

ISRAEL

& Christians Today

INTERNATIONAL

October–November 2026

Cheshvan–Kislev 5787

CHRISTIANS FOR
ISRAEL
INTERNATIONAL

Understanding Israel and world events from a Biblical perspective

www.c4israel.org | info@c4israel.org



| Photo: Shutterstock

Israel—A Blessing for the Nations

In many parts of Christendom there is a deeply rooted idea that Israel's role has finished. "Israel lost its right to the land and its priestly calling because of disobedience; and lost thereby its capacity to be a blessing to the world", wrote one Christian Palestinian theologian. As evidence he mentioned the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

These Christians ignore much of the Bible. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts, God's blessing went out into the world. But that did not bring an end to the significance of the Jewish people. God was not starting a totally new project but was fulfilling what He had already promised. Isaiah said about the last days: "The law will go out from Zion, and the word of

the Lord from Jerusalem." And "many people will come and say, come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob."

Zechariah 8: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God... and many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to and entreat him. This is what the Lord Almighty says: in those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say 'let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"

God's promises remain. The Biblical and historical deep connection between the Jewish people and the mountains of Israel remains. The return of the Jewish people to the land in our generation is proof that God is faithful to His promises.

The prophet Zachariah also said: "Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles."

The apostle Paul later confirmed: a time will come "for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." (Acts 3:21)

Israel's role is far from finished.

2



Modern Blood Libels

6-7



Indigeneity & Israel

11



Feast of Tabernacles

16



Rewarded Patience



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

Colophon

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

Mission

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.

Editorial Team**Andrew Tucker**

International Editor-in-Chief
atucker@c4israel.org

Cathy Trotter (nee Coldicutt)

Managing Editor
newspaper@c4israel.org

*Marloes van Westing, Bryce Turner,
Ian Worby, Rita Quartel,
Marie-Louise Weissenböck*

Scripture references: THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

C4I Offices**Christians for Israel—International**

Willem Griffioen, *Chairman*
Rev Willem JJ Glashouwer, *President*
Leon Meijer, *Executive Director*
PO Box 1100 | 3860 BC Nijkerk,
The Netherlands | Tel: +31 33 422 0405
info@c4israel.org | www.c4israel.org

The English Edition of *Israel & Christians Today* is published by the following English speaking branches:

Christians for Israel—Australia

Ian Worby, *National Leader*
PO Box 1508, Springwood
Queensland, Australia 4127
Tel: +61 7 3088 6900,
info@c4israel.com.au
www.c4israel.com.au

Christians for Israel—New Zealand

Bryce Turner, *National Executive Director*
PO Box 12 006, Penrose,
Auckland, New Zealand 1642
Tel: +64 9 525 7564
info@c4israel.org.nz
www.c4israel.org.nz

Christians for Israel—Korea

Rev Paul Wonil Jung, *Director*
Suite 3, 37 Railway Parade, Eastwood
NSW, Australia 2122
Tel: +61 410 430 677
email: c4israelkorea@gmail.com
www.c4israelkorea.org

Christians for Israel—USA

Willem Griffioen, *Chairman*
PO Box 400, Front Royal, VA 22630, USA
usa-info@c4israel.org
www.c4israel.us

DISCLAIMER: Articles printed in *Israel & Christians Today* express the views of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editors or that of the Board of Christians for Israel. The printing of articles or advertising in *Israel & Christians Today* does not necessarily imply either endorsement or agreement.

© Christians for Israel International.

Reproduction, or storage in a retrieval system or in any other form, is prohibited without permission. Please contact the Managing Editor should you wish to syndicate or republish any articles or materials appearing in *Israel & Christians Today*.



www.facebook.com/c4israel

Modern Blood Libels

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

The Jewish people have always been the subject of false accusations and slander. When Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem's walls, Sanballat didn't contest the project honestly—he wrote an open letter to the Persian authorities accusing Nehemiah of secret rebellion, hoping an official body would act on an unverifiable claim before the truth could catch up (*Nehemiah 6:6–8*). Centuries earlier, Haman took a similar approach at the level of an entire people, telling the king that the Jews' "laws are diverse from all people" and that they should not be permitted to live—an accusation broad enough to justify anything, and specific enough to be checked by no one (*Esther 3:8–9*). In both cases, the accusation didn't need to be true. It only needed to be believed by someone with power to act on it.

"Blood libel" is a special kind of false accusation. It refers to the medieval myth, first recorded in Norwich in 1144 and recurring for centuries after, that Jews murdered non-Jewish children for ritual purposes. What made it durable wasn't just that it was false—it was how it was built: an accusation of hidden intent, supported only by testimony that could never be independently checked, where denial by the accused was treated as further proof of guilt rather than evidence of innocence. There was no action the accused could take that would count as disproof.

At this year's Venice Film Festival, the documentary NAZA—directed by two Israeli's, Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor—received a 25-minute standing ovation and the festival's Special Jury Prize. The film draws on interviews with 24 anonymous Israeli soldiers and officers

who allege that the killing of Gazan civilians was not the incidental cost of urban warfare but systematic and deliberate policy, driven, in the words of one unnamed interviewee, by "total dehumanisation of Palestinians".

It's a serious charge, delivered to a standing ovation. But it's worth looking closely at how the case is built.

Start with the sourcing: every accusation rests on anonymous testimony. No accuser is named, no service record is verifiable, and the IDF itself says it cannot confirm whether these individuals served, in what unit, or in what capacity. An allegation of mass atrocity that can't be checked, contested, or falsified is testimony that asks to be taken on faith rather than evidence that can be tested.

The claims are also unverified by any independent standard—no forensic investigation, no corroborating documentation, no cross-examination, only edited interviews assembled into a narrative.

Most significantly, the film leaves out context that would let viewers weigh the claims fairly. It doesn't address that Hamas fighters routinely operated in civilian clothing, from tunnels beneath homes, hospitals, and schools, making combatants and civilians difficult to distinguish in real time. It doesn't engage the argument made by West Point's John Spencer and other urban-warfare scholars, that weighing expected civilian harm against military necessity isn't evidence of malicious intent—it's a calculation international humanitarian law actually requires commanders to make before every strike. And it omits evidence cited by former Ambassador of Israel to the US Michael Oren that the IDF "did their utmost to minimise civilian casualties."

None of this means IDF conduct is beyond scrutiny; legitimate questions about specific strikes deserve serious investigation.

But a film built entirely on unnamed sources, without independent verification, and without operational context, isn't well equipped to settle that question—it's equipped to produce a verdict before the facts are fully in. It's a blood libel.

It's a familiar sequence: build the case on material that resists scrutiny (a deliberately vague legal standard in one instance, anonymous and unverifiable testimony in the other), and leave out the operational realities—human shields, tunnel networks, the actual requirements of international humanitarian law—that would change how a fair-minded observer reads the same facts.

Critics have already drawn the comparison to Jenin, the 2002 film that shaped international opinion on the Battle of Jenin long before the more measured facts caught up with it.

