beginnings... However, I believe the message in your song and video 'We will not go Down' is inaccurate and incomplete," the talkback said.

"The message of brave people fighting who will not give up is very moving and heroic, but in truth the people who are really saying 'We will not go down in Gaza' are <u>Hamas</u>, and they are doing it at the expense of the civilians there," the post continued. "The civilians - whom I totally agree are being unjustly killed - are not taking part in the fighting, but their schools, homes and mosques are being unjustly used by <u>Hamas</u> to serve as hiding places for their weapons and militants, as well as rocket launching sites from which <u>Hamas</u> shoots at Israeli civilians."

The talkback called on Heart "to use your talent and write another song calling for peace in this troubled area of the world, rather than glorifying defiance on the part of a terrorist organization that does not represent the Palestinian people. You would do well to put such a song against the background of a video clip showing both the misery in Gaza and rocket attacks on southern Israel, and use it to call for peace, for something better for all of us."

# **Graphic**

Photo: Michael Heart

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

**End of Document** 



The Jerusalem Post June 30, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1134 words

Byline: Ida Selavan Schwarcz, Josh Hasten, Menachem Samuel, Ester Zeitlin, Batya Berlinger, Josef Gilboa,

Mervyn Doobov, Linda Kirshenbaum

Highlight: Readers' Letters

# **Body**

#### 50-shekel name

Sir, - Herb Keinon could have his Jewish name on his ID papers if he was willing to pay a fee ("Israeli progress," June 29).

When I made aliya in 1995, the clerk at the Ministry of Interior told me I had to have the name Ida on my ID certificate because that was the name on my US passport. However, for NIS 50, I could have my Jewish name, Haya; so I paid.

But my father's name, Morris, had to remain because I had no proof that his Jewish name was Moshe. If I could bring his birth certificate, I was told, the name would be changed.

I explained to the young clerk that my father was born in Pyatigory, Ukraine, in 1894, and while his birth may have been recorded there, he had never had a birth certificate. She seemed a bit surprised. So on my ID he remains Morris.

#### **IDA SELAVAN SCHWARCZ**

#### Ganei Omer

#### Control for security

Sir, - In "What Barak preaches, he doesn't necessarily practice (Analysis, June 29) Yaakov Katz wrote that "if the PA shows Israel it could effectively crack down on <u>Hamas</u>, the next step will be for Israel to transfer security responsibility over these areas (cities in area A) to the PA."

However, any recent supposed crackdown by the PA against <u>Hamas</u> is a well-orchestrated show. While <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah might have their differences, when it comes to fighting against Israel, both will be willing to let bygones be bygones and unite.

As Khaled Abu Toameh reported in "Dweik is real Palestinian president" (June 25), the PA leadership is planning on releasing hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> prisoners as a goodwill gesture. What is the purpose of having the US train PA forces to combat <u>Hamas</u>, only to see terrorists freed in a revolving-door policy?

Israel should not fall for this ruse, but realize that the only way to insure the security of its citizens is to allow the IDF to maintain total control of security throughout Judea and Samaria.

#### JOSH HASTEN

Jerusalem

Double-cross in the EU's name

Sir, - As Gerald Steinberg pointed out in his analysis of the Hebrew University's conference on Strengthening the Forces of Moderation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Role of the European Union After the Gaza War, the EU is never asked the really tough questions about its duplicity in efforts to solve this conflict ("European funding for the narrative war," June 29).

Why do we not have a law to the effect that any organization receiving funds from any foreign government, either directly or though its NGOs, must register as an agent of that country? In addition, it should have to publicize at least once a year a short balance sheet showing the amounts it has received, as well as the salaries and emoluments paid to its leading advocates.

At least then everyone would realize the colossal amounts spent by these "friendly and even-handed governments" on manipulating our democracy, something they would never dare do in any Muslim country or any dictatorship.

It's high time our democracy stood up and called the EU's bluff. Many of the EU's own citizens will be shocked to learn of the "double-cross" committed in their name.

#### MENACHEM SAMUEL

Jerusalem

#### Hardly conformist

Sir, - Zeev Raphael (Letters, June 28) laments that five readers' letters about Zionists reclaiming Zion constitute frightful conformism - although five regular Jerusalem Post columnists insist that the end of the "occupation" will bring acceptance by all our neighbors and by world "opinion."

Jeff Barak, Gershon Baskin, Naomi Chazan, Larry Derfner and David Forman are crystal-clear about such a solution.

So, Mr. Raphael, you have 10 Jews with two opposing opinions, and scores more of every possible shade in between. That is conformism?

#### **ESTER ZEITLIN**

Jerusalem

#### Sifting and balancing

Sir, - While I agree with Gil Troy that calmer voices have to prevail in the parking lot war, I have two serious problems with his "Radicals aren't necessarily more authentic" (June 28).

The term "Taliban Judaism" is an insult to the majority of law-abiding haredi Jews who want to live in peace. They choose what they want from the modern world, sifting out the potentially harmful parts. (For example, they use a cell phone only for making calls, and avoid the "extras.")

Unacceptable is the public desecration of Shabbat in a municipal (i.e. government) lot. What a person chooses to do privately is his business; but when it comes to a public place, it's as if driving on Shabbat in the holy city of Jerusalem was officially condoned - and that cannot be allowed.

However, I do not approve of the method of protest, and some other way must be found.

Which leads me to my next problem with Mr Troy's thesis: that only the modern Orthodox and National Religious rabbis can help. They can't condone the desecration of Shabbat either!

The essence of being a religious Jew is feeling that this is how a Jew should live. And while we can't force each and every person to observe Shabbat in his own home, we can try to keep the Shabbat atmosphere in the public domain and maintain the special nature of Jerusalem.

For the record, we are not haredi, but sort of national-haredi. My eldest son is in the army, but my younger ones are in Talmud Torah.

#### **BATYA BERLINGER**

Jerusalem

'Care to dance?'

Sir, - It is not necessary for the police to resort to violence to control haredi rioters ("For haredi protesters, a free Shabbat ride to jail," June 29).

A few dozen <u>women</u> dressed in the finest Israeli beachwear and dancing in the street singing "Hatikva" should be sufficient to send them rushing back, eyes firmly shut, to their self-imposed ghettoes.

#### JOSEF GILBOA

Jaffa

No, Prime Minister

Sir, - David Newman's "A flood of fictitious ministries" (June 29) makes a point that cannot be repeated too often: Israel's ridiculously bloated cabinet does not lead to good government.

Newman rightfully draws on the Yes, (Prime) Minister series to make this point, and as a former public servant, I can attest that this is probably the best text on how government actually works (although one of its authors credited his experience of working in the BBC as his model).

Newman derides the standard excuse for this grotesquerie as "the price we pay for democracy." Well, there are those who believe we won't have democracy until we have a Knesset whose members are all directly responsible to the electorate.

Sadly, the reforms that are commonly bruited about will not achieve this elementary and essential precondition for democracy.

#### MERVYN DOOBOV

Jerusalem

Missing Michael

Sir, - Was Michael Jackson so very isolated and alone that no one took the time to care and maybe prevent this? ("The tragic end of Michael Jackson," Shmuley Boteach, June 28.) It seems both a repetition and forewarning of what can happen to celebrities.

He needed to be hugged and accepted and loved better.

He left us too soon, and he and his talent will be missed.

# LINDA KIRSHENBAUM

Suffern, New York

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

**End of Document** 



# Don't count on Egypt to stop the smuggling of weapons into Gaza

The Jerusalem Post January 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 824 words

Byline: EFRAIM INBAR and MORDECHAI KEDAR

Highlight: Its strategy, Beduin and bureaucracy all argue against it. Efraim Inbar is director of and Mordechai Kedar

a research associate at the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University.

# **Body**

Conventional wisdom posits that Egypt must and will play a central role in halting the smuggling of weapons from Sinai to Gaza. Yet this is extraordinarily unlikely - for strategic, political and Egyptian domestic reasons.

Egypt does not mind if <u>Hamas</u> bleeds Israel a little; it gains domestically by indirectly aiding <u>Hamas</u>, gains internationally by playing a mediating role (in a conflict which it helps maintain on a "low flame") and is anyway mostly incapable of stopping the Sinai Beduin from continuing as the main weapons smugglers. Thus, this country would be foolish to expect that the Egyptians will act decisively and significantly to end weapons smuggling.

At the strategic level, Egypt sees us as a competitor in the quest for hegemony in the Middle East, and has for years turned a blind eye to the arming of <u>Hamas</u> via the tunnels. Simply put, it had, and still has, an interest in bleeding us. In contrast to its rhetoric, Egypt is not interested in a resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict that will free us from an immense security burden and will allow the Jewish state to become even stronger than it is.

Power politics and balance-of-power is the prism through which the Egyptian leadership views the region. The continuation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on a "low flame" serves best the Egyptian interest of keeping us not-too-strong.

Moreover, the "low flames" in Gaza and elsewhere in the Palestinian arena maintain an important role for Egypt as a "moderate leader" in the eyes of the international community, particularly in Washington.

The game Egypt is playing also serves a useful purpose in domestic Egyptian politics. In contrast to Europeans, Egyptians easily understand the double game being played by Cairo. Turning a blind eye to the tunnels weakens the arguments of the Islamic opposition that the government is cooperating with the Zionists. Everybody in Cairo understands that the government is facilitating the arming of <u>Hamas</u>.

FINALLY, EGYPT'S double game is also the result of a complex reality in the Sinai Peninsula. As with other Third World states, the Egyptian government is not fully in control of its territory. Thus, an international agreement on ending arms smuggling from Sinai into Gaza will face considerable problems of implementation, even if the Egyptian regime wants it to happen.

Notably, most of the smuggling is led by Egyptian Beduin who live in the northern Sinai. These tribes do not speak Egyptian Arabic, they are not really an integral part of Egyptian culture, and they do not subscribe to Egyptian

political ethos. They make a living by smuggling <u>women</u> and drugs to Israel, as well as arms, ammunition and missiles to the Gaza Strip.

Egyptian attempts to extend law and order to Beduin areas has met armed resistance. Every time the Egyptian regime attempts to curtail the Beduin smuggling activities, they carry out a terrorist attack on a Sinai beach, as has happened in Taba, Sharm e-Sheikh, Nueiba and Ras al-Satan. Such attacks negatively influence tourism to Egypt, an important source of income, and seem to be an effective way of "convincing" the Cairo authorities to live and let live.

BRIBERY, AN important element in the Egyptian ways of doing business, also facilitates the smuggling of weapons. The low-paid Egyptian officials in Sinai can hardly resist hefty bribes. A \$100 bill does wonders in the case of an Egyptian police officer at a Sinai roadblock who intercepts a truck packed with "pipes." The likelihood that a policeman at Egyptian checkpoints would stop taking bribes from trucks transferring arms to Gaza is even lower unless the Egyptian government was to decide to heavily punish such behavior. Such an Egyptian government decision is also unlikely.

Another hindering factor in any attempt to stop smuggling is the bureaucratic culture of Egypt. The cumbersome Egyptian bureaucracy is hardly effective. Even presidential decisions are watered down as they pass through the ranks of the administration. The chance that a presidential decision on a total curb in smuggling would be fully implemented at Sinai checkpoints is slim. This is Egypt.

To illustrate the point: Several weeks ago, the Palestinians published a report that the Egyptians had started to seriously combat the smuggling tunnels between the Egyptian and Palestinian sides of Rafah. The Egyptians initiated an inquiry to discover "who" suddenly became so motivated, and discovered that it was an Egyptian official who did not receive a big enough reward from of the tunnel operators and decided to teach them a lesson. The Egyptians immediately found a different posting for this hyperactive official.

In sum, Israel would be foolish to expect that the Egyptians will act decisively and significantly to end weapons smuggling. An important implication of this reality is that we must maintain freedom of action to bomb tunnels along the Philadelphi Corridor, or to recapture it, as needed.

## **Graphic**

Photo: A BOY LOOKS up from the entrance of a smuggling tunnel on the Palestinian side of the border between Egypt and Rafah on Wednesday. (Credit: Eyad Baba/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

The New Zealand Herald

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 794 words

#### **Body**

GAZA CITY - After three infants from the Samouni family were killed in shelling, relatives bundled up the boys' tiny bodies and hastily buried them in the grave of a long-dead aunt.

There was no space in the crammed Gaza City graveyard and it was too dangerous to reach the area's only cemetery with space to dig fresh graves.

More than two weeks into a blistering Israeli offensive that has killed more than 900 Palestinians, Gazans are struggling to find places to bury their dead. One family buried their slain son with his grandfather. Another man was buried with his cousin. Cemeteries throughout Gaza City that were closed for burial have now reopened.

"Gaza is all a graveyard," said gravedigger Salman Omar, who said he has been busy since Israel's operation began.

The densely populated Gaza Strip, just 40 kilometres long by about 10 kilometres wide, has always suffered from a shortage of burial space. But Israel's shelling and deep ground incursion has made it impossible for residents to reach Martyrs Cemetery - the only open graveyard in eastern Gaza City - at a time when there's a rush of people needing burial.

Israel's offensive is aimed at crushing Gaza's rulers, the militant group <u>Hamas</u>. But Palestinian medical officials believe roughly half of the dead, including the Samouni cousins, are civilians.

"We buried them quickly," said Iyad Samouni, 26, from al-Awda hospital in Gaza City, where he was being treated for shrapnel wounds. "We were afraid we'd be shelled. My relatives were trying to open other graves to prepare for the other dead but we didn't get time."

Samouni said the family fled the graveyard after they came under fire from a warplane.

The children were killed in what the family and the UN says was an Israeli shelling attack on a house in eastern Gaza where soldiers had ordered them to stay to avoid nearby fighting.

A whole part of the clan was wiped out. The exact number is unknown - figures vary from 14 to 30 people. Medics believe there are still bodies they have not been able to recover more bodies under the rubble because of fighting in the area.

Israel's military denies the account, but says the house may have come under attack in a crossfire with <u>Hamas</u> militants.

#### Old graves dug up to bury new dead in Gaza

Muslim tradition allows for graves to be reused when needed. Old graves conceal small underground rooms used in Muslim tradition to bury the dead. Mourners pull away a covering slab, push the bones of long-deceased relatives aside and lower in the newly dead.

" You have a martyr: you need an immediate solution, " said Salman Omar, 24, a gravedigger at Gaza City's Sheik Ridwan cemetery, meant to be closed to new burials, but filled with men carrying in bodies for burial. In Muslim tradition, **women** rarely attend to graves.

"You look for where your grandmother, uncle or mother was buried, and bury them there. If there's three or four, bury them in the same grave," said Omar, who spoke while shovelling earth and smoking a cigarette. Like most Gazans, he calls slain Palestinians martyrs.

At Sheik Ridwan on Tuesday, relatives hammered away at the concrete tomb of Moyhideen Sarhi, killed last May in an Israeli strike against *Hamas* militants. His brother Kamel, 22, another *Hamas* militant, was killed on Tuesday in another airstrike. The family feared approaching Martyrs Cemetery and made do by laying Kamel next to his brother.

" As they were in life they are in death, " said their cousin, Salim, 28.

Before they lowered the body, the men pushed aside the slab protecting Mohyideen's remains from dirt and reverently kissed his shroud.

Even the pathways in the hilly cemetery are littered with graves.

Older graves have marble slabs, when Gazans buried their dead in more affluent times. Relatives of the more recently buried make do with a small tile, or a name etched in concrete. For others, there's no name at all, just the tombstone of the older relative whose grave was reoccupied with the newly dead.

One family arrived with their son, 14, who they said died of wounds in an Israeli strike.

A gravedigger approached, asking if the family had a deceased relative whose grave they could reopen. Street children hoping for small change scrambled to look for the graves of relatives the family could use.

Another group of men in jeans dug up their grandfather's grave. The loud crashing sound of an Israeli airstrike nearby made some of them wearily look up. Their relative, Mohammed Abu Leila, was a militant killed in a strike.

"I've buried a policeman in his mother's grave," said Omar, the gravedigger. "I buried three brothers in one hole. I buried children with their mothers, you don't ask questions: it's just important to find a place and bury them.&#34:

- AP

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



#### Addressing Muslims, a Blunt Obama Takes On Mideast Issues

The New York Times
June 5, 2009 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1057 words

Byline: By JEFF ZELENY and ALAN COWELL; Jeff Zeleny reported from Cairo, and Helene Cooper from

Washington.

**Dateline: CAIRO** 

#### **Body**

In opening a bold overture to the Islamic world on Thursday, President Obama confronted frictions between Muslims and the West, but he reserved some of his bluntest words for Israel, as he expressed sympathy for the Palestinians and what he called the "daily humiliations, large and small, that come with occupation."

While Mr. Obama emphasized that America's bond with Israel was "unbreakable," he spoke in equally powerful terms of the Palestinian people, describing their plight as "intolerable" after 60 years of statelessness, and twice referring to "Palestine" in a way that put Palestinians on parallel footing with Israelis.

Mr. Obama's speech in Cairo, which he called a "timeless city," was perhaps the riskiest of his presidency, as he used unusually direct language to call for a fresh look at deep divisions, both those between Israel and its neighbors and between the Islamic world and the West. Among his messages was a call for Americans and Muslims to abandon their mutual suspicions and do more to confront violent extremism.

But it was Mr. Obama's empathetic tone toward the Palestinians that attracted the most attention in the region and around the world. His words left many Palestinians and their Arab supporters jubilant but infuriated some Israelis and American backers of Israel because they saw the speech as elevating the Palestinians to equal status.

Mr. Obama said the bond between the United States and Israel was "based upon cultural and historical ties, and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied."

"On the other hand," Mr. Obama added, "it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people -- Muslims and Christians -- have suffered in pursuit of a homeland. For more than 60 years, they've endured the pain of dislocation." He said Americans "will not turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity and a state of their own."

Mr. Obama seemed to connect with his audience in his 55-minute speech from Cairo University as he quoted repeatedly from the Koran and occasionally sprinkled his remarks with Arabic, even beginning his address with the traditional Arabic greeting "salaam aleikum," or "peace be upon you."

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In the speech, which was broadcast and translated around the world, Mr. Obama sounded forceful, even scolding at times, as he promoted democracy in Egypt and <u>women</u>'s rights and acknowledged that the United States had fallen short of its ideals, particularly in the Iraq war.

He divided his speech into seven sections, standing at the podium like the university professor he was before beginning his political career. Mr. Obama sharply criticized what he called the "disturbing tendency" among some Muslims, both Sunnis and Shiites, to "measure one's own faith by the rejection of somebody else's faith."

But while he spoke uncompromisingly of the American fight against Al Qaeda, Mr. Obama never mentioned the words "terrorism" or "terrorist." That was a departure from the language used by the Bush administration, but one that some Middle East experts suggested reflected a belief by the new administration that overuse had made the words inflammatory.

Still, Paul D. Wolfowitz, a former top Bush administration official who was an architect of the war in Iraq and is a strong supporter of Israel, offered general praise for Mr. Obama's address.

"I could have used less moral equivalence, but he had to get through to his audience, and it's in America's interest for him to get through," Mr. Wolfowitz said.

Mr. Obama's remarks will be parsed by Israelis and Palestinians, in part because when previous American presidents have used the word "Palestine," they have usually done so only in reference to a future Palestinian state, as President George W. Bush did in March 2002.

"Now Obama is saying 'Palestine' is a present reality," said Robert Malley, director of the Middle East program at the International Crisis Group, and a Middle East negotiator in the Clinton administration.

Mr. Obama's stark statement that "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements" is also likely to be seen as a sharp challenge to Israeli assumptions that existing West Bank settlements will always be allowed to remain.

It was noteworthy that the only Palestinian political group that Mr. Obama specifically mentioned was <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic organization that won Palestinian legislative elections in 2006. <u>Hamas</u> governs Gaza, but is loathed by Israel. Mr. Obama called on <u>Hamas</u> to forswear violence and recognize Israel's right to exist, but Middle East experts said that his mention was an acknowledgment that <u>Hamas</u> might have become a more important actor than the Fatah Party, controlled by Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president.

Mr. Obama said, "<u>Hamas</u> does have support among some Palestinians, but they also have to recognize they have responsibilities."

The president offered few details on how to solve problems around the globe. But he offered up his own biography as a credible connection to his various audiences. His message touched on a lengthy list of challenges, but his appearance here could simply be boiled down to this: Barack Hussein Obama was standing on the podium in this Muslim capital as the American president.

"I consider it part of my responsibility as president of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear," Mr. Obama said. "But that same principle must apply to Muslim perceptions of America. Just as Muslims do not fit a crude stereotype, America is not the crude stereotype of a self-interested empire."

Some Muslims were delighted.

"I feel that he spoke to my emotions, and showed a sense of recognition of the dignity of Palestinians," said Ghaith al-Omari, advocacy director of the American Task Force on Palestine.

Although Mr. Obama strongly condemned those who would deny the Holocaust, many American supporters of Israel said they resented what they viewed as comparing it to the plight of the Palestinians.

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"I understand Palestinian suffering, it is terrible," said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "But it is not on the other hand to the Holocaust."

http://www.nytimes.com

#### **Graphic**

PHOTOS: A customer at a Palestinian barbershop in Jerusalem saw the Obama speech.(PHOTOGRAPH BY SEBASTIAN SCHEINER/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

At a Jerusalem mall, an ultra-Orthodox Jew took in the speech.(PHOTOGRAPH BY LIOR MIZRAHI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Patrons at a cafe as Mr. Obama spoke elsewhere in Cairo.(PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAWN BALDWIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

President Obama at Cairo University on Thursday.(PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)(A1)

In his speech on Thursday at Cairo University, President Obama's sympathetic tone toward the Palestinians left many Palestinians and their supporters jubilant, but also infuriated some Israelis.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke to reporters after the president's speech.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES)(A8)

Load-Date: June 5, 2009



# Ex-Spy Turned Negotiator Sits Down With Islamists and the West

The New York Times
May 2, 2009 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5; THE SATURDAY PROFILE

Length: 1230 words

Byline: By ROBERT F. WORTH

#### **Body**

#### BEIRUT, Lebanon

TALKING to Islamists is the new order of the day in Washington and London. The Obama administration wants a dialogue with Iran, and the British Foreign Office has decided to reopen diplomatic contacts with Hezbollah, the Shiite militant group based here.

But for several years, small groups of Western diplomats have made quiet trips to Beirut for confidential sessions with members of <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah and other Islamist groups they did not want to be seen talking to. In hotel conference rooms, they would warily shake hands, then spend hours listening and hashing out accusations of terrorism on one side and imperial arrogance on the other.

The organizer of these back-door encounters is Alastair Crooke, a quiet, sandy-haired man of 59 who spent three decades working for MI6, the British secret intelligence service. He now runs an organization here called Conflicts Forum, with an unusual board of advisers that includes former spies, diplomats and peace activists.

Mr. Crooke has spent much of his career talking to Islamists. In the 1980s, as a young undercover agent in Pakistan and Afghanistan, he helped funnel weapons to jihadists fighting the Soviets. Later, he spent years working with <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah as a negotiator for the European Union, and helped broker a number of cease-fires with Israel between 2001 and 2003. He earned a reputation for courage and tenacity, but in person he is disarmingly polite and mild-mannered, a slight-figured man with a beaky, impish smile.

The mission of Conflicts Forum, which he founded in 2004, resembles a kind of blueprint for the Obama administration's current outreach efforts: to "open a new relationship between the West and Muslim world" through dialogue and better mutual understanding.

Yet Mr. Crooke, who is legendary for his deep network of contacts among Islamist groups across the Middle East, is not sanguine about the prospects for mere dialogue, especially with Iran.

"I think there is a real fear there will be a process of talking past each other," Mr. Crooke said. "The Iranians will say, 'we want to talk about justice and respect.' The U.S. will say, 'are you willing to give up enrichment or not?' "

To get past that impasse with Iran, and with Islamist groups generally, the West will need to change its diplomatic language of threats and rewards, Mr. Crooke said, and show more respect for their adversaries' point of view.

Mr. Crooke has spent the past few years trying to explain that to suspicious Westerners, in a stream of articles, speeches and conferences. Although not an Arabist by training, he has developed a deep knowledge of modern Islamist movements, and launches easily into analyses of Palestinian politics, or even of medieval Islamic philosophy.

Recently, he has taken his explanatory efforts a bit further. In a new book, "Resistance: the Essence of the Islamist Revolution," he deliberately avoids the most controversial subjects, like Israel and the status of <u>women</u> in the Islamic world. Instead, he focuses on what he calls the core of the Islamist revolution, which he defines as a metaphysical resistance to the West's market-based definition of the individual and society. He invokes European social critics like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, endorsing their critiques of Western thinking and arguing that Islamism offers a more holistic model.

NOT surprisingly, the book has received some stinging reviews, and renewed accusations that Mr. Crooke has gone native. Even some of his fellow board members at Conflicts Forum say they are a little baffled -- not by his sympathy for Islamists, but by the book's broad philosophical themes.

Mr. Crooke says the book grew out of his own efforts to find common ground with Islamists, and to look beyond the usual stumbling blocks.

"It seemed to me there was a real need to understand what was happening inside Islamism better, and to valorize what they were saying in ways that could be understood in the West," he said.

That project seems inseparable from his broader argument about dialogue. To illustrate it, Mr. Crooke describes an episode from the conflict in Northern Ireland in which the British put two opposing factions into a room for talks, "naively imagining that talking would help." It did the opposite, reinforcing their anger. So the negotiators tried another approach: they asked both sides to write down their history and vision for the future on a piece of paper. After three more years of talks, the factions finally reached the point at which they acknowledged the legitimacy of the other side's piece of paper.

"George Mitchell once said to me, 'you don't even have a political process until you accept that the other side has a legitimate point of view,' " Mr. Crooke said, referring to Mr. Mitchell's landmark 1998 Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and relating it to the many obstacles between the United States and Iran.

"Does America have the will and the patience for that?" he said. "I'm not sure we're there yet."

Patience, by all accounts, is something Mr. Crooke possesses. Mark Perry, the co-director of Conflicts Forum, describes an episode in Gaza in 2002 when the two men tried to establish a cease-fire between Israel and Palestinian factions. After weeks of negotiations, Israel dropped a bomb on the <u>Hamas</u> leader whose signature they needed, shattering their efforts.

"We were exhausted," Mr. Perry recalled. "The next day in the hotel room, I looked at Alastair and said 'what do we do now?' He just said, 'We try again.' "

It is not entirely clear where that steadfastness comes from. He is a little evasive about his own life and career, perhaps by training. Born in Ireland, he grew up mostly in Rhodesia, today Zimbabwe, and was educated at a Swiss boarding school and at St. Andrew's in Scotland, obtaining a degree in economics. Before joining MI6, he worked in finance in London.

"It's a dangerous area to work in," he said of his years as a banker, without apparent irony, "because it's so easy to get caught up in enrichment."

He is barred by law from discussing his service with MI6, which included years of diplomatic work on the Israel-Palestine issue. As a negotiator in the Palestinian territories, he is said to have traveled alone, by taxi, eschewing the armed security convoys of many Western diplomats. Colleagues who worked with him say Yasir Arafat and the leaders of *Hamas* trusted Mr. Crooke completely, as did some high-level Israeli officials.

#### Ex-Spy Turned Negotiator Sits Down With Islamists and the West

SOME Israelis, however, apparently complained that he was too close to <u>Hamas</u>. In late 2003, he was recalled to London -- he had reached retirement age -- and quietly ushered out of government service, with a commendation. He says he has no regrets, but some of his colleagues in Conflicts Forum say he retains some bitterness about the way he was treated.

In 2005, he moved to Beirut, where he lives with his partner, Aisling Byrne, and their 1-year-old child, Amistis, in an elegant, old French mandate-era apartment, working out of a home office.

Mr. Crooke smiles at the suggestion that Conflicts Forum may offer him a back-door route back to diplomacy, but does not entirely deny it. "We're not implementers," he said. "What we're trying to do is catalyze and create ideas. The second part is, how do you multiply something done by a small number of people in one room into something larger?"

http://www.nytimes.com

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: ALASTAIR CROOKE (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN DENTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: October 6, 2011



# Ex-spy turns Mideast mediator; Former British agent uses backdoor meetings to reach out to Islamists

The International Herald Tribune
May 2, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1180 words

Byline: Andrew Jacobs - The New York Times

Dateline: BEIJING

#### **Body**

Talking to Islamists is the new order of the day in Washington and London. The Obama administration wants a dialogue with Iran, and the British Foreign office has decided to reopen diplomatic contacts with Hezbollah, the Shiite militant group here.

But for several years now, small groups of Western diplomats have been making quiet trips to Beirut for confidential sessions with members of <u>Hamas</u>, Hezbollah and other Islamist groups they did not want to be seen talking to. In hotel conference rooms, they would warily shake hands, then spend hours listening and hashing out accusations of terrorism on one side and imperial arrogance on the other.

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#### CAPTION:

Alastair Crooke at his home in Beirut. In his 30-year career at MI6, he developed a deep knowledge of modern Islamist movements and numerous contacts throughout the region.

Photo Credit: Bryan Denton for The New York Times

Load-Date: May 19, 2009



# END BLOCKADE, BLAIR TELLS ISRAEL ON FIRST GAZA VISIT; 7 SHOT WOMEN DESERVED TO DIE HARIRI TRIBUNAL OPENS

Metro (UK)

March 2, 2009 Monday

Glasgow Edition

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Section: Pg. 20

Length: 370 words

**Byline: FRED ATTEWILL** 

#### **Body**

MIDDLE East peace envoy Tony Blair called on Israel to end its blockade of Gaza yesterday during his first visit there since his appointment two years ago.

Britains former prime minister said it was causing terrible suffering to ordinary people and supported a black market.

The goods you cant get through the legitimate economy come through the tunnels and that helps the extremists and helps *Hamas*, he told Channel 4 News.

His visit coincided with that of international development secretary Douglas Alexander, who pledged £30million to repair Gazas infrastructure.

An Israeli offensive in January in response to rocket attacks left 1,300 Palestinians dead and the region in desperate need of help.

Egyptian-mediated peace talks have so far stalled, with Israel saying it will open borders only if <u>Hamas</u> releases soldier Gilad Schalit, who was kidnapped in 2006. Militants and Israeli forces yesterday exchanged rocket fire and air strikes.

One rocket hit a school on the coastal city of Ashkelon but there were no injuries.

The hits will be answered with a painful, harsh, strong and uncompromising response, warned outgoing Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert.

Attempts to fund reconstruction continue today, with the Palestinians seeking £2billion in aid £630million from the US at an international conference in Egypt.

SEVEN young <u>women</u> who were shot dead and their bodies dumped on the roadside deserved to die because of their loose morals, the Chechen president said yesterday. The <u>women</u> were rightfully shot by male relatives, claimed Ramzan Kadyrov. If a woman runs around and if a man runs around with her, both of them are killed, he said. Mr Kadyrov is apparently trying to impose strict Islamic values on the country to appease Muslim separatists. Critics claim the <u>women</u> were killed by police and it was reported some of them worked in a brothel used by the presidents security staff.THE first UN anti-terror tribunal opened yesterday to try the suspected assassins of the

# END BLOCKADE, BLAIR TELLS ISRAEL ON FIRST GAZA VISIT 7 SHOT WOMEN DESERVED TO DIE HARIRI TRIBUNAL OPENS

former Lebanese prime minister. Rafik Hariri (pictured) was killed in a suicide bombing in Beirut in February 2005. Four pro-Syrian generals are expected to be extradited from Lebanon to Holland in the coming weeks to face trial in The Hague.

# **Graphic**

Maiden visit: Blair

Load-Date: March 2, 2009



## Hard-liners hold edge in Israeli election

Chicago Daily Herald
February 10, 2009 Tuesday
L2 Edition

Copyright 2009 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 354 words

**Byline:** Associated Press

#### **Body**

JERUSALEM — Israel's election has suddenly become too close to call, though hard-liners are expected to have a clear edge in the horse trading that is sure to follow today's vote.

The fractious coalition government likely to emerge could complicate efforts to create a Palestinian state and pose big challenges for President Barack Obama, who has made achieving Middle East peace a top priority.

The race pits former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who opposes giving up land in the name of peace, against Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, a centrist who hopes to become the country's first <u>female</u> leader in nearly 40 years.

For months, opinion polls have predicted a decisive victory by Netanyahu's Likud Party. But new polls released over the weekend showed Livni's Kadima Party closing the gap. Neither is expected to get more than 30 seats in the 120-seat parliament, however, meaning the winner will have to form a coalition with smaller parties.

Netanyahu seems to be in a far better position, since his natural allies in the nationalist right wing of Israeli politics are all polling well. In particular, Netanyahu's former protege, Avigdor Lieberman, appears poised to make huge gains on a platform that calls for Israeli Arabs to swear loyalty to the state or lose citizenship.

While Livni could still eke out a victory, it appears mathematically impossible for her to form a coalition without bringing in Lieberman or some other hard-line party. That would hinder her ability to pursue a peace agreement with the Palestinians, as she has promised to do.

Still, polls have often been inaccurate in Israel. This time the pollsters' task is even more difficult, because turnout is expected to be low and a plethora of small parties could upset the whole equation. An estimated 15 to 20 percent of voters remain undecided.

The strength of the Israeli right is a reflection of the times. Israel recently wrapped up a three-week war against <u>Hamas</u> militants in the Gaza Strip to try to halt years of rocket attacks into southern Israel. The right criticized the government for failing to go all the way and end <u>Hamas</u> rule over Gaza.

# **Graphic**

ASSOCIATED PRESS Benjamin Netanyahu holds a ballot paper of the Likud Party at an office near Tel Aviv on Monday, a day before national elections.

Load-Date: February 10, 2009



## Will Israel be brought to book?

Guardian.com March 23, 2009

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# theguardian

Length: 907 words

Highlight: Seumas Milne: The evidence of war crimes in Gaza is a challenge to universal justice: will western-

backed perpetrators ever stand trial?

#### **Body**

Evidence of the scale of Israel's war crimes in its January onslaught on Gaza is becoming unanswerable. Clancy Chassay's three films investigating allegations against Israeli forces in the Gaza strip, released by the Guardian today, include important new accounts of the flagrant breaches of the laws of war that marked the three-week campaign - now estimated to have left at least 1,400 Palestinians, mostly civilians, and 13 Israelis dead.

The films provide compelling testimony of Israel's use of Palestinian teenagers as human shields; the targeting of hospitals, clinics and medical workers, including with phosphorus bombs; and attacks on civilians, including women and children - sometimes waving white flags - from hunter-killer drones whose targeting systems are so powerful they can identify the colour of a person's clothes.

Naturally, the Israeli occupation forces' spokesperson insists to Chassay that they make every effort to avoid killing civilians and denies using human shields or targeting medical workers - while at the same time explaining that medics in war zones "take the risk upon themselves". By banning journalists from entering Gaza during its punitive devastation of the strip, the Israeli government avoided independent investigations of the stream of war crimes accusations while the attack was going on.

But now journalists and human rights organisations are back inside, doing the painstaking work, the question is whether Israel's government and military commanders will be held to account for what they unleashed on the Palestinians of Gaza - or whether, like their US and British sponsors in Iraq and Afghanistan, they can carry out war crimes with impunity.

It's not as if Clancy's reports are unique or uncorroborated by other evidence. Last week, the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported that a group of Israelis soldiers had admitted intentionally shooting dead an unarmed Palestinian mother and her two children, as well as an elderly Palestinian woman, in Gaza in January. As one explained: "The lives of Palestinians, let's say, is something very, very less important than the lives of our soldiers. So as far as they are concerned they can justify it that way".

They also tally with testimony of other Israeli soldiers from the Givati Shaked battalion, which operated in the Gaza city suburb of Zeitoun, that they were told to "fire on anything that moves". The result was that one family, the Samunis, reported losing 29 members after soldiers forced them into a building that subsequently came under fire seven bleeding to death while denied medical care for nearly three days. The Helw and Abu Zohar families said

#### Will Israel be brought to book?

they saw members shot while emerging from their homes carrying white flags. "There was definitely a message being sent", one soldier who took part in the destruction of Zeitoun told the Times.

Or take the case of Majdi Abed Rabbo - a Palestinian linked to Fatah and no friend of <u>Hamas</u> - who described to the Independent how he was repeatedly used as a human shield by Israeli soldiers confronting armed <u>Hamas</u> fighters in a burned-out building in Jabalya in the Gaza strip. The fact of Israeli forces' use of human shields is hard to gainsay, not least since there are unambiguous photographs of several cases from the West Bank in 2007, as shown in Chassay's film.Last week Human Rights Watch wrote to European Union foreign ministers calling for an international inquiry into war crimes in Gaza. In the case of Israel, the organisation cited the siege of Gaza as a form of collective punishment; the use of artillery and white phosphorus in densely populated civilian areas, including schools; the shooting of civilians holding white flags; attacks on civilian targets; and "wanton destruction of civilian property".

Israel and others also accuse <u>Hamas</u> of war crimes. But while both Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have echoed that charge, particularly in relation to the indiscriminate rocketing of towns such as Sderot, an exhaustive investigation by Human Rights Watch has found no evidence, for example, of <u>Hamas</u> using human shields in the clearly defined legal sense of coercion to protect fighters in combat. And as Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Human Rights, argued recently, any attempt to view the two sides as "equally responsible" is an absurdity: one is a lightly-armed militia, effectively operating underground in occupied territory - the other the most powerful army in the region, able to pinpoint and pulverise targets with some of the most sophisticated weaponry in the world.

There is of course no chance that the UN security council will authorise the kind of International Criminal Court war crimes indictment now faced by Sudan's leaders over Darfur. Any such move would certainly be vetoed by the US and its allies. And Israel's own courts have had no trouble in the past batting away serious legal challenges to its army's atrocities in the occupied territories. But the use of universal jurisdiction in countries such as Spain or even Britain is making Israeli commanders increasingly jumpy about travelling abroad.

With such powerful evidence of violations of the rules of war now emerging from the rubble of Gaza, the test must be this: is the developing system of international accountability for war crimes only going to apply to the west's enemies - or can the western powers and their closest allies also be brought to book?

Load-Date: March 23, 2009



## 'Seven British Children': An Israeli response

The Jerusalem Post April 6, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 773 words

**Byline:** AMITAI ETZIONI

**Highlight:** During the discussion that followed, it became clear that most of the Washington Jewish Community Center audience found much that spoke to them in the play. The writer is professor of international relations at

George Washington University.

#### **Body**

I had to cross demonstrations to enter the Jewish community center in Washington on a recent night. The demonstrators were protesting a play, Seven Jewish Children, that was opening at the center. The play, written by a rabidly anti-Israel author, Caryl Churchill, was condemned even in Britain, where criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism are more rampant than in the United States.

The short play is built around short lines that attempt to capture what the author claims Jewish parents will or will not tell their children. It first seduces you, as Ari Roth, the artistic director of the JCC, put it, by showing the family trying to shield the children from the horrors of the Holocaust ("Tell her it is a game... Don't tell her they'll kill her."). The family then moves to Israel where the parents tell each other lines such as "tell her we killed the babies by mistake"; "tell her they [Arabs] are filth"; "tell her that we have a right to the water for our swimming pools but they do not for their fields"; "tell her the bulldozer is there to make room for a building, not to level their houses" and so on.

To "balance" the Churchill play, which is widely embraced by many Jews and left-leaning others who are outraged by what they believe Israel did in Gaza, the JCC ran another short play. This one is about an Israeli child, who learned from tender age the difference between a Katyusha and a Kassam rocket and is afraid to enter a house because it does not have a bomb shelter. It has all the power of an aspirin after someone tore your guts out.

I FEEL there is a need for a counterpunch of the kind that follows. Generally I much prefer, as I did in a joint statement with a leading Palestinian American, Shibley Telhami, to urge both Israelis and Palestinians not to dwell on the past and focus on where we go from here. However, when faced with such one-sided, maliciously distorting images, the other side must also be depicted with some force. Here is a preliminary attempt at such a reaction.

Don't tell them that the Palestinian suicide bombers deliberately set out to kill civilians - people sitting at the Seder table in Netanya, students studying the Bible in Jerusalem, Arabs and Jews who live in peace together in Haifa - not as collateral damage, not as deeply regrettable civilians killed in crossfire among fighters, but as their main target, to terrorize a nation that bleeds with every casualty.

Don't tell them that <u>Hamas</u> stores its arms and uses as its bases civilian homes, schools and even mosques, and uses <u>women</u> as human shields.

#### 'Seven British Children': An Israeli response

Don't mention that when Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians - for starters - 95 percent of what reasonable people thinks may be due them, including a capital in Jerusalem, they gave him and Israel not a hand but the finger.

Don't tell them that <u>Hamas</u> makes it clear that whatever Israel offers and gives, it still will seek to destroy the rest. That it wants to throw all Israelis into the sea if it cannot ship them back to where they came from.

Be sure they do not find out that none of the more than one million Israeli-Palestinians is willing to live under the corrupt, abusive Palestinian Authority. They all prefer to live in the Jewish state, enjoy the freedoms it provides, including bitching about this or that additional privilege they would love to have.

Don't tell him that there is room, between the Jordan and the sea, for both people to flourish together.

Addition for Jewish-American children: Tell them to be careful not to support Israel too openly because some of their best friends are not going to like it, and Jews should not make waves when they live in someone else's country.

Be sure they do not find out that it is five minutes to midnight, that Iran is setting out to destroy Israel, and that it needs all our support or we will be enablers if it goes down - just the way so many American Jews remained mum during the Holocaust.

After the Seven Jewish Children play was read to a packed JCC, I was given the stage. During the discussion that followed, it became clear that most of the audience found much that spoke to them in the play. The fact that I failed to reach many of them is in part due to my shortcomings. However, I fear that these days pro-Israel arguments fall on deaf ears among many liberal Jews, including those who are still committed enough to Judaism to regularly attend meetings and performances at the JCC.

I may have won a few more points by calling attention to the fact that it is close to midnight. The threat of Iran is truly existential and Jews, who often were mum during the Holocaust, should now find their voice, and support Israel.

# **Graphic**

Photo: <u>HAMAS</u> DECLARES victory over Israel at a January 22 press conference. Don't tell them that <u>Hamas</u> says that whatever Israel offers and gives, it still will seek to destroy the rest. (Credit: Bloomberg/Naaman Omar)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Gazans emerge to search for the dead; Palestinians stunned by Israeli ferocity

The International Herald Tribune
January 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 1106 words

Byline: Sabrina Tavernise and Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

#### **Body**

Nadim Audi contributed reporting.

\*

It was a day of digging and bitter discovery. Houses had lost walls, and the dead, after three weeks of war, had lost their faces. Families identified them by their clothes.

As the people of Gaza emerged Sunday from weeks of hiding, they confronted the full, sometimes breathtaking extent of the destruction around them wrought by the Israeli military.

Bombs had pulverized the Parliament and cabinet buildings, the Ministry of Justice, the main university and the police station, paralyzing Gaza's central nervous system and leaving residents in a state of shock.

Some places in Gaza City were bustling and matter-of-fact. Work crews in bright orange vests repaired power and water lines. Shops reopened. People lined up at bank machines.

But other areas ached with loss. In Twam in the north, thousands dragged belongings away from demolished houses, dazed refugees in their own city. In Zeitoun, families clawed at rubble and concrete, trying to dislodge relatives who had died weeks before. The death toll kept climbing: 95 bodies were taken from the rubble there.

More than 20 of them were from the Samouni family, whose younger members were digging with shovels and hands for relatives stuck in rooms inside. Faris Samouni, 59, sat alone, watching them. He had lost his wife, daughter-in-law, grandson and nephew, and he was heartbroken.

"Twenty-one are down there," he said, starting to cry. "One is my wife. Her name is Rizka."

The dead were badly decomposed, so families searched for familiar personal details that would identify them. One corpse was identified by her gold bracelets. Another by her earrings. A third by the nightgown she wore. The smell of rotting flesh was suffocating, and as they got closer the diggers put on masks.

#### Gazans emerge to search for the dead Palestinians stunned by Israeli ferocity

At 10:55 a.m., the body of Rizka Samouni emerged as an Israeli fighter jet roared in the sky. Other corpses followed. Houda, 18. Faris, 14. Hamdi, 21. The smallest corpse that emerged, from a different family, was that of a 4-year-old.

"They killed the elders, the children, the <u>women</u>, the animals, the chickens," said Subhi, 55, Rizka's brother. "It's a nightmare. I never thought I would lose all of them."

Around noon, a worker from the Red Crescent ran up to the diggers. The Israelis had called, telling people to leave, he said. The families began to run, again.

"We have to go!" a woman shouted. "But where can we go? Where do we go?"

An Israeli military spokesman said the order had been issued because the Red Crescent had not coordinated its movement in advance.

Permission eventually was granted and the diggers returned to exhume the remaining bodies.

One of the areas worst hit was Twam, a neighborhood north of Gaza City, which by Friday afternoon had turned into a disorganized mass move. Donkey carts lurched over torn-up roads, spilling pillows and bedding into the dirt. People dragged bed frames and mattresses out of bombed-smashed houses. Small boys carried bookshelves. Curtains tied in giant sacks held clothes. Decorative cloth flowers fluttered from a half-closed trunk.

"It's madness," said Riad Abbas Khalawa, who carried one side of a computer while his brother held the other side.
"Now our home is gone. There's no place for us to sit together as a family."

The question of what they thought was Israel's goal elicited a response from the entire throng listening to Khalawa. "It's a war against us as people," a man shouted. "What happened to *Hamas*? Nothing!"

Beker Rahim, 26, who works for a water distributor, walked with a cradle on his head and a blue plastic jug of home-grown olives in his right hand. He had to move a corpse Sunday morning from near his house, placing it respectfully at the gates of the mosque. His house had been destroyed.

The loss was staggering and acutely felt in the Saker family, which looked like a theater troupe on a stage as they salvaged what remained from the third floor of their house, its walls shorn off, its insides exposed to the neighborhood.

The family had lived for generations in a refugee camp but six years ago had finally saved enough money to build the house.

They returned from hiding to find it in shambles, a crushing discovery.

"It was my dream, and now it is erased," said Hadija Saker, 55, who ticked off the evidence, as she saw it, of Israel's unjust actions. She said <u>Hamas</u> lacked influence in the area. A teacher at a United Nations school lived on one side of her now-demolished home, a journalist on the other.

Most painful, she said, was the destruction her lemon trees, which she had nurtured for years and now lay crushed under sandy soil crisscrossed with the marks of tank treads.

Anger was compounded when people concluded that Israeli soldiers appeared to have been using their houses. The Sakers found wrappers for chocolate-cranberry power bars and corn puffs with Hebrew writing.

In another, a child found a tiny Torah.

