

# ISRAEL

## & Christians Today

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CHRISTIANS FOR  
**ISRAEL**  
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

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Digital menorah calling for the release of hostages, Bat Yam Israel 11 December 2023. | Photo: Shutterstock

## Light Will Prevail Over Darkness

This year the Jewish people will celebrate *Hanukkah*—the ‘Festival of Light’, as we celebrate Christmas. During *Hanukkah*, the Jewish people recall the Maccabean defeat (a small army of pious Jews) of the tyranny of the Greek empire and the rededication of the Temple in the 2nd century BC. Since 7 October 2023, the world is experiencing another battle between light and darkness. The violence of 7 October was intended by its perpetrators (Iran, Qatar and their proxies Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and others) to unleash not only a kinetic war but also a dark, ideological war to destroy the Jewish nation again.

As early as 8 October, there were massive calls throughout the West, by a strange but now familiar alliance of Islamism and secular Marxism, for the liberation of Palestine ‘from the river to the sea’. That, of course, is a call for a global *jihad*—the genocide of

Jews. Like the Maccabees, the response of the Jewish people was to seek to survive, so that Israel can be the light to the nations that it is called to be.

In doing so, Israeli leaders faced an incredibly difficult dilemma: how to destroy Hamas and release the Israeli hostages, while also keeping innocent civilian casualties to a minimum? Eliminating Hamas terrorists has meant, tragically, that thousands of Gazan civilians have been killed, and the infrastructure has been largely annihilated. For the next decades, lawyers will debate whether or not Israel’s response was ‘proportionate’ or ‘excessive’.

In human terms, it is impossible to see any way to break this tragic cycle of violence and destruction, in which neither Israelis nor Palestinians, Jews nor Muslims, are winners.

Thankfully, we can be confident that redemption is not only possible, it has been promised. The Lord will

change the hearts and minds of all in the land. One day, there will be peace from Egypt to Assyria, and the people of Israel will live together in harmony.

Only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can solve this conflict, that has become truly a global battle between light and darkness, for the hearts and minds of all people. Luke records that Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied saying that Jesus came to save the people of Israel from their enemies, so that “*being delivered [we] might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.*” (Luke 1:74-75).

As we celebrate Christmas, let us pray for the return of our Lord and Saviour, who will judge the nations, take the throne of His father David, and reign in the midst of His people Jacob. Let us pray that His Son who is the Light of the world will intervene and redeem our broken and dark humanity, in a miraculous way.

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The Lifeline that is C4I



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## Colophon

*Israel & Christians Today is the premier publication of Christians for Israel.*

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Our mission is to bring Biblical understanding in the Church and among the nations concerning God's purposes for Israel and to promote comfort of Israel through prayer and action.

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## Hunting Jews in Amsterdam

## ■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

**The world is in shock after the violence that erupted following the Maccabi Tel Aviv-Ajax football match in Amsterdam on 7 November.**

At least ten Israelis were injured by local Arab and Muslim gangs who attacked Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer fans in many parts of the city following the football match. Hundreds of Israelis huddled in their hotels for hours, fearing they could be attacked. Many said that Dutch security forces were nowhere to be found, as the Israeli tourists were ambushed by gangs of masked assailants who shouted pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel slogans while they hunted, beat and harassed them.

Pro-Palestinian activists claimed the Israeli fans were the first to engage in harassment and violence, although those claims have not been verified. Dutch broadcaster NOS reported that a Palestinian flag was ripped off a building in the centre of the city. City officials said that ten Israelis had been arrested ahead of the soccer match that preceded the antisemitic attacks. Dutch Prime Minister Schoof condemned the actions of the Maccabi Tel Aviv fans, but stressed that “there is a big difference between destroying things and hunting Jews,” Schoof said.

It has become clear that this was a premeditated act of terror targeting the Jewish community.

Reminiscent of some of the darkest episodes in European history, it has deeply alarmed Jewish communities in Europe and abroad.

It has also exposed security gaps. Evidence is emerging that the attacks were coordinated by extremist networks linked to former UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) employee Ayman Nejme. Analysis from the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) indicates that Nejme, an Amsterdam resident, orchestrated these attacks through social media, mobilising groups that openly



A Palestinian flag hangs on a building in Amsterdam. | Photo: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90

endorse anti-Jewish violence. These attackers employed firecrackers, stun grenades, threats, and physical aggression, and forced individuals to renounce their identities, in what has become the most extensive antisemitic assault in the Netherlands since the Holocaust.

The attack underscores a troubling reality: radical groups across Europe are increasingly using public gatherings as venues for antisemitic violence, leveraging social media and transnational networks to amplify their impact.

Europe stands at a crossroads. We cannot dismiss this resurgence of antisemitism, nor can we afford to repeat the mistakes of history by neglecting the safety of Jewish communities. In 1938, Kristallnacht—orchestrated by the Nazi regime—devastated Jewish lives and businesses across Germany. Today, European leaders must act with urgency and determination to prevent a repeat of such tragedies.

Why were the Dutch intelligence, security and police institutions unable to prevent the attacks? The Dutch government has recognised the severity of this incident and pledged to investigate failures within its police and National Coordinator for Terrorism Prevention and Security.

But that is not enough. The Dutch government, European Union authorities,

and international bodies must take immediate action to ensure that those involved are held accountable, leaving no one unpunished or at large. They must examine connections with organisations like UNRWA and scrutinise former employees of international agencies suspected of engaging in antisemitic and violent activities. And they must strengthen protections for Jewish communities.

It is also time for our governments to confront antisemitic narratives that underlie these attacks. For too long, governments have failed to prevent misinformation and slogans that incite violence under false pretences, which serve as rallying points for extremism. The right to freedom of speech does not justify the dangerous calls for intifada and for the liberation of Palestine “from the river to the sea”—all such slogans denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and the legitimacy of the Jewish State of Israel, feed the latent antisemitism and inevitably lead to physical attacks on Jewish people.

Our leaders must act decisively to protect all citizens, in this case, the Jewish communities and the Israeli tourists.

As Christians, we must stand in solidarity with Jewish communities and reaffirm our commitment to promoting security, justice, and tolerance.

## Prayer Points

**Israel**

- “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May those who love you be secure. May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels.’” (*Psalms 122:6-7*).
- The year 2024 has been a difficult year for Israel. It has been a year of loss, sadness and hatred. Pray for comfort for the Israeli population and healing of the victims. Let us also give thanks for the miracles that have happened. Pray for unity amongst the Israeli people and for unity in the *Knesset*, the Israeli Parliament.

**Israel and the Nations**

- Pray for the present world leaders. Pray that they will open up in the coming year to God's Word and His plan with Israel.
- In the past year the hatred against Israel was visible worldwide. Pray that the spirit of hatred and lies against Israel will no longer persist.

**Christians for Israel**

- Pray that Christians will gain more insight into the spiritual battle that is taking place around Israel. Pray that Christians will see that there is a kingdom of darkness, that tries to exterminate God's people and that prayer is an important weapon against this.
- More than 31,000 Jews made *aliyah* in one year from more than 100 countries. Among them are also Ukrainian Jews who, thanks to the work of Koen and Ira Carlier, will build a new life in Israel. We may thank God that He is bringing His children home. Let's pray for the work of Koen and Ira Carlier and their team in Ukraine.
- Pray that the love for Israel may flourish worldwide in the churches. Pray that we as Christians may stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Jewish people.

For daily Prayer Points, go to: [www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)



# Will Trump's 'America First' Foreign Policy Help or Hurt Israel?

■ Jonathan S. Tobin  
Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

The return of Donald Trump to the White House may send shivers down the spines of many, if not most, American Jews. Israelis, however, in large part seem relieved by the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. Both reactions are unsurprising.

To the majority of American Jews who are both politically liberal and loyal Democrats, Trump embodies contempt for the rule of credentialed elites—among whom most Jews number themselves—and the woke ideology they have imposed on the nation. Trump is the 'bad orange man' around whom working-class voters of all races have rallied. Movement towards Trump was in evidence in some, but not all, sectors of American Jewry. But it's clear that partisan loyalties overwhelmed concerns about the way left-wing Democrats have embraced antisemitism and hatred for Israel in the year since 7 October 2023.



Meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US president Donald Trump at the White House in 2018. | Photo: Haim Zach/GPO

would allow them to survive and defeat Israel.

Things will be different under Trump, who has repeatedly expressed his

Trump's version of 'America First' has other tangible benefits for Israel. Unlike both Obama and Biden, Trump is not interested in bolstering multilateral organisations like the United Nations that are cesspools of antisemitism and irredeemably hostile to the Jewish state. The president-elect has little use for that world body or any of its constituent agencies that do so much to demonise and harm Israel.

And though Biden bragged about how European leaders were thrilled with the return of the Democrats to power in January 2021, Trump is right to regard their good opinion as having no value. The less connected the United States is to international opinion, and especially that of the governments of Western Europe, the better it is for an Israel that Western Europe has already largely written off.

Though many anti-Trumpers falsely accuse Trump of antisemitism, the opposite is true since he did more to combat Jew-hatred on campuses than his predecessors, who saw the antisemitic mobs as demonstrating idealism that must be heard, if not fully accepted.

While events and changing circumstances can't be accounted for when determining the future, Trump's pro-Israel record and opposition to woke ideology represent a harbinger of smoother sailing for the alliance between the two countries in the next four years. Whether successful or not, 'America First' is likely to be a better American foreign policy for Jerusalem than the efforts of Biden and Harris.

Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS (Jewish News Syndicate). Republished with permission.

## Whether successful or not, 'America First' is likely to be a better American foreign policy for Jerusalem than the efforts of Biden...

Most Israelis see Trump solely through the prism of his undoubted record as the most pro-Israel president since the re-founding of the Jewish state. The positive memories of Trump moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, holding the Palestinian Authority accountable for its support for terrorism, and its pushing for the 2020 Abraham Accords peace agreements with Muslim and Arab states have only grown when compared to the equivocal attitude of President Joe Biden and his foreign-policy team during their four years in office.

### A More Pro-Israel President

Biden and his administration spent the last year since 7 October speaking out of both sides of their mouths about Israel's struggles. On the one hand, they sometimes expressed strong support for Israel's right to self-defence as well as the eradication of Hamas, and never completely cut off the supplies of arms it needed to continue the war, even if they were slow-walked. Criticism and unhelpful advice served to delay and hamper Israel's efforts to defeat its enemies, while giving hope to the Iranian-backed terrorists that the ceasefire for which Washington yearned

support for a green light to the Israelis to do everything in their power to quickly win the war. Both Israelis and their American friends are right to assume that, at worst, the ties between Washington and Jerusalem will almost certainly be warmer than they were during the past four years.

But even those Trump critics who acknowledge, as they must, that Trump's record on Israel is largely exemplary, are quick to assert that despite that, Israel will inevitably suffer from a revival of a Trumpian 'America First' foreign policy.

The choice of 'America First' for the title of Trump's foreign-policy vision has always been unfortunate since it conjures up the pre-World War II movement led by Charles Lindbergh, that was both dedicated to appeasing Nazi Germany and antisemitic. Trump's 'America First' is neither dedicated to appeasing a foreign foe or spreading Jew-hatred. It is, instead, more of a realist policy than anything else. That's because it involves, as we saw in Trump's first term, a desire to defeat the Islamist terrorists of ISIS, in addition to an aggressive policy of sanctions and anti-terror special operations against Iran.

## Short News

### High Turnover



Israeli commercial high-tech companies achieved a turnover of 7.2 billion shekels in the first nine months of 2024. This shows a recovery compared to 2023, when in the entire year a turnover of 6.9 billion shekels was attained, after 2022 resulted in a turnover of 15 billion shekels. This data shows the resilience of the Israeli high-tech industry. Yokneam High-Tech Park. | Photo: Michael Giladi/Flashgo

### Money Tap Open

Saudi Arabia has promised to transfer millions of US dollars to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA is in dire straits financially. With this, the money tap that was closed almost a decade ago is opened again. The government wants to transfer an amount of money each month to the 'brothers in Palestine' to alleviate 'the humanitarian crisis.' It is not known how much will be transferred.

### Economic Crisis

The war has inflicted much damage to the Israeli economy, according to the director of the Israel Tax Authority. The economic crisis can be compared with the combined impact of two previous crises, namely the Yom Kippur War and the Second Intifada. The director expects that the security expenditure will continue to rise also after this war, amounting to approximately eight to ten billion euros annually.

### ICC Issues Arrest Warrants Against Israeli Leaders

On Thursday 21 November, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Israel's political leaders Benjamin Netanyahu (Prime Minister) and Yoav Gallant (former Minister of Defence). This decision infringes the rule of law. The Court has no jurisdiction over Israeli leaders. The legal and factual grounds for the decision are very weak. Israel was given little opportunity to rebut the charges. For more information: <https://www.thinc-israel.org/articles/does-the-icc-decision-to-issue-arrest-warrants-against-israeli-leaders-comply-with-the-rule-of-law/>



# Israel's Multi-Front War Beyond 400 Days

## ■ Yochanan Visser

Correspondent in Israel

The war that began in Israel on 7 October 2023, is now more than 400 days old and there is no end in sight. It therefore seems good to look at the overall situation on the battlefield, which consists of seven fronts. These fronts are Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, as well as Judea and Samaria, the heartland of Israel.

The most reported fronts are those in Gaza and Lebanon, more on that later.

### The Fronts with Syria, Iran, Iraq, & Yemen

The least active front is in Syria, from where sporadic attacks are carried out by various militias on the Golan Heights in Israel.

The Israeli Air Force is more active in Syria, regularly carrying out attacks on Iran-related targets. One of those attacks eventually led to the first direct confrontation between Israel and Iran when IAF warplanes bombed a building next to the Iranian embassy in Damascus on 1 April 2024. The attack killed seven advisers to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), three of whom were senior commanders of the IRGC's Quds Force. One of the three was Mohammad Reza, the Quds Force commander for Syria and Lebanon, and the liquidation of Reza sparked a confrontation between Iran and Israel that now threatens to escalate into a regional war.