The point isn't that scrutiny of Israel's conduct is illegitimate. It's that the specific instruments being used right now are manipulated in ways that presume that Israelis are intentional child killers.

The right response to such allegations is not panic, and it isn't silence either. It is action. Like Nehemiah ("There are no such things done as thou sayest"), we must speak out against those who propagate lies and misinformation against God's people.

We can speak boldly against the lies in the confidence that scripture promises: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper... this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord" (*Isaiah 54:17*).

Prayer Points

Israel

- On 4 October, the Jewish people celebrate *Simchat Torah* (Joy of the *Torah*). In 2023, *Simchat Torah* fell on 7 October, the day of the devastating attacks in Israel. As memories of that day remain painful for many, pray for comfort, healing, and strength for all those affected. Ask that bereaved families and others carrying loss will know God's grace and support, and that the coming year will bring greater peace, security, and reasons for rejoicing.
- At the end of October, Israel will once again go to the polls. Pray that both the country's leaders and its citizens will be attentive to God's guidance and direction for the nation.
- The situation in the Middle East remains uncertain due to ongoing threats from Iran. Pray for Israel's protection from both direct and indirect threats originating from Iran.

- "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace." (*Numbers 6:24–26*). Using the words of these verses, pray God's blessing over Israel.

Antisemitism

- 2025 was the deadliest year for antisemitic violence against the Jewish diaspora since 1994. Pray for the protection of Jewish communities worldwide, that planned attacks will be thwarted and that God's angels will watch over and guard them.

Christians for Israel

- Pray that Christians will have open eyes to God's covenant faithfulness and recognise His promises being fulfilled as He gathers His people home. Pray that younger generations will also see these signs of God's faithfulness and be encouraged in their faith.

For daily Prayer Points, go to: www.c4israel.org

Settlement Trade Bans

■ Andrew Tucker

International Editor | Christians for Israel

More and more Western states are rallying to impose sanctions on trade in products from “illegal Israeli settlements”. What appears to be a political and legal conflict is in fact an intensifying spiritual battle for Jerusalem, that will lead to a major conflict between Israel and the nations. Like a volcano, pressure has been building up deep underground for decades—and now it is starting to erupt.

Trade Bans

On 8 September, twelve countries—the UK, France, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden—issued a statement jointly pledging to “introduce national and/or support European restrictions on trade in goods with settlements which are illegal under international law.”

Britain, France and Canada are the ones actually pulling the trigger: UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband announced a full import ban on settlement goods within nine months, paired with “action against specific companies and individuals” financing or building in the settlements, though he carved out exemptions for religious items and Israeli medicines. The other nine committed only to “support further action”—a hedge that leaves plenty of room for the coalition to fray before Britain’s own ban actually bites. The twelve-nation statement frames the restrictions as compliance with international law rather than punishment. It cites: settlements being “illegal under international law” (naming the E1 project specifically); actions “tantamount to the annexation of Palestinian land”; the “forcible displacement of the Palestinian population”; “unprecedented levels of settler violence and settlement expansion”; a need to “ensure accountability for settler violence, and investigate allegations against Israeli forces”; and alignment with “relevant UN Security Council resolutions” supporting a two-state solution with Palestinian statehood alongside Israeli security. This builds on ground already shifting under Israel’s feet for a year. Spain banned settlement imports first, in September 2025, followed by Slovenia, Belgium, and now the Netherlands, which adopted a national ban that takes effect 22 September 2026, covering goods from the West Bank and Golan Heights, including intermediate trade by Dutch companies abroad.

Ireland’s Occupied Territories Bill—applicable to goods only, after the government stripped out services over its own legal analysts’ objections—cleared its final vote in July and awaits signature.



Aerial view of Ma'ale Adumim, an Israeli settlement outside of Jerusalem. | Photo: Flash90

Israel’s Response

It did not take Jerusalem long to answer. Israel closed the British consulate in East Jerusalem, pulled the UK out of the Gaza ceasefire support arrangements it had helped stand up, halted Palestinian Authority security training, and barred a dozen British parliamentarians from entry. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar accused London and its partners of “stoking antisemitism”; on the British side, Reform MP Richard Tice called the sanctions a “grave mistake” that would embolden the very antisemitism Sa’ar warned of—a rare instance of an Israeli minister and a British opposition figure making the identical argument from opposite sides of the debate.

The Real Issue: Sovereignty

The main argument used to justify these trade bans is the International Court of Justice’s July 2024 advisory opinion, which found the occupation itself unlawful and said other states have a legal duty not to render aid or assistance to it. According to the ICJ, the reason the occupation is illegal is because the land, including “East Jerusalem”, belongs to the Palestinian people.

The ICJ advisory opinion is the legal hook most of these governments’ own lawyers, and outside groups like Amnesty and Human Rights Watch, point to as the basis for a trade bans.

Since June 1967, Israel has exercised control but not asserted legal sovereignty over the territory that was previously part of the Mandate for Palestine and in 1948 occupied by Egypt (Gaza) and Jordan (the old city of Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria).

Since 1948 there have been basically two main categories of views about “who owns the land”—both within Israel and around the globe.

On the one hand, many (not all) in Israel and in the Jewish community and their allies around the world hold the view

that the Jewish people have a right to live in the land of their ancestors (after all, they argue, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, were all located in the land that the world now calls “East Jerusalem” and “the West Bank”). Some of these people believe it is a Biblical right, others regard it as a historical, political and/or legal right.

Opposing them are those (numerically, the majority of people in the world) who reject (or are ignorant of) the Jewish connection with the land and believe that “the Palestinians” are the rightful owners of this land. The latter group includes some who claim that the only way to solve the conflict is either to create a Palestinian state in the “occupied” territories, or to dismantle Israel and replace it with a single, democratic “State of Palestine”.

To this day, lawyers around the globe continue to debate the question. There is no consensus. Even in the International Court of Justice, there is a range of views. According to the Court’s Vice-President, Judge Sebutinde, the legal principle normally applicable in such situations (“*uti possidetis juris*”) means that in 1948 Israel “inherited” as borders the administrative boundaries of Mandate Palestine. This is the correct legal approach.

Remember that the Palestinians and their Islamic allies do not just claim the “occupied” territories. The Palestinian National Charter claims Palestinian sovereignty over the whole of Palestine, “from the river to the sea”—the territory that in WWI was allocated for the Jewish national home under the Mandate for Palestine.

At the center of this land—literally—is the city of Jerusalem.

The time has come for Israel to finally assert full sovereignty over Jerusalem and the whole land to which it is entitled: “from the river to the sea”.