In the upper-middle-class neighborhood of Tal al-Hawa, Ziad Dardasawi, 40, a wood importer, was trying to process what had happened.

Gazans emerge to search for the dead Palestinians stunned by Israeli ferocity

A supporter of Fatah, Dardasawi said that he despised <u>Hamas</u> but that its rocket fire was no justification for Israel's military response.

"Let's say someone from <u>Hamas</u> fired a rocket - is it necessary to punish the whole neighborhood for that?" he asked, standing in a stairway of his uncle's house, where furniture had been smashed and all the windows broken.

He drew on an analogy he thought would strike a chord: "In the U.S., when someone shoots someone, is his entire family punished?"

The Israeli actions made the situation more intractable, he said.

"How can I convince my neighbors now for the option of peace? I can't."

He added: "Israel is breeding extremists. The feeling you get is that they just want you to leave Gaza."

It was almost dark and the Samounis were finally burying their dead. It took time to find a car big enough to carry them all. A man had to stand in the back to keep them from falling out.

At the cemetery, a battery-powered neon light cast an eerie glow over men digging the graves. There was a moment of panic when *Hamas* militants launched a rocket not far away, but nothing happened.

A final obstacle: There was not enough room to bury all the bodies.

The family opened an old grave to accommodate them.

A cousin, Khamis el-Sayess, observed bitterly: "Even our dead have no land."

But for Yasser Smama, a teenager who was also part of the crowd, there was almost a resigned hope. "Today is not the end," he said. "Today we bury our dead and we pick ourselves up."

Then he pointed at the sky and said, "We have to be strong because they might hit us again tomorrow."

Load-Date: January 27, 2009



## My Say: Palestine's Warsaw ghettos

The Edge Malaysia January 19, 2009

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**Length:** 1227 words **Byline:** Azam Aris

#### **Body**

The only lesson of history is that

there are no lessons.

- Alan John Percival Taylor,

British historian

When discussing the Arab-Israel conflict - notably one that involves the helpless Palestinians - with friends including foreigners, I always stress this point: the irony of this long ongoing struggle is how a race (particularly Jews who support the Tel Aviv Zionist regime) that endured so much pain and wants the world to remember the Holocaust annually continues to inflict unimaginable suffering on another race.

Perhaps, Taylor is right and in this perspective, the Zionist-led Israeli government did not learn anything from the atrocities committed by the Nazis on the Jews during World War II.

The latest Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, which has already killed more than 1,000 people, mostly <u>women</u> and children, is not about neutralising the ability of <u>Hamas</u> to fire "primitive rockets" into Israel. Rather, it is part of a much bigger 60-year-old conflict that the US and Europe refuse to solve even though they are capable of doing it. This hostility will continue as long as the US and Europe, which helped create Israel after World War II, do not pressure Israel into making peace with its Arab neighbours.

The crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo was not allowed to prolong because it happened in the backyard of Europe, which was why the Western powers decided to intervene directly. Why can't they do the same for Palestine? Are we to believe that powerful American presidents, including Barack Obama, are powerless tools of the Jewish lobbyists in Washington to the extent that the US has to veto every effort of the UN to solve the crisis? And even if it means fuelling more hatred in the Muslim and Arab world that will affect American interests more than Israel's?

Had these problems been solved after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war - with the US and Europe pressuring Israel to accept the various resolutions passed by the UN - there would not be *Hamas*, Islamic jihad, Al-Aqsa martyrs or Hezbollah today. Instead, there would be economic development and prosperity in Gaza and the West Bank, no refugee camps in Lebanon and no suicide bombers and rockets on the streets of Israel.

But the US and Europe turned a blind eye and let the conflict and Israeli oppression continue. And like in many wars, the oppressed will fight back, especially when the future seems bleak. In the case of the Palestinians, notably

#### My Say: Palestine 's Warsaw ghettos

those who remain in Gaza and the West Bank and have suffered for three generations, many would be proud to let their children become freedom fighters and die as martyrs.

What are Gaza and the West Bank today - deprived of basic amenities and surrounded by walls and checkpoints - if not ghettos? Gaza and the West Bank are the Palestinian version of the Jews' Warsaw ghettos. History books on the Warsaw ghettos provide a lot of similarities (which is emphasised in italics) between the Warsaw ghettos and those in Gaza and the West Bank.

"When Germany conquered Poland at the beginning of the Second World War, it issued a decree that required all Jewish residents of Warsaw to move into a designated area, which it then sealed off from the rest of the city in November 1940. The ghetto was enclosed by a wall that was over 10-feet high and topped with barbed wire and closely guarded to prevent movement between the ghetto and the rest of Warsaw.

"Unemployment was a major problem in the ghetto. Illegal workshops were set up to manufacture goods to be sold illegally on the outside and raw goods were smuggled in often by children. Smuggling was often the only source of subsistence for the ghetto inhabitants. Food allotments rationed were not sufficient to sustain life. Despite the grave hardships, life in the Warsaw ghetto was rich with educational and cultural activities conducted by its underground organisations... resisting deportation, some of them used small arms smuggled into the ghetto. They offered organised resistance in the first days of the operation, inflicting casualties on the well armed and equipped SS and police units."

Another description of life in Gaza and the West Bank was offered by former US president Jimmy Carter who brokered the Israel-Eygpt peace deal in 1978. Carter, considered the last US president who had some success in solving the problem and had established contact with <u>Hamas</u> - who won the election in Gaza - uses the word "apartheid" to describe the plight of the Palestinians today.

He was heavily criticised in the US by Jewish lobbyists but he maintained his stand. He said: "I knew that's an accurate description on what's going on in Palestine. The confiscation of their land... they being suppressed completely against voicing their disapproval of what's happening, the building of the wall that intrudes deep into their territory, the complete separation of Israelis from Palestinians - all those things in many ways are worse than some of the aspects of apartheid in South Africa. There is no doubt about it and no one can go there and visit different cities without agreeing with what I have said."

The solutions to the conflict are all there in the form of resolutions passed by the UN and Saudi Arabia's Middle East "peace for land deal" or otherwise known as the 2007 Beirut Declaration.

UN Resolution 242 calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from all territories occupied in 1967 - Gaza, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

UN Resolution 194 reaffirms the right of Palestinian refugees (who were driven out of their land in 1948) to return, including to areas in what is Israel today. Additionally, the Beirut Declaration called for Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. While the return of refugees is no longer attainable and unaccepatable to Israel as this will mean turning Israel into an Arab-majority country, financial compensation could be acceptable to Palestinian refugees, just as the Jews were compensated by the German government for the Holocaust. In return, all Arab states will establish normal relations with Israel and consider the conflict "ended".

The main obstacles to peace - the status of Jerusalem, final borders and issue of Jewish settlements, the return of or financial compensation for refugees and a dispute over water - cannot be solved by Israel and Palestine alone but needs the direct involvement of the US and Europe. To establish a strong foundation for peace, there is also a need to set up an international peacekeeping force.

Despite having to overcome a severe economic crisis back home, Obama must invest in peace in the Middle East from day one of his presidency. If he lets the conflict continue unresolved, then expect more of the same - extremism, not pragmatism, will continue to rear its ugly head. Peace will help bring economic development and

#### My Say: Palestine 's Warsaw ghettos

counter extremism, but continued Israeli oppression will likely provide <u>Hamas</u> with more recruits and support among Palestinians.

The Western world and the likes of Bush and Blair can call <u>Hamas</u> and those who fight Israel terrorists but in the eyes of the Palestinians and many in the Islamic world, they are freedom fighters trying to liberate their homeland. Just like the Jews in the Warsaw ghettos, expect the Palestinians to fight until the last man is standing.

Azam Aris is executive editor at The Edge. Comments: feedback@bizedge.com

Load-Date: February 5, 2009



## A country stumbling, blinded by anger

Sunday Independent (Ireland)

January 18, 2009

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# **Sunday Independent**

Section: WORLD NEWS; Middle East

Length: 1113 words

#### **Body**

# Far from demonising Israel,we must help it to find a better way to deal with those who wish to destroy it, says Kate Kavanagh

WHAT has been happening in Gaza is wrong. No matter what the justification, the provocation, the reasons, the excuses -- all of which are valid when you're at war with terrorists -- the reaction and bombardment of Gaza and its citizens has been a well- planned, premeditated over-reaction to an ongoing provocation. But just because you are provoked, you don't have to behave badly as a response.

Ignoring civilian deaths and collateral carnage is no way to make friends and influence people. But it doesn't mean we should demonise Israel as an evil state. That is not only wrong, it reinforces the primitive prejudices that <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbollah constantly rage at: not only the State of Israel, but at Jews everywhere.

Aengus O Snodaigh was wrong. His outburst in the Dail last week was cowardly,rushing to land his blows when his target is on the social back foot. The insult was profane -- shocking, if you really think about it -- and is a serious reflection of O Snodaigh's absurd thinking.

When the pot boils, the scum indeed comes out.

Israel is frightened. Surrounded by relentless enemies, Israel reacts like the rash, defensive and irrational child we all want to love, but who we end up engaged in tearful and exasperated exchanges with. It doesn't matter what Israel says about why took this action. It doesn't matter if rockets are being fired into Israel. Like the child who feels hard done by and is blinded by anger at what it sees as everyone out to get him, Israel's response has been counterproductive.

All evidence shows that Israel'smethods to free itself from constant threat will fail. Apart from the appalling impact in humanitarian terms, shelling of civilian populations won't solve the problem Israel set out to solve. In fact, it will make it worse. Israel says it wants to get rid of *Hamas*, but there can be no stronger recruiting campaign for *Hamas* -- and other Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups -- than Israel's recent actions. *Hamas* is not a club with an address and phone number. It is an ideal,a philosophy, and it is everywhere in the Islamic world in various guises: *Hamas*, Hizbollah, Taliban.

#### A country stumbling, blinded by anger

Unless Israel -- and those who want to help Israel -- tackles the philosophy behind these groups, they will not go away. This is dangerous ground for Israel. It can't see, or refuses to see, the real problem. It's also dangerous for the rest of us. Because Israel's actions rightly result in outrage by the world as witness, there is a danger the world will ignore Israel's real problem with its Islamic neighbours -- and it will be buried in the bloody rubble of Gaza.

This leads to the second way Israel's action will backfire: by alienating it from the rest of the world, which it should be wooing for help. Not only will Israel's recent actions lose international support for its existence, it will allow those like Aengus O Snodaigh to use the opportunity of public opinion running high against Israel, to nastily link the Dail's only Jewish member with Goebbels, and get away with it.

Alan Shatter was not speaking propaganda; he has a long-standing record of being one of the most honourable representatives in Dail Eireann-- not a tag that can be worn honestly by everyone in that shady house. If he's guilty of anything, it's perhaps blindly aligning himself with the inexcusable actions in Gaza.

He could have taken a braver step -- if he felt comfortable enough to do so. He could have supported the right of the State of Israel to exist peacefully, but condemn the current onslaught -- which everyone can see is really only hurting civilians, and allowing foaming radicals to hurl criticism at an isolated state.

But Alan Shatter, along with Michael Bloomberg and other Jewish politicians around the world, feel they have to stand by the actions of Israel -- in the face of political isolation -- because they feel Israel is an isolated state without them.

Why did Michael Bloomberg -- an intelligent secular Jew and a New York Altruist, who once declared an interest in the top UN job -- feel the need to support what the rest of the worldcondemns'

Shatter and Bloomberg are huddling with fellow Jews -- practising and secular -- in defiance of a greater world which can't comprehend why Gaza has to be so brutal, and who can't identify with a State whose surrounding neighbours have the explicit stated objective of wiping it out.

Israel's actions in Gaza have not been motivated by a plan of ethnic cleansing -- that is just a loose and lazy term bandied about lately by those who couldn't be bothered to think beyond the headlines. Israel is a nation afraid, and with good reason. The President of Iran, who may or may not be developing nuclear weapons, has expressly stated the destruction of Israel to be his main goal. The priority of the President of Iran is not the equal distribution of wealth in his country, not to wipe out poverty and sickness, not to introduce education and freedom for <u>women</u>, not to get rid of Sharia law and introduce a secular state, not to curtail the desire that the entire world live by Islamic ways -- but to destroy Israel.

And, like the terrified child who finds itself isolated and surrounded by enemies, Israel's over-the-top response will lead only to more trouble.

Israel has a problem, and Israel's problem is also the world's problem. In the bigger picture, it is fighting an ideal for a worldwide Islamic state. Not only are we morally obliged to help Israel, it is in our interest to do so -- and in the interest of the free world as we know it.

What makes Israel's problem worse is how it deals with the situation. By carrying out aggressive warfare against a civilian population with the idea that you can get a few terrorists in the middle, it has outraged most fair-minded people and made it hard for us to support them.

We cannot continue to angrily dismiss Israel out of hand as a bad state. That is ignorant and dangerous. The world, and the United Nations, must look with caution at what threatens Israel. It is a democracy, and we should acknowledge it and its problems. Israel cannot be allowed to walk itself -- and us behind it -- into a trap where secular democratic nations have no right to exist.

If Israel does not change its methods of dealing with its problems, it will only make them worse. So we must find a better way, and we must support Israel in pursuit of that better way. And, in order to be able to do that, we have to gain Israel's trust. And, in order to do that, we have to stop linking Jewish politicians to Nazis.

Load-Date: January 18, 2009



# <u>Feature - Smoke and mirrors; Ruling-class ideology turns workers into</u> shirkers and civilians into 'our enemies'

# Morning Star January 15, 2009 Thursday

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**Length:** 926 words **Byline:** Derek Wall

#### **Body**

Now, who was it who said that ideology works like a camera obscura, projecting the picture on to a screen but making it appear upside down? Don't tell me. It's on the tip of my tongue.

In capitalist society, a huge effort is made to disguise reality. It's part of the process that keeps the whole show rolling along.

Examining ideology and combating it is both vital and a task to which every Star reader can contribute.

In ecology, ideologists motivated by very material considerations either deny that ecological problems occur or see them as best solved by bankers and corporate green business.

When it comes to the economy, instead of recognising that workers are the ones who produce wealth, bankers are seen as productive and the rest of us are labelled as shirkers. I could go on.

Ideology also enables bloodshed.

Every invasion sees newspapermen and <u>women</u>, priests and academics publicly defending killing and enslavement.

Current events in Gaza provide a gruesome case study.

Demonisation is an important part of the process. It is easier to justify the death of civilians by depicting *Hamas* as a brutal, reactionary force.

Pro-war commentators label *Hamas* anti-women, anti-gay and intolerant. They also play on Islamophobia.

Yet it is overlooked that George W Bush is also anti-<u>women</u>, anti-gay and a slave to fundamentalist religion, while Washington's second-favourite state in the Middle East is Saudi Arabia, a country with perhaps the worst human rights record in the world where gays are routinely executed.

While I am far from sympathetic to <u>Hamas</u>, it looks Liberal Democrat compared to the House of Saud. In any case, many Palestinians are Christians or secular, but they are still killed by falling bombs.

One can imagine how the current crop of pro-war ideologists might have labelled the anti-colonial movements.

Feature - Smoke and mirrors Ruling-class ideology turns workers into shirkers and civilians into 'our enemies'

The pro-war left in the form of "thinkers" like Christopher Hitchens could have described Gandhi as a rightwinger because of his Hindu faith.

The pro-Israeli Defence Force bloggers at Harry's Place would no doubt have cheered on the 5th Cavalry as it killed the Sioux Indians.

One can even imagine Mel Gibson producing a film showing Catholic priests arriving on the shores of Latin America to liberate the suffering Indians from the Aztecs. He could call it Apocalypto.

Any kind of ammunition will do for the skilled ideological operative.

In the case of Israel, those opposed to the killing project are labelled as anti-semitic. Typically, when a call is raised to boycott Israel, it is denounced as racist. Yet how often do we hear the blockade of Cuba, which has gone on for decades and caused terrible problems, described as racist against Cubans?

Many activists have been attacked for describing the blockade of Gaza as similar to the Warsaw Ghetto, where the nazis starved the Jewish population before annihilating it.

Any comparison between the nazis and the state of Israel will lead to understandable offence. But, in a truly obscene remark, Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Matan Vilnai noted last March that "the more Qassam fire intensifies and the rockets reach a longer range, they (the Palestinians of Gaza) will bring upon themselves a bigger Shoah because we will use all our might to defend." Shoah is a term for the Holocaust.

The media also overlooks the fact that there are many Jewish voices for peace - Rabbis For Human Rights, to take one example. In Britain, we have the impressive Jewish Socialist Group, whose magazine is one of the best on the left. Ideology disguises what's really going on.

While Israel may have mounted this horrifying assault, it, like Saudi Arabia, is a US client state. The current bloodshed would be quite impossible without US permission and arms. US arms manufacturers, though, love seeing their products used. It boosts orders.

You and I may be critical of <u>Hamas</u>. But such criticism can easily be used to justify the killing of civilians by the Israeli army.

George Orwell, quite rightly in my view, opposed Stalin. But he also worked with the CIA. The excesses of Stalin from the gulags to the Katyn massacre were later used to justify murderous CIA adventures in Chile and dozens of other countries.

The point is to oppose oppression, not to allow one's opposition to be used to justify a bigger form of totalitarianism.

The aim is to put a few cracks in the glass. This is where you, the reader, come in.

In the age of the internet, there is no hard and fast division between readers and writers. We can all get involved.

If Harold Pinter had lived just a few days more, there is no doubt in my mind that he would have been one of the most effective opponents of the assault on Gaza. The most powerful antidote to ideology that I have seen is his astonishing Nobel prizewinner's speech. You can see the whole thing on the web.

Some impressive bloggers have been providing detailed accounts of the oppression in Gaza.

Haim Bresheeth (<u>www.haimbresheeth.com/politics/political-writing</u>), an Israeli academic and film-maker living in London, has been working around the clock to post an essential account of events in Gaza.

Richard Seymour at Lenin's Tomb (leninology.blogspot.com) has been providing encyclopaedic research into the present conflict. His new book The Liberal Defence Of Murder provides a good account of the humanitarian drive to murder.

Feature - Smoke and mirrors Ruling-class ideology turns workers into shirkers and civilians into 'our enemies'

The Socialist Unity blog is essential reading too. And don't forget the Morning Star, where I think that it is fair to say that all commentators, despite having a variety of political perspectives, are working to try to blow away the ideological fog.

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



#### Israel denies killing fleeing Gazans

The New Zealand Herald January 23, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 890 words

#### **Body**

JERUSALEM - Israeli troops have reportedly fired on Gaza residents trying to escape the conflict area.

The BBC reported that it and an Israeli human rights group had been told of the incidents but Israel strongly denied the allegations.

It said its journalists in Gaza and Israel had compiled detailed accounts of the claims, which included cases where Palestinian civilians were allegedly shot in Gaza as they tried to leave their homes, in some cases bearing white flags.

"One testimony heard by the BBC and human rights group B'tselem describes Israeli forces shooting a woman in the head after she stepped out of her house carrying a piece of white cloth, in response to an Israeli loudhailer announcement," the BBC says on its website.

It said the Israeli military had dismissed the report as "without foundation".

The BBC said it had spoken to members of another family who said they were trapped in their home by fighting and had been shot at when they tried to leave to replenish dwindling water and food supplies, even during the three-hour humanitarian lull.

Israel has not allowed international journalists and human rights monitors into Gaza, making it difficult to verify the accounts.

B'tselem said it had been unable to corroborate the testimony it had received, but felt it should be made public.

Munir Shafik al-Najar, of Khouza village in the Gaza Strip, told B'tselem and the International Committee of the Red Cross of a series of events on Tuesday which he said left four members of his extended family dead.

He told the BBC that about 75 members of his extended family had ended up huddled in a house, surrounded by Israeli forces, after troops shelled the area and destroyed his brother's home.

He said they heard an announcement over a loudspeaker saying: "This is the Israeli Defence Forces, we are asking all the people to leave their homes and go to the school. Ladies first, then men."

"We decided to send the <u>women</u> first, two by two," he said. "The Army was about 15 metres away from the house or less. They shot her [the wife of his cousin, Rawhiya al-Najar, 48] in the head," he said. The woman's daughter was shot in the thigh but crawled back inside the house.

#### Israel denies killing fleeing Gazans

He said the family telephoned the Red Crescent, human rights organisations and Palestinian Authority officials in Ramallah but after several hours no help had arrived.

"We decided that's it, we're going to die, we are [going] to run and all die at once," the BBC reported him as saying.

"When we did that they started shooting with heavy ammunition from a machine gun on top of a tank," even though all the adults were carrying white flags.

He said three of his relatives, Muhammad Salman al-Najar, 54, Ahmad Jum'a al-Najar, 27, and Khalil Hamdan al-Najar, 80, were killed.

A second family member, Riad Zaki al-Najar, gave the BBC a similar account by telephone.

The BBC said it also spoke to Marwan Abu Rida, a paramedic with the Palestinian Red Crescent, who said he was called to the site and that he came under fire as he tried to reach it and was trapped in a house nearby.

He said that when he reached the location he found the dead woman, Rawhiya, who appeared to have been shot in the head.

In a written response to the incident, the Israeli military said: "An initial inquiry into the allegation raised by B'tselem has concluded that the claims are without foundation.

"The IDF goes to great lengths to avoid harming Palestinians uninvolved in combat and reiterates that it is <u>Hamas</u> that chooses to launch its attacks against Israeli towns from within civilian areas."

In a similar account received by B'tselem, Yusef Abu Hajaj, a resident of Juhar al-Dik, south of Gaza City, said his mother and sister were shot as they tried to flee their home while holding a white banner in a group of people including small children.

The BBC quoted him as saying an Israeli tank had fired at their house while the Israeli military was urging civilians to leave their homes.

Meanwhile, as Israel pulled its last troops out of Gaza yesterday, some Palestinians were working to restart - or are continuing with - the smuggling of contraband under the Gaza-Egypt border, despite the hundreds of Israeli raids which they admit have destroyed most of the tunnels.

They say that highly prized diesel and petrol for fuel-starved Gaza is still flowing through improvised piping under the border as other operators begin to assess the damage and work on reconstructing tunnels filled in by precision F16 bombing.

Reconstruction, if it can be launched in light of the frost between <u>Hamas</u> and the West, may cost close to \$2US billion (\$3.7 billion), according to Palestinian and international estimates.

Diplomatic efforts led by Egypt were focusing on reaching a long-term Israel-<u>Hamas</u> truce deal, far short of an accord on Palestinian statehood sought by the United States and other international peace-brokers.

Israel's attacks in an offensive it began on December 27 killed 1300 Palestinians. Gaza medical officials said the Palestinian dead included at least 700 civilians.

Israel said hundreds of militants died and that it dealt <u>Hamas</u> a strong blow that had boosted the Jewish state's power of deterrence and drawn international pledges to help to prevent the Islamist group from replenishing its rocket arsenal.

Ten Israeli soldiers and three civilians died in the conflict.

#### - AGENCIES

#### Israel denies killing fleeing Gazans

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



#### Plots, sense and nonsense: the view from the post bag; Robert Fisk's World

The Independent (London)
January 24, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. 38

**Length:** 893 words **Byline:** Robert Fisk

#### **Body**

Mail that you don't see in the Letters to the Editor column. First, here's reader Jack Hyde tipping me off about a possible (real) reason behind Israel's bloodletting in Gaza. He encloses a paper by University of Ottawa economist Michel Chossudovsky who says that "the military intervention of the Gaza Strip by Israeli Forces bears a direct relation to the control and ownership of strategic offshore gas reserves". It's not exactly The Plot. But it's something that Obama and his lads and lasses may need to study in the next few days.

For according to Chossudovsky, British Gas and its partner, the Athens-based Consolidated Contractors International Company - owned, apparently, by two Lebanese families - were granted 25-year oil and exploration rights off the Gaza coast by Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority in 1999. About 60 per cent of reserves along the Gaza-Israel coastline belong to "Palestine" (wherever that is these days).

But since the <u>Hamas</u> election victory in 2006 and its coup in Gaza in 2007, the <u>Hamas</u> government has been by-passed, even though poor old "President" Mahmoud Abbas, marooned in the West Bank, can only glimpse the Mediterranean from a hill near Jenin. Many negotiations later - and after Israeli "defence" officials claimed that the Palestinians could be paid only in goods and chattels for their gas rather than cash which might go to the dreaded <u>Hamas</u> - there was a proposed agreement under which Palestinian gas from Gaza wells would be channelled via undersea pipelines to the Israeli port of Ashkelon, thus transferring the control of gas sales to Israel. British Gas withdrew from these talks in December 2007.

But in June of 2008 - when, according to the Israeli daily Haaretz, Israel began its invasion plans for Gaza - Israel suddenly asked British Gas to resume talks. And, so says Chossudovsky, negotiations began again for the purchase of natural gas from the Gaza offshore fields. Israeli tanks have now driven out of the Gaza Strip, but Israeli naval vessels still control the coast and there's an obvious question: if the Israelis can continue to violate international law by seizing Palestinian land in the West Bank, why cannot they seize the sovereignty of Palestinian gas fields off Gaza? If Israel can annex Jerusalem, why not annex Gaza's maritime areas?

Less wholesome material is now turning up in my mail bag. Lebanese friends have shown me copies of a new Palestinian blog in which photographs of Palestinian <u>women</u> waiting at Israel's abominable checkpoints and Israeli soldiers firing at Palestinians are "matched" with archive pictures of the Jewish Holocaust. But the **women** and

children waiting in the older photos are queuing at the infamous Auschwitz death ramp and the black-and-white image of a Nazi soldier firing his rifle has been artfully cropped to delete two figures on the right of the original picture: a cowering Jewish woman holding her child, who are being shot in the back. Yes, I believe the Israelis have committed war crimes in Gaza. And in Lebanon. But this Palestinian comparison is utterly self-defeating because it is based on a lie.

What am I to make, for instance, of another pamphlet that has flopped out of my mail package from the "refugees of Ein Karem, Jerusalem"? These Palestinians, originally expelled from 1948 Palestine in Israel's initial act of ethnic cleansing, state that "in view of the current events in Gaza and Palestine", Israel should be "dismantled" because "the savage acts by its forces (are) far beyond war crimes committed in World War Two". Ye Gods! Sixty million humans were slaughtered in the Second World War and the number of murdered Jews equals the entire present-day Palestinian population, including refugees.

But do not think that this is the only nonsense floating around. A letter with no printed author's name and no address arrives to tell me that I am encouraging "extreme fundamentalists to carry out attacks on Western Countries" by exercising "the old chestnut" of "proportionality". Disregarding the fact that Muslims are enraged by Israel's savagery in Gaza - not by our reporting of it - the reader asks me: "Were not far more German civilians killed in the last war than British civilians? Should all the British Generals be held up as war criminals? Don't talk nonsense!"

Of course, it's the same old canard. Now, it appears, it's OK to kill 100 Palestinians in Gaza for every Israeli in the area because "we" killed more German civilians than the Germans killed Brits in the Second World War. Note, here, how Germans subtly become the slaughtered Palestinians, the Israelis (and their ruthless generals) transmogrified into, I suppose, Air Marshal Harris.

There's an even more amazing letter that arrived on my Beirut desk this week - it came from an address in Wimbledon - which deserves to be quoted in full:

"Dear Mr Fisk, I recently saw an interview that you gave on French News TV. I was amazed at the size of your massive long nose that (sic) you have. Is it true that the <u>Hamas</u> Neo-Nazi thugs want to use it next time they need to hide from the Israelis? Yours faithfully..."

Again, the Palestinians become Nazi Germans. Do I reply to this racist dirt? Yes, I rather think I do, with the usual threat of legal action. But I absolutely promise - a repeated pledge by your reporter - I will not mention the Second World War!

Load-Date: January 24, 2009



# Turkish PM and Israel's Peres clash over Gaza

AlArabiya.net

January 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 910 words

# **Body**

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan returned to a hero's welcome in Istanbul on Friday, a day after he and Israel's President Shimon Peres shocked the World Economic Forum as a debate on the Middle East heated up and the leaders raised their voices and traded accusations over the recent assault on Gaza.

In some of the most dramatic moments seen at the normally restrained Davos meetings, Erdogan stormed out in front of U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Arab League chief Amr Moussa and other panel members complaining that he was not allowed by the moderator to respond to accusations made by Peres. Pointed fingers, raised voices

The argument erupted after Peres, criticized by Ban and Moussa, launched an aggressive defense of his country's 23-day assault on Gaza and with a raised voice and pointed finger, questioned what Erdogan would do if rockets were fired at Istanbul every night.

"Why did they fire rockets? There was no siege against Gaza," Peres said, his voice rising. "Why did they fight us? What did they want? There was never a day of starvation in Gaza."

"What would you do if you were to have in Istanbul every night a hundred rockets?" Peres shouted.

The audience of international officials and corporate chiefs applauded Peres's emotional defense of an assault that left more than 1,300 Palestinians dead, a move that Erdogan criticized.

"I find it very sad that people applaud what you have said because many people have been killed," he said to Peres.

As Erdogan tried to continue with his response to Peres, the moderator, Washington Post journalist David Ignatius, repeatedly interrupted him saying it was time for dinner.

"We can't start the debate again we just don't have time," Ignatius said, interrupting the Turkish premier.

"The president [Peres] spoke for 25 minutes. I have only spoken for half of that," Erdogan fumed.

"I don't think I will come back to Davos because you don't let me speak," the Turkish prime minister said, as he stood up and walked out of the conference hall in the Swiss ski resort.

"President Peres you are older than I am. Maybe you are feeling guilty and that is why you are so strong in your words. You killed people. I remember the children who died on beaches," Erdogan said before storming out. Hero's welcome

Erdogan returned to Istanbul where he received a hero's welcome as thousands of people waving Turkish and Palestinian flags turned out to greet the prime minister's plane.

#### Turkish PM and Israel 's Peres clash over Gaza

"I only know that I have to protect the honor of Turkey and Turkish people," Erdogan said to cheering crowds.

"I am not a chief of a tribe. I am the prime minister of Turkey. I have to do what I have to do."

Earlier, in a hastily-called news conference, Erdogan explained that he had been upset with both the moderation of the debate and Peres's manner.

"My reaction was directed at the moderator. I think that if we have moderation in this way, we won't really get out of Davos what we all come here to get out of Davos, and it would cast a shadow over efforts to reach peace," Erdogan said.

"President Peres was speaking to the prime minister of Turkey -- I am not just some leader of some group or tribe, so he should have addressed me accordingly," he told reporters.

Erdogan and Peres spoke by telephone after the debate and the 85-year-old Israeli president apologized for the events, Turkey's Anatolia news agency reported, which the Israeli presidency later denied but said Peres had called Erdogan and the two leaders had "a friendly conversation."

Erdogan, who leads one of the few Muslim countries to have diplomatic relations with Israel and who has sought a peacemaker's role in the Middle East conflict, said although he thought Israel had carried out "barbarian" actions in Gaza, he was not anti-Semitic.

"I am a leader in this world who says that anti-Semitism is a crime against humanity. I said this the very first day I became prime minister and before that as well," Erdogan said defending himself against criticism made by Jewish groups.

Reactions

As the Palestinian Islamist movement <u>Hamas</u> hailed Erdogan's move, Peres told reporters he hoped the heated exchange would not affect relations between the two countries.

"We don't want conflict with Turkey. We are in a conflict with the Palestinians," Peres told reporters at the annual gathering in Davos.

Meanwhile <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, Fawzi Barhum, said: "<u>Hamas</u> pays tribute to the courageous stand of Turkey's prime minister ... who in Davos directly defended the victims of the criminal Zionist war against our children and <u>women</u> in Gaza."

"We consider his departure from the room an expression of support for the victims of the Holocaust carried out by the Zionists," he said in a statement.

Analysts have suggested Peres lost his temper because he felt Israel was being criticized by the international community.

Before Erdogan stormed out, Moussa, the former Egyptian foreign minister who now leads the Arab League, also took Peres to task during the debate for the treatment of the Palestinians.

"You strangle them, you starve them and you ask them to be quiet," Moussa said.

The U.N. secretary-general had also called on Israel to end its blockade of Gaza, for <u>Hamas</u> to end its violence and renewed Arab efforts to bring together divided Palestinian groups.

Moussa later said he thought Erdogan's action was understandable.

"Mr. Ergodan said what he wanted to say and then he left. That's all. He was right." Of Israel, he said, "They don't listen."

Load-Date: May 5, 2009



# Aid agencies call on Israel to end blockade of Gaza

The Irish Times

June 19, 2009 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 436 words

**Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN** 

## **Body**

FORTY UN and international humanitarian agencies have called on Israel to end its blockade of Gaza, where 80 per cent of residents depend on foreign aid for their existence.

We call for free and uninhibited access for all humanitarian assistance . . . We also call for a return to normalised trade, they said in a joint communique marking the second anniversary of the tightening of Israel s blockade following the takeover of the Strip by the Muslim *Hamas* movement.

The indiscriminate sanctions are affecting the entire 1.5 million population of Gaza, and ordinary <u>women</u>, children and the elderly are the first victims. While [the poorest] Gazans are being kept alive through humanitarian aid, ordinary civilians have lost all quality of life as they fight to survive, asserted the signatories, including the UN Relief and Works Agency, Oxfam and Care.

Conditions deteriorated dramatically when Israel launched a 23-day assault on Gaza last December, killing 1,435 Palestinians, wounding 5,000, and destroying or damaging 20,000 Palestinian homes as well as businesses, farms and infrastructure.

Three Israeli civilians were killed by rocket fire from Gaza and 10 Israeli soldiers died during the offensive.

Israel has blocked building materials needed for reconstruction and food, medical, and other supplies not deemed humanitarian. Tens of thousands of Gazans are living in tents or partially destroyed buildings.

The statement coincided with reports that the Obama administration has stepped up pressure on Israel to open border crossings into the Strip to allow the entry of cement, iron, and other construction materials, widen the range of food and medical supplies, and permit the transfer of cash to banks. The administration has rejected Israel s demand that Gilad Shalit, a soldier captured by *Hamas* affiliates in 2006, be released before the blockade can be lifted.

The plight of civilians in Gaza was highlighted on Tuesday by the visit of former US president Jimmy Carter who said the blockade is a terrible human rights crime and called on Israel and the international community to cease this abuse. The Obama administration also disagrees with Israel on a freeze on Israeli settlement activity in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The US is pressing for total suspension while Israel says it is prepared to halt expropriations of Palestinian land and the expansion of settlements housing 485,000 Israelis but remains determined to accommodate natural growth.

## Aid agencies call on Israel to end blockade of Gaza

Palestinians and Arabs demand that Israel withdraw from all Palestinian territory occupied by Israel in 1967 for the Palestinian state.

Load-Date: June 19, 2009



# We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

The Times (London)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Edition 1

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 684 words Byline: Tom Baldwin

# **Body**

Hillary Clinton indicated yesterday that she will put diplomacy back at the heart of a "smart power" strategy for the Middle East.

"We cannot give up on peace," the Secretary of State-designate said as she offered the first real declaration of intent from Barack Obama's incoming Administration that it will tackle the crisis in Gaza head-on.

She added that diplomatic engagement would include increased contact with former pariah nations such as Iran and Syria in an effort to broker a lasting settlement for the region.

Mrs Clinton stopped short of setting out specific measures when appearing on Capitol Hill for confirmation hearings vesterday.

She acknowledged, though, that many past presidents, including her husband, had tried and failed to solve seemingly "intractable" problems in the Middle East. "The President-elect and I understand and are deeply sympathetic to Israel's desire to defend itself under the current conditions, and to be free of shelling by *Hamas* rockets.

However, we have also been reminded of the tragic humanitarian costs of conflict in the Middle East, and pained by the suffering of Palestinian and Israeli civilians," she said.

"This must only increase our determination to seek a just and lasting peace agreement that brings real security to Israel, normal and positive relations with its neighbours and independence, economic progress and security to the Palestinians in their own state." Asked if she would be willing to engage directly with the Islamic extremists controlling Gaza,

Mrs Clinton replied: "You cannot negotiate with <u>Hamas</u> until it renounces violence, recognises Israel and agrees to abide by past agreements. That is an absolute. That is my position and the President-elect's position." The "smart power" strategy should go beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and address other issues, including Iran's nuclear programme and the "irresponsible behaviour" of other countries in region such as Syria.

## We'll do it the smart way, says Clinton

Although insisting "we are not taking any option off the table at all", Mrs Clinton said the Obama Administration would follow "a new, perhaps different approach" to prevent the "unacceptable" prospect of Iran becoming a fully-fledged nuclear power.

Mrs Coverseas bonds that have been strained under President Bush."Today's security threats cannot be addressed in isolation," she said.

"Smart power requires reaching out to both friends and adversaries, to bolster old alliances and to forge new ones." Mrs Clinton underlined her commitment to <u>women</u>'s issues at yesterday's hearings as she attacked the trafficking of young <u>women</u> for prostitution.

"We have sex slavery; we have wage slavery. And it is primarily a slavery of girls and women," she said.

She also condemned the way the rights of <u>women</u> were being abused in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan.

"It is heartbreaking ... that young girls are attacked on their way to school by Taleban sympathisers and members who do not want young <u>women</u> to be educated. It's not complicated. They want to maintain an attitude that keeps <u>women</u> unhealthy, unfed, uneducated. This is not culture. This is not custom. This is criminal."

Smart power means a combination of "hard" power - the power to coerce, by military or other means - and "soft" power - the power to convince and persuade through trade, diplomacy, aid and the spread of values

The phrase "smart power" is a recent addition to the diplomatic phrasebook. It was coined after the invasion of Iraq and was presented as a liberal alternative to the neoconservatism of the Bush Administration and its leading disciples such as Donald Rumsfeld, right, and Dick Cheney

6 According to Joseph Nye, a Soft sell leading exponent of smart power, America must "learn to co-operate, and to listen" if it is to become a "welcomed world leader". Nye defines smart power as the power to persuade other countries to do what the US wants

Advocates of smart power invoke the creation of the UN, Nato, global free trade and the Marshall Plan as examples of the US in a central but not solo role

'You cannot negotiate with Hamas until it renounces violence'

# Graphic

Hillary Clinton with her daughter, Chelsea, before giving testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during her confirmation hearing

**KEVIN LAMARQUE / REUTERS** 

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



## Families emerge to find homes in rubble

The Irish Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; War in Gaza; Pg. 10

Length: 392 words

## **Body**

AFTER 22 days of devastating Israeli air strikes and shelling, shocked Palestinians emerged on to the rubble-strewn streets of the Gaza Strip yesterday to collect their dead and inspect their shattered homes.

<u>Women</u> sat weeping amid the ruins of their houses, many too distressed to speak. Others sifted through the debris to gather cherished belongings. One held a necklace. This is all that s left, she said. Children tried to salvage schoolbags and books. Shereen Abed-Rabbo (12) returned to find her home reduced to bricks. Among her destroyed belongings was a torn Koran. God will punish them very harshly when he sees his book was torn into pieces.

Families who fled advancing Israeli troops began returning to barely recognisable neighbourhoods to discover who had survived and who had died. Thank God you are alive! The house can be rebuilt, God willing, Abu Daoud Amer consoled a friend.

<u>Hamas</u>, eager to show it still controls Gaza, sent policemen back on to the streets even the traffic police were out on mangled, cratered roads. Municipal bulldozers pushed aside crushed cars and fallen chunks of concrete from the streets, but nothing could conceal the scale of destruction wrought by Israel s military machine.

Some people can t even recognise the place where their house used to be, one policeman radioed to his commander from the northern town of Beit Lahiya.

Ambulances negotiated roads torn up by bombs and tank tracks to recover bodies that had lain for days in rubble in Beit Lahiya and open areas to the north. <u>Hamas</u> police said about 95 bodies, mostly of militants, had been found so far.

Fearing renewed Israeli strikes, the police chief in the northern Gaza Strip ordered his men to move only in very small groups and to guard police headquarters and public buildings, not going inside unless absolutely necessary.

Be careful, one officer told policemen. This is not a real calm. Israeli strikes killed scores of policemen on the first day of the war. Israel classes Gaza s police as combatants, although some lawyers say they should be regarded as civilians.

Sereya, an old woman in a black robe, wandered among the ruins of the compound where she had lived. What should I say? Should I speak of my house that was destroyed or of my land that was bulldozed? she cried. I got out with only what I m wearing. (Reuters)

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



# My Say: The struggle for Palestine

The Edge Malaysia January 26, 2009

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Length: 1855 words

Byline: Ahamed Kameel Mydin Meera

# **Body**

The picture of a little girl, buried in the rubble of a collapsed building with only her head visible, touched the hearts of many. But that was only one of the thousands of Palestinians whom the Israelis have killed in years. Ruthless and heartless are probably how one can describe such atrocities. Some Western media organistions have even shamelessly attempted to justify the killing of children by portraying them as future suicide bombers.

Israel's ostensible purpose in launching its brutal attack on Gaza was to stop <u>Hamas</u> from shooting rockets into Israeli territory. Many, ignorant of history, blame <u>Hamas</u> for the Israeli aggression. Perhaps some history and current geopolitical situations might shed some light.

Palestine has been the home of the Arab Palestinians for centuries. But within the land is a place sacred to three Abrahamic faiths - Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The site is none other than the city of Jerusalem. About four thousand years ago, Abraham, the patriarch of these three faiths, travelled from his birthplace of Ur, located near Basra in contemporary Iraq, to Palestine, known as Canaan in ancient times, and thereafter to Mecca where he left his wife Hagar and Ishmael, his son.

Ishmael became the father of the Arabs of today. Through Abraham's younger son Isaac, the Jewish Israelite lineage appeared. The Israelites emerged from Mesopotamia (now Iraq), and dwelled in Canaan for a short period before migrating to Egypt due to a famine. Shortly, the Jews in Egypt became enslaved by the Pharaoh. This was when Moses appeared and led them to freedom from their misery. Remember the story of the miraculous opening of the sea that allowed Moses and his people cross but engulfed the Pharaoh and his army?

The Israelites proceeded to Canaan, the "Promised Land" in their beliefs. By this time, the land had already been inhabited by the Arabs - the Philistines. Under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites took Canaan by the sword, through terrible massacres. "He left not a man alive" (Joshua, 10:40 - Bible. See also A History of Jerusalem by Karen Amstrong). Later, King David and Solomon ruled Jerusalem, hence the often-heard term "Israel of David and Solomon". Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem; only the western wall was left after the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. It forms the Wailing Wall which the Jews use for prayers till today.

As for the Christians, Jerusalem and its vicinity are the places of Jesus Christ's birth and ministry. For the Muslims, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is the place from which Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven in the famous incident called Mi'raj. The nearby Al-Aqsa mosque is also one of the three sacred mosques in Islam, besides the al-Haram mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's mosque in Medina.

Hence Jerusalem is, as Armstrong describes, "One City, Three Faiths". But unfortunately, it has become a place of constant conflict and struggle. Judaism does not recognise the ministry of Jesus or Muhammad. Christianity recognises Judaism and its main figures but does not recognise Muhammad. Islam, nevertheless, recognises both

Judaism and Christianity and the Quran refers the adherents of these two faiths with a honorary title of "The People of the Book" - recognising that Judaism and Christianity come from the same God as that of Islam.

Since the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, Palestine passed into the hands of many other conquerors a number of times - initially to the Assyrians and Babylonians, and later to the Persians and Greeks. In 167 BC, the Jews established an independent Judaea that lasted for only about a century before the Romans asserted control over it, naming it Syria Palaestina. Embracing Christianity, the Emperor Constantine, sometime in 325 AD, made his new faith dominant in the region.

In the early seventh century, Islam was brought by Prophet Muhammad, God's messenger, in Arabia and within a century, the new faith spread from Morocco to India, including Palestine of course, rendering it now Muslim dominant. In 1099 AD, the first Crusaders managed to wrest back Jerusalem and reassert Christian rule, but just to lose it back to Saladin the Great in 1187 AD. Palestine remained practically in the hands of Muslims until the end of World War I when the Ottoman Caliphate fell.

Historian Paul E Walker contrasts the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders and Saladin as follows: "In stark contrast to the city's conquest by the Christians, when blood flowed freely during the barbaric slaughter of its inhabitants, the Muslim reconquest was marked by the civilised and courteous behaviour of Saladin and his troops."

The display of extreme mercy by Saladin can be attributed to none other than the teachings of Islam itself. Similarly, when the Jews were persecuted by the Christian Europe, including during the Holocaust, they were always welcomed in the Muslim empire. After all, they are the "People of the Book" and indeed many prophets of Islam were of Jewish lineage - Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus, to name a few. The Jews, therefore, flourished in Muslim nations particularly during the Muslim rule of Spain.

But a desire for a Jewish nation - a national homeland for the Jews - became embodied in the political movement of Zionism. In its early days, it even considered central Asia and Uganda as possible candidates for the homeland but the idea turned out to be not workable. Being aligned to the British Empire, the Zionists looked towards Palestine. Initial offers by Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, to buy Palestine from Abdul Hamid II, the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, was turned down. Thereafter, Herzl made threats against the empire, being fully aware that Europe and other allies would love to see it collapse and disintegrate.

The Ottoman Empire did crumple in the wake of World War I. And through the Sykes-Picot agreement, the Arab peninsula was divided into five states, with Britain and France acting as their protectorates - Syria and Lebanon came under France and Palestine, Jordan and Iraq under Britain. Nonetheless, through the Balfour Declaration, Britain declared Palestine as a national homeland for the Jews. Thereafter, the immigration of the Jews, confiscation of land and continuous conflicts between the Jews and Palestinians became ongoing history till today. In 1936, the Peel Commission recommended the partition of Palestine between the Arabs and Jews but this is yet to materialise.

In 1948, after the expiry of the British mandate over Palestine, Israel declared itself an independent nation and by the following year, was controlling 77% of Palestine. The miserable condition of the Palestinians gave birth to organisations dedicated to the liberation of Palestine - the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964, Hezbollah in 1982 and *Hamas* in 1987.

In the eyes of the Palestinians, the Israelis are like "hermit crabs". They terrorise the Palestinians, bulldoze their homes and establish Jewish settlements on lands stolen by force. This is what the world has been witnessing again and again, without a concrete solution to the problem. The latest is its incursion and massacre in Gaza.

On Jan 18, Israel unilaterally declared a ceasefire after killing more than 1,000 innocent Palestinians, many of whom were children, and severely wounding many thousands more. But any sane mind with a knowledge of history would know that this ceasefire is not the end. <u>Hamas</u> and Hezbollah would not be bothered if, through the West's propaganda, they are regarded as terrorist organisations. The conflict and battle between both sides are, therefore, likely to continue until an amicable solution is found - at least a two-state solution.

## My Say: The struggle for Palestine

But from Israel's actions, it is clear that it does not desire a two-state solution. Indeed, it seems to harbour a much bigger ambition. Some assert that it longs for an Israel that stretches from the Euphrates in Iraq to the Nile in Egypt.