## Experts now say that the IDF should take on the distribution of humanitarian aid because it is key to the administration of Gaza

Iran has already carried out two major attacks on Israel during the night of 14-15 April and on 1 October, when it fired over 180 ballistic missiles at Israel. Israel responded to the latter attack with extensive airstrikes on military targets deep inside Iran and around the capital Tehran on 26 October. A new Iranian retaliatory strike is now expected. Still, it remains unclear whether it will actually be carried out after the US significantly increased pressure on Iran by deploying B-52 bombers and several new warplane squadrons to the Middle East while also moving more ground troops to Syria.

From the fronts with Yemen and Iraq, Israel is regularly attacked with ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones. The attacks by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) have been increasing in number recently but have not posed a direct threat to Israel so far. That could change if Iran and the IRI carry out their promised joint attack on Israel.

Ansar Allah in Yemen, also known as the Houthi militia, is more of a threat to shipping traffic to Israel but the militia also continues coordinated ballistic missile attacks with the IRI on central Israel and the Red Sea resort of Eilat. As a result of these attacks, the port of Eilat has now become virtually inaccessible.

The so-called heartland front in Judea and Samaria is increasingly posing a threat to stability in Israel. The IDF has launched an ongoing operation called 'Summer Camps' to suppress the terror and the rise of Hamas in the area. However, it has become clear that Iran considers this front very important and is trying in every possible way to supply weapons and cash to the Palestinian terror groups in the area. In fact, Iran has already turned the



Tulkarm, in the West Bank (Samaria), August 2024. | Photo: Flash90

cities of Jenin and Tulkarm in Samaria into forward bases of the IRGC and therefore most IDF activity is taking place there and in Nablus, the biblical city of Shechem, where various terror groups are operating.

### Gaza

In Gaza Hamas has taken heavy blows but has not yet been robbed of its ability to partially control the enclave from the 'metro', the underground tunnel complex. The liquidation of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was a heavy blow to Hamas but the terrorist organisation has proven in the past that it can take such setbacks and continue its *Jihad*.

Due to internal divisions in the Israeli political echelon, the IDF has been limited in its ability to fully implement its war objectives, which include total control over Gaza and the removal of Hamas as the governing power.

The IDF has now been forced to carry out operations in previously conquered areas such as the city of Jabalya due to this policy after it became clear that Hamas was filling the vacuum left by the IDF after it withdrew from the cities in Gaza.

Experts now say that the IDF should take on the distribution of humanitarian aid because it is key to the administration of Gaza and therefore Israel is now trying to solve this problem by hiring foreign companies that specialise in delivering humanitarian aid in war zones.

### Northern Front

On the northern front, rocket and drone attacks by Hezbollah are still the order of the day. Although the number of attacks has decreased somewhat, they have been replaced by increasing attacks with long-range rockets into the centre of Israel.

The Israeli army, with the help of Mossad, has dealt heavy blows to the leadership of Hezbollah that saw almost all leaders and top commanders being liquidated by the IAF.

The Iranian-sponsored terrorist organisation appears to have been infiltrated by Mossad agents who provided precise information that allowed, for example, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah to be liquidated in his bunker two floors underneath a building in the Dahiya neighbourhood of Beirut.

However, the liquidation of Hezbollah's entire top command has had little effect on the battlefield in

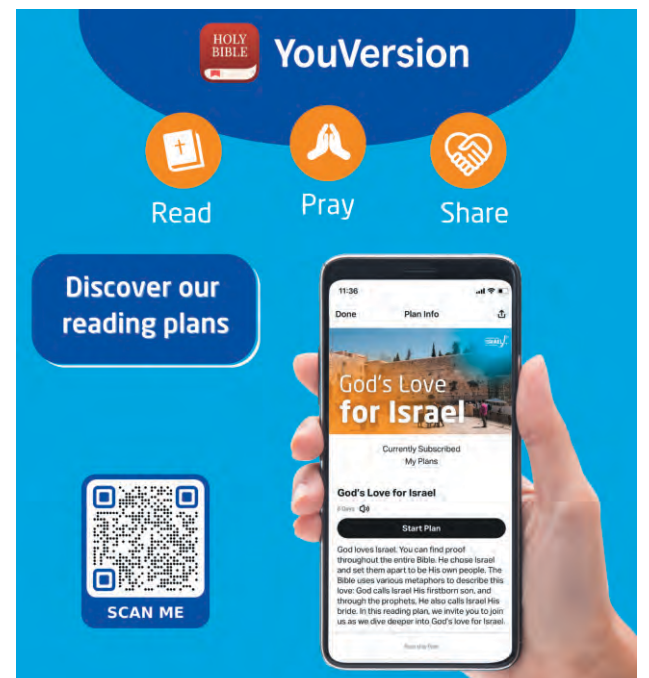
southern Lebanon where Hezbollah is now using guerrilla tactics and operating in small groups that maintain contact with each other via non-electronic means.

The IDF has also adjusted its operational methods and is in the process of creating a buffer zone of at least five kilometres in southern Lebanon. Almost all villages in this area have been destroyed and are no longer populated.

Furthermore, Hezbollah strongholds in the city of Baalbek and the Beqaa Valley are now under constant attack, as well as Dahiya in Beirut which housed Hezbollah's headquarters before the war.

The IDF is also attempting to make it completely impossible for Iran to supply new weapons by bombing border crossings and the Hezbollah depot at Hariri Airport. In this way, Hezbollah's rocket arsenal should be depleted thereby putting an end to the shelling at Israel from Lebanon.

The ground operation in Lebanon aims to push Hezbollah away above the Litani River some forty kilometres from the Israeli border and is expected to take a long time because the IDF is using limited forces to realise this goal.





# Hamas Must be Defeated, not Legitimised

■ **Khaled Abu Toameh**

Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

More than a year after the 7 October 2023, Hamas-led attack on Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to view the Iran-backed Islamist movement as a legitimate partner.

In early November, representatives of the PA's ruling Fatah faction (headed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas) and Hamas held talks in the Egyptian capital of Cairo to discuss establishing a joint administration to rule the Gaza Strip. An Egyptian source confirmed that the Fatah-Hamas discussions aim to create a committee to manage the Gaza Strip, in addition to pursuing efforts to reach a ceasefire there.

Tayseer Nasrallah, a senior Fatah official who participated in the talks with Hamas, expressed 'optimism' that they would lead to the formation of a committee for the reconstruction of Gaza in the aftermath of the war which erupted after the 7 October attack. During the attack, that resulted in the murder of 1,200 Israelis and the injury of thousands, many Israelis were beheaded, raped, tortured and burned alive. In addition, more than 240 others were kidnapped to the Gaza Strip, where 101—alive and dead—remain in captivity.



Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority. | Photo: Flash90

have seen most recently in the Chinese Communist Party, Iran and Afghanistan, negotiating with terrorists and their equivalents simply does not work.

Abbas should, instead, be condemning Hamas, distancing himself from the terror group and holding Hamas fully responsible for the destruction of the Gaza Strip because of the war Hamas started.

Moreover, Abbas should be urging Hamas to relinquish control over the

message to Hamas that, despite the crimes it committed against Israelis on 7 October and the *nakba* (catastrophe) it brought on the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, it can still play a key role in Gaza after the war. Since 2007, Hamas has demonstrated that it does not care about the well-being of the Palestinians, caring only about remaining in power and continuing the fight against Israel.

The Biden administration chose to turn a blind eye to Abbas's efforts to legitimise Hamas. A terror group committed to the elimination of Israel must not be permitted to play any role in a Palestinian government—not in the West Bank and certainly not in the Gaza Strip - preventing them from rearming, regrouping, and preparing another 7 October-style attack.

Since the beginning of the war, Israel has destroyed most of Hamas's military capabilities and many of its top leaders, including Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of 7 October. The United States and the rest of the world should encourage Israel to continue its efforts to eradicate Hamas. They should also urge Abbas and the PA leadership to immediately sever all contact with the terror group.

There is no alternative to a total victory over Hamas and Iran's other terror proxies as well, ultimately of the toxic Islamist regime in Iran.

If Iran's regime remains in place, torturing both its own people and others—as far away as Argentina—there regrettably will be no peace, not only for Israelis but for Palestinians and the free world.

Originally published by the Gatestone Institute.  
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## The United States and the rest of the world should encourage Israel to continue its efforts to eradicate Hamas.

Hamas, for its part, said: "We held a meeting with our brothers in the Fatah faction, and the atmosphere of the meeting was positive and frank."

In October, Fatah and Hamas representatives held similar talks in Cairo to discuss ways of ending the rivalry between the two parties and establishing a Palestinian unity government. Senior Hamas official Taher a-Nunu said that the purpose of the talks was to "achieve Palestinian national unity and strengthen security and political coordination between the two sides."

By negotiating with Hamas about the future of the Gaza Strip, Abbas is legitimising the Iran-backed terror group. It sends a message to the Palestinians and the rest of the world that he sees no problem in dealing with murderers and terrorists who committed the most horrific crimes against Jews since the Holocaust. As we

Gaza Strip instead of begging it to agree to the formation of a joint Fatah-Hamas committee to manage the coastal enclave.

Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, thousands of Palestinians have been killed in wars they initiated with Israel. With the help of hundreds of millions of dollars from Europe, Qatar and Iran, Hamas transformed the Gaza Strip into one of the largest bases of Islamist terrorism in the Middle East. This investment saw the building of a vast network of tunnels and the manufacturing and smuggling of weapons, including rockets and missiles. The assumption that Hamas would voluntarily give up control of the Gaza Strip because of any unity agreement with Abbas, is laughable.

Abbas's efforts to reach a deal with Hamas will only embolden the terror group and incentivise it to pursue its jihad against Israel. These efforts send a

## Short News

### Beekeeping Recovery

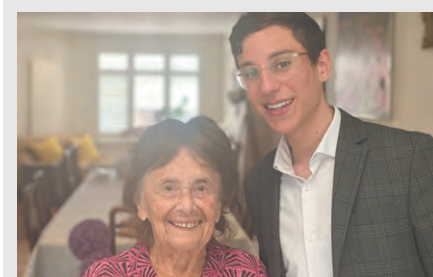


Beekeepers have made a large and successful effort to recover beekeeping before the Jewish New Year. The Israeli beekeeping was heavily affected by the attack of Hamas. Israelis consume about forty per cent of their annual honey consumption in the month of *Tishri* (September/October), which starts with the Jewish New Year. In addition, beekeeping is extremely important for the strongly agricultural region of Tkuma, near the Gaza Strip, because farmers depend on beehives for the pollination of the crops. | Photo: Flash90

### Statement by Amnesty International

"The conflict didn't start a year ago, but with the declaration of the Jewish State," the statement of Amnesty International UK read in a video just before the commemoration of 7 October. In the video, Amnesty International UK accused Israel of implementing apartheid and called on Israel to end 76 years of displacement and destruction. The video ended with an appeal to the British government to forbid arms sales to Israel.

### Holocaust Education



The one-hundred-year-old Holocaust survivor Lily Ebert has passed away. Lily was frequently seen on TikTok and Instagram, together with her great-grandson, answering questions and educating followers about the Holocaust. On the two platforms, she had more than two million followers and their videos received billions of views. Lily received various awards for her education about the Holocaust. During the Holocaust, Lily lost her mother, younger sister and brother. | Photo: Wikimedia Commons



# In the Face of Tragedy

On 7 October 2023, on the day of *Simchat Torah*, Israel endured an unimaginable tragedy that forever changed countless lives and in fact the nation of Israel. The nation will be scared for generations. These pages are dedicated to sharing the stories of that day—of the survivors, those who lost their lives, and of the resilient individuals determined to rebuild.

## “We Must Continue”

Moti Barak is head of agriculture at *kibbutz* Be’eri, which was heavily affected on 7 October. “7 October feels like it was years ago and at the same time as if it were yesterday. Every day I lead people through our *kibbutz*. Over there on the left was the house of Gal, who grew peanuts and potatoes. His parents, Meni and Ayelet, were killed. On the right lived Yarden. She lost her brother when he tried to protect the *kibbutz*. And Ori, who lived nearby, was in charge of growing wheat and maintained the tractors. His parents were killed. And that is just this one street; the list of loss goes on.”

### No Choice

As Moti guides the tours, he sees people crying. “I hear myself speaking, explain, but the words sound unreal.” His own family was fortunate enough to survive, but the community as a whole suffered immensely, with about 100 out of 1,200 residents losing their lives. “It is a terrible loss,” he says, “but we must continue. We have no other choice.”

### Help

“The support is enormous. Many of our farm workers have been injured, killed or evacuated. Without external help, the food would have rotted and the



agricultural produce would have been lost. Volunteers come from all parts of Israeli society—doctors, professors and teachers—everyone comes to help. And there is also help from abroad, from everywhere. Some stay a week, others a month. And more continue to come.”

### Bloom

“I pick myself up. What other choice do I have? We will rebuild Be’eri. We will make the fields bloom again and we will return.”

| Text and Photo: JNF

## Free, Yet Hated

On 7 October, Hamas militants invaded the home of the Goldstein-Almog family in *kibbutz* Kfar Aza. Seventeen-year-old Agam is taken hostage along with her mother and two brothers and taken to Gaza. Her father and sister were killed.

After 51 harrowing days, their nightmare ends when Agam and her family were released through a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

Throughout her time in captivity, Agam often dreamed of her release. Yet the reality proved far from her hopeful visions. “I had imagined the world would welcome us back, but what I found was a world divided and full of anger. The hatred I thought I’d left behind in Gaza was waiting for me online.” Her social media and the comment sections on news stories mentioning her name were inundated with hateful messages.