Short News

Hostages Square



For over two years massive rallies were held on the central square in Tel Aviv for the release of all hostages who were held in captivity in Gaza since 7 October 2023. In popular parlance the square was called “Hostages Square”. In memory of this period the square has recently been officially named “Hostages Square”. Mayor Ron Huldai unveiled new signage at the plaza outside the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and stated: “History cannot be erased, and we must not allow it to be forgotten. The decision to rename the square is intended to ensure that this chapter in the history of the State of Israel, from 7 October 2023 until the return of the final hostage, Ran Gvili, on 26 January 2026, will be remembered for generations.” | Photo: Flash90

In Persian

Survivors of Hamas’ attack on the military basis Nahal Oz on 7 October 2023 heard terrorists shout in Persian (also known as Farsi) to each other. Farsi is the Persian language spoken in Iran. This information complements military information that forces or advisors affiliated to Iran were closely involved in the attack.

Safe for Jews App

A new Israeli app, Safe for Jews, helps Jewish and Israeli travellers to identify security risks and antisemitism at holiday destinations. The bilingual app combines government advice, reports from Jewish communities, media messages and user information. The app’s developers emphasise that the app doesn’t replace official travel advice.

Venezuela Consular Relations Restored

After seventeen years Israel and Venezuela restore their consular relations. The countries arranged to provide assistance to citizens via a new channel of coordination. They also continue their cooperation after the June 2026 earthquakes. Israels sent well over 50 specialists for emergency aid, damage assessment and recovery. The Jewish community is mentioned as a bridge between the two countries and as a sign of “historical friendship”.

Israel's Strategic Position After 7 Oct.

■ Keren Setton

The Media Line

Nearly three years after Hamas' devastating attack on Israel on 7 October, which plunged the country into a multifront war, Israel finds itself at a strategic crossroads as a new US-Iran memorandum of understanding reshapes the regional battlefield. Israel remains largely isolated internationally, maintains a military presence in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, and is still far from normalisation with Saudi Arabia. None of its conflicts has been conclusively resolved, and its relationship with Washington has grown more complicated.

The preliminary US-Iran framework reached earlier in June was a significant turning point. Israel has projected its military might throughout the region, causing massive destruction in Gaza and southern Lebanon while conducting airstrikes in Syria, Iran, Yemen, and Qatar, including a September 2025 strike on Hamas leaders in Doha that drew international condemnation.

"There is a great gap between the military picture and the strategic picture, which is one of overall defeat and collapse of Israel's strategy," Chuck Freilich, a former Israeli national security adviser and currently a professor at Tel Aviv University and Columbia University, told *The Media Line*.

Despite that military prowess, Israel is far from reaching its goals. "It did not succeed in destroying Hamas or unseating it from power, Hezbollah is coming back despite downgrading its capabilities greatly, and Iran believes with good reason that it won the war by surviving an attack by the world's superpower and out-negotiated the US, coming ahead diplomatically as well," Freilich added.

Netanyahu vowed to overthrow Hamas in Gaza, destroy Hezbollah's military capabilities, and remove Iran's nuclear threat. Still, budding alliances with several Arab states under the Abraham Accords survived the war, despite initially seeming fragile. Relations with Saudi Arabia, long coveted by Netanyahu, remain out of reach.

"All of Israel's enemies are significantly weaker; there is wider interest in the Abraham Accords because of the threat from Iran, but Israel's diplomatic and political situation internationally is much worse, particularly in the United States," Prof Jonathan Rynhold, a senior researcher at the BESA Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, told *The Media Line*. "Israel has been far more isolated than this during its history."

The joint American-Israeli strikes inflicted significant damage on Iranian military infrastructure and reportedly



Israel's multi-front challenge: key threats and flashpoints. A more volatile Middle East. | Photo: AI

set back elements of Tehran's nuclear programme. Yet the conflict ended without the collapse of the Islamic Republic, perhaps amplifying its nuclear ambitions, and without a broader regional realignment in Israel's favour. Iranian officials and state media quickly declared victory, arguing Tehran had survived direct attacks by both Israel and the US while keeping its regime and much of its strategic posture.

"Iran believes that it won the war, doing so by withstanding a major American and Israeli operation," said Freilich. "They come out feeling stronger and invigorated. Israel and the US helped them achieve progress towards their goal of being a regional hegemon."

The memorandum with Iran demonstrated Israel's dependence on American diplomatic backing while also revealing differences between Netanyahu and President Donald Trump over the desired endgame. While Israel views Iran as an unresolved threat requiring continued pressure, Washington has sought to prevent a wider regional war, reopen maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, and stabilise the situation. For now, neither side has achieved a decisive outcome: Iran emerged weakened militarily but intact politically, while Israel demonstrated unprecedented military reach without fully removing the threat it sought to eliminate.

"Israel faces a real problem," said Rynhold. "If Iran is not limited in its conventional missile stockpile, Israel will want to attack, and it will be constrained by the US." The future of sanctions against Iran is also unclear, with the sides agreeing to a 60-day period to negotiate final terms. "Sanctions relief would be a strategic failure if it becomes part of any future agreement between the US and Iran," Rynhold added.

When Hamas launched its surprise attack on 7 October 2023, thousands of terrorists stormed across Israel's southern border, and Netanyahu vowed to retaliate, promising to release all 251 hostages taken and remove the terrorist group from power. Israel's ensuing offensive drew significant international backlash, with critics, including some close allies, accusing it of excessive force and war crimes—claims Israel categorically denies.

More than two and a half years later, a fragile ceasefire is in place, and all of the hostages, including the bodies of those killed in captivity, have been returned. Israel controls more than half of Gaza, with Hamas still controlling the rest. The next phase of the ceasefire, meant to see an Israeli withdrawal, is conditioned on Hamas' disarmament, which the group refuses to do. Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain a presence in Gaza and has implied the military will push deeper into Palestinian territory.

"Hamas' military capabilities are a fraction of what they were," said Freilich. "They no longer constitute a military threat, but they constitute a threat to the forces in Gaza, and they are still in power politically. Israel will be forced to withdraw from Gaza sooner or later, whether it likes it or not." Israel's leadership has nonetheless vowed to push further into Gaza to complete its mission of removing Hamas from power—partly, Freilich said, because there are no longer hostages there, and possibly because "Trump will try to compensate Netanyahu a little by giving him some free rein in Gaza for a while, especially before an election."

Netanyahu, who leads a far-right government, has coalition support to intensify military pressure on Hamas, even as the international community grows more critical—from South Africa's genocide allegations to growing cultural,

academic, and weapons embargoes.

"Any Israeli government will not move in a hurry," said Rynhold. "There are a number of reasons for this—psychologically for the Israeli public, it keeps Hamas further away from the border and also because withdrawal is a hard thing to do."

Senior members of the current government favour resettling Gaza with a Jewish population. Netanyahu has pushed back, but the voices within his coalition are loud, drawing international outcry. "As long as Israel won't allow settlers in, Israel has the ability to shape what goes on there—possibly keeping military control but giving other Palestinian factions civilian control," said Rynhold.

Israel is scheduled to hold national elections by late October, and the outcome will have a major impact on the future of Gaza. "Israel cannot allow itself to live with that equation," said Freilich. "This is another failure of its strategy."