In the last days of George W Bush's presidency, Israel took the opportunity to launch an offensive on Gaza. After killing and wounding thousands and destroying most of the infrastructure in Gaza, the Israelis feigned compassion by unilaterally declaring a ceasefire.

Israel seems to have multiple objectives in its war on the Palestinians. One of them is to annihilate its foes before Barack Obama is sworn in as the new US president. The other is to implicate Iran in the crisis and provide Obama with his maiden assignment.

By initiating a regime change in Iran, as has happened in Iraq, Israel is attempting to become a major oil player in the world. If it succeeds, the Jewish state hopes it can become a new superpower. Considering its ruthless behaviour, I hope the world will deny Israel's ambitious plan.

One way the international community, starting with the Islamic nations, can effectively contribute to the "defeat" of the Israelis is by rejecting any fiat currency being used as an international currency. In the current context, they should just deny the dollar its international currency status, which it has enjoyed for the last few decades. This would prevent the US and the financial elites from creating the dollar out of nothing and using it to purchase real things from the rest of the world. I have little doubt that significant amounts of the US Treasury's \$700US billion (RM2.5 trillion) and the Federal Reserves' few trillion dollars created as "bailout" money will go into the funding of new wars.

One of the most disheartening things is to know that the Israeli aggression and the killings of children and <u>women</u>, whose pictures "adorn" the pages of newspapers and magazines worldwide, are indeed significantly paid for through global inflation. That is we, the international community, are the ones footing the bill. Even <u>Hamas</u> does not seem to understand this monetary factor when it itself accepts the Israeli shekel as the main currency for Gaza.

The world should, accordingly, assist and give a <u>Hamas</u> a chance to prove that it can bring about true and everlasting peace to the region; after all, they are the first truly democratically elected government in the whole Arab peninsula.

As Armstrong puts it: "There are still many Israelis and Palestinians, many Arabs and Jews who long for peace and are prepared to make the sacrifices that it requires. It still remains true, when we look back on the long history of Jerusalem, that the societies that have lasted the longest there have, generally, been the ones that were prepared to accept some kind of tolerance and coexistence in the holy city. That, rather than a sterile and deadly struggle for sovereignty and absolute victory, must be the way to celebrate Jerusalem's sanctity today."

I am confident that a victorious <u>Hamas</u>, like Saladin, would show mercy and compassion towards the Jews and Christians in Palestine, and their adorable children will never have go through the hellish terror that the Palestinian children have been made to endure or succumb to.

Dr Ahamed Kameel Mydin Meera is dean, Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance, International Islamic University Malaysia

Load-Date: February 5, 2009



# 'Jones has every right to be aggrieved at that foul'; JOIN THE ONLINE DEBATE

South Wales Echo
January 19, 2009 Monday
First Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 23

Length: 347 words

## **Body**

### 89 MINUTE GAMES

Like everyone else, I was absolutely pig sick with that equaliser late on. Clearly DJ has every right to be aggrieved at the foul that never was, it was as blatant a foul as you could wish for.

However, it's a 95-minute game or more nowadays and goals scored in the final minute of injury time count every bit as much.

We have scored goals late on too, so to surmise where we would be in the table without conceding late goals is a little silly. Why not take away goals scored in the first 10 minutes too (Wolves) or any other period that suits us??!!

What makes it so frustrating is that twice now against Reading, the best side I've seen this season along with ourselves, and Birmingham, we have fully deserved 6 points on the balance of play only to concede very late on and undeservedly so. Yet again though, it shows how far we have come and it's easy to forget we are still top 6 and pushing on.

## Saladthedragon

#### ISRAEL STOP THE KILLING IN GAZA

Like most people I support Israel's right to exist, but the Israelis are far from lily-white in all this. They have lost a lot of support in what many see as using a sledge hammer to crack a nut: an over the top response that has resulted in the deaths of mostly innocent lives, *women* and children who had no truck with the methods of *Hamas*.

I've never denied the right of Israel to defend itself against such onslaughts as perpetrated by <u>Hamas</u> and other extremists. Let's face it, there are plenty of them around in the Middle East, and if I lived in Israel I wouldn't relish the thought of living under any fundamentalist Islamist regime either. I too would pick up a gun to fight that!

However, Israel has overreached itself in taking land upon which Palestinians have lived for centuries, and that has generated bitter resentments and murderous responses.

I'm reminded of Einstein's famous remark: "I don't know what World War III will be fought with, but World War IVwill be fought with sticks and stones."

# 'Jones has every right to be aggrieved at that foul' JOIN THE ONLINE DEBATE

Subterranean

Add your voice to the hottest message boards in Wales

WalesOnline.co.uk/forum

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



# We need to live within our means

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle, UK)

January 30, 2009 Friday

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Section: MAIN; Pg. 28-29

Length: 992 words

## **Body**

GORDON BROWN, pictured, and many other leaders both political and financial are claiming the current financial mess is not their fault.

Whose fault is it then? The fat cats and chancers at firms such as Northern Rock, Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclays and Enron are prime suspects.

This country should take a leaf out of America's book. We need a new beginning lock, stock and barrel.

There should be a complete overhaul of business management and a new code of ethics.

Overdrafts and loans should no longer be handed to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

We need an end to plastic money. People should learn to live within their means. It will be hard, but must be done.

People must have hope in their lives.

WILLIAM PAXTON, Matlock Gardens, Westerhope.

No evidence of war crimes

EARLIER this week Your Shout featured a letter about the troubles in Gaza. The writer conveniently omitted several historical facts and truths.

The Nazi regime, although elected to government, became a tyrannical dictatorship by removing all those who opposed its policies.

The leaders and henchmen of the regime were guilty of the most appalling war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Israeli government is a democratically elected government the only one in the Middle East and there is a healthy opposition.

<u>Hamas</u> were elected to govern Gaza, but soon after winning the election they tried to remove all the Fatah opposition and became a feared dictatorship.

<u>Hamas</u>, which is a terrorist organisation bankrolled by Iran, does not recognise the State of Israel and one of its stated aims is to remove Israel from the map.

#### We need to live within our means

In the conflict with Israel, *Hamas*'s tactics include using members of the population as human shields,

It uses mosques to store ammunition and places rocket launchers near hospitals and schools.

It is no wonder that in this war against <u>Hamas</u> there will inevitably be civilian losses, including <u>women</u> and children, and this is to be deeply regretted.

However, the Israel Defence Forces are under strict orders to limit this loss and there is no evidence that the IDF have carried out war crimes or crimes against humanity.

To equate Israel and its PM Ehud Olmert with Nazi Germany and Hitler is an offensive manipulation of the facts.

DR BERNARD OLSBURGH, Newcastle.

Sweet smell of sucess

IT'S a shame fewer smokers are kicking the habit. I fell by the wayside about three time times when I chucked the habit and still nearly have one when I have a couple of drinks down me.

What helped me a lot was changing my line of thought, from "I don't smoke" to "I don't stink" and I am now quite well dressed as well. It worked for me, though not that I expect everyone to chuck cigarettes. If you want to try though, say that to yourself and it might work.

GLB, High Howden.

Argument tosceptics

I PRESENT to the sceptics the eye-witness accounts.

Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, Peter, the leader of the disciples, the four Gospels, Mathew, Mark ,Luke and John, the high priest Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate and the centurian whose servant Jesus cured were all there.

There was also Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, and Joseph of Arimathea.

They all witnessed the events that happened two thousand and nine years ago proof positive that God exists.

Were the sceptics there?

STEPHEN SIDDOWAY, by email.

Bad luck about obesity germ

I HAD to laugh when I read of yet another possible "explanation" for the modern day obesity epidemic.

This month's explanation was that an American scientist had discovered an obesity germ! So, obesity is something you may simply catch, eh?

Funnily enough though, very few people seemed to catch this germ in the 1970s,60s,50s,40s,30s, etc and no traditional hunter-gatherer peoples are obese. So, luckily for us, this germ must only affect people in North America, Britain, Mexico and New Zealand (the four fattest countries in the world).

Unfortunately for us, we will continue to hear of these ludicrous explanations because the health and food industries refuse to accept that saturated fat is good for us (and doesn't make us fat) and starchy sugary foods are the bad guys (fizzy pop, crisps, chocolate, potatoes, pasta, bread).

Is it any coincidence then that since we were told in the mid-1980s that animal fat was bad for us and we need to cut down on it, and starchy carbohydrates, vegetable oil and low fat foods were good for us, that we have seen a massive increase in obesity (not to mention increases in cancer, diabetes, asthma, eczema and allergies?).

#### We need to live within our means

Maybe the reason we are told to eat unhealthy "healthy" food, is because there's no money to be made from generally healthy populations?

MARK CHESHIRE, Newsham Road, Blyth, Northumberland

Time to save our relatives

AROUND 10,000 non-human primates are used in European laboratories each year, with a third of them undergoing experiments in Britain.

Now, the EU law that governs animal experiments is being revised, presenting an historic opportunity to end the use of these highly intelligent, social animals.

Apes and monkeys are our closest relatives, yet they are still poisoned to death in drug "safety" tests and brain-damaged for the study of neurological disorders.

They have electrodes implanted in their heads and can be denied food and water. A recent study of ex-laboratory chimpanzees found they suffered psychological trauma similar to human victims of torture.

But on the question of whether this research benefits human medicine, abundant evidence suggests it does not.

Findings from marmosets and macaques have frequently misled scientists. For example, scores of treatments for stroke have been tested in primates, but all have failed in humans and even harmed people.

Equally, though 85 Aids vaccines have shown positive results in primates, all have failed in human trials.

More than 80% of European citizens want primate experiments to end. It's time for the European Parliament to act.

Please contact <u>info@animalaid.org.uk</u> for information.

TONI VERNELLI, campaigner.

## **Notes**

Letters

Load-Date: January 30, 2009



# PM candidates hold virtual debate. Internet surfers put questions to Netanyahu, Barak and Livni

The Jerusalem Post February 1, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 1465 words Byline: SHELLY PAZ

## **Body**

In the closest thing to a debate during the current election campaign, the three main candidates for the premiership arrived at the Channel 2 studio in Neveh Ilan, west of the capital, on Saturday evening and answered questions submitted by Internet surfers.

Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu said there would be no more disengagements under his leadership, Labor chairman Ehud Barak said the chances for the release of captured soldier Gilad Schalit were higher following the Gaza offensive, and Kadima head Tzipi Livni said that the Gush Katif evacuees were not being treated seriously, and committed to changing the situation.

First came Netanyahu.

"We live in a country governed by law, and the law should be respected. I support the uprooting of outposts via an agreement between the security establishment and the settlers. I think this is the right approach and it is better than a conflict," Netanyahu answered a woman who asked why she should send her children to the army when the government did nothing to remove illegal West Bank outposts.

"There is a double standard and hypocrisy; why don't I ever hear about the illegal construction on the road between Dimona and Arad and in the Galilee?" Netanyahu added.

One surfer asked why Netanyahu was speaking against the disengagement from Gaza when he had voted for it in 2005.

"I quit the government before the disengagement and because of it. I stood up at the moment of truth and quit. I will not lead another disengagement or any withdrawals," Netanyahu said.

When asked how would he treat the Israeli Arab sector he declared: "He who attacks the State of Israel should be punished, and he who helps it should be rewarded. We will work to promote harsher punishment of those who operate against the state. It is unacceptable that someone here identifies with terrorist organizations, and we will work against it. There are no rights without duties!"

Netanyahu also promised to invest more resources in culture, including in "establishing 50 cultural sites, museums and archeological sites. However, culture begins in education and children will not study the Nakba, but rather

PM candidates hold virtual debate. Internet surfers put questions to Netanyahu, Barak and Livni

Israel's heritage, and the education minister in my government will stand up and sing "Hatikva," Netanyahu said, in a reference to current Science, Culture and Sport Minister Ghaleb Majadle.

Asked by Daliat al-Carmel resident Einat Halebi what he planned to do about the Iranian threat, Netanyahu said, "If I am elected, this will be my first mission, handling Iranian terror nests on the outskirts of Ashkelon and Beersheba and recruiting the entire international community for this mission. Iran will not arm itself with nuclear weapons."

He promised to work to create a broad unity government, "as I should have done as a prime minister [in 1996]. If I am elected, I will turn to all the Zionist parties to form a broad unity-government. We have tremendous challenges ahead of us."

Barak was the next to enter the studio.

He said the chances for a deal that would bring Schalit home were higher following the success of Operation Cast Lead.

"We haven't forgotten Gilad, not for a single moment," Barak said. "The recent military operation in Gaza increased the possibility to complete this mission and we promise not to neglect this issue."

Barak said he hoped this would be done before the Olmert government ended its term. "For that to happen some difficult decisions are required, and I am ready to make them. I advise the government to deal less with who gets the credit for it, and to do it," he said.

Barak evaded the question of whether his Labor Party would agree to sit in a government with Israel Beiteinu, only saying that "there is a need to make a clear distinction between the majority of Israeli Arabs, who are equal citizens of Israel, and the few who undermine the country, and these are the people who should be handled."

"Lieberman and his entire ideology oppose that which we believe is right. The mission of the leadership is to bring hope and solutions, while Lieberman uses fear. A government led by us [Labor] will be strong enough to handle these challenges without Lieberman," Barak said.

Barak rejected claims that Sephardim are discriminated against.

"I think this argument belongs to a different era. My daughters were never aware if they were Sephardic or Ashkenazi, and people from Mizrahi ethnic groups have taken up significant positions. This argument is anachronistic," he said.

Barak was asked about the security situation in the South and what he planned to do if the rockets continued to hit, if only in small numbers.

"<u>Hamas</u> was beaten badly and it is shocked and stricken. We are in the course of a process that will bring quiet to the South and to Sderot. If they try us again they will suffer a serious blow. With all modesty, we will handle this issue better than the other parties. I know everyone wants to hear the bottom line, but life is more complicated than that. We have the Iranian threat before us, Syria and *Hamas*," he said.

When asked if Labor would join a government led by Netanyahu, Barak said he had told Netanyahu he should stay in the opposition, since he had done such a good job there. "I am running for the premiership, and the challenges ahead of us require responsibility and experience. I feel that our public can count on us and we can lead the state, but also be in the opposition if the need arises," Barak said.

Then came the turn of Kadima leader Tzipi Livni, who faced the toughest questions.

She said she would work to help the Gush Katif evacuees, whose lives had yet to returned to normal, more than three years after the disengagement from the Gaza Strip that she had supported.

PM candidates hold virtual debate. Internet surfers put questions to Netanyahu, Barak and Livni

"It wasn't a mistake. I made a difficult decision to uproot people from their homes, difficult but right. Imagine what would have happened if we had to conduct the military operation in Gaza when there were [Israeli] civilians living there?" she asked.

"I initiated the idea of the first communal settlement for Gush Katif's evacuees, but the government hasn't fulfilled the promise it made to the people of Gush Katif. I commit myself to advancing these issues and to restoring their lives back to what they were, but in a different place," she said.

When asked by a haredi surfer if she planned to cancel the budgets for yeshiva students, Livni said no. "But I do plan to promote legislation that rewards people who contribute to the nation via mandatory military service, for example," she said.

Livni did not rule out serving in the same government with Shas.

"I don't rule out anyone, and if Shas accepts my way, they can be part of my government. Kadima as a centrist party can bring together a variety of parties, as long as they don't try to extort me or ask me to support discrimination against <u>women</u> in the rabbinical courts," she said.

Livni also rejected a request to promote men's rights at the expense of efforts to support <u>women</u>'s rights, saying that "unfortunately, <u>women</u> are not equal to men in the Israel of 2009. I will fight to change this and to make sure the rest of the citizens of Israel are equal citizens. First and foremost, I want every woman to go out and vote, and then, I am sure, things will be better."

Livni took a hard line when asked what those Gazans who don't support *Hamas* needed to do to live normal lives.

"The residents of Gaza brought it on themselves. They elected <u>Hamas</u>. Israel needs to fight terrorism and it will continue to do so. I don't intend to reach an agreement with <u>Hamas</u>. I reach agreements with those who recognize my existence and as long as they don't get rid of terror, we will not reach an agreement. They need to denounce <u>Hamas</u>. The armed groups live among them and IDF will continue to fight them, unfortunately, even when it means that children and **women** will be hurt," she said.

Asked whether she had any confessions to make about ever using recreational drugs, Livni said no.

"It is forbidden by law," she answered a surfer's question whether she would work to legalize them, "and the last thing we need now is another challenge. We have educational and economical problems, security challenges and many social process to handle. The last thing we need is another opening for troubles."

When asked by a young Greenpeace activist what would she do to prevent the suffering of animals that are used in industry, Livni said that she herself had been a vegetarian since she was 13 and that she cared deeply for animals.

The three candidates were also asked what they would be do if they were not in political life. Netanyahu said he would be an author and that he planned to write his memoirs after he retired, many years from now. Livni said she would be doing something with youth, "for the soul," and Barak said he would be a public servant for the rest of his life.

# Graphic

3 photos: BINYAMIN NETANYAHU of the Likud, Ehud Barak of Labor, and Tzipi Livni of Kadima answer questions from Internet surfers last night. (Credit: YouTube)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Refugee numbers dipped in '08

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

June 18, 2009 Thursday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A21

Length: 441 words

Byline: BY WILLIAM C. MANN • The Associated Press

Dateline: 0

# **Body**

WASHINGTON - Fewer people sought refuge outside their homelands last year than in 2007, but the world remained an unwelcoming place for many who fled.

An annual survey of the world's refugees being published Wednesday by the Committee for Refugees and Immigrants reported horrors from Turkey's jails to Egypt's desert, as well as in Kenya, South Africa, Malaysia and Gaza:

- Egypt: Border guards shot and killed more than 30 African migrants trying to cross Egypt's mountainous Sinai peninsula to reach Israel. One victim was an Eritrean woman traveling with her daughters, 8 and 10 years old. The Egyptian government has not investigated the shootings.
- Malaysia: Border officials sold people who were being deported to criminal gangs. The men often ended up on fishing boats, the **women** in brothels.
- Turkey: The country incarcerates and deports refugees. It tried to deport into Iraq 42 Iraqis and 18 Syrians and Iranians. The Iraq authorities accepted only their countrymen, and when Turkish officials forced the others to try to swim to Iraq, four drowned.
- Thailand: The navy intercepted boats reportedly carrying 992 ethnic Rohingya from Myanmar. Sailors beat and kicked the weak and hungry refugees, forced them back into their rickety boats, towed them to sea, then cut them loose without engines and little food and water. Indonesian authorities saved 450 off the coast of Aceh. The other 542 still are missing.
- South Africa: Raging mobs of poor South Africans swarmed into refugee camps in May and beat and set on fire the occupants. Mobs killed at least 62, injured 670 and drove away 80,000.
- Kenya: Authorities have tried since late 2007 to keep refugees from Kenya's lawless neighbor, Somalia, out of their country. They have pushed back hundreds but beat and then demanded bribes of Somalis caught trying to reach a major refugee camp complex in the area.

## Refugee numbers dipped in '08

- Israel: The country responded to <u>Hamas</u> rockets from the Gaza Strip with "Operation Cast Lead," which "killed more than 1,400 Palestinians and drove 90,000 from their homes." <u>Hamas</u> continued its rocket attacks, eventually killing three Israelis and wounding 200.

The survey's list of "Best and Worst Places for Refugees" found that Brazil, Costa Rica and Ecuador ranked among the best because they have streamlined their laws and made exceptions to make the lives of refugees more like those of their citizens.

In all, the world had a 3 percent drop in the number of new refugees in 2008, from 14 million to 13.6 million. That was due largely to a steep reduction in the number of Iraqis leaving their country as the U.S.-led war tapered off. In 2007 half a million Iraqis fled.

Load-Date: June 19, 2009



# Eat up, National Post tells LTTE hunger strikers

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka) April 19, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 715 words

Dateline: Colombo

# **Body**

Colombo, April 19 -- The following is the full text of an editorial published by Canada's National Post Thursday:

The ongoing Parliament Hill protests and hunger strikes by Tamil Canadians are meant to stir our lawmakers into action against Sri Lanka, whose government is waging a successful military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), better known as the Tamil Tigers. If anything, however, the protests have had the opposite effect: Just as radical Canadian Muslims attract disgust when they raise the flags of Hezbollah or *Hamas*, so too do Tamils who fly the flag the of the LTTE, a terrorist insurgency that once controlled much of Sri Lanka. What worse, the protesters have flown the LTTE flag alongside the Canadian flag an insult to our own country. As we have written several times before, we are not without sympathy for the cause of the Tamil people, many of whom have been treated as second-class citizens by the Sinhalese-dominated government in Colombo.

Indeed, the Tamils would have had a rightful claim to the world sympathy if the LTTE, which fights for an independent Tamil homeland, hadn't itself adopted such inhumane tactics since its formation in the 1980s. The Tigers perfected the tactic of suicide bombing, deploying explosive-wrapped killers by the dozens even before the practice had caught on in the Arab world. The LTTE has also press-ganged children as young as 10 into military service and, following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, they cleared out orphanages for foot soldiers and interdicted relief supplies to feed their adult insurgents and fund terror campaign against the Sri Lankan government. The sight of this group flags flying in Canada is nothing short of revolting. Canada is home to the largest expatriate Tamil community in the world. Despite the Conservative government decision to declare the LTTE a terrorist organization in 2006, many of the most prominent Tamil groups in Canada remain fronts for the Tigers. Much of the money for the LTTE terror campaign has been extorted from Tamil Canadians, who have faced harassment if they show insufficient enthusiasm for the Tigers. Family members back home in Sri Lanka have even been held hostage until Tamils here pay hefty donations. The reason that Tiger supporters seem so desperate now is that, after nearly 17 months of bloody fighting, Sri Lankan troops have the few hundred remaining Tiger fighters pinned down inside a few square kilometres in northeast Sri Lanka including, possibly, the group sociopathic leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. The only thing preventing Sri Lankan troops from finishing off the Tigers is the presence of thousands of Tamil civilians, whom the Tigers are using as human shields. Like *Hamas* in Gaza, cowardly LTTE fighters are hiding behind the women and children they claim to be protecting. (In fact, the Tigers are actually killing civilians who try to flee the combat area something even *Hamas* never did on a large scale during the Gaza combat.) The Tigers goal appears to be saving itself and we would not be surprised if Pirapaharan staged his own massacre of Tamils as a means to discredit Colombo and force a ceasefire that allowed him to escape. The Ottawa protesters and others in Sydney, Australia insist the Colombo government is readying a genocide against Tamils. Many journalists are even getting e-mails from Tiger supporters claiming that the Sri Lankan army is preparing to use chemical weapons. This is preposterous: If government troops truly wanted to stage a genocide, they could have done so weeks ago. The only reason that the siege has drawn out this long is that Sri Lanka army wishes to avoid

## Eat up, National Post tells LTTE hunger strikers

unnecessary slaughter. Indeed, the Tamils who have managed to escape the Tiger area report being treated better by Sri Lankan troops than they were by the LTTE. If the Tiger supporters in Ottawa truly had the best interests of innocent Tamils at heart, they would be pleading with the Tigers themselves to release their human shields, not declaring their undying support for a terror organization. Our advice to the Ottawa hunger strikers is: Eat up. To the extent anyone is listening to your message, it only serves to disgrace your members. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at <a href="httsyndication@hindustantimes.com">httsyndication@hindustantimes.com</a>

Load-Date: April 20, 2009



# Evil's insidious nature

The Jerusalem Post March 13, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

**Length:** 724 words **Highlight:** Editorial

# **Body**

Yesterday in Manhattan, United States District Judge Denny Chin accepted Bernard Madoff's guilty plea on 11 felony charges: securities fraud, investment adviser fraud, mail fraud, wire fraud, three counts of money laundering, false statements, perjury, false filings with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, and theft from an employee benefits plan. There was no plea bargain. He faces 150 years in prison.

- \* On Wednesday, in the southern German town of Winneden, 17-year-old Tim Kretschmer went on a three-hour rampage that took him from his old high school to the center of a nearby town, leaving a trail of 15 dead, mostly **women** and girls. Cornered by police, Kretschmer committed suicide. German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the slaughter as "incomprehensible."
- \* Also in Germany, prosecutors have charged retired Ohio auto worker John Demjanjuk with more than 29,000 counts of accessory to murder for his actions at the Sobibor death camp. To face justice, however, the 88-year- old will have to be extradited from US.
- \* "If you had met him two days ago, you would have thought he was an average 28-year-old young man," said an acquaintance of Michael McLendon, who went berserk and killed his mother and nine others in southern Alabama, just hours before Kretschmer's rampage across the ocean.

Wherever one looks, evil - in various guises - is present: From Ireland, where Catholic extremists are killing again; to Mexico, where more than 6,000 people were slaughtered last year in the drug war; to Somalia, where pirates rule the seacoast; to Equador, which is on the road to becoming a partly-owned subsidiary of Iran in return in for power plants and hundreds of millions of dollars in loans. Move on to Iraq, where a suicide bomber killed 33 tribal leaders who were on a reconciliation walk through a market.

Closer to home, an elderly Afula couple, he a cancer- ridden Holocaust survivor, she infirm, were this week viciously beaten in their apartment by robbers.

EVIL. The term must not be bandied about lightly or irresponsibly. Yet the real thing needs to be recognized and faced down, and not merely relegated to the fields of forensic psychiatry, philosophy or theology. Because evil is so insidious, it has a way of manipulating even that which is pure to serve its nefarious ends. Thus policymakers, and the informed public, need to be alert to its presence.

Take how <u>Hamas</u>, whose genocidal intentions toward the Jewish state make it evil, is benefiting from the pressure campaign being waged (legitimately and understandably) by the Schalit family and (less altruistically) by much of the local media and various politicians, some of them transparently self-serving. As a consequence, perhaps, Ofer

#### Evil's insidious nature

Dekel, the prime minister's aide charged with negotiating Gilad's freedom, has reportedly proposed releasing 210 of the terrorists "with blood on their hands" that <u>Hamas</u> is demanding. As far as we know, the "worst of the worst" have not been included - yet.

Gilad's desperately anguished parents, Noam and Aviva, who have set up a protest tent near the prime minister's residence, fear that the next government's negotiating position will be less malleable than Olmert's. They and their supporters have intensified pressure on Olmert to unconditionally free each and every terrorist on <u>Hamas</u>'s wish list. President Shimon Peres and even Aliza Olmert have given Gilad's parents succor.

Across the street, another protest tent had folded up for lack of interest.

"We came to Jerusalem to let our voices be heard," said Ron Karman, whose 17-year-old daughter, Tal, was one of 17 fatalities of the March 5, 2003 bombing of Egged bus No. 37 in Haifa. "When we were sitting shiva, the politicians made all sorts of promises. They said their doors would always be open to us. We found those doors [of politicians and the media] closed."

Karman was joined by Yossi Mandelevich, whose boy, Yuval, 13, was on the same bus; and by Yossi Zur, whose son, Asaf, 17, was also killed there. The fathers said that they opposed the release of prisoners with blood on their hands - for the sake of other people's children.

In the waning days of the Olmert government, there is a very real danger that an emotionally co-opted public will, with the purest of intentions, pressure a discredited premier to hand evil another appetite-whetting victory.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Introverted Israelis always see themselves as victims

Canberra Times (Australia)
January 23, 2009 Friday
Final Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 25 Length: 748 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

# **Body**

Iwas watching the superb animated documentary Waltz with Bashir about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. It culminates in the massacre of some 1700 Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in south Beirut by Christian militiamen introduced there by the Israeli army, which observed the butchery from close range. In the last few minutes, the film switches from animation to graphic news footage showing Palestinian <u>women</u> screaming with grief and horror as they discover the bullet- riddled bodies of their families. Then, just behind the <u>women</u>, I saw myself walking with a small group of journalists who had arrived in the camp soon after the killings had stopped. The film is about how the director, Ari Folman, who knew he was at Sabra and Chatila as an Israeli soldier, tried to discover both why he had repressed all memory of what happened to him and the degree of Israeli complicity in the massacre. Walking out of the cinema, I realised that I had largely repressed my own memories of that ghastly day. I could not even find a clipping in old scrapbooks of the article I had written about what I had seen for the Financial Times, for whom I then worked.

Even now my memory is hazy and episodic, though I can clearly recall the sickly sweet smell of bodies beginning to decompose, the flies clustering around the eyes of the dead <u>women</u> and children, and the blood-smeared limbs and heads sticking out of banks of brown earth heaped up by bulldozers in a half- hearted attempt to bury the corpses. Soon after seeing Waltz with Bashir I saw TV pictures of the broken bodies of the Palestinians killed by Israeli bombs and shells in Gaza during the 22-day bombardment. At first I thought that little had changed since Sabra and Chatila.

Once again there were the same tired and offensive excuses that Israel was somehow not to blame. <u>Hamas</u> was using civilians as human shields, and in any case this argument produced more furtively two-thirds of people in Gaza had voted for <u>Hamas</u> so they deserved whatever happened to them. But on returning to Jerusalem 10 years after I was stationed here as the Independent's correspondent between 1995 and 1999 I find that Israel has changed significantly for the worse. There is far less dissent than there used to be and such dissent is more often treated as disloyalty. Israeli society was always introverted, but these days it reminds me more than ever of the Unionists in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s or the Lebanese Christians in the 1970s. Like Israel, both were communities with a highly developed siege mentality, which led them always to see themselves as victims even when they were killing other people.

There were no regrets or even knowledge of what they inflicted on others and therefore any retaliation by the other side appeared as unprovoked aggression inspired by unreasoning hate. At Sabra and Chatila the first journalist to find out about the massacre was an Israeli and he desperately tried to get it stopped.

### Introverted Israelis always see themselves as victims

This would not happen today because Israeli journalists, along with all foreign journalists, were banned from entering Gaza before the Israeli bombardment started.

This has made it far easier for the Government to sell the official line about what a great success the operation has been. No one believes propaganda so much as the propagandist, so Israel's view of the outside world is increasingly detached from reality.

One academic was quoted as saying that Arabs took all their views about what was happening in Israel from what Israelis said about themselves.

So if Israelis said they had won in Gaza, unlike Lebanon in 2006, Arabs would believe this and Israeli deterrence would thereby be magically restored. Intolerance of dissent has grown, and may soon get a great deal worse.

Benjamin Netanyahu, who helped bury the Oslo accords with the Palestinians when he was last prime minister from 1996 to 1999, is likely to win the Israeli election on February 10. The only issue still in doubt is the extent of the gains of the extreme right. The views of these were on display this week as Avigdor Lieberman, the chairman of the Ysrael Beitenu party, which, according to the polls, will do particularly well in the election, was supporting the disqualification of two Israeli Arab parties from standing in the election.

"For the first time we are examining the boundary between loyalty and disloyalty," he threatened their representatives. "We'll deal with you like we dealt with *Hamas*."

Independent

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



# Balad candidate could become first woman MK from Arab party. 'A woman represents the struggle of Arab society just as the man represents it'

# The Jerusalem Post February 10, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 678 words

Byline: BRENDA GAZZAR

# **Body**

Haneen Zoubi of Nazareth could well become the first Arab-Israeli woman to serve in the Knesset as a representative of an Arab party.

Zoubi is number three on Balad's list and recent polls have said that the Arab nationalist party will earn three seats in Tuesday's general elections, as it did in 2006.

The prospect of her election is something the 39-year- old Zoubi says she does not take lightly.

"I don't believe that a woman should only represent <u>women</u>'s issues," she told The Jerusalem Post on Monday in a telephone interview. "A woman represents the struggle of Arab society just as the Arab man represents it, the struggle against the racist politics or regime in Israel, against the distortion of the Arab identity, the confiscation of a person's Palestinian identity and the land of the Palestinian people, and the rights of the Palestinian people inside Israel."

Another Arab-Israeli woman, Asma'a Agbariya-Zahalka, is leading a small Arab-Jewish party called Da'am. However, as in previous elections, the party is not expected to cross the threshold necessary for entering the Knesset.

The only Arab-Israeli woman currently serving in parliament, Labor's Nadia Hilou, is almost certain to be leaving. She holds her party's 30th spot and, according to polls, lacks a realistic chance of retaining her seat.

Hilou said she would have placed 14th - and therefore likely enter the Knesset - had it not been for Labor's quota policy, which reserves certain spots for districts and sectors. She said she chose to run on Labor's national list because she wanted to be elected on her own merits rather than vie for a seat reserved for Arabs.

Hilou told the Post on Sunday that her rank "had nothing to do" with her legislative performance in the outgoing Knesset.

"One of the factors was the budget and the amount of money that flowed from other candidates and deals that were made that pushed me aside," she said.

Only two Arab-Israeli <u>women</u> - Hilou and Hussniya Jabara of Meretz - have served in the Knesset as members of Zionist-Jewish parties. Jabara was the first, serving from 1999 to 2003.

Balad candidate could become first woman MK from Arab party. 'A woman represents the struggle of Arab society just as the man represents it'

Zoubi served as the director of the Nazareth-based I'lam Media Center for Arab Palestinians in Israel for five years before resigning two months ago to focus on her political career. She said that as a member of Balad, she was struggling not only to establish a democratic regime in Israel, but to achieve rights for <u>women</u> in Arab society.

"The opportunities for political mobilization for Palestinians, in a general way, both for <u>women</u> and men, are few," she said. "We don't have a state, we don't have state institutions or [our own] parliament.... We live in a state that recognizes itself as a state of the Jews."

In addition, Zoubi said, due to the community's social values, it is more difficult for an Arab woman in Israel to reach a position of authority or decision-making than it is for an Arab man.

If elected, she said she would work to raise the employment rate of Arab women in Israel.

"The most important factor for modernization and self- autonomy of the Palestinian woman is her economic autonomy," she said.

Less than 19 percent of Arab-Israeli <u>women</u> participate in the labor force, while the rate is 54% for all Israeli <u>women</u>, according to the Herzliya-based Center for Jewish- Arab Economic Development.

Concerning Israel's recent military operation in Gaza, Zoubi said that the conflict is not between Israel and <u>Hamas</u>, but between Israel and the Palestinian people.

"The Israeli war is against the Palestinian struggle, against their freedom and their sovereignty; it is a war against the Palestinian struggle to end the occupation and to end the siege on Gaza," she said.

She added that since <u>Hamas</u> had been chosen democratically by the Palestinian people in the 2006 legislative elections, the Islamist movement represented the will of the Palestinian people and "by fighting <u>Hamas</u>, Israel is fighting the will of the Palestinian people."

While she is "against killing civilians," Zoubi believes it is legitimate for an occupied people to fight against occupation.

# Graphic

Photo: Haneen Zoubi (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# In Israel, detachment from reality is now the norm

The Independent (London)
January 22, 2009 Thursday
First Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. 30

Length: 744 words

Byline: Patrick Cockburn

# **Body**

I WAS watching the superb animated documentary Waltz with Bashir about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. It culminates in the massacre of some 1,700 Palestinians in the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in south Beirut by Christian militiamen introduced there by the Israeli army which observed the butchery from close range.

In the last few minutes the film switches from animation to graphic news footage showing Palestinian <u>women</u> screaming with grief and horror as they discover the bullet-riddled bodies of their families. Then, just behind the <u>women</u>, I saw myself walking with a small group of journalists who had arrived in the camp soon after the killings had stopped.

The film is about how the director, Ari Folman, who knew he was at Sabra and Chatila as an Israeli soldier, tried to discover both why he had repressed all memory of what happened to him and the degree of Israeli complicity in the massacre.

Walking out of the cinema, I realised that I had largely rep-ressed my own memories of that ghastly day. I could not even find a clipping in old scrapbooks of the article I had written about what I had seen for the Financial Times for whom I then worked. Even now my memory is hazy and episodic, though I can clearly recall the sickly sweet smell of bodies beginning to decompose, the flies clustering around the eyes of the dead <u>women</u> and children, and the blood-smeared limbs and heads sticking out of banks of brown earth heaped up by bulldozers in a half-hearted attempt to bury the corpses.

Soon after seeing Waltz with Bashir I saw TV pictures of the broken bodies of the Palestinians killed by Israeli bombs and shells in Gaza during the 22-day bombardment. At first I thought that little had changed since Sabra and Chatila. Once again there were the same tired and offensive excuses that Israel was somehow not to blame. **Hamas** was using civilians as human shields, and in any case - this argument produced more furtively - two-thirds of people in Gaza had voted for **Hamas** so they deserved whatever happened to them.

But on returning to Jerusalem 10 years after I was stationed here as The Independent's correspondent between 1995 and 1999 I find that Israel has changed significantly for the worse. There is far less dissent than there used to be and such dissent is more often treated as disloyalty.

#### In Israel, detachment from reality is now the norm

Israeli society was always introverted but these days it reminds me more than ever of the Unionists in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s or the Lebanese Christians in the 1970s. Like Israel, both were communities with a highly developed siege mentality which led them always to see themselves as victims even when they were killing other people. There were no regrets or even knowledge of what they inflicted on others and therefore any retaliation by the other side appeared as unprovoked aggression inspired by unreasoning hate.

At Sabra and Chatila the first journalist to find out about the massacre was an Israeli and he desperately tried to get it stopped. This would not happen today because Israeli journalists, along with all foreign journalists, were banned from entering Gaza before the Israeli bombardment started. This has made it far easier for the government to sell the official line about what a great success the operation has been.

Nobody believes propaganda so much as the propagandist so Israel's view of the outside world is increasingly detached from reality. One academic was quoted as saying that Arabs took all their views about was happening in Israel from what Israelis said about themselves. So if Israelis said they had won in Gaza, unlike Lebanon in 2006, Arabs would believe this and Israeli deterrence would thereby be magically restored.

Intolerance of dissent has grown and may soon get a great deal worse. Benjamin Netanyahu, who helped bury the Oslo accords with the Palestinians when he was last prime minister from 1996 to 1999, is likely to win the Israeli election on 10 February. The only issue still in doubt is the extent of the gains of the extreme right.

The views of these were on display this week as Avigdor Lieberman, the chairman of the Ysrael Beitenu party, which, according to the polls will do particularly well in the election, was supporting the disqualification of two Israeli Arab parties from standing in the election. "For the first time we are examining the boundary between loyalty and disloyalty," he threatened their representatives. "We'll deal with you like we dealt with *Hamas*."

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



# Foul play in the Gulf

The Jerusalem Post February 20, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

**Length:** 754 words **Highlight:** Editorial

# **Body**

In yet another egregious instance of Arab men cutting off their noses to spite their faces, copies of the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue featuring Israel's stunning Bar Refaeli on the cover have been removed from Dubai magazine racks.

And, after intense pressure from the Association of Tennis Professionals, Dubai has reluctantly granted an entry visa to Andy Ram to play in next week's Barclays Dubai Tennis Championships - after barring Shahar Pe'er from playing in the *Women*'s Tennis Association tournament, affecting her earnings, if not her ranking.

International response to such anti-Israelism by the United Arab Emirates (of which Dubai is the commercial center and a self-governing city-state) has been understated. The Washington Post and Wall Street Journal were critical, and the Tennis Channel cancelled plans to broadcast the Dubai <u>women</u>'s tournament. Pe'er's fellow players, hearing about her exclusion at the 11th hour, were sympathetic but decided to go ahead and compete rather than forfeit millions of dollars in sponsors' support.

Sadly, anti-Israel frenzy has reached such proportions that in Malmo, Sweden, where Muslim immigrants comprise 25 percent of the population, the Davis Cup tennis first round tie against Israel next month will be played in an empty stadium.

Back in the UAE, the first ever "Emirates Airline International Festival of Literature," set for next week, is becoming a real page-turner owing to official censorship of Geraldine Bedell's novel The Gulf Between Us featuring a homosexual relationship set in a fictional Gulf emirate.

The Emirates, where fewer than 20 percent of the 4.4 million residents are citizens, likes to be perceived as a tolerant, pro-Western oasis. And, to be fair, the Saudi- controlled, Dubai-based satellite news channel Al-Arabiya makes a stab at modifying Al-Jazeera's radicalism. Still, public antagonism toward Israel and Western values is getting ever harder to cloak.

QATAR plays an even more duplicitous game, presenting itself as cosmopolitan while shilling for the Islamists. Back in 1996, it hosted the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and seemed to be moving incrementally toward staking out a moderate position in Arab affairs. Indeed, as late as last year, Qatar allowed Pe'er to play in a WTA Tour tournament.

But at this week's three-day annual US-Islamic World Forum in Doha, co-hosted with the Brookings Institution's Saban Center, some Arab participants echoed a refrain commonly heard from Indonesia - where US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton just visited - to the Gulf States: If the US really wants to move closer to the Arab world, it will

### Foul play in the Gulf

have to abandon its "near-blind" support for Israel and "overcome the veto power" of the Zionists on Washington's decision-making.

Qatar, which has the highest per-capita income in the world, has lately adopted a radically pro-<u>Hamas</u> foreign policy; in January, it suspended low-level diplomatic ties with Israel. Controlled by the family of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Qatar has the peculiar distinction of being 75-percent male thanks to its outsized expatriate workforce.

Sheikh Hamad is the main financial backer of the Doha- based Al-Jazeera. While Al-Jazeera's English-language website and television take a mild tone, the main, Arabic, enterprise aligns itself with the <u>Hamas</u>-Iran-Syria-Hizbullah bloc. For instance, it identifies those killed in the Gaza fighting as shahids. The Muslim Brotherhood has long been a presence in Qatar, and Al-Jazeera serves as a popular, attractive platform for spreading its extremist views throughout the region.

During Operation Cast Lead, Qatar hosted a meeting of radical Arab states, plus Iran, to mobilize support for <u>Hamas</u> and also pledged millions of dollars for Gaza's reconstruction. The al-Thani family also played a key role in facilitating Hizbullah's incremental ascendency in Lebanon.

But Qatar is shrewd enough to hedge its bets by hosting bases of the US military's Central Command, which oversees American operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The State Department considers both Qatar and the UAE - two of the world's richest countries - as friendly states.

HOW HAS Qatar, which promotes the Muslim Brotherhood and bankrolls the poisonous al-Jazeera station, succeeded in maintaining its image as a friend of the West? And how is Dubai, with its on-off boycott of Israel, able to sustain its own moderate image?

The answer is money. Lots of it. To win friends, influence people, and manipulate perceptions.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Esau and Ishmael allied

The Jerusalem Post April 10, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 10

Length: 1171 words

**Byline: JONATHAN ROSENBLUM** 

Highlight: Think Again

# **Body**

Jewish eschatology contains numerous references to an alliance between Esau (Rome, the West) and his father-in-law Ishmael (Islam) against the Jewish people toward the end of history. Frankly, I've always had a hard time imaging such an alliance between clashing civilizations. Perhaps my mistake lay in imagining a sort of updated Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

What we are witnessing instead today is Western appeasement and submission to Islam. In both the United States and Western Europe an effective double-standard has been carved out for Islam. Scorn for traditional religions and their adherents is fine, even praiseworthy, as long as it is confined to Judaism or Christianity. But toward Islam, we must show respect.

The lesson that Europeans learned from the Danish cartoons episode was that it is not wise to rile Muslims. Noting Islam's unlovely propensity for producing adherents eager to kill in its name inevitably triggers murderous riots that prove the point being protested.

Britain's recent refusal to permit Dutch parliamentarian Geerts Wilder into the country and the criminal prosecution against him in his own country provide a classic example of anticipatory compliance. The fear that showing of Wilder's movie Fitna, consisting primarily of quotes from the Koran, to a group of British parliamentarians would trigger riots trumped traditional Anglo-Saxon support for freedom of thought and argument.

THE WEST'S astounding passivity in the face of Iran's racing nuclear program is the most consequential form of appearsement. In three months in office, the Obama administration's sole initiative on the Iranian front has been a video from President Barack Obama full of paeans to the great Persian culture for which he received mostly spittle in return.

By contrast, the administration has been hyperactive on the Palestinian-Israeli front. The president's first foreign policy initiative was to appoint a special Mideast envoy, who has already visited the region several times. The president and his secretary of state constantly stress the urgency of the "two-state solution" and the unsustainability of the status quo. The Arab-Israeli conflict, we keep hearing from Washington, holds the key to all Middle East conundrums.

That inversion of priorities makes no logical sense. The possession of nuclear weapons by an ideologically expansionist power, sitting atop or adjacent to a large percentage of the world's oil supply, and serving as a patron of terrorist groups around the world, would permanently change the world in ways too painful to contemplate. Sunni

#### Esau and Ishmael allied

leaders know this and repeatedly told Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that Iran constitutes a far bigger threat to regional stability than Israel.

On the other hand, an imposed "two-state solution" would change little in the Middle East. Arab countries would continue to be plagued by high rates of illiteracy, second-class citizenship for <u>women</u>, lack of scientific or technological training - the absence of civil liberties even in the unlikely event of peace with the Palestinians. The only consequence of such a "solution," particularly if it left Israel uninhabitable after a <u>Hamas</u> takeover of the West Bank, would be to strengthen the narrative of Islamic ascendancy and whet the jihadist appetite.

Few propositions are so easily refuted as the centrality of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the multiple deformations in the Arab world. Not one of the major bloodlettings in the region is remotely attributable to Israel: the Iraq-Iran War, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and its aftermath, civil wars in Lebanon, Iraq and Algeria, the slaughter of 20,000 Syrian citizens in Homa.

Finally, resolute Western action with respect to Iran might actually achieve something. Iran's economy is highly vulnerable, particularly with oil prices low. Yet rather than exploit Iran's economic weakness and lack of petroleum refining capacity, major European firms have signed billion dollar deals to lessen that vulnerability by helping Iran develop its refining capacity.

But there is scant hope of progress on the Palestinian front, particularly if peace, not just signed agreements, is the goal. "Moderate" Muhammad Dahlan, carefully cultivated by the United States for more than a decade, now admits that Fatah never recognized Israel's right to exist. *Hamas*, for its part, repeats over and over again that it will never recognize Israel in any borders. The Palestinian Authority continues to honor as heroes perpetrators of massacres of Jewish civilians. Billions of dollars of international aid continues to go to maintaining multiple security forces and feathering the nest eggs of Palestinian officials rather than to building a decent society. And from an Israeli point of view, as long as rockets continue to fall from every area from which we withdraw, there is no chance of further withdrawals.

WESTERN SUBMISSION and passivity are only part of the story. Ever larger segments of elite and left-wing Western opinion have signed on to *Hamas*'s exterminationist agenda. Comparisons of Israel to Nazi Germany are so commonplace in European discourse that they no longer even shock. Oliphant's cartoon of a jackbooted Israel has now brought this obscenity to the mainstream American press.