### Support for Hamas

“I have seen how the movement in the West for a Gaza ceasefire sometimes spirals into open support for Hamas, with people pursuing Jews in public places,” Agam explains. “My captors surely still hate me, but when American students chant for ‘*intifada*’ or praise Hamas fighters with slogans like, ‘Al-Qassam, you make us proud,’ it’s clear many others do too.”

### Slave

During her detention, Agam was held in a terror tunnel. “My guards despised me because I was Jewish; they forced me to recite Islamic prayers and made me wear a *hijab*. I was not permitted to mourn my father and sister and was often ordered to keep my eyes on the ground. They told me I’d spend the rest of my life as a chained slave in Gaza.”

### Shattered Illusions

Upon her release, Agam endured several frightening moments. At one point, a large crowd surrounded the Red Cross vehicle she was in, shouting, “Die, die, die!” Agam emphasises the urgent need for all remaining hostages to be released, but adds, “I have no illusions about the world they will return to.”

| Source: The Jerusalem Post



Released hostage Agam Goldstein-Almog speaks during a rally calling for the release of Israelis held by Hamas.  
| Photo: Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90

## ADI Negev Escapes Massacre

On 7 October 2023, ADI Negev, a rehabilitation village, located just 20 kilometres from the Gaza Strip, was miraculously spared. Hamas launched its attack on southern Israel early that morning, known as *Black Shabbat*, at around 6.30 am. Shortly after, ADI’s night shift staff was set to be relieved by the incoming



Edna Malkomo (right) with one of the residents.

morning shift. At 6.55 am, two vans carrying about 50 staff members arrived at the roundabout leading to ADI Negev. They arrived just in time: moments later, heavily armed Hamas militants in pickup trucks drove past the same roundabout but did not turn toward the village of ADI, where the approximately 170 residents with severe disabilities and 70 patients in the rehabilitation centre were being moved to safe rooms amid blaring sirens.

### Staff Murdered

Tragically, the terrorists were able to

carry out a horrific massacre in the nearby town of Ofakim, resulting in the deaths of 50 people, including two ADI employees and family members of staff members. Edna Malkomo, who had just completed her night shift, entered Ofakim just ten minutes after the terrorists arrived. Her car was immediately riddled with bullets, and she was killed instantly. Another ADI employee, Jakob Mortov, was also killed by Hamas terrorists as he attempted to reach a public shelter for safety.

### Precautionary Measures

In the wake of these tragic losses, ADI Negev continues to stand as a beacon of hope and resilience for its residents and staff. New security measures have been implemented to strengthen the safety of the care village against future threats. The grounds are now fully secured, with a substantial increase in monitoring systems and sensors. Special security doors have been added in several wards, while fences and walls have been heightened and reinforced. Additionally, an official security team has been established to provide maximum protection for the community.

| Text: Yochanan Zomer. | Photos: ADI



Jakob Mortov.



## "We Will Rebuild and Prosper"

Moran Freibach, head of agriculture at *kibbutz* Nachal Oz, shares: "I was born in Nachal Oz and live here with my wife and five children. From an early age, I was taught to always think five years ahead. On 7 October, we spent 11 long hours in the shelter, frightened and largely unaware of what was unfolding outside. When we finally were able to exit again, we saw something awful! Everything had been destroyed—our houses, but also our agricultural fields along with our irrigation systems.

A farmer without land is essentially bankrupt. Everyone in this area is a farmer, producing food for all of Israel. In this hot climate, water is essential. My water reservoir is right on the border and the terrorists had broken the pipes and filters, took the computers and destroyed the reservoir.

Their message seemed clear: if they lose their land, they will never come back. But they were wrong. We are strong, and we will not be driven away. As early as 8 October, we had already begun assessing the damage and planning for the future, however difficult that was with all the personal losses we endured.

Under the protection of army tanks, we re-seeded our fields, right up to the border with Gaza. This is our victory. We want to grow, rebuild, become more advanced and emerge stronger. We want to show the world that this is a war between light and darkness, between life and death.

We will return and prosper—within the next five years."

| Text and photo: JNF



## "We are Going Home"

On 7 October, Moshe (72) and Diana (75) took shelter in their safe room in *kibbutz* Nir Yitzhak after hearing the air alarm. At 11.30 am, Hamas terrorists invaded their homes to cause death and destruction. Holding the door handle with all their strength, Moshe and Diana tried desperately to keep the attackers from entering. Their efforts were in vain, as a barrage of bullets was fired at the door, injuring the terrified couple.

While Moshe and Diana awaited their fate, the terrorists took their time. They opened the fridge, grabbed food and drinks and settled on the sofa, waiting for further instructions from their leaders. Eventually, orders came: "Take them as hostages to Gaza". Forced to walk, the couple passed the fence of their beloved *kibbutz*, heading towards Gaza. Severely wounded, Moshe pleaded for medical help in Hebrew. There was no response, after which Moshe told them in English, "We are going home". Seizing the moment, he and his wife turned and ran back home, expecting to be shot at that moment.

Miraculously, no shots were fired, and once back in the *kibbutz*, they knocked on the door of their neighbour, who, fearing terrorists, did not open immediately. Once Moshe and Diana were inside, the neighbour called his son, a doctor, who gave instructions over the phone on how to stop Moshe's bleeding. Eventually, the couple ended up at Hadassah Medical Centre in Jerusalem where they were treated.

| Screenshot X



## Ron Shemer (23)

Ron Shemer was a lover of nature and animals, with a passion for ocean sunsets. He grew up in Lod, Israel, as the eldest son of his family. After completing his military service, he dedicated himself to environmental preservation and was planning to begin his biotechnology studies at university in October 2024.

When terrorists from Gaza invaded the Nova music festival grounds on 7 October—where Ron had gone with a group of friends—he managed to escape. He called his mother to reassure her he was safe and on his way home. When he found a car to flee the festival grounds, Ron noticed that two of his closest friends, Dan and Omar, were missing. He left the car to go back and search for them. On the way, he helped a girl who was paralysed by a panic attack.

After locating his friends, they took shelter at an intersection when an alarm sounded. Suddenly, a group of terrorists arrived and threw grenades into the shelter. Ron protected his friends with his body, but the grenades wounded them all. Omar survived. Dan, critically wounded, succumbed to his injuries hours later. Ron, despite his injuries, went out to confront the terrorists but did not return. He went missing and was believed to have been taken hostage by Hamas, until a week later the army found his body, just fifty metres from the shelter. Ron was one of the 364 people who were killed at the Nova Festival.

| Photo: Flash90



## Testimonies from 7 October Survivors

Hundreds of Israelis survived and witnessed the deadliest antisemitic attack since the Holocaust. The Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California took the initiative to record the testimonies of survivors and witnesses. These accounts serve as living history and can help us how to respond to prejudice, hate and violence, and to combat age-old antisemitism. The testimonies are in Hebrew or English. View the testimonies via:

<https://sfi.usc.edu/october7testimonies>



# Walking in God's Miracles

## ■ Rev Oscar Lohuis

On 16 November 2024, Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer turned 80 years old. He is still very active as a pastor and speaker and hopes to continue with this, as long as he can. "Moses began when he was eighty!", he tells passionately. I visited him and his wife Marianne in Amersfoort, the Netherlands.

### *You weren't a believer at all, as a young man. Why?*

"In my childhood and teenage years I turned away from faith. I was pretty rebellious and threw God overboard. I started to believe in evolution. Darwin, Marx and Freud became my heroes. I have no recollection at all of my childhood faith. I was pretty much out of tune within our family and went through life as a kind of 'angry young man.'"

### *How did you finally come to faith?*

"My father [who was a pastor too: ed.] was virtually blind and therefore had to be driven to all of his speaking engagements. Once I had my driver's license, I had to drive him as well. On one occasion, a (Dutch) missionary from Jordan, an associate of my father, was visiting. When my father was due to speak somewhere, I would usually go to a pub for a game of billiards, but this time, my father asked me to stay with him at his meeting. Afterwards, my father asked my opinion about the meeting, while all three of us were back in the car. Inwardly I was furious and told him that the Bible isn't true and historically unreliable. I also said that I thought the missionary (who was in the car as well) 'had overwhelmed the old folks with his shouting', and that it was all about money. The atmosphere in the car did not get any better.

## **"I know that you are real and I will serve You the rest of my life." "That never disappeared and I never doubted Him again."**

After taking my father home, I had to take the missionary to the city of Baarn, the Netherlands. He invited me to come in and continue our conversation. It was like that all week. Finally, he said to me: "Why don't you put this to the test by making a decision in favour of God and Jesus?" After that final conversation I parked the car at the roadside and said to God: "If You are real, I will give You everything." Nothing happened. I was angry and said to myself: "I'll never do that again!" But during the night I woke up and I found myself praising God. There was an overwhelming presence and deep inward praise. The second night I had the exact same experience, but this time the praising was even stronger. The third night it was so strong that my heart almost burst. I felt that I couldn't take any more of the joy and glory. I said to the Lord: "I know that you are real and I will serve You the rest of my life." "That never disappeared and I never doubted Him again."

### *How did Marianne and you get to know each other?*

"We knew each other from secondary school acting in a play called: 'The Miser' by Molière. I played Cleante, the happy-go-lucky son of the miser who squandered everything. Marianne played his loved one: Mariane!" Marianne adds: "When we married, Willem was still a theology student, I was an executive secretary. So, we lived on my small income on a boat on a canal in the Dutch city of Groningen."

### *The two of you also worked at the Dutch Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO).*

Willem: "After my studies, I felt unable to become a

pastor. My father was one of the founders of the Evangelical Broadcasting Company (EO). There was virtually no one who wanted to stick their necks out to help that would-be broadcasting company. We really had the desire to spread the Gospel, but we also loved modern media. That's when I started to produce and direct programmes and develop multimedia. Marianne became a TV presenter. We worked with the EO for twenty years and witnessed the broadcast company expand greatly. Around 1977, I founded the Evangelical College, together with Prof Dr Willem Ouwenel and two other pioneers. We offered young people a gap year to give them some sort of injection, to enable them to survive at University as a Christian. We also witnessed that work grow large and it still exists."

### *Ultimately you became a pastor*

"I hadn't finished my theology studies in Groningen in my younger years and I felt guilty about it. My father parted company from the small Reformed Congregation of the Dutch town of Tull en 't Waal. They then appealed to me to assist in the congregation's pastoral work. I could then also finish my theological studies at the Theological Faculty of Utrecht. We decided to accept the appeal. A week later my father passed away. Therefore I never could hear from him what he thought of my becoming a pastor. It was a very small congregation that could give us almost no income. But if God calls, you simply have to obey."

### *In that period you became seriously ill*

"During a TV recording in Jericho (Israel), I became unwell and collapsed. They put me against the car and when I regained consciousness, we carried on. Back in the Netherlands, I had a medical examination. It turned

out that a large tumour, the size of a grapefruit, which caused tremendous pressure on my brain fluid. Within a week I found myself on the operating table. Halfway through the operation, the surgeon wanted to stop because he couldn't take it anymore. He could look from above right through my nostrils. The team urged him to finish the operation anyway. Later the doctor told us that it was a miracle the operation was a success, "because I know what I did to your brains." There were a lot of Christians praying for me. Through a TV documentary I made about a Jewish boy who survived the horrors of the war in Poland, there had been contact with ultraorthodox Jews in Israel. When they heard about my illness, they organised a *Minyan* (ten Jewish men) at the Western Wall, for which they travelled especially from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. God has answered the prayers of Christians and Jews. And, so He called me to serve the Church and Israel. Now I am eighty years of age and still healthy. Marianne and I still serve Israel and the Jewish people: the miracle of God in our days. Israel, the great sign of hope in this world."

### *How did you get involved with the work of Christians for Israel?*

"When I was recovering from the major operation, Karel van Oordt, the founder of Christians for Israel, came to see me. He said: "We are looking for a new chairman. We prayed for it and we want to ask you." We didn't know much about Israel and were astonished. But Karel said: "Many Christians like dead Jews, the Jews in the Bible, such as Moses, David, Peter and Paul. And they like Jews who are yet to be born, the



Rev Willem Glashouwer. | Photo: Willem Jan de Bruin Photography

future generation of Jews who will be called to bless the entire world again from the prophetically restored Israel. But who will stand in the gap for the Jews today? Who is going to fight replacement theology? We didn't dare to say no. And so my speaking engagements about Israel in all kinds of Churches and gatherings started."

### *How did your thoughts about Israel change?*

"In particular due to acquiring a Biblical understanding about the everlasting covenants of God with Israel. By starting to see that the Lord God Himself has established all covenants with Israel of which the Bible speaks, I began to understand. I then wrote the book 'Israel on Its Way to its Rest' which later became 'Why Israel?' Translations into dozens of languages started the international work. Today new translations are still being added."

### *What have you witnessed due to the work of Christians for Israel?*

"Karel van Oordt had a vision to convert the Church, to give Christians a Biblical view on Israel. He was especially keen on making the Church understand the message, to make atonement for its guilt and remove stumbling blocks. Then we also started the (Dutch) newspaper 'Israel Aktueel' to refute the lies about Israel in the media. The message has taken root quite well. Theological reflection has been initiated. Thousands of ministers and pastors also read the magazine 'Israel and the Church'. A ministry must speak prophetically, God is working and He is leading the world towards His future."

### *How do you reflect on the past while focusing on the future?*

"I am not looking back, my focus is firmly set on the future. My schedule is packed until the end of next year, with major conferences lined up in many different countries. We hope to continue building. Moses started at age 80 and as long as it is day we will keep going. The Lord truly provides strength. Just this morning I read in 1 Chronicles 29:12: "In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all." We experience that daily. God equips us for what He calls us to do. None of this is our work, but it is His work through us. In that, we witness God's miracles. So many times, I've found myself simply standing and watching in awe. To Him be all praise and honour."