Hezbollah, too, is reeling from more than two years of war with Israel. "Hezbollah is infinitely militarily, financially, and politically weaker than it was before 7 October," said Rynhold. It began firing at Israel two days after the joint American-Israeli attack on Iran started in March, prompting an Israeli campaign in Lebanon that lasted into June. Fighting has eased since the US-Iran memorandum, but Israeli forces remain in southern Lebanon, and Hezbollah says its position on the ceasefire depends on Israeli compliance. "Hezbollah now has a partial shield, by virtue of the agreement between the US and Iran; whether it becomes more or less, is another matter," Rynhold said. Iran's threats have made Beirut's Dahieh neighbourhood, Hezbollah's stronghold, harder for Israel to target, and Trump made clear to Netanyahu that action there would jeopardise a broader arrangement with Iran. Analysts say Hezbollah and Iran may emerge with greater leverage, even as both have absorbed heavy blows.

In the almost three years since 7 October, Israel stands in a paradoxical position. It has showcased extraordinary military capabilities and weakened its enemies, yet many of the political and strategic objectives that justified the war remain unresolved. Hamas remains a force in Gaza, Hezbollah continues to challenge Israel from Lebanon, and Iran has survived and, per Freilich, may feel emboldened, while Israel faces growing international isolation. As Israelis prepare to head to the polls again, the country confronts a question that military victories alone cannot answer: how to translate battlefield achievements into a lasting, favourable regional order.

A Waiting Room Full of Israel

■ Joanne Nihom

Journalist & Author

In the waiting room of the hospital, the world seems to come together for a moment. People sit close to one another on plastic chairs, some staring silently into the distance, others speaking softly while children fidget impatiently. The room hums with sound. Hebrew blends with Arabic, interrupted by the beeping of medical equipment and the monotone voice over the loudspeaker calling out yet another name. Outside, the heat of an Israeli afternoon rages on, but inside everything revolves around something else: waiting, hope, and health.

Recently I accompanied a friend who had a follow-up appointment at the Galilee Medical Center in Nahariya. It was not an emergency, but as always, a hospital visit carries a certain tension. While he fills out paperwork, I look around. An Orthodox Jewish man flips through a newspaper. Next to him sits an Arab woman wearing a headscarf, gently pulling her sleeping grandchild closer. Two nurses hurry past. One speaks Hebrew, the other responds in Arabic. No one seems to think anything of it. Here, it is the most natural thing in the world.

A hospital in Israel is perhaps the ultimate place of togetherness. A place where Jewish and Arab doctors, nurses, and caregivers work side by side. A place where babies from different backgrounds are born and where one hopes that the world outside the hospital might one day learn something.

Coexistence in Practice

When my friend is finally called in, we walk inside together. The doctor turns out to be Muslim, while his assistant is a Jewish woman. How do I know? Because during the consultation, we strike up a conversation.

At first, we discuss ordinary things, but soon the conversation turns to growing boycotts of Israeli universities and hospitals, which many say are straining international partnerships.

The doctor shares: “People only see the conflict, but they don’t see what happens here every day. Everyone should visit an Israeli hospital somewhere in the country. This is coexistence at its best.”

As my friend continues discussing his health with the doctor, my thoughts drift back to an interview I conducted some time ago with Dr Massad Barhoum, an Arab Israeli and the director of the hospital we are visiting. “In a hospital, it’s about people,” he told me then. “About human interactions and saving lives. Politics is not an issue here. In the hospital, peace prevails every day.”



An Arab nurse in a hospital in northern Israel. | Photo: Flash90

Barhoum has become a prominent bridge-builders in Israel’s healthcare system. Under his leadership, Jewish, Arab, Christian, and Druze physicians work together every day. Patients share rooms regardless of their background, religion, or political beliefs. In a region where division often dominates, a different reality emerges here.

As I sit in the waiting room, I once again understand what Barhoum meant. Here, in a place where life and health are central, walls seem to temporarily disappear. Not completely, perhaps, but enough to make room for something deeply human.

A young Arab nurse helps an elderly Jewish patient to his feet. A Jewish doctor studies the scan of a Palestinian child with intense concentration. Families who might never meet outside share coffee from the same vending machine while waiting for news after surgery.

No one asks about political beliefs before starting an IV.

That does not mean tensions disappear. Outside the hospital, reality remains complex and often harsh. Rocket attacks, fear, distrust, and political divisions have shaped daily life in Israel since 7 October 2023. Doctors and nurses carry that reality with them as well. Some have lost family members. Others live in communities where tensions are constantly palpable. Yet every day, they choose to work together.

More Than Politics

Of course, a hospital is not a utopia. Discussions, tensions, and emotions arise there too. No one lives in a vacuum. But within the medical world there exists a common purpose stronger than identity: saving lives.

Perhaps that is why so many doctors experience international boycotts as

painful. Not only because scientific collaboration becomes more difficult, but because these institutions demonstrate that cooperation between people is possible. A hospital is not a political slogan. It is a daily reality in which coexistence is made tangible and visible.

My friend’s doctor put it simply:

“When a patient comes in with a heart attack, nobody first asks who he is. You simply try to save his life. And that means it could even be a terrorist.”

It is a complicated reality.

The world increasingly seems to favour black-and-white thinking. The image of Israel that dominates internationally is usually one of conflict and confrontation. Rarely is it that of a Jewish and an Arab doctor performing surgery together. Rarely is it that of a Jewish and Arab nurse sharing coffee during a night shift while sirens sound outside.

Perhaps that is why it is so important to keep telling this story. Not to deny the problems or gloss over political pain points, but because humanity is also part of this region. Because cooperation, however fragile it may sometimes be, is visible every day in hospitals throughout Israel.

Hope in the Waiting Room

When my friend’s appointment is over, the waiting room is still full. I take one last look around. And for a moment, I feel something that has become rare in these difficult times of war: hope.

Hope that people can continue to see one another as human beings. That behind every identity, every language, and every religion lies the same vulnerability.

Peace does not necessarily begin with grand political agreements or international conferences. Perhaps peace looks more like an Israeli waiting room.

Short News

Brain Drain



An increasing number of high-income Israelis, working in the technology or healthcare sector, emigrate from Israel. Their number almost doubled within five years. This is according to a new study by the Israel Tax Authority, that has examined this phenomenon during the past ten years. The Tax Authority warns that the sharp increase in the brain drain could result in a loss of billions of dollars in tax revenue. The desire to find better economic opportunities abroad was always seen as the major reason for emigration. But in recent years the long-running conflict and the political tensions in the Land are the main drivers of rising emigration. | Photo: Flash90

Return

More than twenty years after Israel evacuated four communities in the north of Samaria, dozens of Israeli families recently resettled in one of the four settlements. Dozens of caravans were placed on the site as part of an initiative supported by the government to rebuild these communities. This means that three of the four communities are inhabited again. Israel evacuated these villages in 2005 as part of the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and Northern Samaria.