Operation Cast Lead is said to have brought Israel's international standing to a new nadir. Responding to their accusers, Israelis ask: What other country in the world would have tolerated three years of rockets shot from across the border at its civilian population? How would you have brought those missiles to a halt in a more "gentle" fashion than Israel has? Why are you obsessed with the deaths of 300 civilians in Gaza brought about by the policies of their duly elected leaders (think of the civilian population of Germany under Hitler), but so oblivious to the killings of hundreds of thousands of black Muslims in Sudan.

Very good questions to be sure, and not ones to which there are any answers. But their effectiveness depends on the assumption that the one being asked accepts Israel's right to exist at all. Europeans view our very presence in this place as the last vestige of Western colonialism.

On a tour of US college campuses, The Jerusalem Post's Khaled Abu Toameh found more support for <u>Hamas</u> among non-Muslim professors and students than exists in Ramallah. "We should not be surprised," he wrote, "if the next generation of jihadists comes... from university campuses across the United States." The noose, then, is tightening around Israel's neck as a result of both Western submission and acquiescence to raging Islam. All this was predicted long ago.

What can we do? We have just experienced again the Seder night - leil shimurim. One explanation of the language of shmira is to anticipate and look forward to something. On the Seder night, God not only guards us, He looks forward and anticipates His final redemption of the Jewish people from the clutches of Esau and Ishmael. All He awaits is some sign from us of our own eager anticipation.

#### Esau and Ishmael allied

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



### World - Palestinian kids 'pay price of occupation'

Morning Star
March 6, 2009 Friday

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Length: 451 words

Byline: Our Foreign Desk

### **Body**

Medical experts warned yesterday that Israel's siege of Gaza and occupation of the West Bank is hitting children's health hard.

The research, published in a special issue of respected British medical journal The Lancet, follows a two-year collaboration between Palestinian and international researchers along with the World Health Organisation and UN agencies.

Doctors found that malnutrition is on the rise in the blockaded Gaza Strip, leading to an increase in the rate of stunted growth in children from about 8 per cent in 1996 to 13 per cent in 2006.

In parts of Gaza, malnutrition is so severe that nearly 30 per cent of children have stunted growth.

Researchers found disparities between the health of Palestinians and other people in the Middle East. In Gaza, experts estimated that there were about 27 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006.

In contrast, there were about four deaths per 1,000 births in Israel.

The research also showed that after decades of improvement infant-mortality rates in Gaza and the West Bank have began to plateau in the 1990s.

Between 1990 and 2005, the territories had the smallest reduction in death rates in children under five, a 2 per cent drop.

By comparison, death rates in children under five in Egypt dropped by 70 per cent and by nearly 50 per cent in Iraq.

Researchers said that Israel's checkpoints in the occupied territories caused particular problems.

Researchers quoted 69 cases of Palestinian <u>women</u> giving birth at Israeli checkpoints between 2000 and 2006 and said that 10 per cent of <u>women</u> in labour had been delayed for two to four hours en route to hospital.

And efforts to tackle chronic conditions like cancer and heart disease were hampered by the "state of perpetual limbo on the national economy, strategic planning, health-care policy formulation and national priority setting."

It concluded that the "best-case scenario" for improving the situation "would include establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state."

#### World - Palestinian kids 'pay price of occupation'

Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev called the Lancet study "propaganda in the guise of a medical report," he said, insisting that Tel Aviv was not to blame for Gaza's high death rates.

"How much of this is because of <u>Hamas</u>'s regime. Instead of investing in public health, they've invested in violence," Mr Regev charged.

But Lancet editor Richard Horton noted that "steep inequities in health between the West Bank and Gaza are now visible - inequities that began to appear long before *Hamas* won elections in 2006."

- The British Viva Palestina solidarity convoy crossed the Libyan border into Egypt yesterday, the last stop before reaching Gaza.

The convoy carrying medicine, food, and toys has already crossed France, Spain and north Africa.

Load-Date: March 6, 2009



### Many truths, one secret

The Jerusalem Post January 30, 2009 Friday

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Section: BOOKS; Pg. 28

Length: 663 words

**Byline: ILANA TEITELBAUM** 

Highlight: Matt Rees's third detective novel is another warts- and-all depiction of Palestinian culture

### **Body**

The Samaritan's Secret By Matt Beynon Rees. Soho Crime 288 pages; \$24

Scandal, violence, political intrigue and a lavish <u>Hamas</u> wedding are just some of the elements that make this journey to Nablus one to remember. After his exploration of the blasted, blighted wasteland of Gaza in A Grave in Gaza, Omar Yussef is back to solve another mystery, one that begins with a murder but will end up concerning the fate of the entire Palestinian people.

The schoolteacher-turned-detective is once again spurred by his conscience - if not by self-preservation - to investigate the grisly torture and murder of a Samaritan. And once again, the author's poetic turn of phrase reminds us that the dark alleys and twisting tunnels of Nablus are symbolic of a dark corruption at its heart.

What seems at first like a simple murder case soon spirals outward to include the explosive violence between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah and the financial future of the Palestinians. In a turn of events that might seem implausible to some, it is revealed that international aid money to the Palestinians will be cut off unless the hundreds of millions of dollars stolen by Yasser Arafat are found. (Of interest is that Arafat's name is never once mentioned in this book instead he is constantly referred to as "the Old Man.")

In the end, the mystery that begins with the discovery of a corpse on a lonely hilltop in the village of the Samaritans becomes international in scope, before again circling back to the tensions and traditions that lie at the heart of Palestinian society. And at every step, the dangerous secret that Omar Yussef is about to discover puts his life in jeopardy.

Each of Matt Rees's Omar Yussef mysteries has been as much a cultural immersion as a detective story, and The Samaritan's Secret is no exception: The Samaritan religion and culture will be as much a mystery to most readers as the murder itself, with its ancient ceremonies, revered and priceless Abisha Scroll and unexpected fragments of Judaism.

Less remote but equally exotic to many readers are the intricacies of Palestinian culture, from the deadly rivalry between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah to the social customs and cuisine. This is not a politically correct, sanitized version of Palestinian culture - it is a depiction that includes warts and all: from the blatant declaration by one character that "in our society, <u>women</u> are worth less" to a casual acknowledgment of the honor killings that occur when <u>women</u> "stain" the honor of their families.

#### Many truths, one secret

Yussef himself is a moderate with more enlightened views of <u>women</u>, a fact at least partly attributed to his extensive education. In this novel his family accompanies him to Nablus, and his relationships with them are a reflection of the tensions that intertwine within the culture: His favorite grandchild is a girl, Nadia, who is expected by everyone else to be of little consequence, and his son Zuheir is developing religious leanings that Yussef fears may be those of a fanatic.

At the same time, his best friend, Khamis Zeydan, has committed many murders at the command of Fatah. Thus Yussef continually walks a delicate balance between a deep attachment to his own society and a propensity to more liberal values, acting as a bridge for the Western reader between our culture and his own.

But the novel is not only a cultural immersion, rather it's a deeply sensory immersion as well: The reader will clearly see the complex architecture of Nablus and its alleyways, hear the gunfire resounding within the tunnels, smell the pervasive odors and taste the different Palestinian dishes simmering on restaurant stoves. The dialogue is rich in metaphor and with a subtly different rhythm that bespeaks authenticity. These are not Englishmen in keffiyehs. The shifts from English dialogue to Arabic are noticeable without being caricatured in any way.

To read this book, then, is to savor a rich experience of the darkest corners of Nablus, without having to actually enter the line of fire.

### **Graphic**

Photo: Samaritans walk to a holy site on Mount Gerizim near Nablus, for their annual Succot pilgrimage. The novel unravels the mystery of the ancient religion. (Credit: Illustrative photo: AP; Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# World - Amnesty calls for Israel arms embargo

Morning Star February 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 467 words

Byline: Our Foreign Desk

### **Body**

Amnesty International called on the UN to enforce an arms embargo on Israel yesterday as it published a new report detailing Tel Aviv's use of devastating US weaponry during the Gaza onslaught.

Amnesty researchers who recently visited the besieged enclave found fragments and components from munitions used by the Israeli army, including many that are US-made, littering school playgrounds and in hospitals and people's homes.

These comprised artillery and tank shells, including flechettes, remnants from Hellfire and other airborne missiles and large F-16 delivered bombs, as well as still-smouldering, highly incendiary white phosphorus remains from US-made shells.

They also found remnants of a new type of missile, seemingly launched from unmanned drones, which explodes large numbers of tiny sharp-edged metal cubes, each between 2mm and 4mm square in size.

This lethal, purpose-made shrapnel had penetrated thick metal doors and was embedded deep in concrete walls.

Amnesty alleges that Palestinian civilians killed by this weapon include a 13-year-old girl who was asleep in bed, two young <u>women</u> on their way to a shelter in search of safety, a 13-year-old boy on his bicycle, eight secondary school students waiting for a school bus and an entire family which was sitting in the courtyard of their home.

Amnesty's 38-page report Fuelling conflict: foreign arms supplies to Israel/Gaza points out that the US has been by far the major supplier of conventional arms to Israel for years.

Under a 10-year agreement that will end in 2017, Washington is due to provide \$30 billion in military aid to Israel, a 25 per cent increase compared to the period preceding the Bush administration.

Amnesty International Middle East and North Africa programme director Malcolm Smart said: "The US has a particular obligation to stop any supply that contributes to gross violations of the laws of war and of human rights.

"To a large extent, Israel's military offensive in Gaza was carried out with weapons, munitions and military equipment supplied by the US and paid for with US taxpayers' money," Mr Smart observed.

He challenged the Obama administration to "immediately suspend US military aid to Israel."

Amnesty also accused <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian resistance groups of committing war crimes by using weapons supplied from abroad to carry out attacks on civilians.

#### World - Amnesty calls for Israel arms embargo

In southern Israel, Amnesty investigators saw the remains of Qassam and Grad rockets that were fired by Palestinian guerillas into civilian areas.

Mr Smart urged the UN security council to impose an "immediate and comprehensive arms embargo on Israel, <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian armed groups until effective mechanisms are found to ensure that munitions and other military equipment are not used to commit serious violations of international law."

Load-Date: February 24, 2009



# Our readers | have their say

Daily News (South Africa)
January 20, 2009 Tuesday
e1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7 Length: 730 words

# **Body**

#### **Politics**

p I would rather be called names than vote for the ANC which has been lying to us for 14 years. Viva Cope. Nkosinathi.

p The ANC is full of empty promises like the Barack Obama campaign. After his victory, Obama said it would take four years or more to deliver all that was promised. So people must be observant when parties make false promises and unrealistic demands.

p Judging from the venomous response by the leader of the Minority Front, Amichand Rajbansi, to my observation that his party is a one-man show with only him being its face, my comment must have hit home. For the record, I am not a member of the DA, but an observant democrat. If my comment is not true, where are your democratically elected party structures? Mkhize, Avoca Hills.

p Vusi Pikoli was fired by Thabo Mbeki because he disobeyed him on the Jackie Selebi issue, Kgalema Motlanthe fired him because he prosecuted Jacob Zuma. The moral of the story, don't arrest or prosecute a president's friend. Naushad Omar.

p To Nkosinathi, just because Zimbabwe supported the ANC does that make Robert Mugabe a great guy? You can go to Zimbabwe and starve or hang around for Jacob Zuma.

#### Gaza

p To all you sick people who condemn the Palestinians, shame on you. Three UN schools, a supply truck, innocent people's homes were all bombed and you support the Zionists? AM.

p Terrorist organisation, <u>Hamas</u>, which has been terrorising innocent Israeli citizens for decades, will never negotiate a permanent peace settlement, because Islamic fundamentalists want nothing less than a global "Islamic World Order" where the entire world is ruled by sharia law. Palestine is just a launching pad for <u>Hamas</u>. They hold the entire Palestinian population in Gaza hostage to achieve their goal.

p ANC and Cosatu at least had the guts and courage to speak out against these barbaric acts. Well done to the ANC. Why is the DA not condemning the barbaric attacks on innocent Palestinians? Is it because they support the apartheid system of Israel?

#### Our readers |have their say

p Israel is bombing the <u>women</u> and children of Palestine because <u>Hamas</u> was voted into power by the people. So much for democracy. Sam.

p To those readers who justify Israel's aggressions, you are heartless. Why don't you try living in Palestine and face these Israeli bombings?

#### Odds and ends

p I propose that every resident in Durban take a picture of the low maintenance of their neighbourhood and that the Daily News publish these pictures so that Michael Sutcliffe can revel in his achievements.

p Teachers decline to supply names because the Department Of Education will victimise them. At my school five pupils obtained As in maths yet could barely get Cs during the year. Papers were easy. Pupils will not cope at university. Ted.

p Mr Mkhize, do you really believe poor service delivery is transformation or makes Durban a truly African city? Or is it that you get the services that Sutcliffe gets, and turn a blind eye to the many experiencing poor services? Building the 2010 soccer stadium while millions are not treated for HIV is a shame, not transformation.

p Imagine someone doing civil engineering without Euclidean geometry? Most ignored studying it, yet it is necessary for most fields. Ted.

p Maths papers are a disgrace. Examiner and moderator should be disciplined. But the damage is done.

p It would appear pastor Vusi Dube has been taking his congregation for a ride to advance the course of one political party without telling them.

p To Sutcliffe, I was on holiday on the beachfront this past week. The stench of urine and sight of faeces was unbearable. I promise never to return. MHD.

p Bafana Mkhize, does transformation mean turning Durban into a pigsty?

p What is common between Jacob Zuma and King Goodwill Zwelithini? Both are Christians and polygamists. Both stay across the uThukela River. Both live in IFP strongholds. Their recent acquired wives are younger than |35 and are younger than their first and second-born children. Both are expensive to maintain because of their many wives, huge clans and houses. So birds of a feather flock together. Viva for the 100% Zulu men.

p Can you believe all the fuss about Prince Harry and his "hate" word? For heaven's sake, I have Muslim friends I affectionally call "Muzies" they call my clan "boers", my English friends "pommies". Cut the poor boy some slack, there are far more important things to worry about. Getty.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



### If you like Hamas, you'll love the Taliban

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
January 27, 2009 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A10; Nigel Hannaford

Length: 885 words

Byline: Nigel Hannaford, Calgary Herald

#### **Body**

Full disclosure: I think Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish homeland. That therefore predisposes me to attribute the worst motives to people who wave placards calling for an end to Israeli attempts to defend itself against terrorists launching rockets from the Gaza Strip (or southern Lebanon) into Israeli territory.

But, even with the most generous and open-minded will in the world, there are really only two possibilities, neither of them flattering.

What I actually suspect is that most are Israel-haters, beyond argument or logic. The other possibility is that the chanting crowd is chiefly composed of people whose capacity to think beyond the obvious is seldom exercised.

That is, everybody thinks it's disgraceful when homes and hospitals are destroyed, and <u>women</u> and children killed. But, provoke a war, and that's the risk one takes. One wonders if the folks with the placards have ever considered what Canada would do in the same situation? You know, let your imagination run for a moment: Suppose some militant collectivity, having effectively made its territory a no-go zone, the police don't go looking for illegal firearms and developers are prevented from doing business on land to which they have title, ups the ante by lobbing these rockets into any neighbouring suburb they could reach.

Something would be done, and depending upon the resistance encountered, there could well be smoke billowing across the camera lens.

So, these ill-conceived pro-tests may be what we have come to expect: At any rate, this is Canada and free expression is a right. But, maybe we should hope for more discernment.

That is, if the destruction of life and property in Gaza as Israel prosecutes a defensive war is cause for a demonstration, how about what the Taliban are doing?

On Saturday, the Herald carried an Agence France-Presse story reporting that more than 170 schools in Pakistan have been blown up, or burned down, in the past two years. The attacks are blamed on Taliban extremists. To this shocking total should be added what these people do in Afghanistan where, in their campaign to promote ignorance and suppress any world view other than that proposed by the local mullah still stuck in the 9th-century, they do not stop at destroying the buildings and murdering teachers, but throw acid in the faces of little girls.

Frankly, Daniel Toole, UNICEF's regional director for South Asia, understated things when he said of the Pakistan situation, "UNICEF condemns these attacks which rob children of their basic right to education and have a devastating impact on their lives. Attacks that target schools, educational institutions, children and teachers are unacceptable and must cease immediately."

Well, yes. Agence France-Presse added that the attacks particularly targeted girls' schools in Pakistan's federally administered tribal area and the North West Frontier province, where other schools had been forced to close after being occupied by armed groups or security forces, or because <u>female</u> teachers had been threatened.

So, where the hell are the protesters? Is it only Israel that should be whacked when innocents die? Does it no longer matter, if the smoke coming up out of the middle of the village is just the evidence of crude Islamist misogyny, and an attempt to preserve a way of thinking that is as destructive to the people of South Asia, as it is dangerous to people in the West? Do these dunderheads not get it?

Apparently not. Gaza makes the front page and the network news: Atrocities in Afghanistan get buried, and typically ignored by the electronic media. If it hadn't been UNICEF raising the matter, it probably wouldn't have got the 200 words it got. Sadly, it's (again) what we have come to expect in that part of the world, so it isn't news.

This is more than fodder for a journalism-school debate. Ten years ago, Afghanistan was a failed state, where Islamist terrorists had training camps dedicated to one thing: turning out fanatics ready to take jihad to Europe and North America. As we know, they achieved some spectacular successes before they were routed--most notably 9/11 --and forced to regroup in the loosely governed northern areas of Pakistan.

They are still out there. If one listens to the occasional tapes released as the up-to-the-minute thoughts of Osama bin Laden--generally agreed to be authentic--one learns their objectives have not changed. Neither, apparently, have their methods, or their penchant for "proving their doctrines orthodox, with apostolic blows and knocks," intimidating and murdering those of their fellow countrymen who aspire to live in the 21st century.

Soon enough, we will have the debate about the proposed 2011 withdrawal of the Canadian troops who have worked so hard for years to give progressive Afghans time to grow. It's important to remember that what Afghanistan (and Pakistan) look like in 20 years will determine whether western nations are once more confronted with familiar dangers, from the same place.

We need to get the discussion right: We must not let ourselves forget how utterly vicious the Taliban are, and what they really want.

Bombed schools in Afghanistan and Gaza may look like much the same pile of rubble in a photograph, but the reality behind them could not be more different.

nhannaford@theherald.canwest.com

Load-Date: January 27, 2009



### A show of Israeli unity raises a chorus of protest

The International Herald Tribune February 26, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1011 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: TEL AVIV

# **Body**

The Israeli singer and peace activist Achinoam Nini has long stirred controversy here. Known abroad by her stage name, Noa, she has recorded with Arab artists, refused to perform in the occupied West Bank and condemned Israeli settlements. Some of her concerts have been canceled after bomb threats from the extreme right.

But lately it is the left that is angry with Nini. Chosen by Israel to represent the country at the Eurovision Song Contest - to be held in May in Moscow with a television audience expected to reach 100 million - Nini asked to bring along her artistic collaborator, the Israeli Arab singer Mira Awad.

The selection committee liked the idea of having both an Arab and Jewish citizen in the contest for the first time. But coinciding with Israel's assault on Gaza and the rise of the ultra-nationalist lawmaker Avigdor Lieberman - who has talked of demanding that Israeli Arabs take a loyalty oath to the Jewish state - the pairing prompted many on the Israeli left and in the Arab community to label it an effort to prettify an ugly situation.

A petition was circulated demanding that the duo withdraw, saying that they gave the false impression of coexistence in Israel and shielded the state from the criticism it deserved.

The petition said, "Every brick in the wall of this phony image allows the Israeli Army to throw 10 more tons of explosives and more phosphorus bombs."

Neither Nini, 39, nor Awad, 33, have been deterred. But since they consider themselves peace advocates, they are a bit surprised. The antiwar movement, they said, seems to have turned into a <u>Hamas</u> apology force. That, together with the political turn rightward in Israel, means that while the two are being sent to represent this mixed and complex society, they also feel a bit orphaned by it.

"I am so worried by the drift to the extremes on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides," Awad said as she and Nini, along with their artistic collaborator, the guitarist Gil Dor, took a break from rehearsal to discuss the controversy.

"That is not my vision of a Palestinian state, an extreme religious state where people they don't like are shot in the legs," Awad said. "And then the Israeli election went to the right."

The three are preparing four songs, one of which will be selected by a panel and audience voting at a televised performance early next month.

#### A show of Israeli unity raises a chorus of protest

All four songs are written in equal parts Hebrew, Arabic and English, and all seek to recognize the difficulty inherent in coexistence rather than celebrate some mythic Kumbaya.

"And when I cry, I cry for both of us, my pain has no name," go the lyrics of one of their offerings. A second one says "Where can we go from here? Sister, it's been one long night."

Awad is one of 1.5 million Arab citizens of Israel, which has more than seven million inhabitants. There are four million Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza who have no state of their own.

Awad and Nini have collaborated for nearly eight years. At the height of the second intifada six years ago, they did a version of the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out," and it was an international hit.

Awad, the daughter of an Arab physician from Galilee and a Bulgarian mother, lives in Tel Aviv. She attended the music school where Nini studied and that Dor helped found.

Awad, best known in Israel as an actress who appears in a popular television comedy, has been starring in a searing play at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But it is Nini who has a true international reputation. She has sold well over a million albums and has a strong following in Europe, especially in Spain, Italy and France, where she gives frequent concerts.

She has a crystalline voice and is of Yemenite Jewish background. Having spent her childhood in New York City, she speaks flawless English and combines a number of instruments and rhythms to produce music across a broad range of styles.

"I carry a cross-cultural flag, breaking barriers between religions," she said. "And I am also involved in other things - I am a UN good-will ambassador. So I feel like a kind of fusion, like Barack Obama."

Nini, while admired in Israel, is more popular abroad. Her music, unlike that of most pop stars, is less a reflection of her own country's sensibility and more an effort to express the universal - one reason the selection panel may have thought she could bring home what would be Israel's fourth Eurovision victory in three decades.

But satirical shows on Israeli television often portray her as more interested in Italy than Israel and as exploiting Awad for her own needs.

Awad is also something of a stranger in her own land, a Christian-Arab singer and actress in a country dominated by Jews and Muslims. That partly explains their bond, the **women** say, and it may also explain the ambivalence with which their selection has been met.

But politics and violence have clearly taken their toll. During the recent Gaza war, Nini put a letter on her blog condemning the Islamists of <u>Hamas</u> and calling on her "Palestinian brothers" to join together to eliminate what she called the ugly monster of <u>Hamas</u>. It was widely interpreted as an endorsement of Israel's war in Gaza, though she said it was not.

"What I wrote was based on what my Palestinian friends in Gaza told me - that they are threatened by <u>Hamas</u>," she said.

For some critics, the women's collaboration is a good thing, but is being misused in an official contest.

"I love the fact that they work together, but I am opposed to their being used by the state to send a false message of coexistence," said Nurit Evron, an art educator.

The singers and Dor said that they spend many hours arguing over the meaning of a Jewish democratic state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how to do their parts to make things better.

#### A show of Israeli unity raises a chorus of protest

"Everyone is responsible to put in his or her two cents for peace and coexistence," Nini said. "Our two cents is music. We have a real friendship. Of course we argue. But the beauty is that we offer an example of what coexistence could look like."

Load-Date: March 6, 2009



# Wrong Yardstick for Measuring Gaza Toll

The Forward January 30, 2009

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Section: Letters; Pg. 8

Length: 433 words

Byline:

Kathleen Peratis is a member of the Forward Association.

#### **Body**

Your January 16 editorial Grasping Gaza sickeningly implied that the civilian death toll in Gaza was not so bad because whatever it was (estimates vary), the civilian death tolls in America's Iraq War and in Russia's Chechnya wars (67% and 80% of total deaths respectively) were much worse.

Then, in an editorial the following week, you again suggested that the proper yardstick for civilian deaths is to compare Gaza to Chechnya, Iraq and other recent wars, where, citing a United Nations report, you wrote that civilian tolls can reach 90%. (Numbering The Dead, January 23).

The civilian deaths in those other wars the product, in substantial part, of war crimes is not a proper yardstick. The proper measure is international humanitarian law and simple morality.

Kathleen Peratis New York, N. Y.

So you say that every civilian death is horrific, but you ask: Given that any war causes some civilian deaths, how many are 'justifiable'? I assume that you are replying to those throughout the world including many Jews who are condemning what they see as Israel's disproportionate answer, even if in self-defense, to the real or perceived threat of *Hamas*. These voices note the magnitude of the destruction, the targets (government buildings, hospitals, schools) and the high number of deaths in Gaza (a ratio of 100-to-1 throughout this war) including hundreds of *women* and children caused by Israel's bombardments and military incursions.

Consider the following: What if 1,300 Jews were killed in fewer than three weeks by warring Arab states or by an Iranian attack, in response to a real or perceived threat? What if the attackers claimed that universities, schools, government buildings and hospitals were legitimate targets, given that they provide logistical support to or even hide the enemy? How would you to determine the justifiable number of Israeli civilian casualties? And what if the dead were all soldiers or reservists? Would these 1,300 Israeli deaths be justifiable for you?

As I read your January 23 editorial, I wonder whether Israel will ever recover her senses, if not some amount of basic human decency. As a Jewish American, I am doubly disgusted, grief-stricken and ashamed that my taxes have financed Israel's attack on Gaza. As of now, never again will it be <u>Hamas</u> or anybody else that endangers Israel's right to exist. It will be Israel's own behavior, and that of those Jews throughout the world who have remained silent vis-à-vis the massacre of a defenseless population.

Claudia Chaufan Santa Cruz, Calif.

Load-Date: February 2, 2009



### In Israel, Jew and Arab Sing, But Political Chorus Is Heard

The New York Times
February 25, 2009 Wednesday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5

Length: 981 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER

**Dateline: TEL AVIV** 

#### **Body**

Achinoam Nini, a singer and peace activist, has long stirred controversy here. Known abroad by her stage name, Noa, she has recorded with Arab artists, refused to perform in the occupied West Bank, condemned Israeli settlements there and had concerts canceled because of bomb threats from the extreme right.

But lately it is the left that has been angry with Ms. Nini. Chosen by Israel to represent the country at the Eurovision Song Contest -- this year being held in Moscow in May with an expected television audience of 100 million -- Ms. Nini asked if she could bring along her current artistic collaborator, an Israeli Arab singer, Mira Awad.

The selection committee liked the idea of having both Arab and Jewish citizens in the contest for the first time. But coinciding as it did with Israel's Gaza war and the rise of Avigdor Lieberman, the ultranationalist politician who threatens Israeli Arabs with a loyalty oath, the committee's choice was labeled by many on the left and in the Arab community as an effort to prettify an ugly situation.

A petition went around demanding that the duo withdraw, saying they were giving the false impression of coexistence in Israel and trying to shield the nation from the criticism it deserved. It added, "Every brick in the wall of this phony image allows the Israeli Army to throw 10 more tons of explosives and more phosphorus bombs."

Neither Ms. Nini, 39, nor Ms. Awad, 33, has been deterred. But since they consider themselves peace advocates, they are a bit surprised. The antiwar movement, they say, seems to have turned into a *Hamas* apology force. That, together with the political turn rightward in Israel, means that while the two are being sent to represent this mixed and complex society, they also feel a bit orphaned by it.

"I am so worried by the drift to the extremes on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides," Ms. Awad said as she and Ms. Nini, and their artistic collaborator, the guitarist Gil Dor, took a break from rehearsal to discuss the controversy. "That is not my vision of a Palestinian state, an extreme religious state where people they don't like are shot in the legs. And then the Israeli election went to the right."

The three are preparing four songs, from which one will be selected by a panel and an audience voting at a television performance in early March. All four songs are written in equal parts Hebrew, Arabic and English, and all seek to recognize the difficulty inherent in coexistence, rather than celebrate some mythic Kumbaya.

"And when I cry, I cry for both of us, my pain has no name," go the lyrics of one of their offerings. "Where can we go from here? Sister, it's been one long night," goes a second one. Ms. Awad is one of one and a half million Arab citizens of Israel's more than seven million inhabitants. There are four million more Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza who have no state of their own.

The two <u>women</u> have been collaborating for nearly eight years. At the height of the second intifada six years ago, they did a version of the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out" that became an international hit.

Ms. Awad, the daughter of an Arab physician from the Galilee and a Bulgarian mother, lives in Tel Aviv. She is best known in Israel as an actress who appears in a popular television comedy, and has been starring lately in a searing play at the Cameri Theater in Tel Aviv about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But it is Ms. Nini who has a true international reputation. She has sold well over a million albums and has a strong following in Europe, especially in Spain, Italy and France, where she gives frequent concerts. She has a crystalline voice joined to a Yemenite Jewish background that give her music a rich ethnic quality. Having spent her childhood in New York City, she speaks flawless English and combines a number of instruments and rhythms to produce music across a broad range of styles.

"I carry a cross-cultural flag, breaking barriers between religions," she said. "And I am also involved in other things -- I am a U.N. good-will ambassador. So I feel like a kind of fusion, like Barack Obama."

Ms. Nini, while admired in Israel, is more popular abroad. Her music, unlike that of most pop stars, is less a reflection of her own country's sensibility than an effort to express the universal -- one reason the panel may have thought she could bring home Israel's fourth Eurovision victory in three decades. Israel's two leading television satire shows have portrayed her as more interested in Italy than Israel, and as exploiting Ms. Awad for her own needs.

Ms. Awad, with her mixed parentage, is also something of a stranger in her own land, an Arab Christian singer and actress in a country dominated by Jews and Muslims.

That partly explains their bond, the two <u>women</u> say, and it may also explain the ambivalence with which their selection has been met.

But recent politics have also clearly taken their toll. During the war, Ms. Nini posted a letter on her blog condemning the Islamists of <u>Hamas</u> and calling on her "Palestinian brothers" to join together to eliminate what she called the ugly monster of <u>Hamas</u>. It was widely interpreted as an endorsement of Israel's war in Gaza, although she said it was not.

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http://www.nytimes.com

# **Graphic**

#### In Israel , Jew and Arab Sing, But Political Chorus Is Heard

PHOTO: Achinoam Nini, left, and Mira Awad will perform Israel's entry in the annual Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow this May. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: February 25, 2009



### Livni, Netanyahu both claim victory in Israeli election

The New Zealand Herald February 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; World

Length: 1123 words

### **Body**

JERUSALEM - Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and hard-line rival Benjamin Netanyahu both claimed victory in Israel's parliamentary election which early returns suggested was too close to call.

With over two-thirds of the votes counted, Livni's centrist Kadima Party had 29 seats in the 120-seat parliament while Netanyahu's hawkish Likud Party was right behind with 28, Israel's state-run Channel 1 TV said. Soldiers' votes on bases around the country won't be tallied until Thursday evening, and that could shift the results by a seat or two.

"With God's help, I will lead the next government," Netanyahu told a raucous crowd of cheering supporters chanting his nickname Bibi. "The national camp, led by the Likud, has won a clear advantage."

Soon after, Livni took the stage before a crowd of flag-waving supporters and flashed a V-for victory sign. "Today the people chose Kadima. ... We will form the next government led by Kadima."

Earlier, exit polls showed Livni with a slight lead, but strong gains by right-wing parties overall would make it difficult, and perhaps impossible, for Livni to form a government.

Even if Livni could overcome the formidable obstacles and become Israel's second <u>female</u> prime minister after Golda Meir, exit polls suggested she would have to rely on the participation of right-wing parties opposed to her vision of giving up land in exchange for a peace deal with the Palestinians.

Despite the uncertainties, both sides claimed victory.

Applause, cheers and whistling erupted at Kadima headquarters in Tel Aviv as television stations began reporting their exit polls, with supporters jumping up and down and giving each other high-fives and hugs.

Netanyahu told his supporters in a speech early Wednesday that he was proud of the gains by his hard-line party and pledged big changes in the country's policies.

The partial results marked a dramatic slide for Netanyahu, who had held a solid lead in opinion polls heading into the election.

The results showed hard-line parties winning 64 seats in the 120-member parliament, while liberal parties captured just 56 seats.

Israelis vote for parties, not individuals. Since no party won a parliamentary majority, the leader of one of the major parties must try to put together a coalition with other factions - a process that can take up to six weeks.

In coming days, President Shimon Peres will ask the leader who he believes is most capable of forming a coalition to try to put together a government.

If he chooses Livni, she would have to reach out to hard-liners. The elections were called after she failed to put together a ruling coalition when scandal-plagued Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced he was stepping down last fall.

Alternatively, Peres could turn to Netanyahu, who appeared to be in a better position to put together a majority.

Netanyahu, who opposes giving up territory to make room for a Palestinian state, could find himself on a collision course with President Barack Obama, who is promising an aggressive push for Mideast peace. Netanyahu says he would allow West Bank settlements to expand and is seen as likely to contemplate military action against Iran positions that would likely put him at odds with Obama.

If Livni's projected victory holds, it is likely due to a strong showing by ultranationalist candidate Avigdor Lieberman, who appears to have taken a sizable chunk of votes that would have otherwise gone to Netanyahu.

The partial results gave Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu Party 16 seats, placing it in third place behind Kadima and Likud - and ahead of Labor, the party that ruled Israel for decades. That gives Lieberman, who based his campaign on denying citizenship to Israeli Arabs he considers disloyal, a key role in coalition building. Livni would almost certainly not be able to form a government without his support.

Lieberman said his party's strong showing means he holds the key to forming the new Israeli government. He said he had spoken to both Livni and Netanyahui and told them he could be persuaded to join either one of them.

"It is up to Lieberman who will form the next coalition," said Menachem Hofnung, a professor of political science at Hebrew University. "Lieberman has emerged as the kingmaker. He is the winner of these elections and it depends on who he sides with over the next few weeks as to who will be prime minister."

Netanyahu, who was prime minister a decade ago, portrayed himself as the candidate best equipped to deal with the threats Israel faces - <u>Hamas</u> militants in Gaza, Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon and behind them an Iranian regime that Israel believes is developing nuclear weapons.

He has derided the outgoing government's peace talks as a waste of time, and said relations with the Palestinians should be limited to developing their battered economy.

Livni, who has led Israel's peace talks the past year, has pledged to continue the negotiations with the moderate Palestinian government in the West Bank. At the same time, she advocates a tough line against the *Hamas* government in the Gaza Strip, and was one of the architects against a bruising Israeli military offensive in Gaza last month.

At Likud headquarters, activists dismissed Kadima's edge and predicted Netanyahu would be tapped to form the next government.

"I am certain that Netanyahu will be the next prime minister," said Likud lawmaker Gilad Erdan. "Netanyahu has a clear advantage because the right wing parties have a larger bloc. The test is not which party gets the most votes, but which candidate has the best chance to form a coalition, and that person is Benjamin Netanyahu."

Kadima lawmaker Haim Ramon predicted the party would lead the next government.

"We are the only party that can approach both the right wing and the left," he told Channel 2 TV. But he acknowledged the results would make it difficult for anyone to govern.

Israel's Palestinian peace partners in the West Bank said the next Israeli government would have to stop building in the West Bank before talks could resume.

#### Livni, Netanyahu both claim victory in Israeli election

"We now have clear conditions for whoever heads the Israeli government," said Rafiq Husseini, a senior aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "The conditions for negotiations to resume begin with the immediate halt of settlement activities."

Peace talks have not included the Gaza Strip's <u>Hamas</u> rulers, who do not recognize Israel's right to exist and recently were the target of a devastating Israeli military offensive.

In Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said the election results don't make a difference in the lives of Palestinians because Israel "is still working to eliminate the Palestinian existence.

"Anyone who thinks that new faces might bring change is mistaken," Barhoum said, before the exit polls were released.

-AP

Load-Date: February 11, 2009



### A chorus of protest over an Israeli choice

The International Herald Tribune February 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2 Length: 1015 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

**Dateline: TEL AVIV** 

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"I carry a cross-cultural flag, breaking barriers between religions," she said. "And I am also involved in other things - I am a UN goodwill ambassador. So I feel like a kind of fusion, like Barack Obama."

Nini, while admired in Israel, is more popular abroad. Her music, unlike that of most pop stars, is less a reflection of her own country's sensibility and more an effort to express the universal - one reason the selection panel may have thought she could bring home what would be Israel's fourth Eurovision victory in three decades.

But satirical shows on Israeli TV often portray her as more interested in Italy than Israel and as exploiting Awad for her own needs.

Awad is also something of a stranger in her own land, a Christian-Arab singer and actress in a country dominated by Jews and Muslims. That partly explains their bond, the <u>women</u> say, and it may also explain the ambivalence with which their selection has been met.

But politics and violence have clearly taken their toll. During the war, Nini put a letter on her blog condemning the Islamists of <u>Hamas</u> and calling on her "Palestinian brothers" to join together to eliminate what she called the ugly monster of <u>Hamas</u>. It was widely interpreted as an endorsement of Israel's war in Gaza, though she said it was not. "What I wrote was based on what my Palestinian friends in Gaza told me, that they are threatened by <u>Hamas</u>," she said.

For some critics, the <u>women</u>'s collaboration is a good thing, but is being misused in an official contest.

"I love the fact that they work together, but I am opposed to their being used by the state to send a false message of coexistence," said Nurit Evron, an art educator.

The singers and Dor said that they spend many hours arguing over the meaning of a Jewish democratic state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how to do their parts to make things better.

"Everyone is responsible to put in his or her two cents for peace and coexistence," Nini said. "Our two cents is music. We have a real friendship. Of course we argue. But the beauty is that we offer an example of what coexistence could look like."

Load-Date: February 25, 2009



# Netanyahu stokes fears to take poll lead; Election Israel's right-wing hawk is striking a chord with voters who mistrust peace with Palestinians, writes Marie Colvin in Jerusalem

The Sunday Times (London)
February 8, 2009
Edition 2

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 27

**Length:** 997 words **Byline:** Marie Colvin

### **Body**

HIS silver hair blowing in a chill wind, Binyamin Netanyahu, the right-wing frontrunner in Israel's general election, was eager to reassure a crowd of Jewish settlers in the West Bank last Friday: victory this week for his Likud party would mean no Palestinian state on their land.

"The election on Tuesday will be about one issue - whether this place will remain in our hands or will be handed over to <u>Hamas</u> [the Islamic extremist group] and Iran," he roared to adoring supporters in Beit Aryeh, a small settlement.

If Palestinian militants were in control, rockets would rain down on Israel's international airport only 15 miles away, he warned.

Netanyahu, 59, has won his lead in the opinion polls by repeatedly articulating the anxieties of voters like the inhabitants of Beit Aryeh, whose settlement is built on land won by Israel in the 1967 war. It would therefore be returned to Palestinian rule under the peace agreement envisaged by the United States.

Despite the global financial crisis, Israel's politicians have largely ignored the economy on the campaign trail. This election is about how to deal with the Palestinians.

Coming just six weeks after Israel's invasion of Gaza to stop <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks, it has seen the right making large gains as a result of Israeli fears of the Palestinian threat.

The latest poll in the Haaretz newspaper predicts that right-wing parties led by the hawkish Likud will win 66 seats in the 120-member Knesset, Israel's parliament, with 54 going to Kadima, the governing centrist party, and smaller parties on the left.

Netanyahu stokes fears to take poll lead Election Israel 's right-wing hawk is striking a chord with voters who mistrust peace with Palestinians, writes Marie C....

Kadima, led by Tzipi Livni, 50, the foreign minister, is closing the gap with a predicted 25 seats to Likud's 27, but commentators say the trend is clear. "A wind from the right is blowing through the country," said Shlomo Yerushalmi, an analyst on Israeli television.

Netanyahu, who was prime minister from 1996 to 1999, was not spelling out the details of his plans publicly and refused Livni's challenge to a debate. In briefings, however, the Likud leader - who grew up partly in America - has disclosed that he would spurn any US attempt to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

"We will not withdraw from one inch. Every inch we leave would go to Iran," Netanyahu said, referring to the financial and military support that the Tehran regime gives <u>Hamas</u>. The Islamic extremist group controls Gaza and has a growing presence in the West Bank.

Under Netanyahu's plan, Palestinians would not have a sovereign state but self-governing, non-contiguous "population centres". He also proposes an "economic peace" that would improve living conditions for Palestinians in the hope that this would help moderate opinion to prevail.

Gideon Levy, a Haaretz columnist, expressed a common view when he called the plan "a mix of condescension and dehumanisation", but it strikes a chord with those voters who distrust the idea of making peace in the face of a growing Palestinian radicalism.

A Likud government would annihilate <u>Hamas</u>, Netanyahu claimed, a goal seen as unrealistic even by the Israeli intelligence establishment.

Netanyahu's election would be a setback for the administration of President Barack Obama, who vowed to push for Middle East peace "from day one" and appointed George Mitchell, the former Northern Ireland envoy, as his representative in the region.

The resurgence of the right is exemplified by the startling rise of Avigdor Lieberman, 50, the Russian-born leader of Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home), once considered to be a fringe party.

The one-time Moldovan nightclub bouncer and former aide to Netanyahu rose to third place in the polls last week and is predicted to gain 18 seats, more than the Labour party.

Lieberman, who relishes his hardline reputation, has called for all Israeli Arab citizens to swear a loyalty oath to the Jewish state or lose their citizenship. He also proposes to transfer many Arab Israelis to Palestinian rule by redrawing Israel's borders.

"I think Lieberman will be the big kingmaker in this election," said Michael Barak, an Israeli pollster.

In the complex world of Israeli politics, Lieberman's surge has helped the centrist Livni by siphoning votes away from Netanyahu.

Their supporters could hardly be more different. While Netanyahu stood on that West Bank hill surrounded by dour men in suits, Livni held a rally at which she belted out, karaoke-style, Non, je ne regrette rien (No regrets), the signature tune of Edith Piaf, the French singer. The show starred Dana International, Israel's transgender Eurovision winner.

Livni's speech echoed the themes of Obama's campaign in the United States.

"We are going to do it," she told the ecstatic crowd of <u>women</u> in tight, low-slung jeans and men in T-shirts. "Don't vote from fear or despair. The easiest thing to do is to paint the future as black."

Livni, a lawyer and former agent for Mossad, Israel's overseas intelligence agency, entered the Knesset only 10 years ago. As foreign minister she has led negotiations with the Palestinians for the past year, but she has also

Netanyahu stokes fears to take poll lead Election Israel 's right-wing hawk is striking a chord with voters who mistrust peace with Palestinians, writes Marie C....

been short on details during her campaign, fearing that her backing for a separate Palestinian state would alienate many voters.

Whoever wins the popular vote on Tuesday will still have to form a coalition government. The smaller parties seem certain to hold the larger parties to ransom in pursuit of their special interests. Alliances in Israel can be bizarre and by Friday Livni was saying she would consider taking Lieberman into a coalition led by her.

Netanyahu's dream coalition would include Labour, once Israel's leading party but now in fourth place despite being led by Ehud Barak, Israel's most decorated soldier and the present defence minister.

All the pollsters were making cautionary noises last week, with up to a third of the 5.2m voters still undecided. Few people were prepared to predict which of the two starkly opposing options for bringing peace to Israel and its neighbours would win the day.

# **Graphic**

Netanyahu has gained ground as a result of resurgent Israeli fears of Palestinians, although Livni is closing the gap

**REX/GALI TIBBON** 

Load-Date: February 8, 2009



### Self-defence is no defence

Guardian.com January 21, 2009

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# theguardian

Length: 1166 words

Highlight: Michael Paulin: As more testimony emerges from the ruins of Gaza, evidence is stacking up that Israel

has a war crimes case to answer

# **Body**

Under Article 51 of the UN Charter, a state can take military action without the prior authorisation of the Security Council if it is acting in self-defence. Yet, as CNN has reported, it was Israel - and not <u>Hamas</u> fighters - that broke the ceasefire. On the November 4 2008, Israel shelled the villages of Wadi al-Salqa and al-Qarara, killing six **Hamas** activists.

It is true that Israel has suffered from <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks. Insofar as these attacks indiscriminately target civilian areas, <u>Hamas</u> would be guilty of war crimes under the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Yet, in the past eight years, Palestinian rockets fired from Gaza have killed around 20 people in southern Israel. Israel's response is neither necessary nor proportionate.

At the time of writing, after 23 days of bombardment, more than 1,300 Palestinians have been killed by Israel, including 410 children and 104 <u>women</u>, while 5,300 are seriously injured, of whom 1,855 are children and 795 <u>women</u>. Israel has shelled three clearly marked UN schools, the existence and GPS coordinates of which Israel had been repeatedly notified. Israel has shelled the headquarters of UNRWA, the UN's relief agency (which is responsible with providing aid to 750,000 Palestinians), and it has shelled and bombed hospitals, ambulances, and medical personnel. In typical Israeli fashion, it has bulldozed homes without warning in an attempt to bury the inhabitants alive. Recent UN human rights reports expose that the Israeli army has deliberately used white phosphorus on civilians, which is prohibited "in all circumstances" under Protocol III of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, and evidence has emerged that Israeli snipers have deliberately targeted civilians.

On January 4, Israeli soldiers evacuated approximately 110 Palestinians into a single-residence house in Zeitoun and warned them to stay indoors. Half of the evacuees were children. Twenty-four hours later, Israeli forces shelled the home repeatedly, killing 30 of the inhabitants, although more bodies are likely to be recovered from the ruins.

After several days of requesting safe passage to the area, on January 7, during a three-hour lull in hostilities, an ICRC medical team was finally allowed in on foot (without ambulances) into the closed military area to evacuate any remaining survivors. According to testimonies gathered by the UN, Palestinian children were left unable to walk or speak, in shock and weeping by the bodies of their dead mothers. When the IDF finally let through the International Committee of the Red Cross, the children were led from the building past dogs eating the corpses of the victims.

#### Self-defence is no defence

Navi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights and a former international criminal court judge from South Africa, has stated that the incident in Zeitoun "appears to have all the elements of war crimes". Israel has not ratified the 1998 Rome Statute, so its leaders cannot be brought before the International Criminal Court in the Hague, unless the UN security council itself refers Israel's actions to the ICC. The US abstained from the recent UN security council resolution calling for a ceasefire, and it would almost certainly wield its powers as a permanent member of the security council to veto any attempt to refer Israeli leaders to the ICC.

In UK law, the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 and the Geneva Conventions (Amendment) Act 1995 attempt to afford the domestic courts universal jurisdiction for "grave breaches" of humanitarian law. This includes wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, extensive destruction and appropriation of property, which was not justified by military necessity and was carried out unlawfully and wantonly. Attacks on the wounded, the sick, or against medical units and personnel also constitute grave breaches, as does making the civilian population the object of attack practices of apartheid and other inhuman and degrading practices involving outrages upon personal dignity, based on racial discrimination.