# Time to Reform the United Nations

## ■ Robert Nicholson

If you haven't experienced the epic congestion of New York during United Nations week, count yourself lucky. If you have, you know the inverse correlation between the bedlam of the General Assembly's annual meeting and the march of peace among men. Zoom into any traffic jam across the tristate area and you'll find men and women cursing Franklin D. Roosevelt in every tongue.

Understood in biblical terms, the UN's East River complex might be seen as a House of Noah where the patriarch's long-scattered descendants meet to rediscover their fraternal bonds. But if you witnessed the UN's record over the past year, you know that mankind's premier peacemaking body is much closer to a Tower of Babel—and with the world in disarray, you might wonder if it should be disbanded all the same.

Anyone who doubts such a sweeping suggestion needn't look any further than the UN's record on Israel since 7 October 2023.

In just twelve months, we saw shocking revelations about Hamas's penetration of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip; we learned of a Hamas takeover of the UNRWA branch in Lebanon; we watched the Security Council make minimal interventions on behalf of Israeli hostages while making outsized demands to protect Palestinians (and failing to act against Iranian aggression from Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere); we read the International Court of Justice's unconscionable advisory opinion with its demand that Israel withdraw immediately from Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, including the Old City; we heard the Human Rights Council condemn Israel's highly discriminate 'pager-attack' on Hezbollah terrorists; and we listened to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian address the General Assembly and say—unironically and with a straight face—that Iran hopes to "play an effective and constructive role in the evolving global order."

More glaring than all this, however, is the UN's total failure to prevent the war

now raging between Israel and Iran's proxies in Lebanon. After the last Hezbollah-instigated war in 2006, the Security Council issued Resolution 1701 calling for the total disarmament of the Iranian militia; yet neither the Security Council, its UNIFIL mission to Lebanon, nor the Lebanese government have been willing to enforce the resolution, giving the Islamic Republic of Iran two decades to rebuild its terrorist army on Israel's northern border.

Israelis have endured daily attacks from Hezbollah for a year while fending off Hamas in the south, with nary a peep from the Security Council. Now that the IDF is striking back, however, UN Secretary-General Antonio Gutierrez is suddenly crying that "Hell is breaking loose in Lebanon" and urging "leaders to resume a meaningful dialogue." (His one-sided screeds just got him banned from Israel.) Over at the Middle East Forum, Michael Rubin retorts, "If the UN and Lebanon will not dismantle Hezbollah's network of arms, then Israel will have no choice but to do the job."

With its fixation on the Jewish state, perhaps the UN should be forgiven for its failure to stop conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Haiti; but those conflicts, and others, stand to widen over the coming year. The question is why we continue to tolerate this feckless institution.

These days, the UN is focused on a Very Big Thing called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a 'supremely ambitious and transformational vision' for humanity adopted by member states in 2015. This Agenda lays out 17 goals, each with its own secondary goals, that include everything from eradicating hunger and poverty to promoting gender equality and clean energy. In short, it's a blueprint for better global governance.

Described on the UN website as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the multilateral system and steer humanity on a new course," the Summit produced the 'Pact of the Future', adopted by acclamation on 22 September, which obligates member states to redouble their commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

In 2023, UN economists estimated that reaching the Agenda's development targets would require between \$5.4 and \$6.4 trillion per year until 2030. This redistribution of wealth, combined with other obligations, exacts a heavy toll in the name of a 'brighter future for humanity.'

You don't have to be weird to see the UN's more muscular mandate as the emerging tyranny it is.

At least that's the view of Argentina's new president Javier Milei, who came to this year's UN General Assembly to deliver the jeremiad we've been waiting for.

Self-described 'libertarian-liberal economist' Javier Milei may have been the least likely person to become president of Argentina. His tastes and personality are rather eccentric and his politics conservative by Latin American standards. (Curiously, Milei, a Catholic, feels a strong pull towards Judaism and the State of Israel which he doesn't mind sharing.)

Elected to rescue Argentina from a century of failed economic policies, Milei channels the same disruptive anti-wokeism of Donald Trump, Viktor Orban, and El Salvador's Nayib Bukele—but the task before him is daunting.

Taking the rostrum, he made sure to give credit where credit was due, lauding the UN for helping to repair the world after 1945 by turning swords into ploughshares, etc. But he spent the rest of his 14 minutes tearing into the international body for straying from its founding purpose and leading humanity down the wrong path.

The problem, Milei explained, is corruption—not in the technical sense but the biblical one. Like most "bureaucratic structures that we men create," the UN slowly mutated from an organisation "intended essentially as a shield to protect the Kingdom of Man...into a multi-tentacled leviathan, which seeks to decide not only what each nation-state should do, but also how all the citizens of the world should live." The 2030 Agenda is the latest phase of this mutation, a "supranational government programme, socialist in nature, which seeks to solve the problems of modernity with solutions

that violate the sovereignty of nation-states and violate people's right to life, liberty and property."

Milei knows socialism all too well and wants no part of it. "Collectivism and moral posturing of the woke agenda have collided with reality and no longer have credible solutions to offer to the world's real problems," he said. History teaches that "the only way to guarantee prosperity is by limiting the power of the monarch, guaranteeing equality before the law and defending the right to life, liberty and property of individuals." That's the kind of prosperity Argentinians elected him to restore.

Milei ended his speech by announcing Argentina's dissent from the 2030 Agenda and his own plans to undo it. "From this day on, know that the Argentine Republic will abandon the position of historical neutrality that characterised us and will be at the forefront of the struggle in defence of freedom," he said. He then called "all the nations of the free world to join us, not only in dissenting from this pact but also in the creation of a new agenda for this noble institution: the agenda of freedom."

Calls for reforming the UN are legion. While most foreign policy wonks believe the UN remains an indispensable platform for international dialogue, many have conceded its dysfunction and offered various ideas for fixing it. The problem isn't a lack of ideas but a lack of will.

One thing is for sure: Left unopposed, the dragon will grow. And while Milei is no St. George, his cause is just and his goals are achievable. The UN's mandate must be narrowed—a lot. Its funding must be slashed—a lot (especially for fruitless peacekeeping missions like UNIFIL). Redundant tentacles must be lopped off, and what's left must be consolidated around a more realistic—and less invasive—agenda.

It's a big job, but it can be done.

*Based in New York, Robert Nicholson is a lawyer and social entrepreneur. He is a member of the Advisory Board of thinc. This is an abbreviated version of an article published in 'Providence' on 10 October 2024.*

*The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) is a global network of lawyers promoting the fair use of international law to advance global peace and security. Christians for Israel is a partner of thinc.*



# Invitation to the Basement

## ■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator | Holocaust Survivors Ukraine

### Gathering Ukraine's Jewish Elderly Under the Difficult Conditions of War

Despite two and a half years of war, our team members in Ukraine continue to travel tirelessly to visit survivors and post-war children in the Jewish communities.

Loneliness weighs heavily on each one of them—even more than the daily struggle for physical survival, even more than inflation and power cuts. Years later, the survivors still gratefully remember the last meeting— and hope for the next one. But organising a meeting in the current situation is no easy task.

Even though the war in Vinnitsa is relatively distant geographically, you feel its impact everywhere. Tank barriers are placed at every road junction; the sirens wail almost every day—and then suddenly the electricity is cut off. The country is saving whenever possible so that it will still have enough for the basics after all the destruction of the infrastructure by Russian missiles.

### Down to the Basement

If 'increased danger' is displayed on the mobile warning app, you should go to a shelter, even in war-experienced Ukraine, a local colleague explains to me. When we arrive at the restaurant for our meeting with the elderly, the driver's phone rings and displays the warning message, 'increased danger'. What should we do now? Will our carefully planned meeting fall through? But life goes on in this busy city as if nothing happened. Most residents don't have a shelter anyway, and taking the elevator down to the basement in one of the apartment blocks during frequent power cuts is also risky. People are somehow trying to live with the constant threat. And while our guests are arriving, we do the best thing we can do—we head to the safe basement of a restaurant reserved especially for us.

### "If My Dad Had Lived to See This"

Klara, one of the first survivors we included in our programme, arrives half an hour earlier. "Of course, I remember you—what a question!" she exclaims. "I was a teacher; my head still works quite well! You know, I've often thought about it—your granddad was in the war, my dad was in the war. Neither of them wanted it. So many awful things happened back then. I didn't have a cousin; so many of my family died. And now we're meeting here! If only my



Klara's father had to help build Hitler's Werwolf headquarters as a forced labourer. After the job was done, all workers were shot to erase any traces. Our meeting means healing for Klara. "If only my dad had lived to see this day!" | Photos: C4I

father had lived to see this—Germans and Jews come together in friendship!" And then they come, one after the other—hugging us, putting boxes of chocolates into my hands, overjoyed that I have returned.

"I'm not leaving the house at all!" says Emira, who is accompanied by her son—the only relative she still has. "I only came because of you! Because I was so keen to see you!"

### Encounters with 'Other Germans'



Anna barely survived the shelling of Stalingrad with her mother. Most of her relatives were killed by the Germans in Vinnitsa. For the longest time, Anna couldn't stand hearing German—until one day she met 'other Germans'.

Anna doesn't want to let go of me. She tells me about Stalingrad and how she hated everyone and everything German for a long time. "And then I met Germans who were different. That changed everything," says Anna. "You can't imagine what it means to us that you've come to us in this difficult time! May God repay you many times for what you do for us!"

At the last minute, Alina found a musician to add some culture to our culinary programme. While Yuri, who himself learned Yiddish from his great-grandmother, takes us on a musical tour of Jewish cuisine, the food is being brought out. I talk about the past, about the people in my village who understood, even in communist times,

that the Jewish people are loved and chosen by God; and about all the doors that God has opened since then.

### A Day of Celebration During Wartime

"I've put on my best dress today—it's a day of celebration for us too!" says Larisa.

"The fact that you've come to do something good for us despite all the dangers—that's balm for the soul," says Valentina.

The atmosphere is overwhelming. I would be fighting back tears if I had time to think about it. But I try to make the most of every moment—to shake someone's hand here, ask a question there, give someone a hug there. We haven't done anything special, I think; we're just here for these lonely Jewish senior citizens; hosting them for a few hours. I am moved by how much this simple act of being there means to them.

"Say hello to the lovely people who have made this festive get-together possible for us today," says Vladimir, who was picked up with other guests by our driver from the neighbouring village. "We bow to you for what you do for us!"

### Nadyezhda, a Whole Life in Mourning

At the end of a long day full of visits to Holocaust survivors in the surrounding villages, we still have one flower arrangement left and decide to stop by Nadyezhda's house. She was not present at our meeting; even her biography was



Nadyezhda lost her father, her sister, her husband, her daughter, her granddaughter. It takes time for her to allow some comfort to touch her heart. Her name means 'hope'.

shared with us by her sister Sofia as our contact person said it was difficult to communicate with Nadyezhda.

When we enter Nadyezhda's living room and hand over the flowers, tears immediately start running down her face. "I am left all alone," she says. "Eight years ago, my only daughter died of cancer, and a little later my only granddaughter died as well." Nadyezhda has been in mourning for eight years.

Actually, for eight decades, her whole life.

Her Jewish father was captured by the Germans, managed to escape and hid in the village for a long time. Then he was betrayed by a neighbour. Ten days later he was dead. Then the Germans came again to pick up the oldest daughter, Tatyana, who had run after her father. She was deported to Regensburg for forced labour. Tatyana searched for her family for a long time, they later found out. Since all contact abroad was forbidden in the Soviet Union, the sisters never saw each other again.

Nadyezhda has also been widowed for a long time. Only her 83-year-old sister Sofia remains.

"I don't want to live anymore. I've been begging God for a long time to take me to where my daughter and granddaughter are," says Nadyezhda in tears.

### A Ray of Hope for Nadyezhda

We are trying to find words that could bring Nadyezhda hope. We don't have to look far. 'Nadyezhda' means nothing other than 'hope'!

"If God has kept you on earth, he still needs you here," says my colleague Alisa, who herself lost her parents-in-law in the current war. "Then he still has a task for you!"

We read the card to Nadyezhda: "Fear not, I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." The words from God's mouth help to calm Nadyezhda down.

I still have an artfully crafted scarf from a friend in Germany with me. It's black, and I've been thinking the whole time about whom I should give it to. Now I know.

Yet it's not completely black—it has a light gray edge. I put it around Nadyezhda's neck and tell her that there's a bright silver lining on the horizon.

Now Nadyezhda's tears have dried. Gratitude is rising—for all the help; for the fact that we are not abandoning her.

We ask if we should print off the photos we have just taken for her. "Of course, I'd love to! That is, if I'm still here!"

"Then you'll just have to stay alive for that long. Your job now is to stay in good shape until we come back with the photos!"

And Nadyezhda promises to do so.

*You are welcome to support our work with Holocaust survivors and needy Jewish post-war children with a donation at <https://www.c4israel.org/support-israel/survivors-of-the-holocaust/>*



# Indigenous Leaders Rally in Jerusalem

■ **Gianluca Pacchiani**

Arab Affairs Reporter | Times of Israel

A group of about 60 Indigenous representatives from around the globe gathered at Jerusalem's Western Wall on 28 October, joining hands to show their support for Israel and the Jewish people.

The unique delegation marched from Jaffa Gate to the Western Wall through the alleys of the Old City, many of its members decked out in colorful traditional attire from a wide variety of Indigenous cultures, with beaded headbands, feathered headdresses, embroidered shawls, and woven textiles creating a lively and striking contrast to Jerusalem's gray limestone walls.

Among the crowd, alongside symbols of Indigenous cultures, many waved Israeli flags to express their support for the country in a time of war. But the delegation was uniquely positioned to also convey another message: *Jews are indigenous to the land of Israel.*

The march was organised by the Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem (IEJ), a nonprofit established in February with the goal of providing representation in Israel's capital for indigenous people from around the world, independently from their countries of origin.