New Safety Triangle



Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan concluded a defence agreement in Mecca, in which an attack on one country is considered an attack on all. The pact does not yet provide for a joint command or automatic military response. The three partners also have different priorities. Saudi Arabia remains strongly dependent on America. Turkey contributes NATO-experience. The nuclear-armed Pakistan aims its strategic planning mainly at India. Furthermore Iran might see this agreement as an “encirclement”. | Photo: Saudi Press Agency/Wikimedia Commons

Growing Recognition of Jewish Indigeneity

■ Dr Sheree Trotter

Director Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem

Over the past decade there has been a growing recognition of Jewish Indigeneity. Some of the biggest advocates have been Indigenous Individuals. In 2017 Ryan Bellerose, a Métis from the Paddle Prairie Metis settlement in Alberta, Canada wrote, “It is my belief that strengthening Jewish identity is the optimum way to fight against the perpetuation of false narratives and lies. This can be achieved only through an indigenous decolonisation of Jewish identity, which would urge Jews to see themselves through a Jewish lens and manifest the indigenous aspects of Jewish identity in a meaningful way.”

Using the criteria set forth by José Martínez Cobo for the UN, Bellerose, like many others, recognised that the Jewish people fulfilled most of these requirements.

He stated, “At its simplest, indigenous status stems from the genesis of a culture, language, and traditions in conjunction with its connections to an ancestral land, most commonly derived from ties to pre-colonial peoples. Once a people have such a cultural, linguistic, and spiritual genesis as well as a coalescence as a people, they are generally acknowledged as an indigenous people”².

Indigenous people have had a role to play in helping Jewish people to understand their own Indigeneity. Jewish anthropologist Adam Louis-Klein lived for a few months among the Desana tribe in the Amazon. He has said that studying another Indigenous people’s understanding of themselves made him reconsider Jewish civilisation from within rather than through external political categories.³

Jewish author Ben Freeman wrote the first monograph on this topic in 2025: “*Jews: An Indigenous People*”.⁴

Indigeneity speaks of emergence of a distinct people in a particular land from which a unique language and culture develops. For the Jewish people, that land is historically known as Israel and Judea. Jerusalem became the political and spiritual centre of Jewish life. It is the land where their ancestors lie buried. The connection to ancestors is an integral aspect of Indigeneity. The Hebrew Bible, later Jewish literature and an enormous body of religious practice are embedded in the geography, seasons, flora and agricultural cycles of that particular land.

Jewish identity therefore differs in an important respect from membership in a universal religion such as Christianity or Islam. Jews have historically understood themselves not simply as adherents of a faith but as *Am Yisrael*—the people or nation of Israel.



Former Grandchief Harvey Yesno at the Western Wall. | Photos: Perry Trotter

That identity survived the loss of sovereignty and the dispersal of much of the Jewish population. After the destruction of the Second Temple by Rome in 70 CE, and especially following subsequent Roman suppression of Jewish revolts, Jewish communities became increasingly dispersed across the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Yet Jewish presence in the land itself never entirely disappeared. Communities survived at different times in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, Tiberias and elsewhere. More importantly, dispersion did not sever the cultural relationship between Jews and their ancestral homeland.

For nearly two millennia, Jewish communities thousands of kilometres apart continued to orient their religious and communal lives towards the same territory. Jews traditionally pray facing Jerusalem. Jerusalem is invoked at weddings. The destruction of the Temple is commemorated annually on *Tisha B'Av*. *Passover* and *Yom Kippur* conclude with the hope: “Next year in Jerusalem.”

This is an extraordinary example of cultural memory surviving displacement. The connection is also embedded in the Jewish calendar. Festivals developed around the agricultural seasons of the Land of Israel. *Sukkot* is associated with the harvest; *Pesach* with the beginning of the grain harvest; *Shavuot* with its culmination. The traditional prayers for rain correspond to the climatic cycle of Israel rather than the countries in which diaspora Jews might actually be living.

Even the symbolic vocabulary of Jewish culture is filled with the ecology of the ancestral land: olives, figs, dates, grapes and pomegranates; palms, myrtle and willow.

A Jewish family living for centuries in Poland, Morocco or Yemen could therefore inhabit one physical landscape while practising a culture whose sacred geography remained somewhere else.

Language provides another striking example. Hebrew ceased to be the everyday language of most Jews during antiquity, but it never disappeared. It remained the language of commerce, prayer, scripture, scholarship, law and communication between Jewish communities. Jews developed diaspora languages such as Yiddish, Ladino and Judeo-Arabic, but Hebrew remained a common cultural inheritance.

Its revival as a modern spoken language during the Zionist period is therefore better understood not as the invention of a new language but as the vernacular revival

of an ancient Indigenous one. Few displaced peoples have recovered an ancestral language so successfully.

None of this means that Jewish identity can be reduced to genetics. Indigenous identities are not simply biological categories, and neither is Jewish identity. Jewish communities incorporated converts and developed distinctive cultures wherever they lived.

Nevertheless, historical, archaeological and genetic evidence broadly supports what Jewish collective memory has maintained for centuries: the major Jewish diaspora populations share substantial ancestry originating in the Levant. Diaspora changed Jewish culture, but it did not erase its geographical origins.

This matters because Jews are sometimes described simply as Europeans who arrived in Palestine during the modern Zionist movement. That description captures part of the history of some Jewish migrants, but it obscures the longer history of the Jewish people.

Ashkenazi Jews lived for centuries in Europe, just as *Sephardi* Jews lived across the Mediterranean and *Mizrahi* Jews lived throughout the Middle East. But diaspora location is not necessarily the same thing as Indigenous origin. A people does not automatically cease to be Indigenous because it has been displaced from its ancestral territory.

Zionism consequently can be understood, from a Jewish-indigeneity perspective, as a movement of national return: a dispersed people seeking to restore collective life, political agency and cultural flourishing in its ancestral homeland.

The revival of Hebrew, the rebuilding of Jewish communities, the return to Jerusalem and the re-establishment of Jewish sovereignty can all be situated within that story.

The remarkable feature of Jewish history is that, after centuries of dispersion, the Jewish people never stopped remembering their ancestral home.

¹ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/israel-middle-east/articles/bellerose-aboriginal-people>

² *Ibid.*

³ <https://www.indigenousembassy.org/articles/turning-point-in-history?rq=Adam Louis Klein>

⁴ <https://benmfreeman.com/>

<https://www.indigenousembassy.org/articles/jews-and-cherokees-indigenous-case-studies?rq=Cherokee>



Dr Sheree Trotter with Ryan Bellerose

Indigenous Supporters of Israel Speak

■ Dr Sheree Trotter

Director Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem

From Sweden to the Pacific, North America to Australia, India to Aotearoa New Zealand, a growing body of Indigenous peoples support Israel and understand her position as the Indigenous people of the land of Israel.

Indigenous peoples have supported the Jewish people from a variety of perspectives: symbolic, spiritual or biblical resonance; genealogical connection; Indigenous recognition; Jewish allyship in Indigenous causes and historical analogies.