On September 10 2005, the chief London magistrate Timothy Workman issued a warrant for the arrest of the retired Israeli Major General Doron Almog, in relation to the wanton destruction of 59 houses in Rafah refugee camp on January 10 2002. After Almog had landed at Heathrow, he was tipped off and he flew back to Israel. Perversely, the attempt to bring Almog to justice for war crimes caused the then foreign secretary, Jack Straw, to apologise to his Israeli counterpart for the attempted arrest. As Arthur Neslen has observed, it would seem that war crimes are fine, so long as someone says sorry afterwards.

Palestinians are living under occupation, and are therefore "protected persons" under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Protected persons may not be punished for crimes that they themselves have not committed, and their collective punishment constitutes a war crime.

Israel's attempt to claim self-defence as a justification for the separation wall, which annexes swathes of Palestinian land, has already been rejected by the International Court of Justice. On July 9 2004, the International Court of Justice provided its advisory opinion that the construction of the wall is contrary to international law and that Israel was obliged to dismantle the wall forthwith. The court rejected Israel's defence that the separation wall is justified under the doctrine of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

When the Middle East envoy for the Quartet, former UK prime minister Tony Blair, was interviewed by Gavin Esler on BBC Newsnight on January 9, he opined that a ceasefire had not been possible because: "I think that there are still real issues about what can be done to stop the smuggling of the arms going into Gaza and then the opening of the crossings so that there can be proper humanitarian help." Blair effectively makes the Palestinians' right to humanitarian aid dependent upon whether their democratically elected leadership can be prevented from bringing arms into Gaza.

Yet, as Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: "To the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate." It would appear that Blair regards international law as either irrelevant or a hindrance.

Despite the Israeli supreme court's recent ruling in favour of the petitioner, the Foreign Press Association, that foreign journalists must be allowed into Gaza, the Israeli state prevented proper access throughout its attack. As the FPA's lawyer, Gilead Sher, observed: "There are several countries in this world, such as North Korea, Zimbabwe and Burma, that ban press coverage in conflict zones." Israel must ask itself whether this is really the company it wants to keep.

Load-Date: January 21, 2009



# Obama's skilful Cairo speech

Financial Times (London, England)

June 5, 2009 Friday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: MORE COMMENT ONLINE; Pg. 10

Length: 477 words

# **Body**

**Gideon Rachman's blog:** Obama's speech in Cairo was a brilliant performance. I think it may come to rank with Kennedy's *Ich bin ein Berliner* speech - and for a similar reason. It was based on an appeal to common humanity and the brotherhood of man. In the context of the Middle East, it was an effort to call an end to the "clash of civilisations".

Who knows how far it will go to achieving its ends. As Obama himself acknowledged, there is a limit to how much any single speech can achieve. Still, it was brilliantly constructed and delivered. Somehow Obama managed to speak frankly about all the difficult issues: terrorism, democracy, <u>women</u>'s rights, Israel - without skirting around them, and without giving offence or hostages to fortune.

The main rhetorical device he used is, by now, familiar. First - frankly acknowledge past errors and offences and flatter the audience; then follow up with something tougher and by making a demand. So he began by acknowledging the sins of colonialism and the cold war, and by stating frankly that America overthrew a democratic government in Iran in the 1950s. But he followed up with a challenge to his audience to condemn terrorism. He gave a firm and principled defence of the right of Israel to exist in peace, rooted in an understanding of history. But he followed up by saying that "the situation of the Palestinian people is intolerable".

It was a measure of the success of the speech that - after a while - the audience began to applaud the more challenging passages, as well as the bits designed to stroke them. There was warm applause for the tributes to Muslim civilisation. But there was also applause for his criticism of the "crude stereotype" of America as a "self-interested empire".

I wondered if Obama would risk antagonising Fox News by using the phrase "peace be upon him", after mentioning Mohammad. He skirted around this trap with a skill that was characteristic of the speech as a whole - mentioning Mohammad in the same breath as Jesus and Moses and saying "peace be upon them". Clever.

On Israel-Palestine, there was nothing really new. The condemnation of Israeli settlements was a little firmer and more explicit than the usual US formula. On the other hand, Obama did not shift ground on <u>Hamas</u> - insisting, in line with the Quartet principles, that <u>Hamas</u> must recognise Israel and renounce violence.

Still, I do think the speech will provoke condemnation by the American right and unease in Israel. Obama's implicit comparison between the Palestinian struggle and the struggles against apartheid and slavery - although part of a passage urging the Palestinians to renounce violence - will raise hackles. And the Israelis will remember that, just a

# Obama's skilful Cairo speech

year ago, President Bush was getting a standing ovation in the Knesset. Now Obama is getting the same treatment - but in Cairo.

www.ft.com/rachmanblog

Load-Date: June 4, 2009



### From Gaza to Jerusalem: the impact of war on the Israeli election

Guardian.com

February 3, 2009

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# theguardian

Length: 1646 words

Highlight: Peter Beaumont finds Israel's peace movement being pushed to the margins like never before as the

country prepares to vote

# **Body**

Out of Gaza and across the border to the sound of rocket fire.

A handful of hours later I am at the Hebrew University for a lecture by Gershon Baskin, one of Israel's most prominent peace activists, who is describing his attempts to open a channel of communication between Israel's leaders and *Hamas*.

It's a strange and sudden quantum shift - from the ruins, anxiety and stench of war to normality, calm and mannered debate. What it entails is a journey from one ethos of conflict, the Palestinian one still raw, edgy and angry from the recent violence, to an Israeli one, expressed - most obviously for most - in the harsh rhetoric of political contest.

In a bare room littered with bean bags and exposed piping, less than a dozen students sit patiently to listen to Baskin's account. The meeting has been organised by a group called It Is No Legend. It is an ironic play on a quote from Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism: "If you will it, it is no legend".

Herzl meant the will to bring about the foundation of Israel. Among this group it signifies the will to peace and coexistence with Palestinian Arabs.

I know Baskin via his articles and his emails. The story he tells to the students is largely unreported: one of the hidden tales that Israel's government would like to gloss over.

In meetings with <u>Hamas</u> figures, arranged through texts, calls and emails, Baskin established a kind of one-way channel of communication to the office of Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert. It was the offer of a means of negotiation that Olmert and his government emphatically rejected.

The students pose questions at the end. Was the war inevitable, they want to know. Most think it was. What are the prospects for the future? It is a subdued gathering.

The reality is that the facts of the war, the civilian deaths and the destruction, are not simply better known in Gaza than they are in Israel. In its sparse attendance, this meeting reflects a fundamental shift in Israeli society - despite the students' excuses to the contrary.

#### From Gaza to Jerusalem: the impact of war on the Israeli election

Support for the war has been almost unanimous at up to 94%. Israel's peace movement, as a consequence, has been pushed to the margins like never before. More than that, many of its members have been co-opted.

I recall a conversation I had with Orith Shochat before going into Gaza. A liberal Israeli journalist, she has spent most of her life campaigning against the occupation. It was Shochat who drafted the 2003 letter for the Israeli air force pilots who refused to take part in attacks on civilian areas. This is a war, however, that Shochat has supported.

When I ask her about the civilian casualties she tells me she is "shocked how it does not shock her". "I am amazed," she adds, "how it doesn't haunt me."

She reflects on a journey over five years that led her to the conclusion that the targeted assassinations she once opposed might be more moral than the alternative. That there might be no other solution to the rocket fire out of Gaza than a demonstration that Israel's commitment to deterrence has not weakened.

I meet others - at a friend's flat in Jerusalem and elsewhere - who evince the same views while insisting that they belong to the left; that they support the idea of peace and a negotiated two-state solution.

I hear from several people the conviction that out of the blood of Gaza a new solution and impetus towards peace might yet be born. It is a view, having come from Gaza, that I struggle to understand.

Physics student Ofek Birnholtz, 25, who organised the lecture at the Hebrew University, offers another take. He is convinced that the two trends - strong support for the war and growing support for the end of occupation and a two-state solution - coexist; that it is caught up in a moment of collective anger that will pass.

But the political dynamics of the Israeli election campaign suggest something else is going on. The rightwing Likud party of Binyamin Netanyahu, and the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu party of Avigdor Lieberman - both of which had the least to do with the war against Gaza and <u>Hamas</u> - have have benefited most, suggesting a nationalist retrenchment.

The reality is that a polarisation and radicalisation within Palestinian society has been reflected in an equal radicalisation among Israeli Jews, accelerated by the conflict in Gaza, that has seen even well-established connections between peacemakers on both sides collapse.

The question that remains is why?

For Daniel Bar-Tal, of Tel Aviv University, who has a long record of researching the functioning of each group's "conflict ethos" in the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, the current state of the national psyche is as much manufactured as it is willed.

He explained it in a recent interview in Haaretz. "After the bitter experience of the second Lebanon war, during which the memory of the war was taken out of their hands and allowed to be formed freely," he explained, "the country's leaders learned their lesson, and decided that they wouldn't let that happen again.

"They were not satisfied with attempts to inculcate Palestinian awareness and tried to influence Jewish awareness in Israel as well. For that purpose, heavy censorship and monitoring of information were imposed [during the Gaza campaign]."

It was achieved, he believes, by the willing enlistment of the media, who concentrated only on the sense of victimisation of residents of the so-called "Gaza envelope" - those within the range of missiles from Gaza - largely ignoring the situation of the residents of besieged Gaza.

The veteran peace campaigner Gila Svirsky, of <u>Women</u> in Black, argues for an even more radical interpretation. At her small flat in Jerusalem, cluttered with the mementoes of her life in activism, she says she believes that much of the rejection of the "others' story" has been self-willed.

#### From Gaza to Jerusalem: the impact of war on the Israeli election

Gila tells me a story. It is about a neighbour who admits avoiding the take of foreign media on Gaza to avoid being challenged in her assumptions.

"You can feel it," says Gila. "The temptation of being sucked into only watching Israeli news. It is really hard to extricate oneself from the dominant discourse. There is a word in Hebrew - miguyas - it means, I suppose, seduced. People don't want to go there. Don't want to think bad thoughts [about what is being done in their name]."

It has been accomplished, Svirsky insists, by portraying <u>Hamas</u> as an "existential threat, the forward guard of Iran", not as a local problem to be negotiated. It is precisely the story that Netanyahu has been pushing so hard and successfully in the election campaign.

But there is another difficulty. While those like Gershon Baskin frame the war in terms of multiple missed opportunities to engage with <u>Hamas</u> - or attempts to understand it at least - there are others on the left like Yaron Ezrahi, author and professor of politics at the Hebrew University, who believe there was a failure on the Israeli left's part to formulate an adequate response to the Qassam missiles fired out of Gaza into southern Israel.

Despite that, this war - he insists to me - will be Israel's "Macbeth moment". It will be something - to reverse Shochat's formulation - to shock in the long run. "Israel will be forever haunted by the ghosts of this war," Ezrahi says sadly.

But in the immediate aftermath of war, there does not seem to be much haunting of the majority. It is embraced enthusiastically, grimly or fatalistically as necessary.

At the margins it is not rejected but avoided. I meet an elderly woman in a deli in west Jerusalem, listening to the radio and drinking her tea among a handful of pavement tables. I am told she was a demolitions expert in the Palmach, the organisation that fought for Israel's creation in 1948.

We chat and she is happy to talk about most things. But when I ask her about the current situation she says - with a touch of anger at my presumption in asking the question - that she does not feel well enough informed to comment.

A young woman at Hebrew University, who listens to Baskin for an hour and half, fends off my questions with the same determined excuse: she does not know enough.

But in the offices of Breaking the Silence, the organisation of former Israeli soldiers dedicated to exposing human rights abuses committed by the Israeli defence forces, Michael Manekin and Yehuda Shaul believe it is simply a question of time.

After previous operations, they say, it has taken six months to a year for soldiers to come forward with testimony about events that disturbed them.

The media, Manekin explains, acted as the military's cheerleader at the beginning of the war in Gaza. Now, he says, it is calling every day, hungry for soldiers' stories that contradict the official line.

Yehuda, a burly former infantryman who served during Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, opens up a scanned file on his computer - a pamphlet circulated by the army's chief military rabbi to soldiers before entering Gaza. It is a document as unsettling in its own way as the religious justifications of <u>Hamas</u> for its own violence. It talks about the necessity of cruelty against the enemy, and dehumanises and de-legitimises the Palestinians and their claims.

Manekin translates the words: "We are not allowed by religious command to return an inch of land to the Palestinians. It is our land - God's land. There is a question [in the pamphlet]: 'Can we compare the Palestinians now to the biblical era of the Philistines? And if so, does this guide us how we act militarily'? The answer says: 'Yes we can. The Palestinians like the Philistines are not a natural part of this region'."

Listening to Manekin, I think about the words of Bar-Tal. And I wonder - as I have always wondered in wartime - how much is manufactured? How much willed?

# From Gaza to Jerusalem: the impact of war on the Israeli election

And I wonder what kind of government a society still drunk on the euphoria of military action will elect with a handful of days remaining.

Load-Date: February 3, 2009



## Fury over 'anti-Semitic' Oliphant cartoon on Gaza

The Jerusalem Post March 27, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 458 words

Byline: MAYA SPITZER

# **Body**

The Anti-Defamation League has castigated a "hideously anti-Semitic" syndicated cartoon by Pat Oliphant published in newspapers across the US on Wednesday.

Oliphant employed Nazi-like imagery and depicted the Star of David in a hateful manner, the ADL said.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center similarly denounced the cartoon and has urged news Web sites to remove it.

The cartoon, a comment on Israel's recent offensive against <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, depicts a uniformed figure marching in goose step, swinging a sword in one hand and pushing a Star of David on a wheel with the other. The star is adorned with fangs and chases after a tiny woman carrying a child labeled "Gaza."

"This is absolutely disgusting. God Almighty! This is a classic example of criticism of Israel carried out in a pernicious, anti-Semitic fashion," said Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office.

"There is no context. It is an insidious portrayal and a total distortion of reality, simply an implication that brute Jewish strength goes after the hopelessly helpless Gaza residents," Zuroff added.

"Pat Oliphant's outlandish and offensive use of the Star of David in combination with Nazi-like imagery is hideously anti-Semitic," said Abe Foxman, ADL national director. "It employs Nazi imagery by portraying Israel as a jack-booted, goose-stepping headless apparition. The implication is of an Israeli policy without a head or a heart."

"Israel's defensive military operation to protect the lives of its men, <u>women</u> and children who are being continuously bombarded by <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks has been turned on its head to show the victims as heartless, headless aggressors," Foxman said.

"The imagery in this cartoon mimics the venomous anti- Semitic propaganda of the Nazi and Soviet eras. It is cartoons like this that inspired millions of people to hate in the 1930s and help set the stage for the Nazi genocide," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, the Wiesenthal Center's dean, and Rabbi Abraham Cooper, its associate dean.

Most alarming, said Zuroff, was that "this image, unambiguous in its anti-Semitic intent, has reached millions of people across the United States. Oliphant is simply an anti-Semite for disseminating this message."

Oliphant, a Pulitzer Prize winner for Editorial Cartooning in 1967, has been called "the most influential cartoonist now working" by The New York Times. Oliphant's body of work, often employing stereotypical caricatures, has been known to spark controversy.

In 2001, the Asian American Journalists Association said Oliphant "cross[ed] the line from acerbic depiction to racial caricature," and in 2005, the American-Arab Anti- Discrimination Committee made public its concerns that a number of Oliphant's cartoons were racist and misleading.

# **Graphic**

Cartoon: A FANGED-STAR of David pursues 'Gaza' in this cartoon by Pat Oliphant.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



The Jerusalem Post January 23, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 14

Length: 2179 words

**Byline: LARRY DERFNER** 

Highlight: During the fragile cease-fire, the International Red Cross's team in Gaza works to ease the humanitarian

crisis there. Box at end of text.

## **Body**

When the cease-fire went into effect this week, the people of Gaza came out of three weeks of hiding and running to see who and what was left. With them were humanitarian aid workers such as Antoine Grand, head of the International Red Cross's team in Gaza. It was "like waking up from a nightmare," he said by phone from the Red Cross residence, which has a shell crater and fallen white phosphorus in the garden and broken windows and shrapnel inside, in the battered neighborhood of Tel el-Awa. (The IDF responded that it uses only weaponry allowed under international law.)

"We saw destroyed houses with traces of tanks having run over them. Houses that were completely black from fire. Ambulances that had been crushed down. Pieces of artillery shells in houses and apartments. Roads destroyed, gardens with olive trees destroyed," said Grand, a Frenchman who has been in Gaza some 10 months.

"Some of the houses that had been occupied by Israeli soldiers had graffiti on the walls. Some of it was in English. 'Don't f-ck with us.' 'Where is *Hamas*?' There were obscene drawings, such as a penis pissing on a Palestinian flag." (The IDF had no immediate response to these claims.)

Grand and his 15 Red Cross colleagues from overseas spent the beginning of the cease-fire distributing plastic sheeting to cover the broken windows and keep the cold out of the houses that were still standing, as well as trying to get an idea of the needs for mattresses, blankets, basic kitchen and health supplies, while assessing the damage to essential infrastructure such as water treatment plants to deal with the raw sewage flowing through the Strip.

"But beyond the number of killed and wounded, beyond the damage to infrastructure," he said, "one of the biggest effects of the operation has been on the psyches of the population. One-and-a-half million people lived for three weeks in a permanent state of fear. There was no safe place in Gaza, they were moving from one place to another and didn't know where to run. I think that will have a big impact on the children."

During the war, Grand and the Red Cross team slept in the basement of the sturdier of their two residences. They evacuated many people from bombed-out apartments, at one point coming upon a group of children cowering next to their mothers who had been dead for days. Their movements were limited by the fighting and the IDF's orders; twice their convoy was fired on by troops even though the trip had been fully coordinated, said Grand, adding that the IDF is now investigating the incidents "very seriously."

In his eight years with the Red Cross, Grand, 32, has worked in war zones such as Congo, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast and Afghanistan. "I'm not saying that what happened in Gaza was worse than what happened in those countries, but I personally have never witnessed such destruction as I have here in the last three weeks," he said.

After the UN, the Red Cross is the main international humanitarian agency operating in Gaza and the West Bank, but its reports and public criticisms about Israeli actions toward the Palestinians tend to be much less inflammatory than the UN's; of the dozens of humanitarian agencies and NGOs operating in the territories, the Red Cross probably enjoys the best working relationship with Israeli officials.

KATRINA RITZ, chief of the Red Cross mission here for the last five years, got into Gaza about two weeks into the war, and, in a phone interview last week from her Jerusalem office, gave a very measured view of some of the disputes and moral issues arising out of Operation Cast Lead.

Throughout the fighting, Gazans, humanitarian workers and journalists spoke of terrible shortages of food, medical supplies, fuel and other basics - while Israeli officials denied this, saying that trucks laden with supplies were moving through the Kerem Shalom crossing. After the first week or so, a "humanitarian window" of three or four hours was opened - both the IDF and <u>Hamas</u> ceased fire - so residents could come out of hiding to stock up on food and seek medical attention. In rejecting international pleas for a "humanitarian cease-fire" in the war, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said early on: "There is no need for a humanitarian cease-fire because there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza."

Ritz disagreed. She said that while the supplies were getting to distribution centers, the fighting was so fierce that it was extremely difficult to get the supplies from the centers to the residents. "There are elderly people, handicapped people, people who are living in the ruins and cut off from access who couldn't get to the distribution centers, they couldn't get to the medical clinics. There were people who were bleeding for days. Sometimes we escorted them 10 kilometers to get help. The three-hour or four-hour window between fighting wasn't enough. If you are bleeding heavily, you can't wait for the next humanitarian window. And there were others who were simply afraid to venture out even during a cease-fire."

She gave the IDF credit for getting food and water to a number of families, about 100 people in all, who were trapped in no-go areas. "We made an intervention, and the army escorted these civilians to a safer area, which is exactly what the army in such a situation is required to do. Some of these people had no access to food for eight days. I'm not aware that the army has assisted large populations, but we know that they have assisted some families, and I give them credit for taking our concerns seriously."

The greatest controversies of all, though, are over Israel's claim that <u>Hamas</u> used "human shields" in the fighting and whether Israel deliberately or at least recklessly killed civilians. Regarding <u>Hamas</u>, Ritz says she doesn't know why <u>Hamas</u> fought among civilians and near ostensibly off-limits targets like hospitals and schools - whether because it thought this would protect it from Israeli fire, or because it was indifferent to civilian casualties, or because it was simply fighting wherever it could - but she says <u>Hamas</u> did fight among civilians and that this is prohibited by international law.

But she said the law also requires state armies to use weapons that will cause the least amount of civilian casualties, and that it seemed that Israel had not done this. Noting the Al-Kuds hospital had been shelled although 100 patients and 500 civilians had been taking shelter inside, she said that even though, as Israel alleged, Palestinian gunmen had been firing from the vicinity, "we still say you can't just bomb a hospital, you should warn them that they need to evacuate the wounded and the civilian population because the hospital is being abused by combatants." She said the same principle held true in the IDF shelling of a UN school in which as many as 43 civilians taking shelter were killed.

After this incident, IDF officials maintained that a number of mortar shells were fired at IDF units "from within the Jabalya school. In response to the incoming enemy fire, the forces returned mortar fire to the source." An IDF statement said that the bodies of two *Hamas* operatives, Imad Abu Ashkar and Hassan Abu Ashkar, were among those found at the school.

Noting that Gaza's population density is 75,000 per square kilometer - three times that of Manhattan - Ritz said: "When you have such [military] superiority over your enemy, when you're using tanks and mortars and missiles in such a highly crowded area, it's very difficult [for an army's firepower] to distinguish between who's a civilian and who's not."

There has been great discrepancy between the IDF's estimate of the percentage of civilian casualties - about 10 percent to 15% - and outside estimates, which range to upward of 50%. "We accept what seems to be a general consensus that over one-third of the casualties were civilians," she said.

In her 13 years with the Red Cross, Ritz has also worked in Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, Angola and Eritrea. "What's different about this one is the intensity and duration of the shelling, so the wounded coming into the hospitals tend to have very, very serious injuries. You're not seeing many people with gunshot wounds, they're almost exclusively suffering multiple major traumas from the the blast of the shell."

DR. HARALD VEEN, a Red Cross-affiliated surgeon from Gibraltar, spent eight days working at Gaza's Shifa Hospital. Speaking by phone from Jerusalem on his way to catch a plane home, he said he didn't get much sleep during his stint. "You're simply sitting in the middle of bombardment with shells falling all around, the windows are shaking, and when you think things are quieting down, there's a huge bang. It's the kind of thing nobody gets used to. You can't go out, there's no place in Gaza that's safe."

Aside from four or five previous stints in Gaza, Veen, 49, has worked in war zones including Chad, Somalia, Congo, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. What distinguished the scene at Shifa from those in war zones where the casualty rates were incomparably higher, he said, was that "here we were treating people with the most horrific injuries from all the shelling and bombing, whereas in other countries, they never would have made it to the hospital. Here the injured were being brought in so quickly. There was never a lull, there was a continuous flow of wounded. On average, I took part in 25 to 30 major operations a day.

"There was a lot of maiming, brutal wounds, always a combination blast injuries - cerebral, penetrating, traumatic, legs and arms blown off, blunt injuries and burns, some patients dying on the operating table, corpses brought in in parts.

"We treated many children," he continued. "Many children were brought in dead. That was the hardest part of it. Since I left Gaza a day and a half ago, I've been walking around, and those pictures come back - corpses of children, with big holes in the back, spinal cord damage, paraplegic, traumatic amputations, shrapnel in the brain. We treated a lot of children, **women** and older people. It looked like a cross section of the population."

Outside the operating rooms, it was "chaos," he said. "There was always a lot of family around. The mothers were holding the leftovers of the bodies of their children, and you cannot do anything. You just stand back with respect and silence."

Asked his political opinion of the war, Veen said he didn't have one. "I'm a doctor and I do my little bit to limit the suffering. I'm just frustrated that such conflicts exist. I'm just terribly sad about all the suffering. All I can say is: Politicians, diplomats, don't let people go on throwing bombs. Now I just want to go home and hold my kids."

## (BOX) Waiting at Erez

On Sunday, as Gazans were pulling more than 90 corpses out of the rubble, Israeli doctors and other medical staff waited inside the vast, empty terminal at the Erez crossing for Gaza's war wounded to come in for treatment. It was the first day of the cease-fire, and Israel's "Regional Medical Clinic for the People of Gaza" had just opened to great fanfare, with a news conference, politicians, banners and can-do spirit.

That day, a total of two patients came in. One was an elderly Gazan woman who suffered chest pains on her way through Erez to Jerusalem for her regular chemotherapy treatments. Several hours earlier, her son had collapsed at Erez while waiting for her. The son was revived and sent to Ashkelon's Barzilai Hospital, the mother to Jerusalem's

Augusta Victoria Hospital for her chemotherapy. "Neither of them appeared to have been war casualties," said a medic.

Magen David Adom got the order to build the clinic three days earlier; including time off for Shabbat, it was put together in 24 hours, said MDA director Eli Bin. The clinic is staffed by 30 gynecologists, orthopedists, ophthalmologists, dentists, X-ray and ultrasound technicians, nurses and other medical professionals. It's equipped to handle 30 patients an hour. Asked if there was any cooperation on the Gazan side - still run by *Hamas* - Bin said Israeli officials had "contacted someone in Gaza's Ministry of Health, and he said he supported the idea, that medical care has no nationality or religion."

The foreign press was invited to the opening. Health Minister Ya'acov Ben-Yizri spoke in Hebrew and French. Welfare and Social Services Minister Isaac Herzog, who's handling the government's humanitarian efforts in Operation Cast Lead, denied that this was a public relations stunt. "Israel knows how to fight terror," he said, "but it also knows how to be humane."

In a pep talk to the staff, Bin said, "This is not going to be an easy mission. The eyes of the world are going to be on us. We're going to give these people the best care we possibly can, and they're going to go back to Gaza and be ambassadors for MDA, and show that Israel has nothing whatsoever against the people of Gaza. In our work, we are beyond the conflict."

By Tuesday afternoon, five more patients had come in, including children needing cancer examinations, said MDA spokesman Yeroham Mandola. Anyone who was hurt in the war? "No," he said.

## **Graphic**

4 photos: Destruction in Gaza. 'There is no need for a humanitarian cease-fire because there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza,' said Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni during the operation. Food convoys during Operation Cast Lead. The clinic at the Erez Crossing is staffed by 30 medical professionals and equipped to handle 30 patients an hour. (Credit: AP; Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Israeli shells blast UN headquarters; Residents flee blazing Gaza City

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 16, 2009 Friday

Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 9

Length: 753 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis, Jerusalem

# **Body**

LARGE areas of Gaza City, including United Nations headquarters, were ablaze last night as Israeli ground forces launched their most aggressive assault in the three-week conflict.

The United Nations said three shells containing white phosphorous had struck the main compound belonging to its Relief and Works Agency, setting one building on fire and injuring three UN workers.

The United Nations Secretary-General Ban-ki Moon, who was in Tel Aviv in a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni when he heard of the attack on the UN's headquarters, expressed outrage.

According to the head of UN operations in Gaza, John Ging, the compound's warehouse and workshop were burning out of control.

"It's a very big fire, and we're not able to get it under control at the moment," Mr Ging said.

With gun battles going on around the facility, he said, "the emergency services are not able to get to us."

The UN announced it had suspended all operations in Gaza.

Other buildings reportedly shelled included the headquarters of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the al-Aqsa hospital, and a building housing the offices of Reuters news agency.

The Israeli offensive came after <u>Hamas</u> militants launched about 20 Qassam rockets into Israel, despite reports that a ceasefire deal was near.

One rocket scored a direct hit on a home in the Israeli town of Sderot, five kilometres from Gaza.

Thousands of Gaza City residents were fleeing their homes after the latest attacks, adding panic to the already chaotic mood that has overtaken the city since the start of Israel's Operation Cast Lead on December 27.

Backed by helicopter gunships, tanks and heavy guns, Israeli troops thrust deeper into the city than ever before to seek out *Hamas* fighters.

Eyewitness accounts said the shelling of the densely populated urban area was relentless.

Israeli shells blast UN headquarters Residents flee blazing Gaza City

Video footage from a Reuters camera in central Gaza showed sustained artillery fire from the edge of the city for several hours. Shells were exploding in downtown areas and long machine-gun bursts echoed off the cramped housing blocks.

Much of the fighting was in the Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood, and tanks and bulldozers rolled into a neighbourhood park, apparently seizing it as a kind of command centre. Masked gunmen ran towards the areas under fire carrying bags containing unidentified objects.

Residents in pyjamas fled their homes. Some people were pushing elderly parents in wheelchairs.

Others were stopping journalists' armoured cars or ambulances pleading for someone to take them to safety.

There were no indications of how many people had been killed in the latest attacks. The last death toll figures released by the Palestinian Ministry of Health indicated that 1033 Palestinians had been killed, including 322 children and 76 *women*, and 4850 people wounded.

Israeli Air Force planes were also continuing nightly bombing raids on Gaza, hitting about 70 targets yesterday.

Meanwhile, senior Israeli Defence official General Amos Gilad arrived in Cairo last night to discuss Egypt's plan for stopping arms smuggling into the Gaza Strip and achieving a ceasefire.

<u>Hamas</u> wants a full withdrawal of Israeli troops as part of a ceasefire, as well as a detailed plan for the opening of border crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip.

Egypt and Israel want forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party to take control of the border between Egypt and Gaza.

General Gilad was scheduled to return to Jerusalem early today to present the Egyptian plan to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defence Minister Ehud Barack and Ms Livni.

If the Egyptian plan meets their approval, it will be brought for discussion to the Israeli security cabinet.

Israel is also pushing a plan that would involve building a perimeter fence that encloses the border city of Rafah, half of which is in Gaza and the other half in Egypt.

Densely populated on both sides, Rafah is a hub for smuggling arms and consumer goods into Gaza. Israeli security officials believe smuggling can only be stopped by enclosing the whole of Rafah inside a security fence policed by Egypt.

"Between Rafah and Cairo is the Sinai desert, so if you build the fence outside Rafah, it's very easy to see what's going in and out, and it's impossible to tunnel under the fence and into the desert without being seen," General Giora Eiland, a former director of Israel's National Security Council, told The Age.

Before Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, General Eiland was responsible for preventing smuggling into Gaza.

# Graphic

PHOTO: A Palestinian girl stands in her damaged home after an Israeli military strike in Gaza City. PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



## Vent line

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia) January 24, 2009, Saturday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 425 words

## **Body**

- -I'm sure Hugo Chavez and all the rest of the communists will be glad that Barack Obama and the Democrats are pushing socialized medicine on Americans. Wake up. We're free. We're not communists.
- -I belong to a union, and we had to give back things. What's wrong with the teachers? They shouldn't ask for an increase in pay this year. What's the matter with them? They're nothing but a bunch of crybabies.
- -Want to save electricity? Unplug your TV.
- -When you receive an envelope from Publishers Clearing House telling you that someone in your area with your initials is a winner, does everyone in your area with your initials get the same envelope telling them they are winners, too?
- -I'd like to know what can be done about these light sentences judges impose on child abusers when some people get more time for hurting an animal. Something should be done about this.
- -To the person who called Bush an inept, corrupt, evil person: Judge not, lest ye be judged with the same judgment.
- -Everyone is worried about the economy, but the government is making people buy new TVs or buy boxes. It's just another way for the government to get extra money. It's not right.
- -It is no one else's responsibility for losing weight than yours. Blaming other people for your problems is what's wrong with the country. You will get nowhere until you take it upon yourself to fix your problems.
- -George Bush was so good to Obama through this transition. He was a lot better than Clinton was when he came into office. Please have a little respect for the office of president.
- -If you fire rockets from a mosque, hospital or school, and use your <u>women</u> and children as a cowardly shield, then don't cry and whine for them when they are killed. Wherever <u>Hamas</u> fires rockets from should be leveled.
- -I just read where the Democrats in the House have decided to take a giant step toward socialist medicine...
- -If you fire rockets from a mosque, hospital or school, and use your <u>women</u> and children as a cowardly shield, then don't cry and whine for them when they are killed. Wherever <u>Hamas</u> fires rockets from should be leveled. End of story.
- -People living in the vicinity of Greenbrier Street and the Northgate area should be aware there are wild dogs attacking deer and a few other animals. Pet owners, be careful. These dogs are dangerous.

## Vent line

-I'm a poor little white West Virginia girl, and I didn't vote for Obama - and race had nothing to do with it. Today, I watched the first inauguration of my life and I am thrilled to see a black man become president. This was truly a historic moment.

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



# <u>Palestinians seek to open war crimes case against Israel - Correction</u> Appended

The International Herald Tribune February 12, 2009 Thursday

# Correction Appended

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 776 words

Byline: Marlise Simons - The New York Times Media Group

**Dateline: THE HAGUE** 

# **Body**

The Palestinian Authority is pressing the International Criminal Court in The Hague to investigate potential war crimes committed by Israeli commanders during the recent war in Gaza.

The Palestinian minister of justice, Ali Kashan, first raised the issue during a visit to the court's chief prosecutor late last month, and he and other officials are expected back again in The Hague this week, court officials said.

Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor, initially said he lacked the legal basis to examine the case. But since the Palestinian Authority signed a commitment Jan. 22 recognizing the court's authority, the prosecutor has appeared more open to studying the Palestinian claim.

"The prosecutor has agreed to explore if he could have jurisdiction in the case," said Béatrice Le Fraper, the director of jurisdiction for the prosecution. She cautioned that accepting jurisdiction would not automatically set off a criminal investigation. "We are still very far from any decision. This is just the beginning of a long process," she said.

The prosecutor has received more than 200 requests to look into war crimes during the recent fighting between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> militants. They include accusations from individuals and organizations that Israel has violated the rules of war by targeting civilians and nonmilitary buildings, and by using weapons like white phosphorus illegally.

"Quite a few groups have sent experts to the region, people doing forensic work, studying explosives and other weapons," she said. "The prosecutor can look at all open sources at this stage."

Should a criminal investigation begin, the prosecution would send its own investigators, who would look into possible violations by both sides, including <u>Hamas</u>. But even as envisioned by the Palestinian Authority, the case faces numerous hurdles, specialists say.

The court here is the world's first permanent international criminal court, created to examine war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It can prosecute any citizen from the 108 countries that are currently members of

## Palestinians seek to open war crimes case against Israel

the court. The United Nations Security Council can bring cases irrespective of the nationality of the accused or the location of the crime.

Israel is not a member, and the Palestinian territories, not being recognized as a sovereign nation, appear not to fulfill the requirements. But as a remedy, the Palestinian Authority has taken a first step by presenting a declaration to the court, formally accepting jurisdiction for "an indeterminate duration" over acts "committed on the territory of Palestine" since July 1, 2002, the date when the court's authority began.

Lawyers say such a declaration allows for joining the court on an ad hoc basis and has already been allowed before, in the case of Sierra Leone, which is not a member. But while the Palestinian declaration has been recorded at the court, its validity is far from settled. The big question, lawyers at the court say, is whether the Palestinian Authority can grant jurisdiction in any form, and if so, how that will be defined.

The issue has raised the question of whether Palestinian officials hope to obtain an implicit recognition of statehood through the court.

The court "will not use the term statehood," said a legal expert close to the case who asked not to be named because the issue was still being decided. "The court will avoid defining whether Palestine is a state. The decision will be only if Palestine can be admitted for the purposes of the court statute."

The Palestinian officials visiting The Hague in coming days are expected to try to demonstrate that they have been allowed to sign other international treaties and conventions and can therefore be accepted as a party to the 1998 Rome Treaty that founded the court.

Le Fraper, the director of jurisdiction, said her office would call on international experts to help settle such questions.

Another unknown is whether the Palestinian Authority can bring a case involving jurisdiction in Gaza. The authority is run by Fatah, but its rival faction, <u>Hamas</u>, has declared itself the only authority in Gaza and removed Fatah from the territory.

More than 1,300 Palestinians died in the recent war in Gaza, many of them <u>women</u> and children. Israel has insisted that it respected international law during the fighting. Israel has also said that it will investigate its attacks on UN schools and headquarters and the use of unlawful weapons in urban areas, including the use of white phosphorus.

Human rights groups and several UN officials have called for an independent international inquiry into actions by both sides.

The New York Times

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The New York Times

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## Correction

An article on Thursday said incorrectly that Sierra Leone had been allowed to join the International Criminal Court on an ad hoc basis. The country that joined was Ivory Coast.

Correction-Date: February 18, 2009 Wednesday

Load-Date: February 27, 2009



# Set the people free; Public take to streets against conflict

Middlesbrough Evening Gazette
January 19, 2009 Monday
FIN Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 13

Length: 425 words

**Byline:** SARAH JUDD

# **Body**

HUNDREDS of Teessiders united in protest at the weekend, against terrorist atrocities in Gaza.

Protesters brought parts of Middlesbrough to a standstill, as they marched from the entrance to Albert Park on Linthorpe Road to the town hall.

As cries of "Free, free Palestine" filled the air during Saturday's march, reports of Israeli forces pounding dozens of *Hamas* targets - including a UN school packed with refugees fleeing the fighting - hit the headlines.

The fresh strikes came as the army kept up the pressure on Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> ahead of a crucial vote on whether to end Israel's punishing three-week-long campaign against Gaza's rulers.

Peter Smith, chair of Teesside Against the War, who co-ordinated the march, said: "When people are watching these events, they have a choice to make.

"They can either stay in their homes and remain silent, or they can come out and stand with the Palestinians."

Joanna Morris, 28, from Acklam, attended the protest to "show solidarity and try to raise awareness" of what is happening in Gaza.

She said: "Too many people are saying, 'it doesn't matter,' or 'it's happening miles away and it's nothing to do with us.'

"If it was happening here, I would like to think that the rest of the world would take notice."

Alex Smith, 25, added: "The British Government should at least speak up about it instead of being silent on the issue.

"It just seems to be that every couple of years, Israel is able to do this and the Government never seem to be that forward-thinking in trying to get a permanent ceasefire over the issue."

Jean Davison, who travelled from Bishop Auckland to support the event with husband Reg, said: "It's a horrible thing the Israelis are doing.

"A lot of children are being killed and you just can't believe that it's really happening."

## Set the people free Public take to streets against conflict

Reg added: "They are war criminals and if they can get away with it, anyone can do anything." The retired couple, both 70, attended a similar event in Durham last Saturday.

Naeem Umarjee, from Thornaby, said: "We want to show solidarity to our brothers and sisters."

Zulekha Umarjee added: "There is so much cruelty in Gaza.

"Why do they kill innocent people who are mostly women and children? It's against humanity."

North-east MEP Stephen Hughes and Frank Cook MP, were among the speakers highlighting the brutal assault on Gaza at the end of the march.

Teesside Against the War is planning a range of activities in protest against events in Gaza, with more information on possible debates, rallies and film shows to follow.

# **Graphic**

ANGER: Marchers filled the town centre to express anger at the Gaza conflict, left and below Pictures by PETER REIMANN

CHOICE: Campaigner Peter Smith, above

Load-Date: January 19, 2009



## Foreign ministers call on Israel to allow in more aid

Irish Examiner

January 27, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: WORLD

Length: 454 words

## **Body**

The EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana is heading to the region to help with a peace initiative devised by Egypt and will meet the newly appointed US envoy George Mitchell.

The union's development commissioner Louis Michel, caused consternation in some quarters when he held <u>Hamas</u> responsible for the 1,300 civilian casualties in Gaza. He was one of the first foreign dignitaries to visit Gaza and witness the devastation. He announced a EUR 58 million emergency aid package for the Palestinians in addition to the EUR 3m announced last month for Gaza.

The EU is the largest donor to the bankrupt strip, keeping schools, hospitals and essential infrastructure running.

But Ireland's Foreign Minister Micheál Martin said several countries had questioned the EU's continuous rebuilding of infrastructure in Gaza only for it to be bombed again in Israeli attacks.

However, he said all 27 member states were agreed on the absolute necessity to open the crossings into Gaza to give unimpeded regular access.

"A week since the conflict ended, there are only 123 trucks a day going through, while 800 need to get through," he said.

Ireland and Belgium asked for a full investigation into some of the most serious incidents that would result in those responsible being held to account, especially into incidents like the bombing of UN stores and schools.

Mr Martin said an independent and objective investigation was needed into the circumstances as the shelling of a small area with one and a half million people. "There were far too many children and <u>women</u> and innocent civilians killed," he said.

He added that the strategic value of Israel's defence of its people against rocket launches from Gaza was in question since <u>Hamas</u> had not been finished, there was a danger that they were more radical now and a lasting peace and agreement on a two-state solution appeared to be no nearer.

## Foreign ministers call on Israel to allow in more aid

For these reasons it was now very important to create conditions on the ground to move towards a permanent ceasefire and peace agreement, and this would be helped by opening the crossings and getting the necessary aid in.

Mr Martin received little support for his call and instead the ministers issued a statement saying it reminded all parties to the conflict to fully respect human rights and comply with international humanitarian law.

They added that they would follow closely investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law and noted the statement by UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon.

While initially the UN chief during a visit to Gaza last week had called for an investigation especially into the bombing of UN buildings this was changed when he returned to New York to say that Israel should investigate in the first place.

Load-Date: January 27, 2009



# Antisemitic Incidents Rise in France as Worry Increases About Ethnic Divisions

The Forward January 30, 2009

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**Section:** News; Pg. 3 **Length:** 778 words

## **Body**

For two weekends in a row, as Israel's operation in Gaza raged, the flags of Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u> flew in street demonstrations in Paris and other French cities.

During the recent violence, antisemitic incidents rose to levels that have not been seen in France since the second Intifadah in 2000 and again when Israel moved into the West Bank in 2002.

Yet, while Jews fretted over the increase in attacks several of them aimed at the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic group many of the French saw something else: The marchers at pro-Palestinian rallies were mostly Muslims, and those at pro-Israel demonstrations were mostly Jews.

France is a deeply secular country, where the overarching national identity is supposed to subdue ethnic and religious affiliations. The French Republican model is egalitarian, and it embraces a strict separation of church and state. But with the Gaza war, the specter of communautarism the term the French use to describe strong ethnic or religious identification is seen by many as a bigger threat to the national fabric than the rise in antisemitic attacks.

What the average Frenchmen sees is that a faraway conflict is creating communautarism here, said Madani Cheurfa, an expert with the center for research in political science in Paris. And while the authorities are careful to tamp down its violent expressions, they don't know how to deal with it on a broader level. They celebrate diversity, but they don't know how to handle it.

France has the largest Jewish and Muslim communities in Europe. Moreover, its Muslims are mostly Arab, in contrast to Britain, where most hail from the Indian subcontinent.

While the previous wave of antisemitic incidents at the beginning of the second Intifada sparked criticism among Jews over the lack of reaction by French authorities, Jewish community leaders this time hailed the prompt and firm reaction by the government of French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

But the current incidents have prompted soul-searching about the future of a Republican model that is already under assault by a lagging social and economic integration of the latest wave of mostly African immigrants.

At the same time, the demonstrations revived concerns about the willingness of French Jews to support Israel, even during an operation that the French public largely sees as excessively brutal.

Between the beginning of Israel's military action against <u>Hamas</u> on December 27, 2008, and the cease-fire on January 19, the number of antisemitic incidents reached 66, a tally that was recorded by the Jewish community and validated by the Interior Ministry. In all of 2007, 261 such attacks were recorded.

Several attacks around Paris were launched against Chabad targets. In addition to the firebombing of a synagogue in the Saint-Denis suburb of Paris, the car of a rabbi in the neighboring area of Aubervilliers was torched on the first day of the Israeli assault. The rabbi of a Chabad center in Vincennes, an eastern suburb of Paris, received a threatening letter January 12.

You have killed Palestinian children and <u>women</u>, we will do it here with your kids, the letter read in poor French, according to a copy provided to the Forward.

The rabbi, Joseph Taïeb, filed a complaint with the police, mostly because he wanted to show the letter's author that There is a response.

We need to make sure there is no crescendo and that there is a response, Taïeb said in an interview in his small office.

What's strange about this is a quiet area where there are few Muslims, and we don't have problems with anyone, he said.

Although most of the recent incidents involved attacks on Jews, there was one case in which young militants of the Jewish Defense League roughed up two teenagers of North African descent in Paris.

More broadly, while most mainstream commentators have little sympathy for <u>Hamas</u>, some have questioned the alignment of French Jewry on Israel. For instance, they have criticized the claim by Richard Prasquier, head of the Jewish umbrella organization CRIF, that 95% of French Jews supported Israel's actions.

Observers expect the number of antisemitic incidents to decline if the situation in the Middle East improves. But the lingering effects of the ethno-religious identification are expected to stay. They have already prompted a flurry of news articles about the dangers of France importing the conflict, the fear of communautarism, and the need to find ways not only to build bridges between Jews and Muslims, but also to consolidate the country's egalitarian Republican model.

# **Graphic**

IMAGE: jac ques demarthonProtesters in Paris:Demonstrators gather outside the OperaGarnier on January 17 to protest Israel's military action againstHamas in Gaza.; /afp/gety images

Load-Date: February 2, 2009



## <u>Letters</u>

# The Jerusalem Post March 16, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1161 words

Byline: Judith Guedalia, Danny Levitt, Mark L. Levinson, Matthias Kuentzel, Emanuel Krasovsky, Monty M. Zion,

Lars Nilsson, Bo-Inge Svensson, Claire Ben-Alexander

Highlight: Readers' Letters

## **Body**

#### J'accuse

Sir, - I accuse myself for not getting out of my chair in Jerusalem and running to Kiryat Malachi to give Gila Katsav a hug. J'accuse the talking heads on TV and radio for not mentioning her suffering.

J'accuse all the <u>women</u> who went to Kiryat Malachi for not standing up for the most abused woman in that hall - Gila Katsav.

J'accuse the "insulted" titans of the press for not looping their arms through Gila's and helping her leave that room where the fire and brimstone rained over her, running dry rivulets, burning her tearless eyes ("Katsav's 2-hour rant yields no bombshell," March 13).

Last and most importantly: J'accuse this travesty of sound and light for taking even an infinitesimal amount of time and energy away from helping Gilad Schalit come home.

JUDITH GUEDALIA

Jerusalem

That nagging urge

to murder again

Sir, - In "Time to pay <u>Hamas</u>'s price" (March 12) Larry Derfner asserted: "We have nothing more to lose." Yet "Half the cabinet ready for Gilad deal" (March 13) noted that "According to Almagor [Terror Victims Association] 180 Israelis have been killed by terrorists released in past prisoner exchanges."

More Israelis will almost certainly be murdered by some of the 1,450 terrorists <u>Hamas</u> wants released in exchange for Gilad Schalit. Is this "nothing more to lose"?

Like every Jewish Israeli, I want Gilad back with his family; and if I was in their position I would be doing exactly the same as they are doing. However, our government has an overriding duty to look after all Israelis. In my opinion, the price being asked is too high.