"We really wanted to show our support for the Jews as indigenous people of this land," said Sheree Trotter, co-director of IEJ together with former member of the New Zealand House of Representatives Hon Alfred Ngaro. Trotter, a Māori scholar and activist, is also a founder of the Holocaust and Antisemitism Foundation in New Zealand.

"There is a false narrative that has taken hold of the Western world, including the country where I live, that paints the Jews as the foreign colonisers who have dispossessed the indigenous Palestinians. We want to change that narrative," she told *The Times of Israel*.

Those seeking to delegitimise the State of Israel often make the argument that Israel is a settler-colonial entity that should be dismantled and replaced with a Palestinian state "*from the river to the sea.*"

The Palestinian narrative is rooted in highlighting the Arab historical connection to the land, and Palestinian leaders and scholars assert that their ties precede the mass immigration of Jews that moved to the land with the Zionist movement in the 19th and 20th century—often omitting the thousands of years of deep connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

As the cohort reached the Western Wall, its members caught the eye of worshipers, intrigued by their exotic

outfits. Many cheered on the visitors and approached them to take photos with them, including a group of IDF soldiers, excited at the unusual encounter. A *haredi* man unexpectedly turned into a choir director and led the delegation in traditional Jewish songs such as "*Hava Nagila*" and "*Jerusalem of Gold.*"

For many in the delegation, the journey to Jerusalem represented more than just a physical pilgrimage. It was a meaningful public expression of their kinship with the Jewish people and their Zionism, which would be frowned upon in some of their countries of origin, even within their own tribal communities.

Asked whether participants in the march may be presented with a one-sided view of the conflict, Trotter said, "This delegation has a commitment: The majority of them are Christian, and that gives them that commitment to this place."

The religious affiliation of the participants emerged immediately in conversations. Many said they believed that God promised the Holy Land to the Patriarchs of the Jewish people, as written in the Bible.

Harvey Yesno, a Grand Chief of the *Ojibwe* tribe from Thunder Bay, northwestern Ontario, Canada, said it had been a dream to set up a permanent representation for indigenous people in Jerusalem, and that one of its main purposes was to counter the misinformation about Israel not being indigenous.

"We have the same thing in our lands," he said, speaking of the attempt to delegitimise his people's rights on their ancestral territory.

"We've had treaties with Britain and other colonial powers. Our work now is to correct the narrative that is out there. We believe that Israel is indigenous to this land," he said. "History proves it. Archeology proves it."

Nicholas Gurub Nawab, a chieftain from the *Khoisan* people in southern Africa, acknowledged that sentiment in his community of origin is often hostile to Israel.

"We are busy winning over our tribe so that they can see that we must align with our elder brothers, the Jewish people," he said. "We, as the first indigenous people who have been colonised and have known oppression, identify with our Jewish brothers and what they are suffering in their own land."

Semesi Naciqa, a tribal leader from Fiji, is married to an *Inuit* woman and lives in Nunavut, in the Canadian Arctic. Standing on the Western Wall plaza, he



Grand Chief Harvey Yesno at the Western Wall. | Photo: Perry Trotter

said that he joined the delegation to make a statement.

"We don't agree with what the media and the news are saying that it's an occupied territory. We believe that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, our God also, has given this eternal land for Israel as a covenant to Abraham and his descendants," Naciqa said. "The Israeli people have a right to be in this land, and they are indigenous, just like us."

## Fighting Anti-Zionism with the Tools of Academia

In setting up the Indigenous Embassy in Jerusalem, Trotter had a specific strategy in mind. As a scholar with a PhD in the history of Zionism in New Zealand, she realised that much of the anti-Zionism and antisemitism in the public discourse originates from academia, and consequently must be fought with academic instruments.

The Embassy has set out to promulgate research to disprove claims that Israel is a settler colonialist enterprise and reassert the Jewish people's ties to their ancestral homeland.

"We want to build a body of material that speaks back to those false narratives," Trotter told *The Times of Israel*.

The day after its march to the Western Wall, the IEJ held an academic symposium at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, in which a dozen scholars presented their research.

The confab saw a keynote speech by Natan Sharansky, an icon of the struggle for Soviet Jewry. Among the speakers was antisemitism researcher Izabella Tabarovsky, a Senior Fellow at the Z3 Institute for Jewish Priorities in California, who gave a presentation on the late-Soviet propaganda to deny the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel, and prevent Jews from emigrating from

the Soviet Union.

Wayne Horowitz, an archeology professor at the Hebrew University, delivered a fascinating overview of his research on ethno-astronomy and the affinities in the cosmological traditions of ancient Israel and the *Gwich'in* Tribe in Arctic Canada.

Canadian First Nations activist Karen Restoule spoke of how the cause of Indigenous peoples has been co-opted for nefarious purposes. At a rally outside the Canadian parliament in Ottawa in December, Restoule denounced the use by anti-Israel protesters in Canada of terms such as 'settler' and 'decolonise' to justify terror and violence against Israeli civilians.

IEJ co-director Trotter also took the stage, and discussed the 'hijacking of indigeneity' in favour of the Palestinian narrative in the Māori discourse on the conflict in her native New Zealand.

In the early weeks of the war, videos went viral of Māori performing the traditional *Haka* dance at pro-Israel demonstrations. Trotter said that while those public displays of support represent the sentiment of many Māoris, they do not reflect the political leadership of the community, or of New Zealand politicians in general.

"New Zealand has become very anti-Israel. It's part of the progressivist, woke trend. That whole package has taken hold of our country and some of our politicians, and so it's very difficult. We don't get a balance, and I'm really sorry. It's all one-sided," she said.

"Part of our work is really to educate, to advocate, and to build a community of Indigenous people who understand the history. We're doing an academic conference, and advocacy on social media, to change the culture," she said.

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# Jews in Muslim Lands—East—Part 5

## ■ Joanna Moss

In the last article (North) we focused on the impact of the Ottoman Empire on Middle Eastern Jewry, the ancient cities of Aleppo and Damascus and modern Lebanon. In this article, we look East to the lands of Iran, Iraq and Azerbaijan and their significant Jewish presence. Many readers may have heard the term ‘*Mizrahi*’ and wondered what it means. Literally, it means Eastern or Oriental and so Jews coming from these three nations are often termed *Mizrahi* Jews. But it can also include North African Jews and those from Yemen. Today the largest Jewish community in the Middle East exists in Iran of about 9,000, but they must disavow both Israel and Zionism.

### Persian Jewry Golden Age

Jews have an ancient history in Iran dating back to the 6th century BC and to King Cyrus, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. It is a history dotted with pogroms, antisemitism and forced conversions interspersed with periods of calm. Islam altered the landscape dramatically from 642 AD, especially the strict Shia branch of Islam. From then onwards Jews faced a number of restrictions such as being unable to touch food that Muslims would eat, enter bathhouses or drink from public water fountains. They were given *Dhimmi* status and forced to pay a *Dhimmi* tax for protection. But the Jews represented only one of the minorities living in the land. Others were equally reluctant to embrace Arab culture, language and religion and so accommodations were made. *Farsi*, not Arabic, remains the dominant language in Iran today and Persians represent only 61% of the population.

**Today the largest Jewish community in the Middle East exists in Iran of about 9,000, but they must disavow both Israel and Zionism.**

Historically, Jews played an important role in Persian society occupying professional, political and business positions. This paved the way for them to play a key role in Iranian modernisation when the *Shah* took over. Jews were recognised formally as a community in the late 19th century. The 1910 riot rattled the community with pogroms and forced conversions. The *Shah* took over in a military coup and changed the country’s name to Iran in 1925. He began a modernisation programme based on oil wealth in an effort to create a Western-style nation in the Middle East including female emancipation.

After Israel became established in the 20th century, many religious Jews left to move to Israel and the usual shake-up occurred post-UN Res 181 as states aligned along religious lines. Some Persian Jews were concerned about the secular nature of Zionism and the informal Israeli culture that was in sharp contrast to their own. However, following the 1960s White Revolution, many Israelis moved to Iran to take advantage of the business opportunities and enjoy the lifestyle that modern Iran offered and Israel didn’t. It was the Golden Age of Persian Jewry with a community of 100,000 Jews (60,000 in Tehran). Others resided in smaller cities such as Shiraz and Isfahan.

All that changed in February 1979 when the *Shah* departed and the cultural revolution began, lasting eight months. Women were forced to wear the *hijab* and lost their freedom. Food lines appeared and higher education was closed for three years. Following the Revolution, one of the wealthiest and prominent Jews was arrested and executed. It sent shock waves through the community. A ban on leaving was instituted especially leaving for Israel, yet many left illegally. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) Iran formed an alliance with Israel trading weapons for oil. There are 200,000 Persian Jews in Israel, many highly skilled, and large, wealthy, strong communities in Los Angeles and New York. Israel has made many attempts to rescue the remaining Jews from Iran.

### Iraq—Middle Eastern Mecca

Iraqi Jewry has been described as the oldest and most historically significant of Jewish communities. It began as a result of the Babylonian captivity spawning the significant Babylonian

Talmud and became a centre of Jewish studies. Between 3rd-7th centuries Iraq had the largest diaspora community in the world of around one million Jews. During the Ottoman era, Iraqi Jewry played a significant role in trade, especially the trade routes serving the Middle East and Asia, with Jews relocating to Asia and establishing trading posts. In the 18th century, Jews from Aleppo and Damascus moved to Baghdad with the decline of the overland routes. In the 19th century, Baghdad was a leading Jewish centre in the Middle East with traders plowing their money into rabbinical scholarship and the community. During this period



Jewish waterpipe seller reading the Torah in his shop, in the Shiraz bazaar. An estimate of 8,500 Jews are still living in Iran. | Photo: Shutterstock

a large *Kurdish* community joined. The Iraqi community had a distinct identity in terms of culture, traditions, dress and rituals and spoke Judeo-Arabic. It was but one of a number of minority communities.

In 1930 Baghdad was 25% Jewish, double the Jewish percentage in NYC of around 12%, but similar to the Warsaw, Poland figure (30%) highlighting the significance of the community at that time. Both communities have now vanished. They were religious, but not Zionist. Jews played a major role in Iraqi independence in 1932 and Jews held key offices in the new government such as the Minister of Finance and in the judiciary. However, from the 1930s onwards the situation began to change, and an influx of Nazi propaganda began to emerge. Unofficial quotas meant restricted access to schools, university and public service positions. Many lost jobs.

A pogrom in 1940 resulted in the death of 200 Jews with significant damage to Jewish property. The writing was on the wall. In 1947, there were 150,000 Jews. The UN vote and the founding of the state of Israel made the situation unbearable. So, in 1950 the government denationalised the Jews effectively forcing them out. Jews gathered in Baghdad waiting to leave. Between 1951-52 two major, urgent operations rescued the Jews—*Operation Ezra* and *Operation Nehemiah*. Altogether 120,000-130,000 Jews left for Israel amounting to 75% of the community. Today nothing remains.

### Azerbaijani Jewry 20th Century Renaissance

Azerbaijan is a small, Muslim country on the Caspian Sea to the north of Iran. Known for its impressive architecture, oil reserves and being an ally of Israel, it once boasted a significant Jewish

community. The community is made up of three types of Jews: *Mountain Jews*, *Georgian Jews* and surprisingly, *Ashkenazi Jews*, although it was formerly a Soviet republic. Today *Mountain Jews* make up the most significant part of the community with their own distinctive language. *Ashkenazim* arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and during WW2. Then they became the majority and many were in the professional classes, especially lawyers and physicians. *Georgian Jews* relocated to the capital Baku in the early 20th century. Today numbers vary from around 5,000 upwards as significant numbers of Jews have married out making counting problematic.

Although there was ancient Jewish settlement, the modern settlement stems from the 1820s onwards. At the end of the 19th century, Zionism was firmly ingrained in the community and it became a focal point in the Russian Empire for Zionism. Once the Soviet Empire took hold, all Hebrew was banned as were Zionist activities. The first *Aliyah* took place in the 1920s and then another followed in the 1970s when the *refusenik* ban was lifted. By then the community numbered around 49,000 and peaked. Once the Soviet states disintegrated, *Ashkenazim* fled fearing the worst. So in the 1990s the population fell to below 10,000 and has been declining ever since. There are seven synagogues in the country each reflecting a distinctive community. Russian remains the *lingua franca* of the community, although there is an effort to teach Hebrew. The government wants the Jewish community to be a part of the state and Jews have been elected to parliament, reflecting their acceptance by the community.



# For I Myself am Also an Israelite



Religious Jews perform the ritual of circumcision in the Tomb of patriarch. | Photo: Gershon Elinson/Flash90

## ■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

This is part of a series of articles based on the book *Rejoice, You Nations, with His People*, by Johannes Gerloff

This is not the only place where Paul emphasized his roots among the Jewish people. In Caesarea, he explained to King Agrippa II and to the Roman governor Porcius Festus how he “according to the strictest party of our religion” led his life “as a Pharisee” (Acts 26:4-5). He was proud of having been “circumcised on the eighth day”, of being a descendant “of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin”, of being seen as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews”.

You can't be more Jewish than that! Paul was part of Israel. No one could deny that. He was a Jew not because he had converted or tirelessly studied. He could prove his physical descent. Still, Sha'ul of Tarsus confessed *Yeshua* as his *Messiah*. Despite his physical heritage, he had taken hold of the salvation offered to him by the heavenly Father through mercy alone.

Klaus Wengst wrote: “It is very clear at this point that Paul did not understand his confession of Jesus as *Messiah*—what we would call conversion to Christianity today—as anything that affected his being Jewish! He remains a Jew—an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the people of the twelve tribes”. And: “He and all the other Israelite believers in *Messiah* cannot be considered to be ‘extracted’ from Israel. They remain integrated, are representatives of Israel and are thus a solid testimony to the fact that “all Israel” has not been rejected.”