When missionaries first arrived in New Zealand in the early nineteenth century, they noted certain similarities between Jewish and Māori cultural practices and some even surmised that Māori might be one of the “lost tribes of Israel”. While this theory was later debunked by historians, some contemporary Māori groups still hold to that view, and it is not uncommon in the thinking of Indigenous groups from other nations.



Brad Haami

Some Māori embraced Christianity, which resulted in a warm attitude towards the Jewish people, in recognition of their role as the prophets and apostles of the holy book. Māori lecturer, Brad Haami has pointed to the way in which Māori in the nineteenth century identified with the Jewish biblical stories and how Hebrew names were inscribed in the naming of persons and *whenua* (land).

As colonisation increased and Christianity fell out of favour, prophetic Indigenous movements arose, whose leaders identified with the Israelites of the Hebrew scriptures. Some of those movements still exist today.

Intermarriage occurred between Jewish settlers and Indigenous tribes in New Zealand, across the Pacific and in North America adding another element of



Hon Alfred Ngaro

Indigenous-Jewish connection. One example is Hon Alfred Ngaro, a New Zealand politician of Cook Island descent and a proud Zionist who speaks of his Jewish grandmother Rita Goldstein.



Nova Peris OAM

Indigenous Australian Nova Peris, Australia's first Aboriginal Olympic gold medallist and first Indigenous woman elected to federal parliament, points to Jewish lawyers and activists who supported Aboriginal rights, including involvement in native title and the 1965 Freedom Ride.

From the Pacific to North America, Australia, India and Aotearoa New Zealand, Indigenous voices are standing in solidarity with the Jewish people and affirming their connection to their ancestral homeland.

Former Judge, Harry LaForme, *Anishinaabe*, Canada has spoken of his experience in the 1970s, as one of only a handful of Indigenous students nationwide in higher education. LaForme felt like an outsider, but it was among Jewish peers, who knew what it felt like to be “othered,” that he found a sense of belonging.

“I had an audience with Jewish colleagues,” he said. “They identified with my otherness. Social justice was a real concern for these judges, as it was for me. Our thinking tended to be aligned. They became my haven—my go-to people.”

Many Canadian First Nations and Native Americans speak of having endured similar experiences. David Sickey, a leader with the Sovereign Nation of the *Coushatta* Tribe of Louisiana, has noted that his Native American tribe has experienced many of the same tribulations—“Banishment from our homelands, adversity and persecution”—that Jews underwent after Roman forces destroyed the kingdom of Judea.

Since 7 October, Indigenous voices have been amongst the most powerful in challenging the false narrative that Jews are foreign colonisers in their land.

Harry LaForme challenged the “antizionist libel-driven hate movement that incites violence and the targeting, exclusion, and marginalisation of Jews in the diaspora”.

First Nations lawyer Karen Restoule and Harry LaForme wrote a powerful submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights’ Study of Antisemitism objecting to the university encampments on Treaty lands. They stated, “As *Anishinaabe*, we are troubled by the expressions of hatred against Jews and Zionists, and the disappointing ignorance, fuelled by misinformation coming from

universities. Ignorance about the indigeneity of the Jewish people in the region that is Israel. Ignorance about the values that Israel, as a democracy, stands for—as imperfect as it is.”²

Nova Peris wrote a powerful submission to the Bondi Commission, as did Indigenous Australian academic Marcia Langton.

Contemporary Indigenous Evangelical Christians have a strong contingent of Israel supporters in Canada, the US and also across the Pacific. In September 2025, a wide coalition of *Indigenous Peoples from Across the Pacific Rim* issued a statement expressing solidarity with the Indigenous Jews who live in the Land of Israel.

Groups including the Ainu of Japan, Indigenous groups in Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, Latin America, Australia, United States, Canada, the *Māori*, Native Hawaiian *Knaka* peoples and others “represent a chorus of voices from every corner of the Pacific, declaring (their) unwavering love, admiration, and commitment to the Jewish state. Their declaration sums up the feeling of many Indigenous supporters of Israel.

“We recognise the Jewish people as the Indigenous stewards of the land of Israel, their ancestral

homeland, where their history, culture, and spiritual legacy have been rooted for millennia. This indigeneity resonates deeply with our own connections to land, tradition, and resilience, forging a sacred bond between our communities and the Jewish people.”³



Dr Sheree Trotter and Harry LaForme OC

Dr Sheree Trotter is the director of the Indigenous Embassy Jerusalem, a platform for the indigenous of the nations to express their solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people. IEJ exists to oppose antisemitism, affirm Jewish indigeneity and to advance scholarship countering false narratives.

¹ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/an-anishinaabe-zionist-on-how-indigenous-history-is-weaponized-to-promote-antisemitism/>

² [https://www.indigenousembassy.org/articles/opinion-we-are-anishinaabe-zionists-hateful-anti-israel-camps-disrespect-our-lands?rq=Karen Restoule](https://www.indigenousembassy.org/articles/opinion-we-are-anishinaabe-zionists-hateful-anti-israel-camps-disrespect-our-lands?rq=Karen+Restoule)

³ <https://indigenousfriendsofisrael.org/press-release-declaration-by-pacific-rim-indigenous-people-in-support-of-israel/>

The Director's Log

By Leon Meijer

The World Through Qatari Eyes

Just imagine two small island nations of a few hundred thousand people each: Iceland in the North Atlantic, Vanuatu in the South Pacific. Both fear climate change will make them uninhabitable, through shifting ocean currents or the rising sea. Each launches an international news channel, *Icy News* and *Pacific Storm*, to help the world see reality through its eyes. Every tree felled, every coal-fired power station still running, every barrel of oil pumped becomes an attack on their existence.

Far-fetched? Yet that is precisely what is happening.

Only the country is not Iceland or Vanuatu. It is Qatar: some 350,000 citizens, almost three million migrant workers and, thanks to gas, extraordinary wealth. Its leadership has decided the world should see the news through Qatari eyes.

Here my comparison breaks down. Iceland and Vanuatu have reasonable fears and legitimate interests; their slant would be self-preservation. Qatar exports an ideological project: that of the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement antisemitic to its core. Its ideologues described the Jewish people as an enemy to be fought, and Hamas, part of the Muslim Brotherhood, wrote that enmity into its charter. When such a worldview frames how hundreds of millions watch the Middle East, the result is not slanted emphasis but a poisoned well.

Al Jazeera is Qatar's channel, funded with millions. Billions swallow its pre-cooked information whole, though its colouring is clear: in 2017 neighbouring Arab states demanded its closure. So the world sees Israel through Qatari eyes, paid for largely with Western gas revenues.

When I told officials at Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs they are losing the battle on social media, they agreed: against Qatar's billions they are outmatched. Our conclusion was simple: come and see Israel with your own eyes. That is how our partnership began. This year and next, Christians for Israel International hopes to bring over a hundred young people to Israel for ten days to see its security challenges, how the Jewish people are rooted in the land God promised them, and how they hold on to hope.