I am not against the release of so-called security prisoners to get Gilad back, but they must not include those serving life-terms for murdering our citizens. And that includes Marwan Barghouti.

DANNY LEVITT

Netanya

Out of touch

Sir, - "Should expats vote?" asked your March 15 editorial, and presented a few reservations.

But one problem it left unmentioned arises from the dynamic nature of Israeli politics.

A person who left the country a couple of years ago can find that the ballots now represent parties with new names; and even the old names may not stand for exactly what they used to politically.

How is a citizen off in Kansas City supposed to know the policy differences between Habayit Hayehudi and the National Union - from watching CNN?

Not only is it more difficult overseas to form an intelligent and sensitive opinion about the issues, it is also more difficult to turn that opinion into an intelligent vote.

MARK L. LEVINSON

Herzliya

Ignoring the

earthquake

Sir, - Re "Berlin conference didn't lump Islamophobia with anti-Semitism" (Right of Reply, Yehuda Bauer, March 5):

I am very grateful that Elie Wiesel took a position in The Jerusalem Post on the dispute about the Berlin Center for Anti-Semitism Research. He spoke carefully, in the conditional: "If indeed the Berlin Center downplays the Iranian anti-Semitic threat, it surely is deplorable."

The Berlin Center is an important public institution with an international reputation. It should, especially in Germany, be addressing Iran's anti-Semitic threat energetically, so that politicians and industry understand why the increase in German exports to Iran in 2008 is inexcusable.

In this area, the center has failed. To date, it has not published a single public statement on Iran's anti- Semitic threat. Whenever its director, Prof. Wolfgang Benz, distances himself from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, he does so in general terms that do not address his anti-Semitism.

To this day, the Iranian threat has not appeared in the center's numerous projects and classes. The terms "Ahmadinejad," "Hizbullah" and "*Hamas*" are not mentioned on the center's home page - as if their policies had nothing to do with the educational work of a "Center for Anti- Semitism Research." This is comparable to a group of earthquake researchers purposely ignoring an impending earthquake.

Does the center intend to change any of this? The answer that Prof. Benz gave to this question when I asked him on December 8, 2008 was not very encouraging: He saw no need for justification nor change.

## MATTHIAS KUENTZEL

## Hamburg

The writer is author of 'Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the roots of 9/11' (also published in Hebrew last year by Koren) and on the board of directors of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East.

Unhelpfully shrill

Sir, - Rabbi Abraham Cooper and Dr. Harold Brackman may be correct and insightful in their analysis of Sweden's attitude toward Jews and Israel ("Sweden's anti-Israel apartheid policy is about more than sport," March 9), but neither the shrill tone of their article nor their interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the recent Davis Cup tennis match between the Israeli and Swedish teams helps their argument.

The match, after all, was not cancelled (as it happened, the Israeli team won); and by banning fans, the Malmo City Council punished the Swedish sportsmen no less than it did the Israelis.

Calling the public safety rationale "nonsense" hardly makes sense - ironically, the writers themselves unintentionally offered proof for why the reasoning was sound: "The few dozen who attacked the police vans for the benefit of media coverage would have tossed the same projectiles had the stadium been packed with tennis fans."

Had these projectiles hit (our) players on the pitch, the consequences would have been disconcerting at best, traumatic or even tragic at worst.

**EMANUEL KRASOVSKY** 

Tel Aviv

Sir, - I have little doubt that the anti-Israel fanatics would have been able to subject our sportsmen to great risk of significant physical harm - and the hurling of projectiles would have forced the abandonment of the match. The actions of the Malmo authorities allowed our players to achieve a great and meritorious victory, and we should be thankful for this, whatever the underlying sentiments.

MONTY M. ZION

Tel Mond

Swedish support

Sir, - I'm a 53-year-old chef in the south of Sweden and I support you all the way in the war against *Hamas*.

The problem as I see it is that only a fraction of the Swedish population knows the history of Israel, which to the best of my knowledge started around 1896 or something when Jewish organizations started to buy land.

If people here in Sweden, and perhaps in all of Europe, learned a little bit of the history creating the State of Israel, maybe they would think twice times before they support terrorists.

LARS NILSSON

Baystad, Sweden

Sir, - I'm ashamed of the way you and your tennis players have been unjustly treated here in Sweden. I believe and hope that the majority of the Swedish population agree with me.

**BO-INGE SVENSSON** 

Uppsala

Fly and bye

Sir, - As a retired nurse, no longer a taxpayer, my sympathies go to the country's workers, whose hard-earned money is being used to help finance multi-millionaire Rafi Eitan's eight-day "business" trip to London ("Costly farewell trip for outgoing minister," March 10).

I'm glad I'm not contributing to this outrage.

CLAIRE BEN-ALEXANDER

Kiryat Bialik

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Israel shields troops from prosecution

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B6

Length: 445 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: AZBET ABADRAPOH, Gaza Strip

# **Body**

As the UN investigates whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month, Israel decided Sunday all military personnel who fought in the <u>Hamas</u>-run Palestinian enclave will receive state protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defence Forces have been made by the UN and such agencies as Amnesty International.

Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli forces.

One is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp and about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border. This weekend, as residents combed through scores of flattened homes, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadallah said as a crowd swarmed her and an associate. "It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to <u>women</u> and children."

Piecing together who did what, when and where, will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled. For Awadallah, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far is a mother who died while breastfeeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Pensioner Ahmed Muhammad Baduan's street looked as if an earthquake had hit it. When his wife, Halima, was hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel fired from a tank he went outside and told an Israeli in the next street that his wife

## Israel shields troops from prosecution

was wounded inside. But one of three tanks parked about 50 metres from his home fired, he said, bringing his already battered house down, killing his wife.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law. While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war, the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they could not be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

# **Graphic**

Colour Photo: INVESTIGATION: Survivors comb the rubble in one of several hundred homes destroyed by Israeli forces during its three-week war against <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza. Azbet Abadrapoh is one of at least four communities where the UN is investigating whether Israel forces may have committed war crimes.;

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



## <u>Letters</u>

# The Jerusalem Post

February 23, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1103 words

**Byline:** Yonatan Silver, Israel and Blossom Rubin, Natan Ben Yehuda (Nathan Borsky), Josh Hasten, Gershon Copperman, Dr. Esor Ben-Sorek, Jeremy Weiss, Robert Klein, Martin D. Stern, Peter Simpson, John Eason

Highlight: Readers' Letters

## **Body**

Lentils and pasta...

Sir, - Re "Visiting US congressmen say Israel has to change 'counterproductive' Gaza policies," February 22:

Brian Baird and Keith Ellison maintain that Israel should lift all import restrictions, including on such items as pasta and lentils.

Maybe these congressmen have a point. Perhaps the Palestinians persist in trying to kill us because of a lack of pasta. After all, I once heard a perfectly rational person calmly state that he would kill for a nice bowl of fettuccine.

Therefore, I propose starting a grassroots Pasta For Peace movement in which Gaza's leadership will agree to stop spending food money on a massive terrorist infrastructure. In return, it can wallow in more noodles than it ever envisioned in its wildest dreams.

#### YONATAN SILVER

## Jerusalem

Sir, - The two visiting congressmen's plea for Israel to lift the ban on lentils and pasta is a pathetic commentary on the state of Congressional fact-finding missions.

Where is the condemnation of the more than 7,000 Kassam and Grad rockets aimed at innocent Israelis? Hundreds of smuggling tunnels have ferried tons of illegal arms, rockets and missiles. Perhaps there is not as much profit in smuggling lentils and pasta.

## ISRAEL AND BLOSSOM RUBIN

### Beit Shemesh

Sir, - What audacity, what chutzpa, what falsehoods.

Why don't Brian Baird and Keith Ellison ask <u>Hamas</u> what they have done with the millions, or is it billions, they've received for "lentils and pasta?" Why don't the congressmen wonder why <u>Hamas</u> found it necessary to destroy their

own people's lives and arm themselves with rockets they've been firing into Israel from land that was fully vacated? Why don't they ask members of *Hamas* why they dedicate their lives to the destruction of Israel?

What's worse, why doesn't our own government respond forcefully to Baird and Ellison, who are predisposed to blind bias?

NATAN BEN YEHUDA

(NATHAN BORSKY)

Ra'anana/Woodstock, NY

...for Taliban, too?

Sir, - I wonder if US Congressmen Brian Baird and Keith Ellison are planning a fact-finding mission to Afghanistan to see how Taliban children are coping with the US military presence in their country.

If their visit to Gaza reflects new US attitudes and policies toward Israel, it's going to be a rocky four years.

JOSH HASTEN

Jerusalem

Chelm-on-the-sea

Sir, - While Gilad Schalit is in captivity with <u>Hamas</u> and the whereabouts of other soldiers remains unknown ("A hostage situation," February 22), the Arab murderers in our jails get visits from their families and from the Red Cross. Marwan Barghouti was actually permitted to take a degree from the Open University.

If it weren't so tragic, I would say we're living in Chelm.

**GERSHON COPPERMAN** 

Petah Tikva/Dublin

Is Lieberman so bad?

Sir, - Why all the Lieberman bashing?

Avigdor Lieberman tells it as it is and as it should be: "Bli ne'emanut ain ezrachut"... without loyalty there can be no citizenship.

His challenge is not only to Israeli Arabs, but also to haredi Jews. No military service. No national service. No wars have been won or borders secured by Talmudists. Israelis are obligated to demonstrate complete loyalty to the nation or risk the loss of certain privileges.

Lieberman has a view that offers hope to those in need of hope, people like the 300,000 non-Halachic Jews who cannot have a rabbinically-sanctioned marriage in Israel. His proposal of a civil union is a solution to a very unhappy situation.

Why did Lieberman succeed in getting so many votes from Israeli-born youth and soldiers? Because he represents the future.

DR. ESOR BEN-SOREK

Rishon Lezion

...looks like it

Sir, - Avigdor Lieberman should seriously consider the fact that this is a Jewish state and as such its laws should be in accordance with Jewish law.

The conversion process is designed to be lengthy and difficult because becoming Jewish is a lifelong commitment to living one's life as a Jew, and is not intended as a tool to enable people to come and live in Israel.

There is already a significant lack of knowledge of even basic Judaism among many Israelis, and I fear what would happen to Israeli Jewish society should Lieberman's dreams become reality.

#### **JEREMY WEISS**

Tel Aviv

Halacha is 'more just'

Sir, - Yisrael Perry stole the equivalent of NIS 800 million from Holocaust survivors and Israel's Supreme Court punished him with 10 years in jail ("Lawyer who defrauded Holocaust survivors to be jailed immediately," February 19).

The Torah mandates that thieves pay back the entire amount they stole, plus an equal amount as a fine and deterrent. Therefore, if the Supreme Court had used Halacha to determine the fine, Perry would have to pay NIS 1.6 billion, and directly to his victims, not the State of Israel - which could still fine Perry for the cost of the police investigation and the trial.

As for the jail sentence, Halacha calls for no jail time, which is cruel both to the thief (who imprisoned nobody) and to society (which has to foot the bill for incarceration).

The Halachic system of torts and damages is much more just, logical and humane than the modern Western approach.

## **ROBERT KLEIN**

Beersheba

Electoral reform redux

Sir, - Further to the correspondence arising from Amnon Rubinstein's proposals to reform the obvious shortcomings of the Israeli political system ("Plenty of brakes but no engine," February 18):

Perhaps a first step would be to increase the threshold before any party can have representation in the Knesset, to, say, 10 percent of the votes cast. This would ensure that all parties are relatively broad-based, rather than single-issue factions.

MARTIN D. STERN

Salford, England

Tennis, anyone?

Sir, - Andy Roddick is to be applauded for boycotting the Men's Dubai tennis tournament this week ("Roddick steps up for Pe'er," February 22). But would this have been necessary if organizations like Sony-Ericsson and Barclays Bank, the tournament sponsors, had spoken up about the UAE barring Shahar Pe'er from last week's <u>women</u>'s tournament?

Thank goodness there are still some decent people who are not afraid to publicly show they know right from wrong.

PETER SIMPSON

Jerusalem

Is there a way out?

Sir, - While other places in the world (e.g., Kashmir, Kurdistan, Korea, just to name three) also defy solutions, it's always the Middle East and the so-called Holy Land that grab world attention.

I've always been intrigued by Biblical prophecy. If the best brains in the world can't solve the Palestine conundrum, which has been ongoing since 1947, maybe there's something to this apocalyptic stuff.

President Obama entered office with a lot of goodwill. Let's hope he can do more than simply kick the can down the road!

JOHN EASON, Victoria, BC, Canada

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Obama shouldn't forget the democrats

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

April 10, 2009 Friday

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Length: 946 words

Byline: Rayyan al-Shawaf

## **Body**

Barack Obama recently addressed Iran's people and rulers in a televised address. The US president, who has been accused by detractors of being soft on the Islamic Republic, reaffirmed longstanding US opposition to the Iranian regime's sponsorship of terrorism and pursuit of arms, alongside his respect for Iranian culture and its achievements.

Barack Obama recently addressed Iran's people and rulers in a televised address. The US president, who has been accused by detractors of being soft on the Islamic Republic, reaffirmed longstanding US opposition to the Iranian regime's sponsorship of terrorism and pursuit of arms, alongside his respect for Iranian culture and its achievements. While his skepticism about Iranian behavior allayed the fears of those worried about Obama's supposed ingenuousness regarding Iran's leadership, it remains unclear whether the new administration will adopt a similarly unequivocal stance toward other despotic Middle Eastern regimes.

Iran's case has always differed from that of its many undemocratic neighbors, due to the rupture between the United States and Iran following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the subsequent hostage crisis involving American diplomats, the Islamic regime's support of terrorism, and its pursuit of nuclear technology. As a result, it remains unlikely that the Obama administration will significantly alter the firm US line toward Tehran. What may happen in light of this, however, is that President George W. Bush's initial "tough love" approach to undemocratic allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt, on the wane since the disastrous aftermath of the Iraq war, will disappear. Similarly, the US might ease up its support for democratic and moderate political forces in Lebanon and Iraq, in addition to the Palestinian Authority, and consider making concessions to Syria.

This might appear sensible. Whether in Palestine or Lebanon, America's allies have lost ground in recent years. In Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> mounted a coup against the Palestinian Authority, while in Lebanon Hizbullah overran western Beirut last May in response to a pair of government decisions the party opposed. However, should the Obama administration go so far as to modify the strategy of supporting American allies in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Territories? If so, the consequences would be grave, not least because of the inevitable increase in the power of Hizbullah and <u>Hamas</u>, as well as of radical Shiite parties in Iraq, all backed by Iran.

As for making concession to Syria on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which aims to uncover those responsible for the assassination of the former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri, that too would pose several problems. Not

## Obama shouldn't forget the democrats

only would such as step be immoral, it would allow Syria to avoid taking any decisive decision on distancing itself from its ally Iran.

There would also be something deeply ironic about a significant shift in US policy toward Lebanon and Iraq, as upcoming elections in both countries may well result in increased gains for democratic and moderate coalitions there. In Lebanon, where parliamentary elections will be held in June, the March 14 alliance might benefit from defections in the electorate of Michel Aoun, who has allied himself with Hizbullah. And in Iraq, where recent provincial elections showed a decline in support for extremist sectarian parties, the national elections scheduled for next December will likely continue this trend. Indeed, the democratization and moderation of ideology that American neoconservatives thought would quickly follow in Iraq following that country's liberation in 2003, might only fully manifest itself now that the neocons are out of power.

The neocons undoubtedly fouled up the critical post-war period in Iraq. It is also exasperating that they did not distinguish between Israel's legitimate refusal to deal directly with a <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian government and its illegitimate embargo of the Palestinians of Gaza afterward. Additionally, the neocons failed to appreciate the nuances of Lebanese politics, and may have exacerbated an already charged situation in Lebanon, just as they seem to have done in the Palestinian territories, by encouraging adventurism on the part of their allies.

Yet none of this means that the democratic moderates in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories should now be ignored and left to the tender mercies of their Iranian-backed rivals. Similarly, while the neocons cynically overlooked Moammar al-Gadhafi's totalitarianism once he gave up on Libya's unconventional weapons program; and while they backtracked on pushing for democratic reforms in Egypt and Saudi Arabia once they saw that Islamists had emerged as the election winners in Iraq and later in the Palestinian areas, the argument that Middle Easterners deserve freedom and equal rights as much as Westerners do remains cogent and - perhaps surprisingly to some - inherently liberal.

With this in mind, the Obama administration would be wise to retain certain aspects of neocon thought by supporting its democratic allies, without repeating the neocons' mistakes. The Middle East, after all, is a mess. However, were Obama to shepherd the Palestinian entity through to statehood (instead of just paying lip service to the idea of a Palestinian state), pressure undemocratic US allies Saudi Arabia and Egypt to democratize and grant greater rights to <u>women</u> and non-Muslims, and continue to support democratic moderates in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories, the region's fortunes might finally improve.

Rayyan al-Shawaf is a freelance writer and reviewer based in Beirut. He wrote this commentary for THE DAILY STAR.

Load-Date: April 10, 2009



## PALESTINIANS MUST END HATRED

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

March 15, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 Times Publishing Company All Rights Reserved **Section:** PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 2P; YOUR LETTERS

Length: 1243 words

## **Body**

Returning to ruin in Gaza - March 8, Perspective story

When I saw the picture on the front page of the March 8 Perspective section - a beautiful Palestinian family standing in front of their destroyed home - I had mixed emotions. I was very saddened for their loss but happy to see that they all survived and were physically unharmed.

Blaming Israel for defending its people who were experiencing horror every day for many years by the missiles flying from Gaza into Israeli towns where defenseless <u>women</u> and children were running for their lives into shelters for protection is wrong. Did this beautiful family ever protest against those actions of <u>Hamas</u>? I wonder. After many warnings, Israel responded and Gaza paid the price. Israeli concessions, like giving up Gaza, led to more extremism and terrorism.

Peace can be achieved first and foremost by removing hatred toward Israel from the Palestinian children's textbooks and demonstrating against launching missiles toward Israel. They need to analyze the problem thoroughly and truthfully, change the attitude of hatred toward the Jewish state and recognize it's there to stay. Then the beautiful family will know no more destruction.

Mary Wygodski, St. Petersburg

\* \* \*

Israel is right to defend itself

Your overwhelming pro-Palestinian coverage with its subtle messages that obviously cast Israel as uncaring of human life, abusive and ruthless to those people is bad journalism.

Your spread last weekend devoted to the Palestinians was enough for me. You obviously do not want to investigate the Israeli side of things and take their perspective and stories.

The Arab countries have had 50 years to help resettle the Palestinians and provide them a better life, but instead, they turned the other way and allowed Yasser Arafat and <u>Hamas</u> to rule. And the ordinary Palestinians have paid the price because of these regimes' doctrine to destroy Israel.

I am glad Israel has stood up for its rights and for protecting human life, as any democratic country would do.

Bruce Clark, Tampa

#### PALESTINIANS MUST END HATRED

\* \* \*

#### Balance is needed

When will the St. Petersburg Times begin to provide readers with balanced coverage of the Middle East? Readers are exposed to biased, one-dimensional, inaccurate and incomplete information, portraying our ally Israel. Palestinians are portrayed as victims. Israelis who endure rocket attacks on <u>women</u> and children daily are ignored.

It is time for balanced coverage!

Norman N. Gross, Ph.D., president, Promoting Responsibility in Middle East Reporting, Palm Harbor

\* \* \*

Returning to ruin in Gaza - March 8

Conscience payment

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has pledged the United States will provide \$900-million to the Palestinians to help rebuild areas in Gaza devastated by Israel's recent overwhelming attack. More than 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed in this assault.

The United States provides more than \$3 billion to Israel in economic and military aid each year, so we are pretty much implicated in whatever Israel does. Maybe the \$900 million pledge is a conscience payment to atone for our part in the attack on Gaza.

But where is Israel's conscience payment? Israel seems to be perfectly happy accepting our money, launching vicious attacks on the Palestinians and then expecting others to repair the damage they have done.

Joseph A. Mahon, St. Petersburg

\* \* \*

#### Aid is ridiculous

I just wrote an angry letter to my U.S. representative regarding the \$900 million in aid the Obama administration plans to provide to the Palestinian Authority and Gaza. There are not enough expletives in the English language to allow me to properly rail against that ridiculous idea!

The Israel Defense Forces devastated Gaza because <u>Hamas</u> terrorists had been attacking Israel for months, even in the midst of a cease-fire. The Palestinians who live there elected their <u>Hamas</u> leadership. They then harbored the terrorists who launched rockets and mortars against innocent civilians in Israel.

President Bush wisely said that those who harbor terrorists should be treated as terrorists. During this time of economic hardship in America, I am enraged to see American foreign aid paying to feed and arm terrorists. The Palestinians brought their misery upon themselves. Let their rich Arab and Iranian patrons pay for their idiocy!

Rick Hubbard, Tampa

\* \* \*

A cheater by any other name ... - March 8, Robyn Blumner column

## Punish the cheaters

We keep asking ourselves, "How did we get into this financial nightmare so quickly?" Well, Robyn Blumner's column in Perspective reveals the "bad guys," the cheaters. Regulation and oversight of our financial systems were

#### PALESTINIANS MUST END HATRED

"methodically bought off" by the financial sector, and our irresponsible politicians in Washington (both Republicans and Democrats) were bought off through this appalling influence peddling.

I followed Blumner's advice and read the complete report, "Sold out: How Wall Street and Washington betrayed America," which I found at <a href="http://www.wallstreetwatch.org">http://www.wallstreetwatch.org</a>. This site contains an executive summary of the report. The complete report details the "12 policy decisions that led to cataclysm" in our financial sector.

How much longer are you and I going to tolerate government run by special interests, lobbyists and big money? I urge you to read the report described above. I urge you to write your congressional representatives regarding this scandalous situation. I urge you to demand a return to governmental regulation to safeguard our financial systems. And I urge you to call for severe punishment for such cheaters whose greed and arrogance have damaged all of us so profoundly.

Elizabeth Reynolds, St. Petersburg

\* \* \*

Stem cell research

Just reject the care

There is a very simple answer for those who are protesting the research to be done with stem cells. All of these people need only make a statement to their doctors, and have it made a part of their medical file, that they refuse any and/all medicines or procedures developed through this research.

They do not, however, have the right to deny the rest of us any help that can be obtained from such research. They do not have the right to dictate their small-minded ideas.

Constance Spinney, Largo

\* \* \*

The greatest Floridian - March 10, commentary by Martin Dyckman

Depth of knowledge

It was a pleasure to see a column by Martin Dyckman in the St. Petersburg Times again. I didn't know the story of how LeRoy Collins had stood up for civil rights as governor in his bold speech in 1960.

And standing up for civil rights in the early 1960s was even more dangerous for individuals in the South than it was in the Midwest, which I had experience with as a schoolgirl. So it was wonderful to learn about Collins' courage, especially in the context of finally having our first black president.

I really miss Dyckman's columns. The information he used to give in his columns helped me assimilate to this state when I first arrived. I came to Florida unsure of whether I would stay. But Dyckman - and many of your other columnists, editorial writers and reporters who were long-time or native Floridians - always gave such deep context to all the articles they wrote that I quickly came to feel like a native. Florida became home.

Now, like Dyckman, most of them are not writing or only write as correspondents. So much of that deep context is missing.

I hope the Times will manage to hang on to the few remaining newsroom staffers it still has who know Florida and St. Petersburg so well.

Lin Young, St. Petersburg

### PALESTINIANS MUST END HATRED

Load-Date: March 16, 2009



# Diaspora Jews and the war

The Jerusalem Post January 26, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

**Length:** 1275 words **Byline:** ISI LEIBLER

Highlight: One can imagine the response during the Blitz had Anglo-Jews sought to divide funds raised to alleviate

the suffering of British civilians with German noncombatants. Candidly Speaking

# **Body**

The virulent global response to our struggle to defend our citizens against a cruel and evil foe confirms that Balaam's biblical depiction of Jews as "the people that dwells alone" remains valid to this day.

Notwithstanding unprecedented efforts to minimize noncombatant casualties among enemies ruthlessly exploiting their own <u>women</u> and children as human shields, we were once again demonized. Diaspora Jews had to endure a new torrent of frequently violent anti-Semitism with demonstrators displaying placards proclaiming obscene messages like "Death to the Jews," "We are all <u>Hamas</u>" and "Jews to the gas." Even more shocking, purportedly respectable liberals joined in some of these murderous hate fests.

Despite being vastly outnumbered by Muslims (other than in the US) and enveloped in a violent anti-Semitic climate reminiscent of the 1930s, most Jewish communities maintained their support for Israel. The fact that this time Israeli spokesmen effectively articulated their case undoubtedly encouraged many of the traditionally more timid Jewish leaders in smaller communities to speak up.

American Jewry, encompassing the vast majority of Diaspora Jews, remained steadfast in its support. AIPAC, despite having been the target of a radical Jewish campaign seeking to discredit it, retained its standing as a responsible and effective lobbying group supported by the leading American Jewish agencies.

It was gratifying to observe that the highly vocal fringe groups like J Street, Israel Policy Forum and other left-wing clusters who had been urging the US administration to exert pressure on the government were marginalized and to date have been utterly ineffective.

ELSEWHERE, THE response of the smaller Diaspora Jewish communities was sometimes more problematic and largely determined by the attitudes of individual leaders. The vast majority displayed considerable fortitude and responded to the anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic venom with public expressions of solidarity. Most Jewish community leaders were also attacked in the media for their support of Israel by people of Jewish origin, many of whose only involvement in Jewish affairs related exclusively to Israel bashing.

In Europe, the French under the leadership of CRIF, once again emerged as the most robust Jewish community. In the UK, even the Board of Deputies of British Jews which has a penchant for lying low and trying to avoid rocking the boat, responded to pressure from grassroots activists and endorsed public meetings expressing solidarity which were well attended.

#### Diaspora Jews and the war

Predictably, the obsequious Board of Deputies launched a major appeal for funds to provide medical assistance to be equally divided between civilians in "Gaza and in Israel" presumably to demonstrate that Anglo Jewry is no less distressed concerning the plight of Palestinians than about their own kinsmen. Supporting the humanitarian needs of Palestinians is, of course, commendable. Even residents of the South who endured <u>Hamas</u> missile attacks for eight years contributed aid to noncombatants in Gaza. However it is doubtful whether the "noble" sentiments displaying equal concern to both parties conveyed in the Board of Deputies appeal will impress anyone, including the general British public and certainly not the supporters of <u>Hamas</u>. One can imagine the response during the World War II Blitz had Anglo-Jews sought to divide funds raised to alleviate the suffering of British civilians with German noncombatants.

IN CONTRAST to the UK, the Australian Jewish community has a long tradition of maintaining a proactive approach. When prime minister John Howard, renowned for over a decade as one of Israel's greatest friends, was defeated, there was considerable concern that Australia's policy toward Israel could tilt toward the European model with its propensity to endorse moral equivalence. To the relief of the Jewish community, the new Labor Party Prime Minister Kevin Rudd unequivocally maintained his predecessor's policy of friendship to Israel. However last November, his government stunned the Jewish community by endorsing a UN resolution which went to the lengths of accusing Israel of breaching the Geneva Conventions. The Jewish community rallied and protested in a robust but responsible manner.

Subsequently, when the Gaza war erupted, the Australian government again emerged as one of Israel's few friends in the international arena and in the UN consistently justifying its right to take measures necessary to defend its citizens. This demonstrates how even a small Jewish community can have a positive impact if it is willing to stand up and be counted.

In that context, one must commend the courageous South African Jewish Board of Deputies which was not deterred from promoting the case for Israel despite the hostile environment surrounding it.

ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL level, the poor performance of the New York-based World Jewish Congress whose Plenary Assembly opens in Jerusalem today was highly disappointing. The raisin d'tre of this global Jewish body is to provide leadership and direction to the smaller Jewish communities, especially during periods of crisis. To his credit, WJC president Ronald Lauder did participate in the American Jewish Presidents Conference solidarity mission to Israel. Likewise, the European Jewish Congress, an autonomous offshoot of the WJC, did encourage its constituents to support Israel. But despite the global tsunami of anti- Semitism and its obligation to raise its voice in defense of Israel, the New York head office of the WJC has been virtually invisible over the past month.

Their incompetence is also exemplified by the ongoing Chavez fiasco. Last year, the WJC was criticized for groveling to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez after he had mumbled a few words about opposing anti-Semitism and signed a statement with the Argentinean and Brazilian presidents "condemning anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism." Despite being aware that Chavez remained totally committed to Iran and had been facilitating the penetration of Hizbullah into Latin America, the WJC leaders lavished him with praise and predicted that the Venezuelan ambassador previously withdrawn from Israel would soon return to Tel Aviv.

When the war against <u>Hamas</u> erupted, Chavez accused Israel of inflicting a "holocaust" on the Palestinians, demanded that their leaders be charged with war crimes, expelled the Israeli ambassador and called on Venezuelan Jews to dissociate themselves from Israel. The head of the local Jewish community, Avraham Benshimol, courageously defended Israel and condemned Chavez.

Following this, WJC secretary-general Michael Schneider was urged to speedily issue an appropriate statement and delete the lead story on the World Jewish Congress Web site which continued extolling the virtues of Chavez. Yet, weeks later, after Chavez had already formally severed relations with Israel and virtually every major Jewish organization had condemned the Venezuelan government, the WJC statements praising Chavez remain the lead story. Hopefully the global Jewish body will get its act together after its assembly.

If history is to be any guide, one can expect that sooner or later there will be another upheaval that will again put the Israel-Diaspora relationship to the test. One of the prime tasks of the new government following the February

#### Diaspora Jews and the war

elections should be to resurrect the ministry of Diaspora affairs which went into cold storage after the retirement of former minister Natan Sharansky. This ministry should become an essential instrument for the strengthening of ties between Jews everywhere in peace as well as in war.

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Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# <u>Diskin, Dekel fly to Cairo for decisive talks on Schalit. Prisoner swap may be</u> approved by cabinet tomorrow

The Jerusalem Post March 15, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 798 words

Byline: MARK WEISS and TOVAH LAZAROFF

**Highlight:** Lead Story

# **Body**

Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) head Yuval Diskin and the prime minister's special envoy for prisoner exchanges, Ofer Dekel, will hold what are being called "make-or-break talks" in Cairo on Sunday in an effort to clinch a deal to free kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit from Gaza before the Olmert government leaves office.

The negotiators, who will meet with senior Egyptian intelligence officials, have until Sunday night to finalize an agreement, sources told The Jerusalem Post on Saturday night.

A special cabinet session is scheduled to convene Monday morning on the exchange. Ministers will either be asked to approve the details of a prisoner swap, or be briefed on the unsuccessful efforts.

Fourteen of the 26 cabinet ministers have told the Post that they would likely support a deal, or at the very least would not prevent it from going forward.

Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu has been updated by Olmert, but was not asked to approve the latest developments.

Israel's deadline of Sunday night for an agreement is based on the expectation that coalition agreements for the new government are to be presented to the Knesset on Tuesday.

"This is the last week that decision-makers have to fulfill their obligation to save Gilad," Yoel Schalit, Gilad's older brother, told Channel 2 on Saturday.

Dekel returned to Israel from his latest round of talks with Egyptian mediators on Thursday and briefed Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

The fact that Dekel was ordered to return to Cairo yesterday, accompanied by Diskin, is a sign that progress was achieved, although officials in Jerusalem refused to talk of a "breakthrough."

Although officials remain tight-lipped on details of the contacts with <u>Hamas</u>, via Egyptian mediators, it is believed that a figure of 450 Palestinian prisoners in return for Schalit's release was agreed to some time ago.

What is believed to be holding up a deal is Israel's refusal to free an unspecified number of detainees demanded by *Hamas*, and Jerusalem's insistence that some of the West Bank prisoners be exiled either to Gaza or abroad.

Diskin, Dekel fly to Cairo for decisive talks on Schalit. Prisoner swap may be approved by cabinet tomorrow

*Hamas* has denied that any deal is taking place.

This latest round of talks in Cairo comes after Schalit's family stepped up its campaign to pressure Olmert to finalize a deal before he leaves office.

For the past week, Gilad's parents Noam and Aviva have sat in a tent they pitched outside the prime minister's Jerusalem residence. They even held a Friday night dinner there and intend to stay in the tent until Olmert leaves office.

Numerous ministers, politicians and visitors from abroad have stopped by the tent to show their support for the Schalit family. At least 10,000 of those visitors signed a petition in which they urged the government to authorize a prisoner swap for Gilad.

On Friday, Yoel Schalit, who has been largely absent from public protests for his brother, joined his parents in the tent, and on Saturday he conducted a number of television interviews.

"This is a critical week and a critical period. We hope that this campaign, and the tent and the wide public support, will push the decision-makers to make the right step to return Gilad," he said.

When thinking of his brother, Yoel said, he has tried to imagine the suffering and pain of 993 days of captivity.

Should his brother be released, Yoel said, "We do not know what he has gone through and how he will be. We hope he will return healthy. I believe he is strong enough to endure what he needs to, and we will give him the support he needs, but first he has to return."

His father was more cautious when speaking with the media. Noam Schalit refused to ride the wave of optimism generated by the latest efforts to release his son.

"I'm not a prophet," he said, when asked about Diskin and Dekel's Cairo talks on Sunday.

Since his son was taken, he said, there had been so much frustration and hope.

"We are always taking one step forward and another step backwards." Now, he said, "we are waiting."

On Sunday morning, Noam Schalit will be joined in the tent by Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz.

Among those who have voiced their support for the Schalit campaign are a group of 20 reservists who on Thursday wrote a letter to the prime minister and urged him to free Gilad.

They said that many of them had served in Operation Cast Lead, and that they have since watched how their achievements there had disappeared.

If Schalit is not freed, the reservists said, they feared that his fate could be like that of missing airman Ron Arad, who was kidnapped in Lebanon after his plane crashed there in October 1986. He disappeared in May 1988.

There is no price that is too high, the reservists said, to pay to return a soldier who was kidnapped while serving his country.

"We call on you to finish this mission and to leave a clean table," they wrote.

# **Graphic**

Diskin, Dekel fly to Cairo for decisive talks on Schalit. Prisoner swap may be approved by cabinet tomorrow

Photo: TWO <u>WOMEN</u> stand in front of a picture of captured soldier Gilad Schalit at a protest tent outside Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's residence on Friday. Some 10,000 people signed a petition demanding his release. (Credit: Tara Todras-Whitehill/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Obama gives hope; President voices desire for 'new beginning'

The Herald (Glasgow)

June 5, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 18

Length: 556 words

## **Body**

AS PRESIDENT Barack Hussein Obama deployed his rhetorical armoury and unique personal credentials to establish "a new beginning", based on co-operation and respect between the west and the Muslim world, the distance between the new American President and the previous one could not have been clearer.

The speech, studded with references from the Koran, was received enthusiastically by his audience in Cairo, but it is the reaction across the Middle East that will determine its success in ending "the cycle of suspicion and discord".

The first question will be whether his re-endorsement of the need for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will succeed in moving on discussions that have been circular for decades. Taking on this issue so early in his presidency, when his two predecessors have left it to their final term of office, is a powerful indication of a seriousness of intent on this issue. Probably more significantly, however, it suggests a belief that the stalemate can be broken and America can get negotiations back on track.

Both sides have failed to live up to obligations agreed under the 2003 "road map" and President Obama was studiedly even-handed in his criticism:

calling for an end to violence from <u>Hamas</u> and recognition from Israel of Palestine's right to exist, while reiterating the "unbreakable" nature of the bond between America and Israel.

Calling for an end to the construction of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, he said the policy "violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace". That was balanced by criticism of militant action by <u>Hamas</u>. "It is a sign of neither courage nor power to shoot rockets at sleeping children, or to blow up old <u>women</u> on a bus."

Mr Obama's reaction so far to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to endorse a Palestinian state or stop settlement construction on the West Bank has been to warn that diplomacy is always a long process. His promise to pursue a peaceful settlement "with patience and dedication" underlines a commitment to the long term. It may be very long: it is not clear, for example, whether Mr Obama's insistence that construction must stop refers to future expansion or whether he envisages existing settlements being dismantled.

#### Obama gives hope President voices desire for 'new beginning'

The first reaction to the speech from Israel was equally opaque, notably avoiding any reference to the settlements, thus enabling it endorse hope for "the opening of a new era that will bring an end to the conflict, and to general Arab recognition of Israel as the nation of the Jewish people that lives in security and peace in the Middle East". At this stage, that passes for diplomatic acknowledgment.

The Muslim world is diverse, however, and that was acknowledged in the range of this speech from US military involvement in Iraq (a commitment for all troops to leave by 2012), on Afghanistan (the need for a multilateral attack against al Qaeda but no desire for a permanent US base there), on Iran (the danger of nuclear arms proliferation but the right to peaceful nuclear power), to the rights of <u>women</u> to education while practising their faith as they see fit.

The Obama rhetoric fulfilled the expectation of its billing and it provides an opportunity for an understanding that must be seized. It can only be judged, however, when words are followed by actions.

Load-Date: June 8, 2009



## World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 1, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 582 words

Byline: Compiled from Deseret News wire services

# **Body**

Britain: Titanic survivor LONDON? Millvina Dean, the last survivor of the sinking of RMS Titanic, has died, her friend Gunter Babler said Sunday. Babler said Dean's longtime companion, Bruno Nordmanis, called him in Switzerland to say Dean had died in her sleep at her nursing home in southern England. Dean was just over 2 months old when the Titanic?

billed as "practically unsinkable" by the publicity magazines of the period? hit an iceberg on the night of April 14, 1912. China: Closer ties BEIJING? After years of acrimonious economic relations with China, the U.S. insists it wants to turn the page and develop closer ties with the world's third largest economy. U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, who arrived Sunday in Beijing for two days of talks with Chinese leaders, said he wanted to foster the same kind of working relationship with China that the United States has enjoyed for decades with European economic powers. Iran: Airliner bomb TEHRAN? An Iranian airliner was forced to return to a southern airport minutes after takeoff when a homemade bomb was found aboard, said state television, in an incident a security official called a "sabotage operation." The report said the bomb was found in a toilet but gave no other details on the device. Israel: Clash kills 6 JERUSALEM? Palestinian Authority forces clashed with Hamas militants in the West Bank early Sunday, leaving six dead in the bloodiest such encounter in two years. The violence erupted days after the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, assured President Barack Obama in Washington that his troops were imposing order on the area. In Gaza, Hamas reacted by arresting Fatah activists and hinting of further revenge. Italy: Premier scandal ROME? Premier Silvio Berlusconi slammed the paparazzi Sunday for taking photos of a New Year's party at his Sardinian home that was attended by an 18-year-old at the heart of a political and personal storm. At a campaign stop in Bari, the premier also lamented that the scandal was playing out on the front pages of newspapers, saying such personal matters belonged exclusively in the private, family sphere. "We've really hit bottom with this intrusion into the private lives of everyone," Berlusconi said. Prosecutors on Saturday seized hundreds of photos taken by a Sardinian photographer of a New Year's party at Berlusconi's villa that was attended by 18-year-old Noemi Letizia and dozens of other young women. Myanmar: Defense Myanmar's junta defended its prosecution of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, accusing her Sunday of covering up the truth when she let an uninvited American intruder stay in her house. The comments marked the first time a top official from the reclusive regime has appeared in a public forum to justify its actions, which have drawn widespread international condemnation, including from its closest neighbors in Southeast Asia. North Korea: Trial As global powers debate how to punish North Korea for its nuclear defiance, two American journalists seized nearly three months ago face a trial this week in Pyongyang on charges that could land them in one of the country's notorious labor camps. North Korean guards detained Laura Ling and Euna Lee, reporters for former Vice President Al Gore's Current TV media venture, at the northeastern border with China on March 17. Activists who helped organize their trip say they had been reporting on North Korean women and children who fled to China for an uncertain life.

### World datelines

Load-Date: June 1, 2009



# There's no hiding from the truth; German myths are challenged at the Royal Court, but Gaza's are not, says Christopher Hart

The Sunday Times (London)
February 15, 2009
Edition 1

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Section: CULTURE; FEATURES; Pg. 22,23

Length: 815 words

Byline: Christopher Hart

# **Body**

Marius von Mayenburg's The Stone, at the Royal Court, kicks off an interesting season of new German drama, though one hopes the temperature will rise as the season progresses. It's a clever, sleekly engineered but chilly and emotionally uninvolving look at post-war Germany's perpetually uneasy conscience.

It's partly chilly because of structural tricksiness. We float between 1935, 1953, 1978 and 1993, sometimes virtually in mid-sentence, making it difficult to get to grips with individual lives. As the younger generation begins to question the older, however, a modern German family gradually gives up its dirty little secrets. There are moments of genuine eeriness, with the arrival of a young girl explaining only "I've come to disturb you", and glimpses of someone out in the garden, standing by the swing.

The house previously belonged to a Jewish family, we learn. But they escaped, didn't they, via Amsterdam, to America? Indeed, Mrs Schwarzmann is now a celebrated gallery-owner in New York, isn't she? Meanwhile, a swastika lapel badge is found in a shoebox. But Grandma and Grandpa hated the Nazis, didn't they? "Your grandfather did things you would be proud of," Grandma assures Hannah.

And what about the celebrated stone, almost a sacred family relic, which Hitler Youth thugs lobbed through the window because of the family's kind and courageous support for the Jews? It comes as no surprise that this comforting myth is economical with the truth, and that the family is a microcosm of wider self-delusion.

This is odd, though, because of all the participants in the second world war, Germany has been perhaps the most relentlessly honest: more so than Austria, or Russia, and certainly more so than France, as you'll know if you've seen The Sorrow and the Pity (which you really should before you die).

The ensemble acting is flawless, however, and Ramin Gray's direction supremely assured. Johannes Schütz's white-box set may look like the sort of studio where they design Audis, but it makes sense, bathing everything in a

There's no hiding from the truth German myths are challenged at the Royal Court, but Gaza's are not, says Christopher Hart

constant, unblinking white light from which nobody can hide - although Grandma tries, under the table. Hope in this bleak and unsparing story lies with the younger generation. Hannah means Grace, we are told. In Hebrew.

Which brings us to Caryl Churchill's 10-minute piece at the Royal Court, Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza. A leaflet handed out before the show, inviting donations to Medical Aid for Palestinians, tells you how "brutal" Israel's "invasion" of Gaza has been. "Bombardment", "devastation", "earthquake": these are reassuring little signposts. Otherwise, you might worry that Churchill has written a play that considers both sides of the conflict.

In seven one-minute acts, Israeli adults discuss what to "Tell her" - in each case, an imaginary young Israeli girl. About the Holocaust? Suicide bombings? About 1967? "Tell her not to be afraid" is a recurring and poignant refrain.

This simple device could have been highly effective, but it's ruined by the play's ludicrous and utterly predictable lack of even-handedness.

We all agree, I think, that the scenes coming from Gaza are not good. But the enormously complex reasons for such horrors are not considered here. Instead, Churchill comes across like a very minor Old Testament prophet, bewailing the Wickedness of my people Israel (Jeremiah 7:12). And the final lines, delivered by an Israeli in full rant, about how the Palestinians are "animals", how he wants to see their children "covered in blood", are simply outrageous.

"Tell her we killed more of them" is one suggestion earlier. Ah, yes, the idea that you can fairly judge the righteousness or wickedness of either side in this miserable conflict by looking at the casualty figures. You hear this on the BBC, too. <u>Hamas</u> rockets rarely kill anyone. They don't really mean it, they're just teasing. Not like those ruthless

Israelis. In fact, <u>Hamas</u> would love their rockets to kill Israelis - men, <u>women</u>, children, whatever. The reason their rockets rarely kill anyone is that they're really rubbish at aiming them. Israel, on the other hand, despite having directly caused the deaths of more than 1,000 civilians in Gaza recently, does not deliberately target queues of people at bus stops.

Seven Jewish Children isn't art, it's straitjacketed political orthodoxy. No surprises, no challenges, no risks. Only the enclosed, fetid, smug, self-congratulating and entirely irrelevant little world of contemporary political theatre. Fresh air is urgently needed. But I'm not holding my breath.

Meanwhile, donating to Medical Aid for Palestinians seems a good idea. I just hope the supplies get through. Two weeks ago, the UN suspended all food aid to Gaza after 10 lorryloads of supplies, 3,500 blankets and 400 food boxes were stolen at gunpoint. By *Hamas*.

The Stone \*\*\*

Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza \*

Royal Court, SW1

# **Graphic**

Clever, but chilly: Helen Schlesinger and Jonathan Cullen in The Stone

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK ELLIDGE

There's no hiding from the truth German myths are challenged at the Royal Court , but Gaza's are not, says Christopher Hart

Load-Date: February 15, 2009



# PALESTINE MASSACRE MUST BE STOPPED

Sowetan (South Africa)
January 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: UNREST, CONFLICTS & WAR

**Length:** 879 words **Byline:** Firoz Osman

# **Body**

'My wife cries all the time. At night she hugs the children and cries. At home there's no water, no electricity, no heating gas. And you say there's no humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Tell me, are you normal?'

#### PALESTINE MASSACRE MUST BE STOPPED

The responses in the media by pro-Israeli propagandists on the dastardly invasion of Gaza, is not surprising. But to defend and justify the indefensible massacre of children and <u>women</u> by David Saks of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (in Sowetan yesterday), including Rabbi Warren Goldstein, must surely leave one aghast.

The conflict did not occur because Qassam rockets killed 14 people in seven years but because of decades of dispossession, expulsion, occupation and annexation of Palestinian land.

Neither is this a conflict between Islam and Judaism but one in which political Zionism, founded in 1897 and based on settler colonialism, racism and expansionism, created the Israeli entity from the rib of terrorism.

European Rabbis and many Jews oppose the aims of Zionism and creation of Israel because it violates the tenets of Judaism. Yet today the Zionist lobby, unashamed of its incestuous relationship with Israel, justify Israel's violation of international humanitarian law, including the recent genocidal killings of civilians in Gaza.

United Nations Relief and Work Agency spokesman Christopher Gunness dismissed with contempt Israeli claims that the bombed UN facilities harboured weapons. Blaming the victims has been an old Israeli ploy to cover their horrendous atrocities, as in Qana, Jenin and South Lebanon in 2006.

Brian Cloughley describes a Gaza father's suffering: "I keep the children away from the windows because the F-16s are in the air. I forbid them to play below because it's dangerous. They're bombing us from the sea and from the east, they're bombing us from the air. When the telephone works, people tell us about relatives or friends who were killed.

"My wife cries all the time. At night she hugs the children and cries. It's cold and the windows are open; there's fire and smoke in open areas; at home there's no water, no electricity, no heating gas. And you [Israelis] say there's no humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Tell me, are you normal?"