The fact that Paul traced his ancestry

through the tribe of Benjamin back to Abraham underlines God's faithfulness in a special way. The Apostle Paul argues: If I, “an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” have not been discarded, then how much more must it hold true for all of Israel that:

“Never has the [one, true] God rejected His [chosen] people” (Romans 11:2a).

That which holds true for one Israelite, holds true for the whole people of God. A few verses later the Apostle repeats the same statement using different words. He employs an old illustration: “If the firstfruit is holy, then the [whole lump of] dough [is holy]” (Romans 11:16).

God had promised Abraham: “I have given the land in which you live as a migrant to you and your descendants” (Genesis 17:8; 13:15-16). Here in Romans 11:16, Paul reminds us of a commandment linked to receiving the promised land: “When you arrive in the land to which I will bring you, and you will eat of the bread of the land, then you shall offer an offering to the Lord: Of the first of your dough you shall offer a cake as an offering. As you do the offering from the threshing floor, so you shall present it. Of the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord an offering throughout your generations” (Numbers 15:18-21). Therefore, when Paul identifies himself with all Israel, he is not just applying an old rabbinical rule. He is using a principle rooted in the Holy Scriptures.

In Jewish custom, this Biblical principle remains alive to this day. In the *Sabbath* celebration, every Jewish household needs two ‘cakes’ or loaves of bread, made of fine wheat flour if possible. When the dough is kneaded, the baker takes a piece out of the dough and

recites the blessing: “Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments and has commanded us to separate the *chalah*”. The removed piece sanctifies the whole lump of dough.

From a Biblical standpoint, it is clear that: If God still has a future for this Rabbi Sha'ul of Tarsus, this Israelite “of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin”, “the first fruit of bread”, how much more does he have a future for the whole ‘lump’—the whole of the Jewish people, all Israel whom he foreknew (Romans 11:2a).

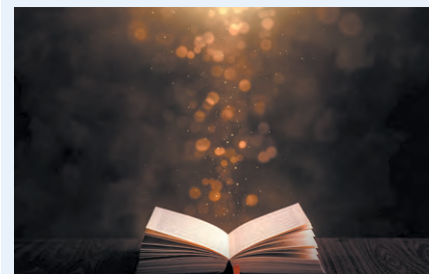
God ‘foreknew’ his people. This means that the Creator had planned something that will only be revealed “in the end of times” (compare 1 Peter 1:20). The ‘knowing’ hints at the deep connection first alluded to in Scripture in Genesis 4:1: “And Adam knew Eve his wife”. Of all the peoples of the earth, the Creator chose this particular nation. He ‘foreknew’ it in order to irrevocably join the fulfillment of salvation to the history of Israel.

Frédéric Godet explains: “In every other case, salvation is a question of the individual. In the case of Israel, however, the question of salvation relates to the nation as a whole. God foreknew this nation as believers and ‘saved ones’, and sooner or later they will not fail to become both”.

“The guarantee for not ‘casting-away’ lies in the ‘foreknowledge’ of God: After all, God cannot give up his original choosing. From the term ‘foreknowledge’, we also clearly deduce the concept of election.

## Reflection

By Rev Henk Poot | Christians for Israel Netherlands



## He Will Reign Over the House of Jacob Forever

“Greetings, you who are highly favoured!” Luke 1:28

The encounter between the angel Gabriel and Mary, as described in Luke 1:27-33, has been a beloved theme in art. Just think of the well-known ‘Ave Maria’ (Hail Mary). What many do not realise, however, is that Gabriel's greeting echoes a prophecy from Zephaniah: “Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!” The prophecy continues: “The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm.” (Zephaniah 3:14-15). Notably, the Greek word for ‘rejoice’ (*chaire*), used in this prophecy, evolved over time to ‘greetings.’

With these words from Zephaniah, you will clearly realise, that Mary is not just an ordinary young woman from the people of Israel. She is the symbol of Israel. It is Israel that will receive the Son of God and bring forth the *Messiah* for the rest of the world. This is true of Mary, and it is also true of Jesus. He has everything to do with Israel. He will bring salvation and peace to the world. He will even take away the sins of the world. But He will do so as the King of Israel. Israel has received that grace from God.

Another detail from this passage that should be highlighted, are the words of Gabriel about Jesus. “The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David.” At the time, Herod—a descendant of Esau—was on the throne. Yet Gabriel proclaimed that Jesus, a descendant of Jacob, of Israel, would reign. And He will be King over Jacob for all eternity. I suspect that not many people will think about the fact that salvation is from the Jews during Christmas. But it is true, and it is not incidental.

Let us pray for the soon coming of Jesus to Jerusalem, where He will reign from the city of David over the entire world.

“The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end.” Luke 1:32b-33



## Short News

More than 57,000ha  
of Land Burnt

Attacks by Hezbollah have burned over 57,000 hectares of land, the Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael—Jewish National Fund announced middle of November. Iran-backed Hezbollah has since fired around 10,000 rockets, missiles and drones at the Jewish state. According to the KKL-JNF Forestry Department, it will take about five to seven years for nature to repair the damage. According to the data, the Upper Galilee and Golan Heights regions in Israel have suffered the most damage with almost 43,500 hectares, followed by the Lower Galilee (about 6,175 ha), Western Galilee (2,223 ha) and Hula Valley (178 ha).

| Photo: Flash90

## Passed Away

Yeshayahu Gavish, who as a general conquered the Sinai Peninsula in the Six-Day War, passed away in Israel at the age of 99. He was the last surviving high commander of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. About the paratroopers who conquered Jerusalem in those days, he said: "They are stealing the show." Gavish joined the Jewish underground organisation *Palmach*, established during the Second World War when he was eighteen years old. After the Declaration of the State of Israel, Gavish stayed in the army.

Sheba Medical  
Hospital Back to Life

Sheba, the biggest medical Centre in Israel, was expanded after the 7 October massacre in southern Israel, causing the war with Gaza to follow. The expansion was necessary to meet the enormous demand for trauma treatment and rehabilitation for civilians and soldiers. Israeli Defence Force (IDF) statistics show that from 7 October 2023 to mid-August 2024, a total of 4,310 soldiers suffered injuries of varying severity. To date, Sheba has rehabilitated more than 600 civilians and soldiers injured in the ongoing Gaza conflict in its newly established rehabilitation department. All under the motto 'Returning to Life'. Due to the high demand, medical facilities like Sheba have invested a lot of time and resources in facilitating the rehabilitation of soldiers, civilians and returned hostages—hopefully, more of the latter will be home soon.

Believing Without Israel  
*Israel is and Remains Israel—Part 14*

## ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

The following article is the last instalment of a series, written by Rev Cornelis Kant, in which he explains how the role of Israel came to be viewed, during the development of the Christian faith and the history of Christian theology, as being insignificant.

God is, and always will be, faithful and trustworthy. He never lets go of what His hand began. He makes covenants with Israel that are everlasting. Even when the people of Israel are unfaithful and follow other gods, and God, in His anger, threatens destruction, He ultimately does not and, out of love for His people, remains faithful to them. Many passages testify to this. Several times God sends His people into exile outside Israel but, He always promises to bring His people back again. He will eventually bring His entire people back to the land of their fathers. The land promise is a fixed and permanent part of God's eternal covenants and promises for His people.

## Risk of Thin Support

The advent of Jesus and the consequent inclusion of the gentile nations in God's plan of salvation does not diminish Israel's position. The allegation that the Jews killed Jesus, along with replacement theology, have together fuelled much aversion and hatred towards the Jewish people over the centuries. Those ideas have caused much harm and are among the principal origins of antisemitism. A theology without Israel is not just an 'opinion' or an innocent understanding of the Bible. It is a sin against God and



God will bring His people back to the land of their fathers. | Photo Dafna Tal/Israeli Ministry of Tourism

harbours great risks and dangers for Jews and for Israel as a land and people in this world. On several occasions in the past, it has led to violence and slaughter of Jews. If this enlargement or fulfilment theology persists, we can rightly worry about Israel's position. For if Israel no longer has Biblical legitimacy, the basis for supporting Israel becomes very thin, especially at this time when Israel's very existence is threatened from all sides.

## Blessing and Riches for Us

God promised Abram that through Abram all generations of the world would be blessed. Paul speaks about riches: "I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!" (Romans 11: 11, 12). The fall of Israel, its inability (yet) to believe that Jesus is the

Messiah, brings great riches to us as Gentiles. It has brought us the Gospel of Jesus, with all its spiritual riches. God brings us the Gospel of His Son through and via Israel.

But that is not all. Paul even says that Israel's future adoption will bring us all the more riches. When soon the Kingdom comes and the Word of the Lord will once again go forth from Zion, the whole world will share in riches we can hardly imagine now. Jesus will reign on the throne of His father David and rule over the whole world from Jerusalem. People will no longer learn war. Weapons will be turned into agricultural instruments. A glorious future awaits us through Jesus Christ, who is, and will be, the King of Israel. It is therefore of utmost importance that Christians and congregations worldwide, regardless of their denomination or identity, stand firmly behind Israel. Let the biblical testimony about Israel resound.

The Lord's Prayer  
By Kees de VreugdHallowed be Thy  
Name

In this series, we explore how the Lord's Prayer is embedded in contemporary Jewish faith.

The invocation of God as Father is followed by the sanctification of God's Name. The Greek literally says: *Your Name must be hallowed*. Together with the confession of God's kingship, the sanctification of God's Name is what the Bible is all about. Because a Jew is prepared to give his life for the sanctification of God's Name, the term has become synonymous in Judaism with martyrdom.

The Name of God is so holy that it is not pronounced. At the same time, the Name is the very presence of God. He

is always there. To sanctify the Name is to acknowledge that in deep awe. One of the oldest prayers in Jewish liturgy is the *Kaddish* prayer. *Kaddish* means sanctification. This prayer begins with the words, "Let His great Name be glorified and sanctified." In the synagogue, it is said in turns. The response of the congregation is: *May His Name be great forever and ever*.

*Isaiah 29:23: "But when his children see the work of My hands in their midst, They will sanctify My name; Indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel."* When will that be? When the Lord will bring redemption on Israel. But then it goes even deeper. It is God Himself who sanctifies His Name. He speaks constantly in

*Ezekiel: "Not because of you, but because of My holy Name which you have profaned before the nations." Not even primarily Israel's sin, but the fact that Israel is in exile is a desecration of God's Name. As a result, the nations are blaspheming God's Name. But God is going to do something about that (Ezekiel 36:23): "I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I show Myself holy among you in their sight."*

He sanctifies His Name by bringing Israel back into the land. God's Name is sanctified because the restored people of Israel live again in the land of Israel.



## 7 October Scorecard

### ■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

It was a dreadful day which we will never forget. The rape, murder, and massacres of 7 October 2023 were the biggest pogrom since the Nazi holocaust eight decades ago. Over 1,200 were killed and, as with the Amalekites at David's encampment at Ziglag (1 Samuel 30), spoils and hostages were taken.

The aftermath was as well-known as the actual event: Israel went to war. Unlike other brief conflicts, this one needed to be protracted. The objective: to close down the Hamas government in Gaza and neutralise them militarily. Yet the results were anything but guaranteed.

A few short years earlier, Israel dealt with a friendly US administration that moved the embassy to Jerusalem, gave Israel the Abraham Accords resulting in peace treaties with four Arab nations, designated the Houthis of Yemen as a terrorist organisation, withdrew from the Iran Nuclear deal and slapped sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Since 7 October, the Jewish state has dealt with a reluctant, if not difficult, administration that lectured them about being 'proportional' in its response to Hamas holding back delivery of armaments and financial aid in an unprecedented move.

Well-organised and funded pro-Hamas protests were held weekly in major Western cities, and Governments and police seemed not to know what to do about them. Antisemitism, the world's oldest and most irrational hatred, was fully displayed at record levels. Jews do not feel safe anywhere. Israeli fans are now being attacked at European soccer matches.

Israel was told that Hamas could not be defeated, embedded in Gaza, bolstered by hundreds of miles of underground tunnels and weapons with supplies to withstand a long siege. Hamas enjoyed enthusiastic patronage of Iran, Turkey, and Qatar. They also had good public relations, convincing the world that they were the true victims, and Israel was wrong to retaliate. They managed to paint Israel as 'genocidal' zealots who committed war crimes.

Israel is not fighting on one front but several: Hezbollah in Lebanon, IRGC and Hezbollah in Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen who have been hindering international shipping in the Red Sea and sending drones into Israel itself—1,800 kilometres away.

Iran has been bankrolling all these groups with the goal of destroying Israel through its proxies—particularly Hamas and Hezbollah—who wage a war of attrition against the Jewish state. Yet, for



Student protests in Western cities. | Photo: Flash90

the first time ever, Iran has directly attacked Israel with 500 rockets, drones and missiles. However, this large attack has caused minimal damage.

Of Iran's proxies, Hezbollah is of particular concern. They have been well funded by Iran through drug sales and money laundering and armed with 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel. They, too, had underground tunnels and boasted of a fighting force of 100,000 battle-hardened soldiers from the Syrian civil war. They have to date fired 9,000 rockets into northern Israel, thus dislocating 60,000 Israelis who are being housed elsewhere. Left unchecked, this regional war could morph into World War III.

**Yet, where many saw doom and gloom, Netanyahu saw an open door. Unlike others, he did not flinch, panic, or retreat.**

On top of all this dire portrait stands Israel's embattled and often maligned prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. Like his nation, he faced great obstacles including opposition from some fellow Israelis and western allies. In the first half of 2023, Israel was rocked with unprecedented mass protests against his Judicial Reform programme. Not just individuals but companies and major organisations were involved. A very disturbing part of the protests was that a number of military reservists who refused to report for their annual duty. Not only was this a first, but it was also a crime. This portrait of a divided, polarised Israel sent the wrong message to Israel's enemies and no doubt set the stage for the well-planned Hamas attack on 7 October.