The antidote to disinformation is winning people over, one by one. Anyone who has walked the land as an eyewitness will stand firm, online and offline, because they can say: I saw it myself. I heard it, I felt it. No one can take that away.

Do you know a young person who should make this journey? Get in touch with us.

An Evening for Israel in Vienna

■ Marie-Louise Weissenböck

Chair | Christians for Israel Austria

At the invitation of Christians for Israel Austria, approximately 400 Jews and Christians who stand in solidarity with Israel, gathered on 7 September, 2026, at the MuTh, the Music Theater in Vienna, to enjoy an evening of music featuring Israeli songs and "golden oldies" performed by the Shalva Band, who had been flown in from Israel for the occasion.

The particularly moving solidarity event took place just days before *Rosh Hashanah* in support of the Shalva Sharabi Family Center, a rehabilitation and therapy center being built in southern Israel for families who survived the terror-attack of 7 October 2023. A substantial amount was raised for the project that evening.

The *Evening for Israel* was hosted by the chairwoman of Christians for Israel in Austria, Marie-Louise Weissenböck. Among the prominent guests in the hall were the Deputy Ambassador of Israel to Austria Ilay Levi Judkovsky, the Chief Rabbi of Vienna Rabbi Jaron Engelmayer, the President of the Jewish Community in Linz Dr Charlotte Herman, as well as the founder of the Shalva organisation, Kalman Samuels, who celebrated his birthday that same evening.

Kalman Samuels gave a short insight in how the institution Shalva had come into being.

Believing that the care of children with disabilities should not be left to the family alone, Kalman Samuels and his wife Malki created a therapeutic environment in which children with disabilities could grow and thrive. This approach was based on the Samuels' own experience with raising their son Yossi who was left blind, deaf and acutely hyperactive as the result of a faulty vaccination.

Yossi's disabilities took their toll on his family. Providing him with constant loving care, they became exhausted and isolated. Many professionals and well-intentioned friends suggested placing Yossi in an institution. But his mother Malki refused and vowed to God that if He helped Yossi, she would dedicate herself to helping other children with disabilities and their families.

When Yossi was eight, Shoshana Weinstock, a deaf special education teacher penetrated Yossi's wall of silence via Hebrew fingerspelling. She taught Yossi his first word, thus creating a relationship analogous to that of Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller. Malki recalled her promise and with Kalman's help, Shalva was founded in 1990.

What began as an afternoon programme for eight children in a local apartment



| Photo: Shalva

has grown into a national centre serving thousands of people with disabilities from infancy to adulthood from the entire spectrum of Israeli society.

Over the course of over thirty years, Shalva has developed transformative programmes to fill needs that were previously neglected. The success of these programmes has received government and cultural recognition, inspiring grassroots changes in public policy and social inclusion.

In his address to the audience Deputy Ambassador of Israel to Austria, Ilay Levi Judkovsky thanked the organisation, Christians for Israel in Austria, for their steadfast stand by the country: "In these days, when we are facing enormous challenges from our enemies alongside rising waves of antisemitism in Europe and the world, your support and courage are more important than ever. The members of the Shalva band are our true ambassadors—representing a caring, inclusive Israel that believes that every person deserves respect, community and equality."

The Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Rabbi Jaron Engelmayer, addressed the upcoming *Rosh Hashanah* prayers: "On *Rosh Hashanah* we pray not only for ourselves, but for the entire world to be blessed with peace and blessings. This partnership, and the spirit of peace that places the weak and the disabled at the center of society, is the embodiment of the mutual guarantee and social responsibility that we hope for."

The Shalva Band

The Shalva Band is comprised of eight talented musicians, of which four are disabled. It performs to the highest musical standards. Inspiring crowds with its musical repertoire and charm, the band is one of Shalva's most celebrated inclusion programmes. It

formed in 2005 as part of Shalva's music therapy programme. Many members are graduates of Shalva's rehabilitation programmes, where their musical talents were nurtured. Beyond their musical careers, band members engage in studies, work, and volunteering within the wider community. Today, the Shalva Band enjoys growing popularity in Israel, performing regularly with well-known artists and leading cultural integration efforts. Their performances shatter stereotypes, captivate audiences, and inspire belief in the potential inherent in every individual.

The artistic part of the evening in Vienna swept the entire audience to tears as well as dancing. The members of the Shalva band, including the two blind vocalists Dina Samta and Eden Tehrani, performed their greatest hits—from *A Million Dreams* to *Stand by Me* and *Hallelujah*.

The band's director, Shai Ben-Shushan, shared how the band members accompanied his rehabilitation process, after he was seriously injured in battles in Gaza and Lebanon and returned to fight time and time again.

Another highlight occurred when Vienna's chief cantor, Shmuel Barzilai, took the stage, and performed *Al Kol Ele* and *Adon Olam* with the band in a moving arrangement. After standing ovations the beautiful Jewish prayer *Avinu Malkeinu* (*Our Father our King*) was sung as an encore.

Later the song *Jerusalem of Gold* was dedicated by the Shalva Band to a group of Holocaust survivors who were also present in the hall. They were overjoyed when receiving roses from the band members.

The moving evening concluded with a joint singing of *Hatikva* (Hope) by all those present in the hall.



Hope in the North: Cello in Metulla

■ Anemone Rüger

Project Coordinator | Holocaust Survivors Ukraine

In more than two years of war in Israel, two regions have suffered the most—the *kibbutzim* along the Gaza Strip and the towns along the Lebanese border in the north of the country. It is precisely here that Christians for Israel (C4I) ambassadors are traveling to bring hope—especially to the survivors of the *Shoah* who have since returned.

“For our working trip last summer, I had the north on my heart,” says Claudia Schall, who has been working part-time at C4I-Germany since the beginning of the year. “The border region had been severely affected by the war. That’s how we met Irit, who runs a hotel in Metulla with her mother, Miriam.”

“We left right away on 8 October; we didn’t even wait for the official evacuation,” Irit recalls of the day after the Hamas massacre in the south, when Hezbollah began launching rockets at northern Israel. “I just had a feeling that this was going to last a while.”

Within a five-kilometre radius, more than 60,000 residents were forced from their homes. Two years later, every other house had suffered severe damage. Many families have yet to return, but things are looking up again—including for the Beit Shalom Hotel.

A Fresh Start & a Special Idea

“All the windowpanes were shattered by the rocket strikes,” says Irit. “Animals had taken up residence, and the grounds had become overgrown. When Claudia arrived with her team in August, we felt as though we were in *Snow White*. These Christians from Germany worked so hard! They started at 7am, and by the afternoon everything looked beautiful! They helped us get back on our feet. A few weeks later, we were able to welcome our first guests.”

Now the story has taken a moving turn. The family-run hotel has not only weathered dramatic years of war, but also brings to light the story of Irit’s grandparents—both Holocaust survivors from Krakow.