What boggles the mind is the Zionist lobby's ability to preach peace, tolerance and harmony between Muslims and Jews and at the same time justify the horrendous crimes against defenceless people. Their powerful influence

#### PALESTINE MASSACRE MUST BE STOPPED

among politicians and businessmen shield the Zionist regime, allowing Israel to commit war crimes with impunity and immunity.

There is simply no moral equivalence between the protagonists. Under international law Palestinians under occupation have the right to resist.

One is occupied, oppressed, invaded, terrorised and persecuted, facing ethnic cleansing and genocide; the other is the colonial, racist occupier, oppressor, invader, terroriser, persecutor and executer. The one has F-16 fighter jets, Merkava tanks, Apache helicopters, navy gunships and nuclear bombs; the other has no aircraft, no navy, no tanks, no artillery - just smuggled guns and primitive rockets made of exhaust pipes in the back yard.

The injustice meted out to Palestinians is monumental and tragic. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

Complicity in Israel's war crimes is the corrupt and treacherous puppet Fatah leader Mahmud Abbas and the Arab regimes, Egypt in particular. International lawyer Franklin Lamb said: "Even a cursory examination of the events which began on December 27 2008 require that Mohammad Hosni Mubarak be added as an accomplice to the pending International Criminal Court case concerning international crimes committed by Israel with American weapons."

The Council for the National Interest, based in Washington, said: "Nearly 50 years ago, the South African regime attacked a crowd protesting in Sharpeville and in a matter of minutes killed 69 black South Africans. Eventually, after world reaction to this "incident," sanctions were imposed and they led to the end of apartheid."

Using US weapons, Israel has indiscriminately killed more than four times that number in Gaza. In 1960 there were 20million black South Africans and today there are only 1,5million Palestinians in Gaza. So the first two days of the US-supported Israeli attempt to wipe out *Hamas* is sixty times as criminal as the Sharpeville massacre.

<u>Hamas'</u> real threat is its example as the Arab world's only democratically elected government, drawing its popularity from its resistance to the Palestinians' oppressor and tormentor. <u>Hamas</u> remains steadfast in its fight for dignity, freedom and justice. It has repeatedly proposed a 10-year truce with the reasonable condition that Israel obeys international law and ends its illegal occupation beyond the 1967 borders.

Until and unless the international community and governments, championed by South Africa, punish Israel with sanctions, the anguished cries of the innocent and blood of the martyrs will be in vain.

I The writer is general secretary of the Media Review Network.

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



# <u>Feature - Young Palestinians find their voice; Amid the shattered world of a people under siege, Jordan Flaherty uncovers a vibrant young hip-hop scene that has become the news outlet of a generation</u>

# Morning Star June 11, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 854 words

Byline: Jordan Flaherty

# **Body**

The Maqusi Towers in Gaza City look a bit like US housing projects. The neighbourhood consists of several tall blocks of flats grouped together in the northern part of town. It is also a hub for Gaza's growing hip-hop community. On a recent evening in one small but well-decorated apartment, a dozen rappers and their friends and families relaxed, danced, smoked fruit tobacco and rapped the lyrics to some of their songs.

The occasion was a post-show celebration of the filming of Hip Hop Kom, a Pop Idol-type talent competition for Palestinian rappers. Fifteen acts from across Palestine performed on Thursday night and the show was broadcast simultaneously in Gaza City and the West Bank city of Ramallah. Through the use of video conferencing and projection, each city could see and hear the performances happening in the other. Five groups from Gaza participated, and Gazans took first and third place.

The Gaza City show was held in a small theatre in the Palestine Red Crescent building. Although only publicised by word of mouth, nearly 200 young people filled the theatre, loudly cheering for the rappers and breakdance crew who took the stage.

One of the organisers of the contest, a charismatic young man named Ayman Meghames who holds a degree in history, is a minor celebrity here. Part of Gaza's first hip-hop group - named PR: Palestinian Rapperz - Ayman dedicates his time to supporting and publicising Gaza's young music scene.

Armed with a ready smile, Ayman was seemingly everywhere at once that night. He was on stage introducing the acts, helping with technical difficulties, greeting friends and co-ordinating with the West Bank organisers.

For Ayman, making music is a form of resistance to war and occupation, as well as a tool to communicate the reality of life in Palestine. "Most of our lyrics are about the occupation," he tells me. "Lately we've also started singing about the conflict between *Hamas* and Fatah. Any problem, it needs to be written about." Rapper Chuck D, from the group Public Enemy, once called rap music the CNN for black America. For Ayman and his friends, music is their weapon to break media silence. "Most of the world believes we are the terrorists," he says. "And the media is closed to us, so we get our message out through hip hop."

One of the first acts to take the stage was a duo called Black Unit Band. Mohammed Wafy, one of the two singers, displays the innocent charm of a teen pop star as he jumps from the stage and into the audience. Tall and skinny with a shock of black hair, Mohammed is 18 and looks younger. Khaled Harara, the other singer (and Mohammed's next-door neighbour) is a few years older and several pounds heavier but no less energetic on stage.

Feature - Young Palestinians find their voice Amid the shattered world of a people under siege, Jordan Flaherty uncovers a vibrant young hip-hop scene that has ....

As the evening progressed, the energy in the room continued to rise. A high point featured a performance from the combined groups DA MCs and RG (Revolutionary Guys), now collectively called DARG Team. The crowd was up on their feet, many of them singing along as the performers displayed a range of lyrical stylings.

In Mohammed Wafy's apartment, the performers waited anxiously for the results of the contest. The call came in on Ayman's mobile. Putting it on speaker, everyone listened as the results were announced: DARG team had come in first place, while Black Unit placed third. There were no hurt feelings shown by those who didn't win - for these young performers, every victory is a shared victory. DARG members will now go on to Denmark to produce an album - if they can get out of Gaza.

Fadi Bakhet, a studious and slightly preppy looking Afro-Palestinian in wire-rimmed glasses, is DARG's manager, as well as the brother of one of the members. As the night went on, the gathering moved on to his flat and the conversation continued late into the night. The next day was hot and sunny and thousands of Gazans gathered on the beach to relax by the Mediterranean.

These stories may seem incongruous with much of the international reporting about Gaza and the *Hamas* government. But it is exactly for this reason that they should be told.

If you follow the reporting on Palestine in the US media, you might well imagine a fundamentalist state - <u>Hamas</u>-stan, as at least one Israeli commentator has called it. You might imagine a nation of terrorists, where <u>women</u> are oppressed and men launch rockets. But perhaps when we learn that Palestinian families swim on Friday afternoons, that they study literature in the day and rap about imprisoned friends at night, we can rethink the US's unquestioning support for Israeli aggression against this almost entirely defenceless population.

Yesterday, I visited a journalism class at the Islamic University, taught by Rami Almeghari. The students had many questions but one young woman's words in particular stayed with me. "What can we do to reach people in America and tell them how things really are here?" she asked. "How can we get them to listen and to see?"

- Jordan Flaherty is a journalist based in New Orleans and an editor of Left Turn Magazine. He is currently traveling in Gaza with a delegation of journalists and human rights workers from the US south.

**Load-Date:** June 11, 2009



# International: Two parties claim Israel victory - but the kingmaker will be the man in third place: Centre-left is crushed, and right disappointed. Now Lieberman waits in wings

The Guardian - Final Edition
February 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 17

Length: 515 words

Byline: Jonathan Freedland, Jerusalem

## **Body**

Most elections produce clear winners and losers, but not this one. Drawing up a list of victors and vanquished in yesterday's Israeli poll proves a maddeningly complex task.

At first glance the winner appeared to be Tzipi Livni, the leader of the centrist Kadima party. Weeks ago every political sage insisted Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu was strolling towards victory, but Livni staged a comeback. Early returns suggested she had squeaked ahead of Bibi (Netanyahu). Even ending level will count as a serious achievement.

Maybe it was <u>women</u> voters, drawn to the prospect of the first <u>female</u> prime minister since Golda Meir 35 years ago. Perhaps it was dovish voters, defecting to Kadima as the only way to stop Bibi. Whatever the explanation, Livni proved her doubters wrong. Even if that lead holds - and once soldiers' votes and others are counted it may not - it could prove a hollow triumph. For Kadima sits in a larger, centre-left bloc that lost soundly yesterday.

However you crunch the numbers, the centre-left, including what would once have been called "the peace camp," fell far short of the 61-seat threshold necessary to form a government. The "national camp" - led by Likud - cleared it comfortably. When President Shimon Peres starts asking parties to name their choice for prime minister, Livni might be a loser after all.

A clearer winner is surely Avigdor Lie berman, the ultra-nationalist who leads Israel's third largest party. At a victory celebration he said he held "the key" to Israel's next government. And he does. Last night both Netanyahu and Livni put in calls to Lieberman, confirming his status as the kingmaker - one who will try to extract a high price. He suggested his priorities would be the release of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier held by <u>Hamas</u>, and the "toppling" of **Hamas** in Gaza.

As neither Livni nor Bibi can rule without him - unless they create a unity government excluding him - he may get what he wants.

International: Two parties claim Israel victory - but the kingmaker will be the man in third place: Centre-left is crushed, and right disappointed. Now Lieberma....

The losers are easier to count. Labour was once Israel's natural party of government, ruling from 1948 to 1977. Yesterday, it trailed in fourth, Ehud Barak - once prime minister - barely polling ahead of the sectarian religious parties. The dovish, civil rights party Meretz was reduced to a handful of seats.

But there are more substantial losers. First, the Israeli political system is confirmed as dysfunctional. When a ruling party cannot muster a quarter of the seats in parliament, something has gone badly wrong. It means any government will be formed only after protracted horse-trading. Strikingly, all the main leaders - including Lieberman - spoke of the need to reform the political system.

The second serious loser is the Middle East peace process. According to Daniel Levy, analyst at the New America Foundation: "We will now have a weak, unstable government in Israel to join the weak governments in the Palestinian territories. They are not going to be able to make progress by themselves." With both sides hobbled, they will simply lack the strength, says Levy. "It will have to be driven from the outside." And that means Washington.

Load-Date: February 11, 2009



# Southern residents launch aid drive for Gaza civilians

The Jerusalem Post January 19, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 493 words

Byline: HAVIV RETTIG GUR

# **Body**

As Operation Cast Lead draws to an apparent close, hundreds of Israelis, including those from rocket-battered communities in the Gaza periphery, are mobilizing to help suffering civilians on the opposite side of the border.

What started on Thursday as the private initiative of two young <u>women</u> - Lee Ziv, an activist in peace organizations, and Hadas Balas, a student at Sderot's Sapir Academic College - has mushroomed into a countrywide drive to help the civilians of Gaza.

"There is no connection to politics," said Ziv. "We don't represent a side, we just see an immediate need for blankets for people who have nothing to cover them at night and milk for infants who have nothing to eat."

Since a short radio interview on Sunday morning, Ziv said her phone had been ringing off the hook. "Within two minutes of the interview, I had 40 voice messages. The response has been overwhelming. Schools have called asking how they can help. A father called who had three sons serving in the IDF in Gaza. A woman called who had a mortar fall on her house."

Four drop-off points have been established around the country, in Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem and Kibbutz Kfar Aza, just kilometers from the Gaza border.

The Kfar Aza drop-off point is run by kibbutz resident Eyal Mazliah, director of the Hillel Jewish campus organization at nearby Sapir College.

The college's Hillel had "spent the past month gathering equipment for bomb shelters and running activities for children on our side of the border," Mazliah said. "When [Ziv and Balas] approached us for help, we already had many blankets and coats collected."

On Friday, mortars landed inside Mazliah's small kibbutz. What did it feel like to help the population on the other side of the border?

"Look, even when your windows shake at night from the rocket attacks, you can see across the border that Gaza is dark for a month," he explains. "You feel the humanitarian situation. Most people here say <u>Hamas</u> brought this upon them, but we're still talking about children who we will have to live with in the future. The people who are closest to this should do the most. It's a basic humanitarian act."

#### Southern residents launch aid drive for Gaza civilians

Hillel volunteers "have been moving from bomb shelter to bomb shelter almost 24 hours a day for the past month," Mazliah said. "Now, with the limitations forced upon us, we have the privilege of helping civilians who are hostages of *Hamas* on the other side."

The organizers are careful to keep the initiative apolitical, refusing to divulge the names of groups that are helping to collect supplies. But they add that they are coordinating with official channels.

"The only way to get this stuff into Gaza is through the UN and the IDF, and of course they are part of this," said Ziv.

Not all contributions are accepted, she added. "We have a detailed list from UNRWA, and we're following that. They need baby food, nonperishable food, blankets. Please don't send us toys or clothes. There's simply no room in the trucks."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# UN vote provokes passion on both sides of the fence

The Toronto Star

January 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: LETTER; Pg. AA07

Length: 1491 words

# **Body**

Canada votes alone for Israel,

Jan. 13

There is a reason why no other nation voted against censuring Israel's crimes against humanity: The evidence overwhelmingly shows that Israel's actions violate international law and human rights conventions. It is shameful that Canada used the rocket attacks as an excuse since the evidence is clear that Israel broke a truce with its military incursion into Gaza. The blatant racism displayed in not condemning Israel's brutal invasion marks another sad day in Canada's retreat from decency.

Gary Dale, West Hill

Canada's decision to stand against an attempt by Cuba, China, Egypt and other egregious human rights violators to condemn Israel at a UN Human Rights Council meeting should be a matter of national pride, not national handwringing.

Chris McPherson, Toronto

Canada, at the vanguard of opposing international climate change action as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, continues its sad slide into irrelevance on the world stage with its unqualified support for the Israeli military offensive in Gaza. We have given Israel a free pass to mete whatever retribution it pleases. Even if it includes tanks, warplanes and experimental burn-inducing white phosphorus and flesh-stripping DIME bombs.

As Israel controls all borders into and out of Gaza, there is no possibility for its residents to seek refuge. Like shooting fish in a barrel, 1,000 of whom are now dead. We stand on guard for what, exactly?

James Stauch, Toronto

While collateral damage is cold comfort for the many innocents who suffer, <u>Hamas</u> knew that its unending rocket fire on Israel would have dire consequences. Its madness has brought this nightmare action in Gaza down on the heads of innocent Palestinians and Israelis alike. Supporting Israel doesn't mean that Canada isn't fair-minded; it just means that Canada has the nerve to say it the way it is.

Bob Warren, Toronto

#### UN vote provokes passion on both sides of the fence

More than 1,000 Palestinians - including children, <u>women</u> and innocent civilians - have been killed in the Israeli offensive. The government of Canada must demand an immediate ceasefire and a full restoration of humanitarian aid, food, fuel and medicine to the population of Gaza. Any action short of this amounts to acquiescence in the collective punishment of a people.

#### Meesum Ashraf, Toronto

For Canada to support Israel in what can only be termed a wanton slaughter of innocent civilians is both embarrassing and illogical. Bombing <u>women</u> and children to make a point with <u>Hamas</u> makes about as much sense as George W. Bush invading Iraq over 9/11.

#### J. Richard Wright, Niagara-on-the-Lake

I'm no fan of the Harper government, but for once they got it right. It is those who blame only one side in this issue who lack an "even-handed approach to the Middle East." Our UN rep voted on the basis of "principle and fair-mindedness" and was the only one to do so. Being "a friend of Israel" doesn't make Canada an enemy of anyone else. Nor does trying to see both sides of this very tragic story.

#### David Speirs, Fenelon Falls

The Harper government's myopia is dragging this great country into the halls of infamy. Being the lone dissenter, among 47 member states of this UN council and siding with an aggressor, should be a matter of deep shame for all Canadians. We deserve much better than a government that condones a brutal aggression that has already led to 1,000 Palestinian deaths. Under statesmen like Pearson and Trudeau, Canada stood tall and shone bright around the world. What have we done to deserve these pygmies calling the shots in Ottawa and desperately trying to make us a pariah?

#### Karamatullah K. Ghori, Richmond Hill

On what planet does Stephen Harper live? Is he so convinced that he alone is right that he can stand up to the 47 nations of the UN council and oppose a motion condemning the slaughter in Gaza?

#### Gerry Hedican, Newmarket

Congratulations Marius Grinius and Canada for having the moral backbone to stand up against hypocrisy and rhetoric. The countries that abstained from voting are moral cowards. The motion condemned Israel alone and did not mention the aggressive bombing and attacks by <u>Hamas</u> over the past eight years. When and if there is equal condemnation against both sides, we can take a "middle-of-the-road" position. Until then, we must stand firm and be the moral voice that so many are afraid to be.

#### Richard Bonafede, Ancaster

Mr. Grinius' failure to reflect the values of Canadians will most definitely stain our reputation and bring shame to our nation.

#### Humairah Saeed, Scarborough

I am proud to be a citizen of a country whose government recognizes that neutrality in the face of such evil assists the perpetrators, not the victims. Congratulations to Canada for taking a courageous stance.

#### Jonathan L. Richler, Toronto

Stephen Harper clearly values his neocon ideology over the more fair-minded attitudes of the country he is supposed to be prime minister of.

#### Dennis Ryan, Toronto

#### UN vote provokes passion on both sides of the fence

<u>Hamas</u> and the other Islamic extremists have declared war, not Israel. But as soon as they start losing, they start screaming and our liberals start their "sympathy whines." The Jews can have a "homeland," but don't expect the UN to ever support their right to defend it. When they do so, all the historically anti-Semitic people start screaming.

#### B. Brian Rose, Ottawa

Why are we in the United Nations? The original intent was to raise other nations to our level, instead of us descending to their level. Where is the evidence of success?

David W. Lincoln, Edmonton

If a neighbour were sending rockets into Canadian cities, surely we would be justified in fighting back. And if that neighbour's goal was to wipe Canada off the map, retaliation would be even more justified. Similarly, Israel is justified in responding to rockets from Gaza. Of course Canada votes for Israel. To do otherwise wouldn't make sense.

Joan Forsey, Toronto

Since its foundation in 2006, the UN Human Rights Council has condemned Israel 20 times, yet has failed to officially condemn any other country. Is this "even-handed?" Or perhaps you believe that Canada should mimic the voting pattern of human rights stalwarts Cuba, China and Saudi Arabia who all voted in favour of the resolution? We should be proud that Canada has taken the brave position.

Mark Segal, Thornhill

Israel has every right to defend itself when <u>Hamas</u> fires rockets across the border, but when a UN driver is killed and a UN school is bombed in "error," the time has come to call a halt to this aggression. With the technology of today, there are no excuses for these types of "errors." This war has to end before more innocent lives are lost.

Warren Dalton, Scarborough

The Harper government deserves our gratitude for refusing to join such blatant foes of human rights as Saudi Arabia, China and Cuba in a one-sided condemnation of Israel. When these authoritarian nations have given their own people such basic human rights as the vote, they may be entitled to judge Israel.

Raymond Heard, Toronto

Let me get this straight: our government supports the widespread slaughter of Palestinians? We support the Israeli army firing rockets and air bursts over a civilian population in the Gaza? We have no problem with children being buried in rubble?

Never thought my government could embarrass me more than this week. Stephen Harper is a vindictive, dangerous man and an election can't come fast enough for this Canadian. It's inspired me to hold my nose and vote Liberal.

Ian Ross, Sudbury

Canada alone has dared to speak truth to power, and refused to join another anti-Israel pile up at the UN. Our stance is a testament to our Prime Minister's courage, wisdom and moral clarity. It is also an indictment of the blindness and cowardice of other nations and moral bankruptcy of the UNHRC.

Mindy G. Alter, Toronto

Throwing support blindly and unconditionally behind either side in this conflict will not advance the cause of peace. It will however destroy any hope that Canada has to regain its former status as a peace broker in the world and will position Canada nicely as a target of terrorism. Put yourself in the position of the Palestinians. How would you view Canada as you sift through the rubble and read that it was the only nation on the UN council to vote in support of this destruction?

Kieran McIllvray, Toronto

It's official, the Canada that once stood for integrity, peace and honour is dead. We have decided to officially support a country that has bombed schools, hospitals, homes, ambulances and entire cities. Israel, through its military actions and self-righteous response to criticism, has proven to the world that it doesn't give one damn about peace and security. If this were any other country, we would be fighting to overthrow it, not giving our unconditional support to it.

Every Canadian soldier who has ever given his or her life, for peace and freedom, has now been totally dishonoured. For the first time, I am truly ashamed to be Canadian.

Stephen Bryce, Stoney Creek

# **Graphic**

MAJED HAMDAN ap photo A Palestinian child, wounded in an Israeli military attack, looks through the window of Gaza hospital yesterday.

Load-Date: January 15, 2009



# Aviva Schalit: This nation's unwritten covenant is cracking

The Jerusalem Post January 29, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 508 words

**Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF** 

# **Body**

Before Aviva Gilad heads out to vote on February 10, she wants to be able to hug her son Gilad, who has been held in Gaza since June 2006.

In hopes of pressuring the government to secure a deal for his release before the election, Aviva spoke on Wednesday night in Tel Aviv to an audience of <u>women</u> at an event organized by the Desert Queen jeep expedition program.

"This is a last-minute plea," she said, addressing her words to Prime Minister Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, even though they were not in the auditorium.

"Before you leave the government or ask to be reelected, stand behind your promises," Aviva said.

She spoke so softly that it was hard to hear her, until the microphone was adjusted.

She told the audience she wanted to speak with them "as a mother to other mothers" and as "a woman to other women."

"Like most of you, I sent my son to serve his country out of the belief that it in turn would do everything that it could to return him," she said, but that has not happened.

Since tank gunner Gilad, who is now 22, was kidnapped 948 days ago, "there have been two wars, personnel changes in the government and the army, a cease-fire, rockets, Grad missiles, mortar shells and God knows what else," Aviva said. But, "one thing has not changed. My son Gilad is still imprisoned by *Hamas*."

The family last heard from him in June 2007, when *Hamas* allowed him to send them a letter.

On Tuesday, her husband Noam met in Paris with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and was told that Gilad was alive.

Still, she said, more information was needed, given that the Red Cross had not visited him, no one had seen him and there had been no word from someone who had actually seen him.

"No one knows if he is healthy, if he is sick, if he is cold, how he is sleeping, or can he see the sun," she said. "I do not know anything and there is no one in the world who can give me answers."

Page 2 of 2

Aviva Schalit: This nation's unwritten covenant is cracking

Since the creation of the state there has been an unwritten covenant between the IDF and the mothers of its soldiers, one that is so strong that it might as well be etched in stone, she said.

"We give you our sons and daughters, and the IDF returns them to us at the end of their service. They are not always healthy, they are not always whole, and sometimes they are not alive, but they always, always, return home," Aviva said.

Many of the older teenagers who were about to be drafted were paying close attention to Gilad's fate and the actions of the government to secure his release, she said.

"I have no doubt that this impacts their motivation to serve, she said. "They also want to know if the government will keep its covenant with the soldiers," she said.

Already, she said, "I feel as if this covenant is slipping from my hand."

"The faith between the mothers in this country and its leadership has cracked," she added.

The soldiers who went into Gaza said that for them the battle was not over until Gilad had returned home, she noted.

To Olmert, Barak and Livni, she said, "Do not leave this mission to those who come after you."

# **Graphic**

Photo: Gilad Schalit (Credit: Courtesy)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Quiet but no peace in border town

The New Zealand Herald January 27, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 The New Zealand Herald All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; World

Length: 523 words

# **Body**

Sderot's open-air market is open and bustling for the first time in a month, thanks to newfound quiet following Israel's punishing offensive in the Gaza Strip.

Many residents of this rocket-scarred town, like the people thronging the market to buy shoes, clothes and vegetables, say they see the operation as a long-overdue military success - but also believe the good times will be short-lived.

"There is no victory here, only quiet," said Eli Asayag, 55, who runs a restaurant in Sderot.

Sderot is a kilometre from Gaza, a convenient and frequent target for the homemade rockets manufactured by Gaza militants over the years. Thousands have exploded in this town of 20,000, traumatising residents and damaging many of the houses and businesses, though relatively few people have been killed or wounded.

The satisfaction in Sderot with the military's performance coupled with a belief in the implacable nature of their enemy and despair of ever being free of the shadow of violence are recurring themes in Israel's south. People here see the offensive as a much-needed restoration of their country's deterrent power and a stirring example of national unity.

But they also see it not as a definitive blow but as a successful round in a match they seem to expect to continue indefinitely.

"If this brings us a half-year of quiet or a year, it's good, if it brings us 10 years it's great. But we never forget that Gaza will always be our neighbour, and as long as <u>Hamas</u> is in control, we will be in danger," said David Buskila, the town's mayor.

During the fighting, Shimon Elmaliach, 41, who sells <u>women</u>'s leather boots, took his wares to Tel Aviv, where <u>women</u> purchased shoes simply because he was from Sderot. "They did it to express solidarity," he said. "Our unity - that was our victory."

During the fighting, Israelis out of rocket range volunteered to take in people displaced by the violence, and there was an outpouring of support for Israeli troops.

In Nahal Oz, a communal farm just a few hundred metres from the Gaza border fence and within eyesight of the suburbs of Gaza City, residents say the years of rocket fire are slowly killing their community. They are not confident the offensive will effect real change.

#### Quiet but no peace in border town

Two Israeli-made Merkava tanks stand between Nahal Oz and Gaza, pointing their cannons into the Palestinian territory. Several dozen tanks remain in rows in a staging ground nearby, waiting to go into action if the week-old ceasefire falls apart.

"We very much wanted this operation, not because we are warmongers but because we have lived with this reality for years," said Yemima Barnea, who is in charge of bringing new families to the community. Her job, she said, has become virtually impossible.

But not everyone is pessimistic.

Ofer Shmerling, who runs a restaurant at a nearby gas station, calls the operation's results "excellent".

His confidence is based on the military's show of strength and the deterrence he believes it restored. <u>Hamas</u>, he said, realised it had pushed Israel too far.

"They didn't dream we would go crazy like that, but we went crazy, and they ran like rabbits and left their people exposed."

- AP

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



# Some truths about Palestinian Christians

The Jerusalem Post
May 13, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 874 words

Byline: SETH J. FRANTZMAN

**Highlight:** Christian communities suffered most in the West Bank, where Muslim refugees were cynically settled in their midst. The writer, a PhD student in geography at the Hebrew University, wrote his M.A. thesis there on Arab

Christians. A contributor to various publications, he runs the Terra Incognita Journal blog.

# **Body**

Palestinian and other Arab Christians are a perennial political football, especially with Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Holy Land. Seen by some as the epitome of what happens to minorities under Islamist rule (when their shops are firebombed in <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza), they are also continually used by the Western media to show how the Israeli security fence divides those in Bethlehem from Jerusalem. Even as their community shrinks they seem to get more and more attention. They were a centerpiece of Jimmy Carter's Palestine: Peace not Apartheid.

It is worthwhile therefore to consider a little about their recent history and dispel some of the myths that have grown up about them. A recent Time magazine article by Andrew Lee Butters notes that "the creation of Israel has been a disaster for Christians in the Middle East. Many of the Palestinian refugees... were Christians. The flood of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon helped spark a civil war between Muslims and Christians there... the ongoing occupation of the West Bank [by Israel] is strangling the life out of those Christian communities that are left."

The truth is quite different. There were roughly 150,000 Arab Christians in British mandatory Palestine on the eve of Israel's 1948 War of Independence. Some 75,685 fled the areas that became Israel, leaving 32,000 in Israel in 1949, mostly in Nazareth, some villages in the Galilee and in Haifa, Acre and Jaffa. Family reunification and repatriation programs brought their numbers to 39,000 by 1951. Most Christian refugees came from Jaffa, Haifa and West Jerusalem, and almost all of them fled before Israel declared independence in May 1948.

In fact Ben-Gurion ordered the IDF to give special protection to Nazareth when it was seized on July 16: "Those who penetrate into the city will fight valiantly against invaders and gangs wherever they resist; at the same time they will meticulously and conscientiously refrain from harming, despoiling or pillaging holy places." Christian villages in the Galilee, many of which are also shared with Druze, were given special protective treatment as well, and few were harmed by Israelis or abandoned by their Christian inhabitants.

CHRISTIANS ACTUALLY benefited demographically from the creation of Israel, rising from 1 in 7 of the Arab population to 1 in 3 by the 1950s. Rather than being "many" of the refugees, they formed a small minority and fared much better than their Muslim counterparts. Most were middle class, educated and spoke foreign languages. Because of this, prominent Palestinian Christians such as the families of Edward Said and John Sanunu (Ronald Reagan's chief of staff) easily assimilated in the West. Their being overwhelmingly urban - in 1947 115,000 lived in towns and cities - made them both vulnerable during the war and also made it easier to flee the fighting.

#### Some truths about Palestinian Christians

Christian communities suffered most in the West Bank, where Muslim refugees were cynically settled in their midst. Thus Ramallah was 90% Christian before the war and contained only 5,000 inhabitants, while Bethlehem was 80% Christian and had only 9,000 inhabitants. By 1967 there were 16,000 people in Bethlehem, of whom only 6,400 were Christian, and Ramallah is a large Muslim city today.

Lebanon was certainly harmed by the influx of Palestinian refugees, but its Christians were hurt primarily as a result of the 1970 Jordanian Civil War, after which Arafat's PLO created a state within a state in Lebanon and, in alliance with other Muslim militias, destabilized the country. Far from "strangling the life" out of Christian communities in the West Bank, where there are barely 50,000 Christians, access to Israel and its economy, education and medical facilities helped them. In contrast the *Hamas* victory in Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal hasn't made their life better. Compared to Christians in the Palestinian territories, the ones in Israel have flourished even though demographically they have declined to 2% of the population.

THE OTHER SIDE of the story of Palestinian Christians is that they have had a long and hallowed role in Arab nationalism. Mathilda Moghannem, a Protestant Palestinian feminist, declared in January 1948 that "Christians will become Muslims to defeat Zionism."

George Habash, founder and leader of the communist terrorist PFLP, was a Christian, as was Yasser Arafat's wife. In the 1970s a Catholic Christian priest, Hilarion Carucci, was even convicted of running guns for the PLO.

Palestinian Christians suffer periodic bouts of intimidation and harassment. Their churches are spray- painted with graffiti, and while Christian <u>women</u> marry Muslim men and Palestinian law ensures their children must be raised Muslim, when a Christian man is rumored to date a Muslim woman riots have ensued.

Larry Derfner recently wrote in The Jerusalem Post that they are a "minority that tends to get along... [and] keep their complaints to themselves" and that attacks on them may reflect "class resentment." Such talk about minorities might remind us of how these were supposed to behave as dhimmi under Islamism, or how the Jews lived in Europe before the Holocaust. People resented the Jews' class as well - hardly an excuse to attack and harass them.

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# Graphic

Photo: THE WORD 'Hamas' sprayed on a Greek-Orthodox monastery in the West Bank. (Credit: Seth Frantzman)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Why pour money into Gaza before the rockets stop, Netanyahu asks donors. Secretary Clinton to join representatives of 80 countries gathering in Sharm for Gaza reconstruction conference

The Jerusalem Post March 2, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 902 words

Byline: HERB KEINON, AP contributed to this report.

**Highlight:** Lead Story

# **Body**

Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu voiced serious reservations during recent meetings with foreign leaders about money going into the Gaza Strip for reconstruction before the rocket fire on Israel has stopped, The Jerusalem Post has learned.

After hearing in one meeting that European taxpayers were concerned about investing in Gaza only to see further destruction at the hands of the IDF, Netanyahu explained that Israel tried hard to avoid civilian casualties and targeted only those areas used by terrorists. He then reportedly said he was not willing to sacrifice Israel's security "for a smile."

Sources close to Netanyahu said it would be critical for humanitarian aid to bypass <u>Hamas</u>, especially with the Islamist group continuing to fire rockets into Israel.

One Netanyahu aide said that with the Gaza reconstruction conference, it seemed as if the world felt that attacks on Israel were a thing of the past, when they were taking place daily.

Representatives of some 80 countries - including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton - are gathering in Sharm e-Sheikh on Monday to pledge billions of dollars to rebuild the damage from Operation Cast Lead, with the US reportedly ready to invest \$900 million in the enterprise.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned at the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday that "should the firing from the Gaza Strip continue, it would be met by a painful, sharp, strong and uncompromising response by the security forces, led by the IDF."

Gazan terrorists continued their attacks on Israeli civilian areas on Sunday night, firing two rockets at the western Negev. One of the Kassams hit the yard of a Sderot home, causing light damage.

Minutes later, another rocket struck an open area in the Sdot Negev region.

There were no casualties in either attack.

Why pour money into Gaza before the rockets stop, Netanyahu asks donors. Secretary Clinton to join representatives of 80 countries gathering in Sharm for Gaza r....

Earlier, terrorists fired a rocket that landed south of Ashkelon, near where a rocket hit overnight on Saturday. No one was wounded and no damage was caused.

Olmert said Israel could not countenance the continued attacks, and that the response would not be what the terrorist organizations expected.

Later in the day, Olmert met with Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, who was on his way to the donor meeting. The prime minister told him that Israel supported aid for the Palestinians in Gaza but that ways had to be found to ensure that the support did not strengthen <u>Hamas</u>.

The important thing was not just to pledge money, Olmert said of the expected \$2.8 billion in pledges, including \$1b. from Saudi Arabia. The important thing was to see how the aid was to be delivered, and what monitoring mechanism would be set up so the money didn't end up helping *Hamas*.

Like Netanyahu, Olmert said it would be a mistake to believe that the matter of rockets from Gaza was over. The assumption that there was now quiet in the South and that all efforts could be focused on reconstruction was faulty, he said.

In the run-up to the conference, Quartet envoy Tony Blair became the latest in a parade of international figures making their way to the Gaza Strip, going there Sunday for the first time since taking up his post in the summer of 2007.

"This money will not have a lasting impact unless there is a political solution," Blair said. "It is ultimately in the politics that the solution lies."

At a UN-run school in Beit Hanun, Blair said, "I wanted to come to hear for myself first-hand from people in Gaza, whose lives have been so badly impacted by the recent conflict. These are the people who need to be the focus of all our efforts for peace and progress from now on."

Britain's International Development Secretary Douglas Alexander also visited Gaza, and pledged £30m. to rebuild homes, schools and hospitals damaged or destroyed in the recent IDF offensive.

During his visit, Alexander urged Israel to relax restrictions on items allowed into the area.

"There is a desperate need for tough restrictions on the supply of goods to be relaxed," he said. "Gaza needs money, fuel and construction materials, and whilst these goods are turned away at the borders, repairs to homes, water systems and the electricity network will remain impossible. Israel must do the right thing and allow much-needed goods to get through to those men, <u>women</u> and children who continue to suffer."

In a statement released by the British Embassy, Alexander did not relate to Israeli concerns that it could not allow construction materials such as steel and concrete into the region for fear they would be used to build rockets and rocket factories.

Clinton, on her first trip to the region since being appointed secretary of state, is scheduled to arrive in Israel Monday evening, immediately following the donor conference and a meeting with other representatives of the Quartet - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

On Tuesday, she is scheduled to meet with President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister-designate Binyamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak.

She is also scheduled to visit Yad Vashem, hold a joint press conference with Livni, and attend an event at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem.

Why pour money into Gaza before the rockets stop, Netanyahu asks donors. Secretary Clinton to join representatives of 80 countries gathering in Sharm for Gaza r....

On Wednesday she is scheduled to go to Ramallah for talks with the Palestinian Authority's President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salaam Fayad. She is scheduled to leave Wednesday afternoon.

# **Graphic**

2 photos: EGYPTIAN SECURITY personnel check a vehicle outside the conference site in Sharm e-Sheikh yesterday. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will attend. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# **LETTERS FROM READERS Your Views STLOPINION**

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 30, 2009 Monday

FIRST EDITION

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A13

Length: 1240 words

Dateline: 0

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When Palestinian civilians are killed, we see the Israeli press and public debating whether those casualties could have been avoided. When Israeli civilians are killed, we see public Palestinian celebrations praising the killers as heroes.

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Regarding "Israel's image takes hit" (March 22): The reasons Israel grapples with isolation can be found by examining the article. First, a picture of the security barrier does not mention that Israel had a 97 percent decrease in suicide bombings after its construction. Secondly, there is no discussion of the thousands of missiles launched from Gaza at southern Israel that lead to the conflict. Thirdly, no one noted that Israeli "atrocities" often disappear after investigation. For instance, a claim that Israel killed 40 civilians in a U.N. school turned out to be 12 people killed outside the school, and nine of the 12 were known *Hamas* agents.

President Barack Obama has noted that if he were in southern Israel, he would use all of his powers to stop the shelling of the area where his children sleep at night. Col. Richard Kemp, a BBC military analyst, noted that Israel has done more to ensure the safety of civilians than any other army. If the allegations of Israeli misconduct are true, they will be investigated. When has <u>Hamas</u> tried to avoid Israeli civilian casualties or protected Palestinian civilians?

Israel grapples with isolation because of a failure to present the Israeli viewpoint. More attention is paid to the Israeli-Palestinian wars than any other armed struggle. Scant attention is directed to the Israelis except as villains. <u>Hamas</u> is devoted to terror and continued attacks on Israel and Jews throughout the world. Until the truth about the struggle over Gaza is published, Israel will need to deal with isolation.

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What price is our rookie president willing to pay for the friendship of the Iranian government?

Ben Janson - St. Louis

Load-Date: March 30, 2009



## Grim testimony on Israeli assault; Soldiers report killing of unarmed civilians in Gaza

The International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1238 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

Isabel Kershner contributed reporting.

\*

In the two months since Israel ended its military assault on Gaza, Palestinians and international rights groups have accused it of excessive force and wanton killing in the operation, but the Israeli military has said it followed high ethical standards and took great care to avoid civilian casualties.

Now testimony is emerging from within the ranks of soldiers and officers regarding a permissive attitude toward the killing of civilians and wanton destruction of property that is sure to inflame the domestic and international debate about the army's conduct.

On Thursday, the military's chief advocate general ordered an investigation into one soldier's account of a sniper killing a woman and her two children who by mistake walked too close to a designated no-go area, and another account of a sniper who killed an elderly woman who came within about 100 meters of a house commandeered by Israeli soldiers.

When asked why that woman was killed, a squad commander was quoted as saying: "What's great about Gaza, you see a person on a path, he doesn't have to be armed, you can simply shoot him. In our case it was an old woman on whom I did not see any weapon when I looked. The order was to take down the person, this woman, the minute you see her. There are always warnings, there is always the saying, 'Maybe he's a terrorist.' What I felt was, there was a lot of thirst for blood."

The testimony by soldiers, leaked to the newspapers Ma'ariv and Haaretz, which promised to release more such anecdotal accounts on Friday, appeared in a journal published by the Yitzhak Rabin pre-military academy in the northern town of Tivon. The academy's director, Dany Zamir, said in an interview on Israel Radio: "Those were very harsh testimonies about unjustified shooting of civilians and destruction of property that conveyed an atmosphere in which one feels entitled to use unrestricted force against Palestinians."

Defense Minister Ehud Barak said on the radio that he believed such events to be exceptions, adding: "The Israeli Army is the most moral in the world, and I know what I'm talking about because I know what took place in the former Yugoslavia, in Iraq."

It was clear that Mr. Zamir felt his concerns, which he had raised earlier in a letter to the military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, had not been taken seriously and that was why he published the testimony, which was given on Feb. 13.

Since the war ended, others have raised similar questions, generating a heated debate within military circles.

"According to the code, a soldier has to do his utmost to avoid civilian casualties and that involves taking some risk," said Moshe Halbertal, a Jewish philosophy professor at Hebrew University who, along with three others, rewrote the military ethics code eight years ago. "That is the question we have to struggle with. From the testimonies of these soldiers, it sounds like they didn't practice this norm."

Amir Marmor, 33, a history graduate student in Jerusalem and a military reservist, said in an interview that he was stunned in training discussions in the week before his tank unit entered Gaza in January at the way civilian casualties were discussed. "Shoot and don't worry about the consequences" was the message from the top commanders, he said.

Speaking of a lieutenant colonel who briefed the troops, Mr. Marmor said: "His whole demeanor was extremely gung ho. This is very, very different from my usual experience. I have been doing reserve duty for 12 years and it was always an issue how to avoid causing civilian injuries. He said in this operation we are not taking any chances. Morality aside, we have to do our job. We will cry about it later."

About 1,300 people were killed in the Gaza war, but how many of them were combatants remains a matter of controversy. Israel lost about 10 soldiers in Gaza, some killed by its own forces.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which is based in Gaza and has documented the deaths there, says that about two-thirds of the 1,300 dead were civilians, among them 121 <u>women</u> and 288 children, which it defines as anyone 18 and younger.

But the Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Israel said Thursday that it had analyzed the Palestinian center's names and found some that it listed as civilians were combatants according to <u>Hamas</u>-related Web sites. Some listed as children were 17-year-olds with guns, it said, adding that more than 500 of those described by the center as civilians it considered "unknowns" because most were men of combat age whose activities could not be easily traced.

The institute argued that the proportion of <u>women</u> and children among the dead was relatively low, showing that Israel had not killed in an indiscriminate fashion.

The revelations aired Thursday produced an immediate uproar here, with some soldiers and reservists saying they did not recognize the stories being told as accurate.

Gur Rosenblat, a company commander during the Gaza operation, said in an interview, "To say that people were killed without justification - the opposite was true. We put soldiers at risk to prevent harming their civilians."

Israeli experts noted that Palestinian <u>women</u> had served as suicide bombers in the past so that soldiers in Gaza did not always know when a woman was approaching whether she was a threat.

One of the incidents that the military institute testimonies highlighted was of the killing of a family.

"We had taken over the house and the family was released and told to go right," a soldier said. "A mother and two children got confused and went left. The sniper on the roof wasn't told that this was O.K. and that he shouldn't shoot. You can say he just did what he was told. He was told not to let anyone approach the left flank, and he shot at them."

Much of what happened in Gaza, some military experts said, was in reaction to the way events unfolded in the second Lebanon war, in 2006, when Hezbollah fighters caused many Israeli casualties. In that war, when Israeli

#### Grim testimony on Israeli assault Soldiers report killing of unarmed civilians in Gaza

soldiers took over a house, they sometimes found themselves shot from a house next door. The result was that in Gaza many houses next to those commandeered by troops were destroyed to avoid that risk.

Israeli soldiers were also afraid of being taken hostage like their colleague Gilad Shalit, who remains in <u>Hamas</u> hands. <u>Hamas</u> repeatedly issued blood-curdling threats about how prepared it was with terrible surprises for any Israeli soldiers who entered Gaza.

But Israeli ethicists said they were troubled by what they have heard.

"Unfortunately, I think that selective use of killing civilians has been very much on the agenda for fighting terror," said Yaron Ezrahi, a political scientist at Hebrew University. "The army believes that a weak spot of Israeli deterrence is its strong commitment not to kill civilians, and there has grown the sense that it might have to temporarily overcome that weakness in order to restore deterrence."

Amos Harel, defense correspondent for Haaretz, wrote in an analysis accompanying some of the testimony: "Underneath Israeli leaders who promise to teach <u>Hamas</u> a lesson and generals who adopt a policy of 'zero risks' and rabbis who preach about a war of religious obligation, there are the fighters who go deep into the built-up areas of Gaza. Their action is not divorced from everything they have heard around them - it is a direct continuation of it."

Load-Date: March 25, 2009



#### Letters

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

March 30, 2009 Monday

FIRST EDITION

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## **Graphic**

PHOTO -

Load-Date: March 30, 2009



## Leader: Anomalies are a blemish on Scots education

The Scotsman

January 16, 2009, Friday

1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 25

Length: 958 words

## **Body**

HER Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) has just published its second comprehensive report on the performance of the entire Scottish education system from pre-school to vocational colleges. It consists of 102 dense pages of statistics and assessment which repays close reading. It should certainly be on the bedside table of every member of the Scottish Parliament.

What emerges from the report is that the Scottish education system has become more systematised and professional over the recent period. By analogy, it has moved from being a cottage industry to a hi-tech manufacturing one, with greater emphasis on the process of learning. The introduction of the new Curriculum for Excellence - whatever the travails along the way - should cement this change. At the same time, using a benchmark that has greater relevance for parents and employers, overall pupil attainment in Scotland scores very well in international comparisons.

However, this second HMIe survey highlights a glaring problem that has not diminished in the three years since the first report, namely the staggeringly poor performance in literary and numerical skills by a significant number of pupils in the first two years of secondary school. Somewhere between the middle of primary school - when overall reading, writing and arithmetic attainment is exceptionally good - and entering secondary school, a large number of pupils (especially boys) suddenly start to under-perform.

As a result, Scottish pupils are divided between the four-fifths who continue to perform well and go on to higher and vocational education, and the remaining fifth who eventually leave school early with no qualifications and continuing difficulties with literacy and numeracy. The new report makes an obvious point: this is bad enough, but with the economy entering recession, the onus on having a skilled and literate workforce is greater than ever before.

The causes of this anomaly have long been debated and efforts have been made to improve basic skills at primary level, and to introduce more a more challenging learning environment in S1 and S2. There is now greater use of "setting" to let pupils work in groups that suit their own pace, though this needs to go further. And the shift back to phonetics as an approach to teaching reading skills is producing results. But whatever the solution - probably a mix of things - it is here that efforts at reform must be concentrated in the future.

If there is a criticism to be made of the report it is that it sometimes comes across as being too complacent. The economic crisis will bring new problems - budget cuts and an excess of new teachers coming out of training colleges. Only 65 per cent of pupils in Scotland say they like being at school - one of the lowest approval ratings in the industrial world and five points lower than in England. If the prospect of jobs starts to decline over the next few years, that disenchantment will grow.

Leader: Anomalies are a blemish on Scots education

#### Israel must declare a ceasefire

WE ARE now three weeks into Israel's relentless invasion of Gaza - a strip of land barely the size of Glasgow and Edinburgh combined, which harbours nearly a million and a half citizens desperately seeking shelter from the fighting. Israeli forces are now engaged in a street by street battle with <u>Hamas</u> militants in Gaza City itself, where the danger to innocent civilians is obviously greatest.

Yesterday, Israeli forces shelled the UN headquarters in Gaza City - a compound where hundreds of civilians had fled for safety. As usual, the Israelis claimed to have been fired upon first, though UN officials fiercely deny this. Again, as usual, the Israelis issued an apology "regretting" the incident. But waging war with tanks and F-16 bombers in a crowded city is certain to kill and maim innocent men, <u>women</u> and children - over 1,000 already. What use is another apology - or the next one?

The need for more apologies should be removed at source. Israel must declare a ceasefire instantly before there are any more civilian casualties. Its invasion is not preventing <u>Hamas</u> from firing rockets into Israeli territory - 15 were launched yesterday. Nor will the attack destroy <u>Hamas</u>. Rather it is only serving as a recruiting sergeant for the Islamic extremists while undermining more moderate Arabs. In shelling the UN building, Israel finally lost the moral high ground.