For many, the protests were a chance to topple the Netanyahu government. Also,

at the age of seventy-five and having been prime minister for sixteen years, many felt that it was time for Netanyahu's tenure to come to an end. Many blamed him—known for being 'Mr. Security'—for the serious security lapse that enabled the barbarism of 7 October to take place. As with Donald Trump after 6 January, Netanyahu was on political life support.

Yet, where many saw doom and gloom, Netanyahu saw an open door. Unlike others, he did not flinch, panic, or retreat. To him, 7 October gave Israel the opportunity—however short-lived—to wage an all-out war against Hamas and other enemy forces and finally finish and win a war rather than fight

and then be cut short by a ceasefire that merely buys time for Israel's enemies to rearm.

What is the scorecard after one year of fighting? Israel has assassinated the senior leadership of Hamas, destroyed tunnels, crippled its military wing, and rendered it a rump to its pre-war levels. Hezbollah has lost its senior leadership, been zapped with booby-trapped pagers and walkie-talkies, and lost half of its cache of missiles. Israel's counterattack against Iran destroyed half of Iran's missiles, antiaircraft batteries and launching sites. Its supreme leader has gone into hiding since Israel assassinated a Hamas chief in Teheran. A politically dead Netanyahu is ahead in the polls.

The war is not over but with tough, courageous and visionary leadership, it is amazing what you can accomplish with the right attitude... and plenty of prayer.

### Biblical Roots By David Nekrutman

#### The Greatest Commandment

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was asked, "What commandment is the most important of all?" He replied, "The foremost commandment is, 'Hear, O Yisrael, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength...'" "Shema Yisrael, A'do'nai Elo'hei'nu, A'do'nai E'chad" (Deuteronomy 6:4)

It is important to note that Mark's Gospel was written primarily for non-Jewish believers in Jesus, living in Rome, to strengthen and guide through the era of Nero's persecutions. He does not assume his audience is familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures, and he explains Jewish customs and geography.

Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the key scriptures of faith. The verse is known within Judaism as the *Shema*.

By Jesus' time, the *Shema* verse—along with Deuteronomy 6:5-9—was part of Jewish daily liturgy. The *Shema* was recited twice a day to fulfill the Deuteronomy 6:7 directive—"when you lie down and when you get up."

The first Hebrew word of Deuteronomy 6:4 is *Shema*, usually translated as 'listen' or 'hear'. However, this Hebrew term does not have a one-word translation. It is an idea.

In biblical Hebrew, there is no word for 'obey'. *Shema* is the closest word for 'obey', but with a twist. God does not want robotic faith. When God declares *Shema* to Israel, He is asking them to freely choose His will as their own. Perhaps, a better one-word translation for *Shema* is 'internalise'.

In understanding the *Shema*, Mark's Gospel presents the verse as a monotheistic credo—[Scribe to Jesus], "Correct, Rabbi! You have truly stated that 'He is one, and beside Him there is no other'" (v. 32). Israel's God is the only one and no other god exists alongside Him.

This is quite fascinating since it is possible to understand *Shema* as a declaration of Israel's loyalty to God (2 Chronicles 13:10) or an eschatological vision that YHWH will be accepted by all people as the one true God (Zechariah 14:9). Rather, Mark is presenting the *Shema* via a Deuteronomic prism (4:35, 32:12) for the Roman believers of Jesus to continue to believe in monotheism of Israel's God.

Mark presents the greatest commandment, "to love God," within the context of *Shema*.

Primarily a polytheistic civilisation, the Roman Empire recognised and worshiped multiple gods. They believed that these deities served a role in founding the Roman civilisation and shaped the events of people's lives daily. The *Shema* is a protest to that narrative. To truly express love for the God of Israel, a believer must recognise that He is the only God, and serve Him only.



## Hanukkah

### ■ Kees de Vreugd

Theologian | Christians for Israel International & Editor  
| Israel & the Church

On Wednesday evening 25 December the first *Hanukkah* light will be kindled in the streets in Jerusalem, in Jewish homes, and even in many cities worldwide. *Hanukkah* lasts eight days. The first night one light is lit, the second night two, and so on, until in the last night eight candles are burning. The ritual is simple. At the lighting of the candle a blessing is said commemorating the miracle of *Hanukkah*. Usually, the hymn *Ma'oz Tzur Yeshu'ati* ('Solid Rock of my Salvation') is sung. And it has become a custom to eat *sufganiyot*, a sort of doughnut baked in oil, referring to the miracle of the oil.

This year, *Hannukah* coincides with Christmas. In Israel, *Hanukkah* falls in the winter. Thus it is mentioned in *John 10:22* as the Feast of Dedication, 'and it was winter'. *Hannukah* is sometimes referred to as the Feast of Lights. Both *Hanukkah* and Christmas celebrate the victory of Light over darkness.

### Historical Background

*Hannukah* celebrates the (re)dedication of the temple. The history is described in the books of the Maccabees. It happened in 167 BC. The Greek king Antioch IV Epiphanes, who ruled over Israel, placed an 'abomination of desolation' (1 Maccabees 1:54, Daniel 9:27) in the temple in Jerusalem: a statue for the Greek deity Zeus, and he had pigs sacrificed on the altar. In an unparalleled attempt to assimilate the Jewish people into Greek-Hellenistic culture, *Sabbath*, circumcision and study of the *Torah* were forbidden.

The elite in Jerusalem, among which many priests, had already adopted Greek culture, but the people in the land resisted. A clan of priest-farmers in the city of Modi'in, the *Maccabees*, started a revolt against the Greeks. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, the Jewish people succeeded in taking over Jerusalem and expelling the Greeks from the city. The temple was purified from idolatry, and on the same date as it was desecrated, the 25th of Kislev, the altar was rededicated. Eight days took the celebration of the



Menorah on the fifth eve of *Hanukkah* at the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site in Jerusalem's Old City. | Photo: Kobi Gideon/Flash90

rededication, just like the eight days of the feast of tabernacles, and like the original dedication of the first temple. The temple was ornamented with crowns and bosses of gold, and was abundantly lighted. From then on, the feast of the dedication should be celebrated yearly. Jesus, too, celebrated the Feast of the Dedication in the temple (*John 10:22*)!

### Oil

The *Talmud* relates the story that, when they entered the temple and wanted to light the *Menorah* (the seven-branched candelabra), there was no oil that was ritually fit for the *Menorah*. Finally, however, they found a small jar of ritually pure oil, just enough for one day. However, a miracle occurred: the *Menorah* burnt for eight days on that small amount, long enough to produce new pure oil.

### Dedication

The word *Hanukkah* means dedication. *Hanukkah* is not just about lighting candles. It is about dedicating,

and re-dedicating oneself to a life in accordance with God's Word. In Jewish thought every human being is supposed to make of himself a temple, a sanctuary by learning the values of God's Word. In this way, he spreads light into the world. That is how Israel understands her own being in the world.

The word *Hanukkah* is also related to the Hebrew word for education (*Hinnukh*). In these dark times, in which Israel is in an ongoing war for her existence, rumours are widely spread and lies are easily believed. Many people are hardly aware of the historical backgrounds, let alone the Biblical foundations, yet have an immediate and absolute opinion. The violence we have seen against Jews in Amsterdam and other cities in the world is rooted in hatred and ignorance. This year more than ever, *Hanukkah* is a call to spread light, not the least by educating people about the real history and the true meaning of Israel. It is at least one important weapon in the fight against the powers of darkness.

## Sharing Israel's Story with Pastors in Chile

### ■ Rev Cornelis Kant

Executive Director | Christians for Israel International

Building relationships in Latin America can be challenging without fluency in Spanish. This changed when Yerko Clavero, a Chilean native, joined Christians for Israel. His involvement allowed us to connect with a network of pastors in Chile. We quickly realized there was significant interest among these pastors in Biblical and historical information about Israel. As a result, we were invited to speak in various churches in Chile.

Nine regional meetings with pastors were organized, thanks to arrangements made by Pastor Luis from Concepción. Additionally, we had the opportunity to preach at two Sunday church services and serve as guest speakers at a missionary event. Yerko accompanied us as a translator, making these interactions possible. In total, we met over 300 pastors, each of whom received a Spanish-translated

copy of the book *Why Israel?*

These meetings were extraordinary. Some pastors expressed, "Had I known this, I would have organised a full-day conference at my church." The pastors represented various denominations, including traditional churches, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations. The smaller gatherings allowed for meaningful discussions and deeper engagement, which were particularly enriching.

Amid the current conflict in and around Israel, many pastors had pressing questions. Their understanding was often limited to what mainstream media portrays. Offering a Biblical perspective on current events proved enlightening for many. Given the vast distance and high costs, most of these pastors have never had the chance to visit Israel. They voiced a strong desire for more Spanish-language resources in Israel. During our trip, we also met the

director of the National Library, who was so impressed with the book *Why Israel?* that he committed to adding ten copies to libraries nationwide.

Each meeting was a blessing, and we are filled with hope and prayers that these initial connections in Chile will grow and flourish in the future.



Pastor's meeting in the city of Hualpe. Rev Cornelis Kant (5th from left) and Yerko Clavero (6th from left). | Photo: Christians for Israel



# The Attempt to Colonise Jewish History

■ Yonina Pritzker

Jewish News Syndicate (JNS)

**For centuries, the Jewish connection to the Land of Israel was universally acknowledged, but not today.**

The history of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel did not begin in 1948, as those who want to erase Jewish history and the Jewish connection to Israel would have us believe. In fact, Jews have been living in their ancestral homeland continuously since antiquity.

Throughout that long history, there have been adversaries who attempted to drive the Jewish people out of their land, such as when the Babylonians destroyed the First Temple in 586 BCE. Those exiled as a result sang, *"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat; we also wept when we remembered Zion"* (Psalm 137).

The Romans also attempted to drive out the Jewish people when they destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE. Images of the ancient Roman looters can still be seen in Rome today, carved on the Arch of Titus.

Many more conquerors have tried to incorporate the Land of Israel into their own territories, including Persian, Greek, Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman conquerors. Yet Israel has always been the sovereign country of the Jewish people alone.

This ancient bond between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel has been universally acknowledged for thousands of years, including in recent centuries.

In 1830, the governor of Damascus, writing of the Jewish connection to the Matriarch Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, instructed the Mufti of Jerusalem that "they [the Jews] are accustomed to visit it from ancient days; and no one is permitted to prevent them or oppose them [from doing] this."

Similarly, in 1919, Emir Faisal ibn Hussein, later King Faisal of Iraq, wrote a letter to Prof Felix Frankfurter, later an associate justice of the US Supreme Court, stating: "I want to take this opportunity of my first contact with American Zionists to tell you what I have often been able to say to Dr [Chaim] Weizmann... We feel that the Arabs and Jews are cousins in having suffered similar oppressions at the hands of powers stronger than themselves."

Faisal stated that the Arabs "look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement" and would "do our best... to help them through: We will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home." He also acknowledged that "The Jewish movement is national and not imperialist. Our movement is national and not imperialist. ... I look forward, and my people with me look forward, to a future in which we will help you and you will help us."

The Supreme Muslim Council also acknowledged the Jewish connection to the Land in a 1925 guide to the Temple Mount, which stated, "Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute."

This connection was also recognised by the world powers at the close of World War I. It was unanimously affirmed by the League of Nations and codified in international law that the Jews have an indigenous claim to all the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, including Gaza, as well as the Golan Heights and the land that comprises the country of Jordan.

Nonetheless, we have seen countless attempts to strip the Jewish people of their land and to denigrate and even criminalise their presence in it. For example,



Francesco Hayez's 1867 oil on canvas painting *'The Destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem'* at Venice's Gallerie dell'Accademia. Both the first and second iterations of the Beit Hamikdash were razed on Tisha B'Av, hundreds of years apart. | Photo: Francesco Hayez, Wikimedia Commons.

almost immediately after the Jewish right to the land was recognised, the international representatives entrusted with facilitating the resettlement of Jews in the Land of Israel gave away 77% of it to create Jordan.

The remaining 23% is precisely the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea about which people chant in the streets today, fabricating this land's 'occupation' by Israel.

Previously, this tactic to erase Jewish history and replace the Jewish people by calling Israel a colonial, occupying enterprise would have shown the claimants to be either ignorant or deceitful. It would not have earned them a teaching position at our celebrated institutions of higher learning, where they have been able to mislead and indoctrinate a generation of students who have not been taught actual history or critical thinking.

Similarly disingenuous was United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres when he claimed that the massacre of Israelis and others in the pogrom of 7 October had context because of Israel's 'occupation'.

His statement was in direct contradiction of the UN charter, since the UN inherited the obligations of the League of Nations, including the reestablishment of the State of Israel on precisely that 'occupied' land.

We also see the word 'occupation' deceptively applied to Israel in various newspapers and on other media platforms. We see it used by international leaders and elected officials who, at best, unthinkingly parrot these tired mantras about Israel and, at worst, are actively aiding in the effort to wrest the Jewish homeland away from the Jewish people by verbally rewriting history and denigrating the Jewish state.

Had Israel's neighbours offered it any kind of reciprocity, any acknowledgement of the rights of the Jewish nation to a sovereign state in its ancestral homeland, they would have planted the seeds of peace. Unfortunately, in the face of the current attempt to drive the Jewish people out of the Land of Israel, the Jews are once again forced to defend their history, heritage and home while the yearning and praying for peace continue.