#### Scottish Opera's artistic coup

IN RECENT times Scottish Opera has led a tempestuous existence - indeed very much like an opera plot. There have been cash crises, layoffs, artistic disputes, accusations of elitism, and bitchy reviews. Just like most other opera companies, in fact. But through all this drama, the show has gone on. The good news is that despite all these vicissitudes, Scottish Opera has not only kept its nerve but has just staged a remarkable international artistic coup.

This week, a sell-out audience at the famous Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg demanded no fewer than seven curtain calls as Anna Netrebko, one of the world's most acclaimed sopranos, made her long-awaited return to the stage in a Scottish Opera production of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor.

There has long been a debate in Scotland about the relevance of maintaining an opera company, particularly if it diverted funding from other cultural activities, such as traditional music. The St Petersburg achievement helps to resolve this argument. The Scottish Opera production was specifically chosen by the renowned Russian composer Valery Gergiev, who saw it at the Edinburgh Festival. Scottish Opera has proved it is able to showcase Scottish artistic excellence at an international level - which is good for the nation's image and for the reputation of Scottish arts as a whole. Success will breed success.

Load-Date: January 16, 2009



## My Say: Obama in a fix over Gaza attack

The Edge Malaysia January 26, 2009

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**Length:** 1288 words **Byline:** Munir Majid

## **Body**

The world's two most difficult problems stalked Barack Obama in his run for the US presidency. One - the global financial and economic crisis - he took on with creditable purpose, even if primarily in its domestic dimension. The other - the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which blew up once again three weeks before his inauguration, following Israel's brutal attack on Gaza - he was less confident about and comfortable with.

Managing, let alone solving, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was never going to be easy, for Obama's or any US administration. The new president's message of change, at least a fresh approach, has given some hope, but the destruction and killings in Gaza have put it under severe test.

Obama's initial deafening silence, after Israel began its brutal attack during the festive season, was perhaps understandable. One-president-at-a-time, at a time he was not yet president, seemed sensible, especially with an explosive, live and running event that involved the US deeply. It is not like the Mumbai terrorist attack where a statement will do, or reviving the domestic economy which at the time was just planning, not yet doing.

But then Obama spoilt it all by expressing deep concern over the loss of civilian lives, BOTH Israeli and Palestinian - after Israeli forces plunged Gaza into a humanitarian catastrophe by some indiscriminate strikes including at UN targets and at the point where well over 100 Palestinian children had been mercilessly killed.

Balance? It would be a bit rich to describe this as being even-handed. This is misstep number one, which would not have been missed. Obama cannot afford too many if he wishes to have credibility in solving one of the world's most intractable problems.

It would have been better then for him to have maintained his silence. Or to have kept only to the second part of his statement at the time: that he would have a lot to say about the conflict once he became commander-in-chief on Jan 20.

But his hand was forced. The Israelis were intent on making it a difficult point of entry for him. For all their protestation that they were left with no alternative but to launch their attack to stop those rockets <u>Hamas</u> had lobbed into the southern part of their country, its timing appears to be intended to beat the date of Obama's inauguration. While they may be confident there is no way he can or will abandon Israel, they are less certain how, as president, he might respond to a military operation of unconscionable brutality. This is the kind of thing they do which the US allows them to get away with. They are throwing in a marker.

At the same time, before Obama became president, they would have achieved a changed situation on the ground, on that blessed strip of land called Gaza, where 1.5 million Palestinians are packed like sardines and killed like sitting ducks, who <u>Hamas</u> are unable to protect, having been reduced to an ineffective force.

Into the bargain, the Israeli military would also have absolved itself of the 2006 debacle in Lebanon, where a total of 120 Israeli soldiers - how many Palestinian children in this attack on Gaza? - were killed. The domestic political position of a couple of Israeli politicians has been enhanced, and thus they would be better placed to negotiate a peace settlement. Except that, again and again, this has not happened, domestically-strengthened politician after domestically-strengthened politician.

So, the reminder has been signalled, before Obama took office, of the Israeli right to disproportionate destruction and killing against anything deemed to be an act of terror, in this instance, we must not forget, those rockets the hapless *Hamas* were firing at Israel, giving them the excuse or reason, to crack the nut during the season of good cheer.

Obama had not had the chance yet even of beginning to address the major political issues of the overall Israeli-Palestinian conflict before the Israelis threw the live grenade at him, while also trying to moderate, if not still, whatever he might be coming up with on the broader issues.

The Palestinians and Arabs have committed bloody acts of terror, have blundered, have been over-emotional and erratic of behaviour, beginning with the disastrous six-day war in 1967, the consequences of which they live with until today. It has been one mistake after another, faction after faction and, at the end of it, more and more deaths and suffering. Helplessness and hopelessness - perfect ingredients for more erratic behaviour.

This vicious circle has to be broken. Only the US can broker a peaceful settlement of the conflict but Obama must appreciate that this cannot be achieved by giving Israel everything that it wants, by accepting everything that it does, by defining Palestinians just for their acts of desperation, and not for the sufferings they have endured.

Historically, in this modern era, the Palestinians and Arabs have suffered for 100 years at the hands of the Zionists. Hopelessness has to be addressed and terror has to be stopped in a world we claim to be civilised.

There are many intricate issues to be solved. But every time Israel acts with the kind of impunity it has done, as in Gaza this time, the hand of moderate Palestinians is weakened - which is also precisely why <u>Hamas</u> has goaded Israel. It cannot be imagined that Israel does not recognise this. Indeed, it probably welcomes it. Even if Israel's security concerns are conceded, there are many ways to address them short of blowing Gaza to pieces.

With a weakened Palestinian moderate hand and after this latest Israeli atrocity throws up uncontrollable hate, what chance a peaceful two-state resolution of the conflict? Does Israel really want a two-state solution? Even if it does, does it want only a rump of a Palestinian state, run by some kind of Vichy regime? Will this bring lasting peace?

On the contrary, apart from striking fear and bringing terror to civilian populations, the Israeli pattern of negotiation and diplomacy with use of force makes a meaningful peace difficult to achieve. Peace becomes more like a moving target good for Israeli shooting practice.

Both at the short and at the long end of the dispute, Israel has made any hope for a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict more difficult for Obama to achieve by this Gaza attack. And Obama still has to negotiate past the powerful pro-Israel lobby in Washington, at a time he will also need much of their support for his great American economic revival plan.

There is a further question mark about some of the people Obama has assembled for his administration, whether they are with him in this objective. The charitable assumption is they would help clear the way past the pro-Israel thicket. But then Obama could also receive rotting fish in the White House internal mail, which would be tragic - but nowhere near as tragic, however, as all those innocent Palestinian men, <u>women</u> and especially children in Gaza who perished these past weeks just as Obama prepared to assume the presidency.

In his inaugural address, Obama did offer to the outside world, including to the Muslim world, cooperation based on mutual interest and mutual respect. He had also declared "we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals". Would this apply in American foreign policy abroad? Like unstinting support for anything and everything

#### My Say: Obama in a fix over Gaza attack

Israel perpetrates in the name of its security? Or has Israel made its point with the Gaza attack, rather than president Obama his in that much acclaimed address?

Tan Sri Munir Majid is visiting senior fellow at London School of Economics IDEAS (Centre for the Study of International Affairs, Diplomacy and Grand Strategy). He is also chairman of Malaysia Airlines.

Load-Date: February 5, 2009



## **VOTERS BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, TOO**

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)
January 18, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 Times Publishing Company All Rights Reserved **Section:** PERSPECTIVE; Pg. 2P; YOUR LETTERS

Length: 1246 words

#### **Body**

A failure of leadership - Jan. 13, editorial

It certainly is not unreasonable for Floridians to demand leadership from their elected representatives and to expect from them a proactive, nonpartisan and gimmick-free effort to deal with the state's \$2.4-billion budget shortfall. And while I agree with the Times that the partisan patchwork plan passed last week by the Republican-led Legislature shows a total lack of fiscal responsibility, it is worth remembering that it is not current tough economic conditions alone that are responsible for the mess we find ourselves in.

The responsibility lies rather with state lawmakers who have refused for years to address Florida's critical need for some form of comprehensive, meaningful and sustainable tax reform. They did so knowing that the day would come when we would be unable to adequately fund essential services like public education and aid to our most vulnerable citizens.

They made matters worse when they abdicated altogether their legislative duty and promoted through referendum a change to the state's property tax structure that is now less fair, less equitable and less able to support Florida's fiscal needs, and will be even more difficult to fix in the future.

Yet voters passed Amendment 1 last January and, in November, returned to office every single member of the state Legislature up for re-election. Perhaps the failure is ours.

Bob Hackworth, mayor, city of Dunedin

Minorities too often settle for less - Jan. 11, Bill Maxwell column

Education's focus shouldbe on our best students

Bill Maxwell presented the nucleus of a fine national higher educational policy. Let us make sure our most qualified high school graduates have access to the best universities. If finances are not available to the most needy, we as a nation should provide those funds. Educating our best is the only way to continue our country's strength.

However, if we are truly interested in higher education, we must also eliminate those discriminatory admissions policies that give preference to color and ethnicity over achievement. We cannot have it both ways.

If Bill Maxwell believes the function of our universities is to give seating to the best and brightest, then I assume he will agree with me.

George Post, Clearwater

#### VOTERS BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, TOO

Minorities too often settle for less - Jan. 11, Bill Maxwell column

Obsessed with 'best'

Bill Maxwell laments that some outstanding black students must languish in "second-best" colleges, where most white students also go, rather than attend Ivy League schools. Maxwell thinks that going to second-best schools could possibly impact their futures, never mind that many graduates of those schools become teachers, doctors, lawyers, business people, etc., and achieve above-average incomes. True, they may not be sufficiently titled for Wall Street, but do not pity them. Students around the globe clamor to come to our schools, even the second-best ones.

This obsession to attend a "good" school creates worship for Ivies and taints the achievements of most college graduates. Even though top schools may offer "the ultimate intellectual challenge," their graduates have led our country to financial disaster. Having to go to a "second-best" college is not to be forsaken to a life of despair.

Bob Womack, Crystal River

System needed to monitor drug use - Jan. 11, editorial

Remember those in pain

I am one of those people in intractable pain from a construction accident. I have to take a strong painkiller just to get from my bed to the bathroom.

I will agree that something must be done to get control of the accidental overdoses and abuse in the system, but please believe me when I tell you that the government can make life just as bad. A doctor who prescribes two prescriptions to the same patient for the same drug is "suspect." You may lower overdoses with a registry but raise the number of suicides when folks who suffer intractable pain can no longer have medicine. Life is not so sweet when all you do is hurt all day.

Please use your influence to ask the lawmakers to protect truly needful patients. Study the Texas Intractable Pain Treatment Act of 1989. It protects both doctors and patients who are aboveboard and trying to do the right thing.

C.H. Eure, St. Petersburg

Justice must still justify the means - Jan. 11, Perspective story

Twisting our thoughts

I wonder if the writer of this article has a moral issue with <u>Hamas</u> members hiding behind innocent families, using them as shields when under mortar fire and then yelling "outrage." When the rockets and missiles were landing on towns in Israel and children and <u>women</u> were being killed, where was the outrage?

Propaganda has twisted our thoughts into believing that <u>Hamas</u> is not the terrorist organization calling for the destruction of Israel that it is. Instead we see <u>Hamas</u> portrayed as a victim.

When Israel finally, after many months of terror against its citizens, strikes back at the <u>Hamas</u> terrorists, we call foul. What a double standard.

As Golda Meir once said, "We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children. We will only have peace with the Arabs when they love their children more than they hate us."

Terry Drago, Hudson

510 campaign promises - Jan. 15, PoltiFact.com

Focus is off target

#### VOTERS BEAR RESPONSIBILITY, TOO

With all that is going on in the world today, how could you possibly believe that tracking the promises of Barack Obama is the best way to use your reporting space?

First, Obama hasn't even been inaugurated and you are already keeping score. Second, why not start with the eight years of George Bush and provide us all with history? Third, why not provide the progress, if any, for Gov. Charlie Crist, Sens. Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson?

Barry Kanter, Lithia

An important assessment

I subscribed to the Times after total frustration with the Tampa Tribune. I read the Times the other morning and was impressed by the quality of the print, the construction of the articles and of the paper itself.

I am a Democrat and your front-page article on 510 campaign promises was very important to me and should be to all Americans.

I think Barack Obama should be just as credible as he had promised, and if not he should be taken to task. Keep the quality in your paper and keep your articles newsworthy.

David Kessler, Zephyrhills

Obameter

Unfair and illogical

In case you hadn't noticed, many Americans' hopes and dreams have been made impossible to fulfill recently due to a financial crisis compounded by a pre-existing federal deficit. To play games with a "Truth-O-Meter" based on what was said in the last campaign is totally unfair and illogical.

Note that right below the Thursday front-page article is a report on how the state has to break its commitments due to budget problems.

A father sadly telling his son to postpone college for a year or two should not be judged as a liar because he gave that dream to his son. Father and son need to work together to come up with new, creative solutions that involve more sacrifice, delayed gratification and difficult choices.

That's the kind of intelligence and judgement I see in Obama - a leader, not a Santa Claus to give us our unearned presents.

Jude Knecht, Sun City Center

Clay Bennett cartoon - Jan. 15

A welcome return

It was great to see one of Clay Bennett's cartoons back in the St. Petersburg Times, even if he is now working for the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

He always did hit the nail on the head when he worked at the Times.

Malcolm Johnson, Seminole

Load-Date: January 19, 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).

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....

"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.

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....

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."

Said was writing in 1988.

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?

q This an edited version of a speech by Pregs Govender, newly appointed commissioner for the South African Human Rights Commission, at a meeting of the Palestinian Support Group in Mowbray Town hall, Cape Town last Friday.

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....

Load-Date: January 14, 2009



## Israeli use of phosphorous shells angers Lib Dem defence secretary Harvey

North Devon Journal January 29, 2009

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Section: Pg. 26

Length: 203 words

## **Body**

North devon MP Nick Harvey has expressed alarm about the use of white phosphorous by the Israeli army during its recent invasion of the Gaza strip.

Mr Harvey, the shadow Liberal Democrat defence secretary, has tabled an early day motion in the House of Commons, calling on the UK government to clarify its position and do all it can to persuade the Israeli government to stop using such weapons.

The UN, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also condemned the use of the weapon in Gaza.

Mr Harvey said: "The use of white phosphorous by Israeli forces in the recent incursion into the Gaza Strip is alarming.

"It is an indiscriminate weapon; innocent men, <u>women</u>, and children will be affected as well as the <u>Hamas</u> militants Israel say they are targeting.

"As a chemical designed for smokescreens and signalling, its use in one of the most densely populated places in the world is entirely unacceptable."

"Although it is not illegal under international law, serious questions need to be asked about the restrictions placed upon its use, and in my role as Liberal Democrat Shadow Defence Secretary I will continue to call on the Government to clarify its position and seek to find what can be done to monitor its use."

Load-Date: August 21, 2009



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Load-Date: June 11, 2009



## Utter silence worldwide

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

January 23, 2009 Friday

1 - Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 22

Length: 211 words

## **Body**

EVERY day we are seeing worldwide condemnation, demonstrations and marches against the Israeli attacks on Gaza against the rocket firing *Hamas* Palestinians.

Even our country has joined the hue and cry.

Now, I have not seen or ever heard of any such activities against the carnage and slaughter of civilians, <u>women</u>, children, in Iraq by suicide Muslim bombers from both religious sects, Sunni and Shiite.

The death toll in that country over the years far exceeds that of Gaza. The Americans are not even involved in these attacks.

The Muslims are killing their own people, and there is utter silence from the Muslim communities here and around the world.

Why? Any protester care to explains?

After the Bali bombers were found guilty and shot, there has been no case for compensation for the families of the deceased from any of the law fraternity, who are never slow in jumping on the gravy train in such cases.

After all, Libya had to pay out millions to the families of those who died in the Lockerbie Pam Am air crash.

What is the difference, both were proven guilty?

Ah, but we do have one compensation case, that from Dr Haneef's solicitor!

Haneef was only falsely accused, the Australians and other nationalities were killed.

Someone please explain?

Colin LT

Easdon-Smith,

Ingham.

#### Utter silence worldwide

Load-Date: January 22, 2009



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North Devon Journal January 29, 2009

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Section: Pg. 26

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Load-Date: January 30, 2009



## Educating a generation of jihadists - Correction Appended

The Toronto Star April 6, 2009 Monday

## Correction Appended

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A15

Length: 580 words

## **Body**

"We should not be surprised if the next generation of jihadists comes not from the Gaza Strip or the mountains and mosques of Pakistan and Afghanistan, but from university campuses across the U.S." That's how Khaled Abu Toameh, a distinguished Arab journalist and documentary filmmaker, sums up his speaking tour last month at universities across America.

Writing in the newsletter of the Hudson Institute, he describes how a vociferous minority of students and professors, most of whom have neither visited the region nor seem to want to know much about it, made him realize that "there is more sympathy for *Hamas* there than there is in Ramallah."

Abu Toameh explains: "What's happening on the U.S. campuses is not about supporting Palestinians as much as it is about promoting hatred for the Jewish state." What masquerades as pro-Palestinian is just anti-Jewish.

"What struck me more than anything else," Abu Toameh continues, "was the fact that many of the people I met on campuses supported <u>Hamas</u> and believed that it had the right to 'resist occupation' even if that meant blowing up children and <u>women</u> on a bus in downtown Jerusalem."

The mood doesn't appear to be very different in some Canadian universities. All who don't share the self-righteous canards of the agitators are at risk of being browbeaten into implicit compliance with the prejudices of the phony self-appointed champions of the Palestinians. Though the troublemakers are relatively few, their activities may turn many others into colluding bystanders.

This is anti-Semitism in the guise of human rights advocacy. It has echoes of what my parents' generation was subjected to in universities in pre-World War II Poland and which I myself experienced there as a child immediately after the Holocaust. It prevented me from going to school out of fear of Jew-bashing.

The fact that something similar is happening in universities here and now is cause for deep concern. Some seem to attend institutions of higher learning not in search of an education but for training in hatred. They make it difficult for bona fide students to achieve their legitimate goals. A few vociferous lecturers encourage them. Scandalously, they even advocate boycotting Israeli academics.

The attempts that York University is reported to be making to promote civility in the Israeli-Palestinian debate, and avoid the kind of atmosphere that has of late plagued it, are laudable, but probably insufficient. For it's not enough to deal with symptoms without tackling underlying causes.

#### Educating a generation of jihadists

We need a national debate about the nature of higher education to determine what must be done to promote truth, assure openness and safeguard mutual respect. Those responsible must shape policies that guarantee free exchange of ideas yet prevent the kind of malicious and indiscriminate manifestations of prejudice that Abu Toameh encountered.

Though there must never be less than absolutely open expression of all legitimately held opinions, there's also the need to scrutinize the poisonous agendas of some teachers to enable university authorities to create structures that prevent abuse.

One way of doing it is to make sure that universities help students to grow unhindered into independent and mature individuals. Without such help, Abu Toameh's prediction about the next generation of jihadists may indeed come true. And we'll only have ourselves to blame.

Dow Marmur is rabbi emeritus at Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple. His column appears every other week.

#### Correction

NB: Khaled Abu Toameh's contribution to the Hudson Institute was made as a posted comment on its website (not in its newsletter).

Correction-Date: April 16, 2009

Load-Date: April 17, 2009



## Canadian speaks out for Palestinians

The Toronto Star

March 25, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: LIFE; Pg. L02

Length: 613 words

## **Body**

Kim Elliott speaks in tones so soft that it's sometimes tough to hear her.

But she uses her voice effectively, making her more courageous than many other Canadians who shout a good game about human rights and freedom of expression, but who slink away when it comes to talking the talk about Israel's invasion of Gaza.

That despite the awful allegations about Israeli army actions that started to dribble out last week: children being used as human shields, civilians being shot for not instantly obeying commands, units buying T-shirts depicting pregnant Palestinian <u>women</u> with targets on their bellies.

Elliott not only speaks out but, as the publisher of the online magazine Rabble.ca, walks the walk.

This month, she went all the way to and around Gaza where she, along with 59 other (mostly <u>women</u>) peace and human rights activists, entered at the invitation of the United Nations.

"There was this doctor we met who told us of 'caged rats syndrome,'" she tells me. "It's like putting a bunch of rats in a cage and seeing what happens. It's limiting their movement and packing them in really densely so they turn on each other. They want to get out but can't. Anger just boils over."

Among her fellow sojourners are five Canadians, including Sandra Ruch, one of the Jewish <u>women</u> who occupied Toronto's Israeli consulate in January in protest of the invasion, as well as American author Alice Walker (The Color Purple) and Code Pink leaders Medea Benjamin and (former colonel and diplomat) Ann Wright, whose peace activism in the U.S. led to their being barred from entering Canada in 2007.

(On a side note: never in my life had I been ashamed of my country until the Stephen Harper government began to transform it into NeoConada. Last week's banning of British MP George Galloway for unspecified security reasons was just the last straw.)

The group had freedom to tour at will, Elliott insists. "We didn't have anything to do with <u>Hamas</u> other than that they stamped our passports. We wandered around by ourselves all night. We were safe because, as we'd heard, <u>Hamas</u> had so cracked down on the gangs that had started to take over."

Elliott, whose interest in the Palestinians began long ago and who has visited the Middle East many times, went to Gaza so she could bear witness to the effect of the attack and Israel's long-running siege, which strangles the movement of food, medical supplies and other necessities into Gaza.

#### Canadian speaks out for Palestinians

Which is why there are tunnels from Egypt.

The media emphasize that the tunnels are used to smuggle rockets and weapons into Gaza - true - but everything from zoo animals to seedlings also move underground. Just this week, Egypt seized 560 sheep that were being herded through.

"The inhumanity of the border is, oddly enough, what left the most striking impression - more than the incredible destruction of homes," Elliott explains. "The Red Crescent Society said they need at least about 1,000 trucks a day to go through every day to properly sustain the people. On average since the siege, it's about 100 trucks. Some days, there are none. Most of what is feeding the people is going through the tunnels."

So, with all the injustices around the world, why focus on Palestinians?

"I got my human rights background at Amnesty International and, up until very recently, they wouldn't touch this issue, in Canada especially. People felt so threatened!" she says.

"So, not only were the Palestinians suffering enormous human rights abuses...but the focus of the media in disenfranchising them and the way people are attacked for working this issue motivated me."

Antonia Zerbisias is a Living section columnist. azerbisias @ thestar.ca. She blogs at thestar.blogs.com.

Load-Date: March 25, 2009



## PM resists as world changes

The Toronto Star

March 12, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A25

Length: 581 words

#### **Body**

George W. Bush held the view, and so also Stephen Harper, that admitting defeat was a sign of weakness and talking to one's adversaries was for sissies - and traitors.

Would you talk to the Taliban? No. Iran? No. Syria? No. Hezbollah and *Hamas*? Absolutely not.

But with Barack Obama saying that NATO is losing in Afghanistan, Harper agrees with him. In fact, the Prime Minister says NATO cannot win, period.

So what are we doing there?

Helping NATO help Kabul stabilize Afghanistan just enough to let the foreign troops get out. This is the same formula as in Iraq: arranging a face-saving departure.

Thus the grand declarations of the last seven years - eliminating Al Qaeda and the Taliban; killing Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar; remaking the Middle East; modernizing retrograde Arabs and Afghans; "reforming" Islam; and liberating <u>women</u> - will just have to wait for another day, another invasion.

Harper has set a secondary goal: "NATO must succeed or its future is in considerable doubt." Translation: NATO has failed and cannot win but must stay on until it's seen not to have failed. (See Iraq, above.)

On Iran and other issues, though, Harper won't budge. He said recently that the Iranian regime is "obviously evil" and it wants a nuclear bomb to "act on that ideology."

Obama, however, is getting ready to talk to the evil Iranians. And the Syrians. And the Taliban.

Meanwhile, some European and Arab states are exploring ways to engage even Hezbollah and *Hamas*.

The times they are a-changin'.

Hillary Clinton has invited Iran to a summit on Afghanistan, along with Pakistan and other regional players.

Iran, which borders both Afghanistan and Pakistan, has legitimate concerns. For example, she said, "it's deeply concerned about the importation of (Afghan) narcotics." She noted that Iran cooperated with the U.S. after 9/11 and during the invasion of Afghanistan.

She could've added that Iran was among the first to warn about the Taliban in the 1990s - a time when America was flirting with them.

#### PM resists as world changes

As for Iranian nuclear plans, Obama is hinting he might axe the U.S. missile defence shield in Eastern Europe if Russia dropped its nuclear and missile deals with Iran.

He is talking to Syria. The two officials he sent to Damascus "found a lot of common ground."

He needs Syrian co-operation in Lebanon. But his priority is to get Syria and Israel back negotiating, as they were under Turkish auspices until the Israeli offensive on Gaza. An Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a peace deal would help isolate Iran.

Bashar al-Assad may insist that Israel settle with the Palestinians and Iranians at the same time. We'll only find out at the negotiating table.

Clinton visited Turkey, thanked it for brokering the talks and said Obama himself would visit soon. The U.S. needs Turkey as an exit point for U.S. troops and equipment out of Iraq, and as an air supply route into Afghanistan.

This is smart politics, all around.

In Jakarta, Clinton said that Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, shows that "Islam, democracy and modernity not only can coexist but thrive."

No revelation that. But it does represent a sharp departure from Dick Cheney's and Jason Kenney's apocalyptic formulations in dealing with Muslims.

Obama said in December: "We've got a unique opportunity to reboot America's image around the world, the Muslim world in particular."

He's moving ahead both symbolically and substantially. But Ottawa is still stuck in its neo-con muck.

hsiddiq @ thestar.ca

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The Jerusalem Post
January 14, 2009 Wednesday

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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

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

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

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



# Soldiers protected from war crimes charges; Israel makes promise as UN gathers evidence

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

January 26, 2009 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 587 words

**Byline:** Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service **Dateline:** AZBET ABADRAPOH, GAZA STRIP

### **Body**

With The UN gathering information that may be used as a starting point for investigations into whether Israeli soldiers committed war crimes in Gaza earlier this month, the Israeli cabinet decided on Sunday that all military personnel who fought in the <u>Hamas</u>-run Palestinian enclave would be given state protection from foreign prosecution.

"The commanders and soldiers sent to Gaza should know they are safe from various tribunals and Israel will assist them on this front and defend us, just as they defended us with their bodies during the Gaza operation,"Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said.

Allegations that there may have been improper behaviour by Israel Defense Forces have been made by the UN and agencies such as Amnesty International. Much of the territory, including most of Gaza City except for government buildings, was not touched by the war. The charges of misconduct centre on at least four communities in central and northern Gaza that bore almost the full brunt of attacks by Israeli ground forces, artillery and warplanes.

One of the areas is Azbet Abadrapoh, just east of the Jabaliya refugee camp. This weekend, as residents combed through the ruins of scores of homes that had been completely flattened in the neighbourhood, which is about 1.5 kilometres from the Israeli border, Sannaa Awadalluh of the UN's Gaza office and an associate went around with clipboards already thick with notes.

"I am collecting tragic stories to send to our directors for analysis," Awadallah said as a crowd swarmed around her and an associate. "It is important for the UN to know exactly what happened here and also to find out what help is required now. We are particularly interested in knowing what happened to <u>women</u> and children."

Piecing together who did what when and where will be an immense challenge as so many people wanted their narratives chronicled. For Awadallah, the most harrowing of the 70 accounts she had recorded so far was the case of a mother who died while breastfeeding her baby, who lay beside her corpse for three days before Israel allowed Palestinian medics into the area.

Pensioner Ahmed Muhammad Baduan's street looked like an earthquake had hit it. When his wife, Halima, was hit in the head by a piece of shrapnel fired from a tank he went outside and told an Israeli in the next street whom he

Soldiers protected from war crimes charges; Israel makes promise as UN gathers evidence

described as a commando that his wife was wounded inside. But one of three tanks parked about 50 metres on the far side of his home fired, he said, bringing his already battered house down, killing his wife.

Asked whether <u>Hamas</u> should continue firing rockets into Israel, which was what provoked the war, Baduan replied:"They should stop throwing them because there is hard destruction here, but they do not listen to my speeches."

In El Atatra, most of the damage appeared to have been caused by fires.

"The smell was terrible. We could not breathe," said Shahir Khdeir, whose son died in a blaze caused by an explosion that gained strength when he and his neighbours tried to put it out with water. He said he was sure it was white phosphorous, which is not supposed to be used against civilians.

Israel has vigorously defended the conduct of its troops and has said that the weapons they used conformed with international law. While launching an investigation into the uses of white phosphorous shells during the 22-day war, the military censor's office has also ordered local and foreign media to blur the faces of army commanders so that they could not be identified and arrested while travelling abroad.

### **Graphic**

Colour Photo: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service; Ahmed Muhammad Baduan's wife was killed recently in their Gaza Strip home, now in ruins. Several agencies have condemned Israel's actions.;

Load-Date: January 26, 2009



# US journos given 12 years' labour in North Korea

Cape Times (South Africa)
June 09, 2009 Tuesday
e2 Edition

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Section: Pg. 2

Length: 229 words

# **Body**

Two US journalists were convicted of committing a "grave crime" against North Korea and of illegally entering the country and and sentenced to 12 years of hard labour. The US will "engage in all possible channels" to win the release of Laura Ling and Euna Lee, reporters for Al Gore's Current TV.

At least four Palestinian militants with explosives belts were killed in a gun battle with Israeli soldiers along the border of the *Hamas*-run Gaza Strip.

Thousands of Mexicans mourned the young victims of a fire that swept through a government day centre in a northern city, killing at least 42 people, most of them under two.

China wants all personal computers sold domestically to come with software that blocks access to online pornography, says one of the Green Dam-Youth Escort software's developers.

Security forces opened fire on protesters over the rape and death of two young <u>women</u> in Indian Kashmir, wounding at least seven people, including two critically.

Ex-finance minister embezzled more than \$600 000

Avraham Hirschson, former Israeli finance minister, was convicted of embezzling more than \$600 000 from a workers' union, one of a string of scandals to batter Israel's top ranks.

Scott Roeder, charged with the fatal shooting of high-profile Kansas abortionist Dr George Tiller, warned of more slayings, sparking fears of a "violent, terrorist movement" against abortion.

Load-Date: June 8, 2009



### Voter turnout in Israel election defies predictions

### AlArabiya.net

February 9, 2009 Monday

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Length: 627 words

### **Body**

Israelis took to the polls in large numbers Tuesday despite bad weather and predictions of low voter turnout to decide the tight race between hawkish former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and centrist Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, with the far-right expected to make major gains.

More Israelis had cast ballots in the first five hours of voting on Tuesday than during the previous election three years ago defying analysts who said turnout in Israel's 18th parliamentary election could sink to a historic low.

The short campaign was overshadowed by Israel's Gaza offensive, and the key issue facing voters became which leader can best assure the security of the state while chances of a peace deal seem remote. Far-right monitor sparks protest

Police barred an election monitor from the radical rightist National Jewish Front from entering the predominantly Arab town of Umm El-Fahm in the north following clashes between Arab Israelis and the police, according to press reports.

Dozens of Arab youth who opposed the Central Elections Committee's decision to allow far-right activist Baruch Marzel to serve as a poll monitor attempted to prevent him from entering, according to the Jerusalem Post.

"We have come to condemn the racism and this fascist," one of the demonstrators told the paper. "We want to live in peace, but we won't let any racist into Umm el-Fahm. He won't enter our home."

In advance of the election, Israel sealed off the occupied West Bank, denying Palestinians entry for the duration of the election, the army said. Police deployed thousands of officers nationwide for extra security.

#### **Dull contest**

Some 5.3 million voters were eligible to cast ballots in more than 9,000 schools and community centers nationwide stand to decide an election analysts dubbed as duller than past contests, with some blaming this on the fighting in Gaza and continuing rocket fire into Israel that put campaign rallies on hold for several weeks and dampened public enthusiasm.

Israeli President Shimon Peres accused the candidates of failing to address "the country's burning issues" in the campaign, during which candidates did not hold a single debate.

Yitzhak Galnoor, a political scientist, said Israelis were largely bored by the campaign because it was "filled with slogans bereft of any content."

Dead heat

### Voter turnout in Israel election defies predictions

The race could be determined by how many votes the smaller parties garner or the ballots of the 10 to 15 percent of undecided voters, pollsters said.

"The trend we've seen the last few days indicates a very close battle," said pollster Rafi Smith of the Smith Research Center. "No one has jumped ahead and it's tough to call."

Likud party leader Netanyahu, once a clear frontrunner in opinion polls, has lost ground to Livni since the 22-day assault that Israel claims was aimed at wiping out <u>Hamas</u> tunnels and stopping rocket attacks, both of which continue following the Jan. 18 unilateral ceasefire.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak, a third prominent candidate, trailed both Netanyahu and Livni, though his poll numbers had more than doubled since the Gaza assault, which killed 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis, ended.

Livni, 50, a former Mossad agent, would become the first <u>female</u> prime minister since Golda Meir in the 1970s. Netanyahu, 59, a former finance minister, and Barak, 66, a former general, have also previously served in the top position.

The big surprise of the campaign has been the meteoric rise of Avigdor Lieberman, a tough-talking Soviet immigrant whose support swelled in the wake of the Gaza war as he vowed to hit Israel's enemies with an iron fist.

Mr. Lieberman-- who in the past has called for executing Israeli Arab MPs who have had dealings with <u>Hamas</u>-- has made "No Citizenship Without Loyalty" a central theme of his campaign.

Load-Date: May 5, 2009



### Holocaust row sours Jewish-Muslim ties

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

February 6, 2009 Friday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 582 words

Byline: BARNEY ZWARTZ, RELIGION EDITOR

### **Body**

AUSTRALIA'S Jewish community leaders have threatened to sever relations with Muslims after the chairman of Australia's main Islamic group refused to withdraw his comparison of Gaza with the Holocaust.

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils chairman Ikebal Patel infuriated the Jewish community by claiming during the Israeli incursion into Gaza last month that the "victims of the Holocaust (are) now perpetrating much worse atrocities against the Palestinians".

Asked by Executive Council of Australian Jewry president Robert Goot to withdraw the statement, Mr Patel replied that the tone and choice of words were appropriate and reflected the outrage of Muslims and other Australians.

"We believe our comparison of the atrocities and the brutal use of disproportionate force by Israel ... is justified," he wrote.

With his reply - dated January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day - Mr Patel sent a montage of 42 pairs of photos, Holocaust images on the left and pictures of Palestinians on the right. The montage was generated by US academic Norman Finkelstein and has been widely circulated on the internet.

Mr Patel said the federation did not intend to diminish the impact of the Holocaust, that the pictures did not "diminish or magnify any atrocities" and the federation was still committed to working with the Australian Jewish community.

Mr Goot wrote a three-page reply on Monday, saying the Jewish community could not work with the federation while the "offensive letter and your Holocaust remarks remain on the public record".

He said Mr Patel gave no explanation of the photos, that few, if any, were from Gaza, and they seemed to serve no purpose but to diminish the atrocities of Nazi Germany.

"No matter how you seek to twist and distort the facts, there is simply no parallel in history to the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews in systematic mass executions (and) the mass transportation of millions of Jews to purpose-built death camps."

#### Holocaust row sours Jewish-Muslim ties

He said Mr Patel ignored <u>Hamas'</u> responsibility and its "boasts" of using Palestinian <u>women</u>, children and the elderly as human shields. He sought an assurance that the Holocaust comparison was not being taught in the five Australian Federation of Islamic Councils schools.

The federation and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the leading representative groups for each faith community, have a long history of joint projects, and Mr Patel has addressed the Jewish council's annual conference.

Mr Goot and Mr Patel are involved in a joint delegation to the ABC today to ask it to reinstate the Religion Report radio program. Yesterday Mr Goot told The Age he hoped to sit down with Mr Patel after that meeting. He said even if the two groups disagreed, there was a way of expressing it that let dialogue continue on other issues, and it was important not to lose sight of the big picture - multicultural harmony - over a view of one issue.

Mr Patel said yesterday he stood by his comments, though he would regret it if the Jewish council cut ties.

He said he had spoken to the state Islamic councils, other Muslim groups and many imams, and was confident he represented the mainstream Muslim view.

But he said he did not mean Israel's actions in Gaza were the same as the Holocaust. "I meant people who suffered so much (the Holocaust) should understand the impact of modern warfare and missiles and phosphorus bombs."

He had urged both sides to show restraint in Gaza. "Hamas firing missiles is clearly not helping the problem."

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: One of the pairs of images of the Holocaust and Palestinians sent by Australian Federation of Islamic Councils chairman Ikebal Patel.

Load-Date: February 5, 2009



### International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)
February 26, 2009 Thursday

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Section: A; Pg. 8 Length: 655 words

Byline: The Associated Press

### **Body**

Iranians in test-run of nuclear plant BUSHEHR, Iran - Iranian and Russian engineers carried out a test-run of Iran's first nuclear power plant Wednesday, a major step toward starting up a facility that the U.S. once hoped to prevent because of fears over Tehran's nuclear ambitions. American opposition to the plant had eased when Iran agreed in 2005 to return spent fuel to Russia to ensure it can't be reprocessed into plutonium. Russia is providing enriched uranium fuel for the plant in the southern port city of Bushehr. But U.S. officials say there are deep questions about whether Iran intends to use other parts of its nuclear program to develop atomic weapons.

Artillery shell kills 2 Somali kids at school MOGADISHU, Somalia - An artillery shell killed two schoolchildren in the Somali capital on Wednesday during the second day of fighting between AU peacekeepers and Islamist insurgents, witnesses and officials said. Elsewhere, Islamists seized a key southern town from pro-government forces. A teacher said two pupils younger than 10 were killed and four others injured. Bangladeshi border guards revolt over pay DHAKA, Bangladesh - Bangladeshi border guards angry over low pay paralyzed the cap- ital in a daylong standoff Wed-nesday, taking their officers captive, seizing a shopping mall and holding kids hostage in a school. One bystander died after being shot. The Bangladesh Red Crescent reported it evacuated 15 injured people, some badly wounded. The guards eventually released the children and agreed to lay down their arms in exchange for amnesty. For more than four hours, intermittent gunshots rang out at the headquarters. Smoke billowed. Soldiers shut down area streets as helicopters circled. Sierra Leone rebels guilty of war crimes FREETOWN, Sierra Leone -The rebels were known for asking their victims if they preferred "long sleeves" or short sleeves." They then cut off the hands of those that chose the first option and the full arm of those that picked the second. On Wednesday, an international court modeled after the Nuremberg tribunal charged three top Sierra Leone rebel leaders with crimes against humanity. Revolutionary United Front leader Issa Sesay and one of his battlefield commanders Morris Kallon were found guilty on 16 of 18 counts, including mutilation, terrorism, rape, forced marriage, sexual slavery and the enlistment of child soldiers. Another commander, Augustine Gbao, was found guilty on 14 of the 18 counts. Palestinian sides agree to release detainees CAIRO - The rival Palestinian groups Hamas and Fatah agreed Wednesday to release each other's loyalists from detention, seeking to lower tensions during reconciliation talks. A deal between the Islamic militants of Hamas who rule Gaza and the more moderate Fatah movement in charge of the West Bank is seen as key to Gaza's reconstruction efforts after Israel's recent offensive. Rare Shiite protests in Sunni-led Saudi Arabia RIYADH, Saudi Arabia - Shiite Muslims are shouting anti-government slogans and demanding more freedoms in rare protests amid the minority's worst confrontations in years with authorities in this overwhelmingly Sunni kingdom. Hundreds of protesters gathered in the poor Shiite town of Awwamiya, witnesses said. One said youths threw stones at a police post before officers fired in the air to disperse the crowd, which included women. No casualties were reported. Pakistani charged in Mumbai attacks MUMBAI, India - India charged the lone surviving gunman from the deadly Mum-bai attacks in a 11,000-page document marking the

### International briefs

beginning of a legal process that could lead to his execution - and raise tensions with Pakistan. Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, a Pakistani, was captured in the early hours of the attacks and jailed ever since. Nine other attackers were killed during the three-day siege in November, which left 164 people dead and targeted luxury hotels, a Jewish center and other sites.

Load-Date: February 26, 2009



# What the hell! A big day out for grown-ups; ROCK

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 19, 2009 Monday

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### **Body**

#### ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

Cockatoo Island, January 17

TO FILE UNDER: We're not in Kansas (or Homebush) any more, Toto.

I'm sitting next to a group that is emptying a picnic basket onto a very nice rug. People don't take picnic baskets to the Big Day Out. (Actually, the website for this concert says do not bring picnic baskets; the BDO website says do not bring drugs.)

Behind me three young <u>women</u> are discussing Israel and <u>Hamas</u>. People don't discuss Israel and <u>Hamas</u> at the BDO - unless it's the name of a new electronic duo.

I find a woman reading The Financial Times. People don't . . . well, you know the drill. (Actually, I suspect she's looking up the share price of the festival's boutique beer supplier, which is charging \$7.50 for a small plastic cup of ale.)

To file under: What did they just say?

The American band Dead Meadow channel a heavy heavy monster sound that is pure early '70s Sydney band Buffalo or Black Sabbath, but one song's chorus says "too much sugar, not enough meat". Possibly one of the first times the philosophy behind the Atkins Diet has been canvassed in a rock song.

Speaking of diets, the remarkably slimmed down singer with the Saints, Chris Bailey, in typically mischievous mood, warns us we may not understand the next song - their 1976 debut single (I'm) Stranded, as it turns out - as it is sung in fluent Queensland.

Earlier in the day, the Saints guitarist Ed Kuepper, in typically sardonic mood while playing with his tight and hard swinging jazzed-up rock outfit the Laughing Clowns, responds to a request to turn it up from an audience member with: "There's a pretty highbrow outfit up here and the Kiss army out there."

The German electronic pioneers Harmonia, behind a row of laptops, machines and one guitar, build propulsive rhythms, hard throb pulses and serene atmospheres, all with impassive faces and not one word.

To file under: What the hell?

The poetically named DJ Passenger Of Shit unleashes a sound that surely is a collapsing brick tower under attack from a battery of howitzers while a woman undergoing live organ removal screams for mercy. It's bowel-rumbling, utterly assaultive, hilarious and brilliant.

To file under: Why urologists will be busy this week.

There were 7000 people on the island. Most of them seemed to be in the toilet queues at the one time. All day. Do the words backed-up middle-aged bladders mean anything to you?

To file under: let's do this again.

Even if the volume has to be kept down so as not to upset the burghers of Hunters Hill and Lane Cove, Cockatoo Island's mix of natural harbour beauty, sandstone tunnels, rusting machinery and old ruins is like no other music site.

With Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds in rambunctious mood and pretty good form - and already ahead for the diverse and successful mix they curated - the old folks' music holds up well all day while Japanese drums-and-guitar duo Afrirampo make art punk terrorism fun again; Beaches make shoe-gazing psych-rock and guitar grooves cool again; and gospel-country-psychedelia creators Spiritualized make Pink Floyd topical again.

Not one on-drugs-for-the-first-time-ooh-yeah!! teenager is seen.

# **Graphic**

THREE PHOTOS: High-brow outfit . . . Ed Kuepper in his Laughing Clowns livery. It's his party and he'll cry if he wants to . . . Nick Cave, performer and curator of All Tomorrow's Parties, lets loose, above, and Chris Bailey of the Saints. Photos: Edwina Pickles

Load-Date: January 18, 2009



# Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

The Irish Times

January 19, 2009 Monday

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Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN in Jerusalem

### **Body**

THE SITUATION in the Gaza Strip was unsettled yesterday in spite of Israel s unilateral ceasefire and <u>Hamas</u> s declaration of a conditional week-long truce. Israeli F-16s struck a house and tanks engaged fighters in northern Gaza after Palestinian fighters fired rockets into southern Israel. At Beit Hannoun, a farmer was killed and his son injured when inspecting their fields and a woman and her daughter were wounded when their home was hit by an Israeli shell.

Phosphorus munitions hit al-Tuffah neighbourhood of Gaza city. The 23-day death toll rose to about 1,300, including 410 children, with 5,450 wounded. The fatality figure is certain to increase as bodies are recovered.

Hospitals remained under severe pressure although a group of 40 doctors entered from Egypt on Saturday. A few critically wounded Palestinians left the Strip through the southern Rafah crossing for treatment in hospitals in Egypt which was insisting that only its ambulances could make the transfer. At the Erez crossing in the north Israel reportedly opened a field hospital to treat the wounded.

Irish volunteer Caoimhe Butterly was with the Palestinian Red Crescent in the northern Jabaliya area, the site of heavy fighting, where she helped recover bodies. Thirty-eight were brought to the Kamal Adwan hospital in the morning, she said. Palestinian health officials put the total for this area at 95; 20 were believed to be of guerrillas killed fighting.

Australian volunteer Sharon Locke took part in the Red Crescent effort to extract 27 bodies through a hole in the roof of a house in the Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza city where Israeli troops had rounded up 70 members of the Sammouni family on January 4th.

Twenty-four hours later the house received direct hits from Israeli bombs. Ms Locke saw the corpses of four **women** extracted before the Red Cross warned ambulance crews and local people that they should flee because Israeli tanks were advancing. Later rescuers returned and lifted out another 14 bodies. Heavy equipment had been brought in to do the job. The whole area is crushed, Ms Locke stated.

Salah Sakka, a former member of the Gaza city municipality, which serves 500,000 people, said: Planes, drones and helicopters are overhead [creating tension]. Water and sanitation are a catastrophe. Water and sewage pipes have been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of people do not have tap water, 220,000 in Jabaliya alone.

### Strikes on Gaza continue despite truce

The power company s lines are down, wires are in the streets [where] . . . debris of bombed buildings is scattered. Shops and offices along Omar Mukhtar Street [Gaza city s main thoroughfare] have been smashed, particularly those near the government compound.

Christopher Gunness, spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), said its work depended on whether <u>Hamas</u> halts rocket fire and Israel withdraws. Of the 100,000 displaced people, half are living in UNRWA schools. Before the agency can resume normal work, accommodation will have to be found for the displaced. While looking after them, UNRWA has to carry on with food distribution, and repair or replace 53 damaged or destroyed schools and other facilities.

Israel has rejected accusations by human rights experts and agencies, including, on Saturday, Human Rights Watch, that it has committed war crimes by attacking densely populated urban areas with a variety of highly destructive and toxic munitions. UNRWA s Gaza operations chief, Irish national John Ging, asked: Were they war crimes that resulted in the deaths of the innocent during the conflict? The question has to be answered.

Load-Date: January 19, 2009