*Republished with permission.*

## The Bible Speaks

### Luke 1: 68-75

*"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
because He has come to His people and redeemed them.  
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of His servant David  
(as He said through His holy prophets of long ago),  
salvation from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us—  
to show mercy to our ancestors  
and to remember His holy covenant,  
the oath He swore to our father Abraham:  
to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,  
and to enable us to serve Him without fear  
in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*

Filled with the Holy Spirit, the priest Zacharias sings this hymn. God places these words in his heart and on his lips to make clear: the *Messiah* has come because God is faithful to His promises. The time will come when Israel will be delivered from all Jew-haters and the Jewish people will serve the Lord in peace. | Photo: Unsplash



# 7 October: The NGO War Against Israel

On 7 October 2023, Hamas orchestrated the deadliest attack against the Jewish people since the Holocaust. Terrorists from Gaza committed wholesale acts of murder, sexual assault, kidnapping, torture, destruction, and other atrocities—and they were joined by Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other Iranian proxies in launching a multifront war against Israel.

In parallel to the devastating physical attacks, a powerful network of international NGOs—in partnership with UN agencies and officials—launched a political war against the Jewish state.



Since 7 October, NGO Monitor has mapped the NGO network behind these campaigns, highlighting the role of secretive governmental, private and humanitarian aid funding in enabling antisemitism and violence against Jews and Israelis.

## Israel-Gaza War: The NGO Front

### Dehumanisation

- Libels: genocide, starvation, war crimes
- Atrocity inversion
- Rape denial
- Erasing Israeli victims and hostages

### Lawfare

- International Criminal Court
- International Court of Justice
- Lawsuits
- Arms embargoes

### Global Antisemitism

- Campus intimidation and hate
- Anti-Israel demonstrations
- Widespread anti-Jewish violence

## NGOs and 7 October: Atrocity Denial, Contextualisation, Celebration

So called human rights and humanitarian NGOs, contextualised, justified and even celebrated the massacre at times labelling the attacks ‘resistance’. Several senior NGO officials denied the Hamas orchestrated atrocities, including the systematic sexual violence against Israelis.

Instead of supporting and promoting the human rights of Israelis and Jews, NGOs contributed to normalisation of violence, romanticisation of Hamas and other terror groups, and dehumanisation.

### Miftah

“The silence of ‘Western’ feminists has also been appalling given their earlier outrage about **unsubstantial Israeli allegations** which were used to justify and commit the ongoing genocide in Gaza.”

21 February 2024

### PMRS

“Today is a **glorious day of historic proportion**.”

PMRS (Palestinian Medical Relief Society)  
President  
Mustafa Barghouti  
7 October 2023

### Amnesty

“The root causes of these repeated cycles of violence must be addressed... ending Israel’s 16-year-long illegal blockade on Gaza, and all other aspects of Israel’s **system of apartheid**.”

Amnesty Statement  
7 October 2023

### B’Tselem

“B’Tselem Executive Director Yuli Novak described the events of 7 October as **acts of resistance or an uprising against Israeli apartheid regime**.”

Haaretz  
24 March 2024

### HRW

“The reports and unverified videos of Israeli families taken hostage in their homes, kidnapped into Gaza, are terrifying. There’s no honour in unlawful attacks... **No matter how just your resistance to apartheid and oppression is**.”

HRW Programme Director Sari Bashi  
7 October 2023

### PNGO

“We in PNGO (Palestinian NGO Network) salute this **honourable image** that our people are sketching.”

8 October 2023

| Photo: Background Flash90

## Facts Speak

## Attacks on Israel by Hezbollah 8 October 2023–12 November 2024 (Day 403)



**15,900+**  
rockets, missiles and mortar  
bombs fired towards Israel



**3.4km+**  
m<sup>2</sup> area burnt



**76+**  
murdered



**46,711+**  
Israelis displaced from  
their homes



**1,100+**  
houses and infrastructure  
damaged

Source: StandWithUs



# The Lifeline that is C4I

**■ Danielle Mor**  
Director | Christian Friends of the Jewish Agency

For over ten years now I have been personally blessed by Christians for Israel. To many this statement might seem strange. What possible personal connection could there be between me as an Israeli, Jewish mother, and a group of devout, faith-filled Christians? But as a person serving at The Jewish Agency for Israel, I have witnessed and felt firsthand, the deep love for Israel and its brave defenders, the selfless caring for Holocaust survivors in Ukraine, the creativity and joy brought into helping, whether with children suffering from PTSD, new olim or in planting tulips. These have all been a blessing to me and to the many thousands of Israelis whose lives have been transformed thanks to this support. But since 7 October, this blessing has become so much more. It has become a lifeline. A beacon of light in what felt like utter darkness and despair. A proof that not all hope is lost. A warm embrace, that does not let go and wordlessly signals: *You Are Not Alone!* I first began to realise this when the messages and



Danielle Mor, donating blood, in light of the need for blood for the wounded 7 October 2023. | Photos: Danielle Mor



Danielle playing with new olim children, currently in rehabilitation after a five-month evacuation at the Ibim Aliyah village.

phone calls on 7 October started coming in, while I was with my family in our shelter room, asking me: “How am I?” “Is my family safe?” Next, when shaking and crying outside the hospital room of a critically injured young man, I received a firm long embrace from a Christians for Israel member. And of course, in the days, weeks and months that have passed, I have felt and witnessed how the incredible generosity with millions of dollars coming in support of urgent needs, the unfailing faith and the abundant love and fight for justice, have and are a lifeline to myself, to the Jewish people and to all of Israel. I know this path you walk in is not easy. That you too are suffering attacks. And so, if I may, I’d like to end by thanking Christians for Israel for being our lifeline and share with you a Hebrew Jewish prayer, one that is recited all over the world for our defenders:

*“May the Almighty cause the enemies who rise up against us to be struck down before them. May the Holy One, Blessed is He, preserve and rescue our defenders from every trouble and distress and from every plague and illness, and may He send blessing and success in their every endeavour.”*

You can contribute to the Emergency Fund Israel here.  
**Will you help? Any amount helps.**

## Support Huge Encouragement

Since launching the emergency fund on 7 October last year, supporters of Christians for Israel have demonstrated great commitment. In recent months, substantial donations have poured in to help address Israel’s pressing needs. Christians for Israel are deeply grateful for the donations from so many around the globe. Frank van Oordt, Director of Christians for Israel Netherlands, recently shared about the impact of this support after visiting Israel. “We noticed that Christians for Israel supporters worldwide understood this was a meaningful way to stand with Israel in these difficult months. People in Israel genuinely feel this support. It moves them to know that Christians are praying, offering help, and standing steadfastly alongside them, especially during times like these.” In the initial phase of the war, emergency funds were largely directed toward enhancing security measures. “Think, for example, about shelters. We also helped northern Israel to buy surveillance cameras, because people there feared attacks.” Israel still has 250,000 evacuees, mostly from the north, which has been bombarded by Hezbollah for over a year now. The donations have already funded numerous

projects in Israel, yet the need remains high. Frank shared: “Our support is far more than a mere drop in the ocean; it deeply encourages Israel. Each contribution is a tangible expression of the prayers offered, and that is how it is received.” Looking ahead, Frank assumes that the emergency fund will remain essential for quite some time. “Even after the war ends, funds will be needed for reconstruction. Because of the war’s pressure on the economy and the ongoing return of Jews, vulnerable groups will still need extra support. It is important that we continue to help and demonstrate our love as Christians.” Frank van Oordt at the Centre of the hostages. | Photo: Christians for Israel



## Our Projects Overview

Part of our mission is to comfort Israel and the Jewish people through prayer and action. If you would like to support one of our projects you can complete the coupon on page 16 or make an online donation. Thank you very much for your support!

### Aliyah

Aliyah is the Hebrew word for the return of the Jewish people to Israel. We support Aliyah mainly from Ukraine (and the former Soviet Union), but also from India and France. Furthermore, we help new immigrants (in Hebrew: olim) to integrate into Israeli society.



### Hineni Soup Kitchen

We help the poor of Israel, by providing them with food. We do this in partnership with the Hineni Center in Jerusalem, headed by Benjamin Philip. Your gift for the soup kitchen goes directly to the purchase of food.



### Holocaust Survivors

We support impoverished Holocaust survivors in Israel and Ukraine through various projects which provide assistance to survivors of the Holocaust. Those survivors are elderly and will not be among us for long, and there is a growing demand for practical assistance.



### Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)

You can support the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria, the heart of Biblical Israel. The main purpose is to encourage the people in the Biblical Heartland and to show them that there are Christians throughout the world who support them and share the belief that the areas of Judea and Samaria are part of Israel’s inheritance.



### Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

We distribute food parcels amongst Jewish people in Ukraine. These parcels are handed out to Holocaust survivors, needy families, and the sick. Those food parcels are a sign of friendship that demonstrates your support for our Jewish brothers and sisters and that they are not alone.



### Arab Christians

Life for Christians in Bethlehem is often not easy. Christians for Israel supports the First Baptist Church of Rev Naim Khoury in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The members of this church spread the gospel among Arabs and share their love and heart for Israel and the Jewish people. For country-specific or further information on our projects, go to our website, [www.c4israel.org](http://www.c4israel.org)





# Winter Food Parcel Campaign Ukraine

**Koen Carlier**  
Aliyah Fieldworker | Christians for Israel Ukraine

Dear friends of Israel and the Jewish people,

Recently, we met an elderly couple, Victor and Tamara, at the synagogue in Zaporizhzhya. They had come after the rabbi urged them, “Come to the synagogue— Christians for Israel is delivering a large emergency supply of food parcels!”

When we asked if they had children, silence fell. Their first son tragically passed away at just 42, and their second son, drafted into the army, has been missing since December 2022. They live with relentless uncertainty—was he killed, dumped somewhere, taken hostage? This question weighs heavily on them each day.

The war shows no signs of easing. Many are dreading the approaching winter, wondering if there will be enough heat, electricity, and water, as attacks continue to cripple an already fragile infrastructure.

The food parcels we deliver are essential, but offering a listening ear is just as important. We have the chance to bring comfort and remind people that the God of Israel watches over them. Food aid remains a crucial part of Christians for Israel’s mission in Ukraine, especially with the challenging winter months ahead. It brings hope to the Jewish community that we are here to support them. Will you join us in this work with your gifts and prayers?

With warm greetings from the entire Christians for Israel team in Ukraine.

Since 2004, Christians for Israel has been dedicated to supporting the Jewish community in Ukraine. Our efforts include distributing essential food parcels, visiting and caring for Jewish elderly, and providing practical support for aliyah—the return of Jews to Israel. As Ukraine faces yet another harsh winter amidst the ongoing war, many Jewish people in Ukraine are still living in severe poverty. The need for basic supplies is urgent, and our team is committed to delivering food parcels to help them endure the bitterly cold months ahead. Temperatures here can plunge well below freezing, making survival incredibly challenging.

Now entering the third winter of this devastating conflict, we cling to the certainty that God’s plan for His people is steadfast. He continues to watch over them even in these uncertain times. This winter, our goal is to distribute 50,000 food parcels to support impoverished Jewish families, the elderly, and Holocaust survivors.



Svetlana’s smile when she receives her food parcel truly captures her joy and gratitude.



- One €15 parcel contains:
- 2 kg pasta
  - 1 kg grits
  - 1 kg rice
  - 1 kg bulgur
  - 1 kg sugar
  - 2 kg flour
  - 500 gm oatmeal
  - 1 can of peas
  - 1 can of corn
  - 1 litre cooking oil
  - 1 can of fish
  - 1 pack of coffee
  - 1 box of tea
  - 1 bar of chocolate
  - 1 can of pineapple

One food parcel costs only €15.  
Will you support one or more parcels?

## YES! I Want to Support Christians for Israel

### CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL MINISTRY

- ☐ My donation for ministry costs, print & post
- ☐ Emergency Situation in Israel
- ALIYAH - BRING THE JEWS HOME**
- ☐ One person from Ukraine - € 135 | US \$150
- ☐ One family (5 people) - € 675 | US \$750
- ☐ One bus (25 people) - € 4500 | US \$5000
- ☐ First Home in the Homeland - € 450 | US \$465
- ☐ Bnei Menashe (India) (1 person) - € 950 | US \$1000
- ☐ Aliyah Ethiopia

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS

- ☐ Meals on Wheels - € 5 | US \$5 each
- ☐ Food Parcels in Ukraine - € 15 | US \$15 each
- ☐ Children at Risk - Jaffa Institute
- ☐ Hineni Soup Kitchen - € 7,50 | US \$7.50 per meal
- ☐ Holocaust Survivors Ukraine and Moldova
- ☐ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities (CFOIC)
- ☐ Arab Christians

TOTAL DONATION

### DONATION

.....  
\$.....

### TEACHING RESOURCES

- ☐ Israel on Trial (Book) by Andrew Tucker
- ☐ 70 Questions About Israel (Book) by Chan Siew Fong
- ☐ Israel 70 Years (One-off Collector’s Magazine)
- ☐ Jerusalem 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (One-off Collector’s Magazine)
- ☐ Israel: Covenants & Kingdom (Book) by Willem JJ Glashouwer
- ☐ Why Israel? (Book) ☐ Why Jerusalem? (Book) ☐ Why End Times? (Book)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Trilogy Book Set)
- ☐ Why Israel? Study Guides (Trilogy Book Set)
- ☐ Why Israel? (DVD) ☐ Why Jerusalem? (DVD) ☐ Why End Times? (DVD)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Trilogy DVD Set)
- ☐ Why Israel? (Book, DVD & Study Guide)
- ☐ Why Jerusalem? (Book, DVD & Study Guide)
- ☐ Why End Times? (Book, DVD & Study Guide)

To order these and other resources, go to [www.c4israel.org/webshop](http://www.c4israel.org/webshop)



### TO MAKE AN ONLINE DONATION:

Go to our website: [www.c4israel.org/support](http://www.c4israel.org/support)



### INTERNET BANKING:

Ref: Your name & donation purpose  
Account Holder: Christians for Israel International  
Bank Account No: NL12 ABNA 06275.15.460  
Bank: ABN-AMRO Bank, Nijkerk, The Netherlands  
BIC/Swift code: A B N A N L 2 A

Please confirm by emailing [international@c4israel.org](mailto:international@c4israel.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_