“When I saw the room with the exhibition, it occurred to me what it



A small group of Holocaust survivors in Metulla received visitors from Germany. | Photos: C4I

They helped us get back on our feet. Hearing the songs and sharing this special gathering with Holocaust survivors was a wonderful reminder that they are not alone on Israel’s northern border.

would be like to invite a group of Holocaust survivors here,” says Claudia.

Plans were made, flowers were ordered, and Claudia even managed to find a cello. Eti, an employee of the Israeli Holocaust Survivors Authority, brought the elderly guests. Two Russian-speaking survivors from Gita Koifman’s network also made the trip.

Klavdia—Deported

“I was ten when the Germans invaded our home in Ukraine back then,” Klavdia recalls. “Grandpa took us to his farm in a horse-drawn cart. ‘The Germans are good people,’ he said. That’s why we didn’t leave. After the harvest was brought in, we were deported toward Odessa, 200 kilometres on foot. A quarter of the people never made it and died along the way.”

Klavdia’s mother heard some prisoners making escape plans along the way and joined them.

“After dark, we escaped into the forest. Suddenly, my little brother started crying. He was hungry, and Mom didn’t have any milk left. That’s when the

again. Grandma died on the way. Grandpa walked the entire way to Bogdanovka. When they arrived, the men were lined up at a dug-out trench and shot.”

Klavdia and her family found refuge in the Romanian-occupied Shabokrych ghetto, but that, too, became a death trap for many. Klavdia survived the war with her family, the years of famine that followed, and Soviet antisemitism. In 1990, she and her family were aboard one of the first flights to Israel.

Reunion in Northern Israel

In Kiryat Shmona, she met Roman, who had grown up in Shabokrych when it was still a Jewish *shtetl*, and who lost almost his entire family in a mass shooting in a single day. These are just two of the survival stories shared at the gathering.

Claudia and Livia Tiersch, also new to C4I-Germany, perform music for the survivors with a small, talented team, conveying the message that they are not alone even on Israel’s northern border. They share hugs and flowers.

“It did the survivors so much good to get out for a change,” says Irit. “To experience this appreciation, to hear the songs. It was a wonderful gathering.”

The music also drew onlookers. “Afterward, a man came up to me,” Livia recounts. “He was so moved by our event. His parents survived the Holocaust in Hungary. It touched him so deeply to see us perform.”



Claudia, C4I-Germany, with Leon, a Holocaust survivor from Poland.

Europe Targets Jewish Presence

■ Robbert van de Bovenkamp

Researcher | The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.)

In the world today the word “settler” evokes the image of foreign colonisers, but in reality, Jews living in Judea and Samaria are returning to the cradle of their civilisation: Hebron, Shiloh, Beit El, and Shechem are biblical towns where Jewish life thrived for millennia. In the words of legal scholar Eugene Kontorovich: “Israel’s presence in the West Bank is not an occupation under international law, because there was no prior lawful sovereign, and the land was allocated to the Jewish people under binding international law”.

Background

Unfortunately, the European Union (and its predecessor the EEC) has chosen to ignore the history of the land prior to the June 1967 war. The EU has since 1970’s demanded that Israel end its occupation of what it regards as Palestinian territory. In 1980, the EEC issued the Venice Declaration, which essentially committed the Europeans to support the PLO in its efforts to enable the Palestinian people “to fully exercise their right to self-determination”. In article 7 the Europeans demanded that the PLO be associated with negotiations.

Since 1980, the European position has hardened into a demand that a Palestinian state be established in the entirety of the “occupied” territories. The EU’s most recent actions targeting Israeli “settlers” has been stimulated by the 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, in which a majority of the Court’s members opined that Israel’s occupation of the territories captured by Israel in June 1967 has become illegal, and that Israel must remove Israelis from these territories. Several of the Court’s own judges were highly critical of this conclusion.

This majority Opinion is often regarded as justifying the view that somehow all Israelis in these territories are illegal. However, such an approach is highly problematic from a historical perspective, as it completely disregards the facts (as inferred in the introduction to the article above) that Jews have been living in what is now known as the “West Bank” for millennia, that Jordan ethnically cleansed Jerusalem and the West Bank of Jews between 1948 and 1967, and that many Jews who now live there are neither responsible for the Israeli military administration nor have they ever been “deported” or “transferred” by the State of Israel within the meaning of article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention (this provision being the sole ground for the claim that settlements are illegal), nor



Israelis pray at Sa-Nur, northern Samaria, July 2015. | Photo: Flash90

does their presence as such prevent Palestinians from fulfilling their self-determination rights.

As for the presence of Jewish people in the West Bank, it’s noteworthy here to refer to the dissenting opinion by Judge Sebutinde in the ICJ case “Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.” She writes that, “whilst the exact nature of the rights conferred under the Mandate has been the subject of much discussion, the language of the Mandate shows that with respect to the territory then known as “Palestine”, the Jewish people were the main beneficiaries of those rights.” According to Sebutinde, the Mandate clearly confirmed the right of the Jewish people to settle, self-determine and live peacefully in the Mandate territory.

It is against the background of the European bias towards the Palestinians that we must view the most recent efforts of the European Union to make the presence of Jewish life in the West Bank a sanctionable offense.

On May 28th the European Council adopted additional restrictive measures against four entities and three individuals under the European Union’s Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. Those targeted by the measures are labelled by the Council as “extremist Israeli settlers and organisations”, which are “responsible for serious and systematic human rights abuses against Palestinians in the West Bank, including abuse of the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental integrity, the right to property, the right to private and family life, to freedom of religion or belief and the right to education.”

The designations include the Nachala Settlement Movement and its Director

Daniella Weiss. According to the European Council, the movement encourages and facilitates coercive acts that lead to the forced displacement of Palestinians. The Council also lists the Israeli NGO Regavim and its director Meir Deutsch. The council remarks that Regavim and its leadership lobby for the demolition of Palestinian property “with the aim to expand the control of Israel to the whole West Bank and institute legal proceedings to that end.”

Restrictive measures are also imposed against the Hashomer Yesh NGO—an organisation that offers material support and coordinates volunteers on the herding farms, supporting outposts and settlements in the West Bank—and its president Avichai Suissa. Additionally, the Council lists the Amana cooperative association of the settler movement Gush Emunim. Since its creation, Amana has played a key role in initiating, financing, and facilitating at least 30—in view of the Council: “violent”—outposts and settlements.

The European Union’s policy deliberately mixes together criminal acts (real or manufactured) by a small number of Israelis against Palestinians—acts that are both inseparable from and greatly outnumbered by acts of terrorism by Palestinians. Israel’s leaders and rabbis condemn criminal acts by settlers categorically, in contrast with the Palestinian Authority, which pays pensions to its terrorists. The clearance rate on such incidents is low, but that is also true of property crime in US and European cities.

It should be noted how the “settler violence” story is made up. The production cycle goes like this: A deceptive NGO report becomes a settled account, trumpeted by human-rights organisations that are themselves funded

by the European Union. Reporters and international bodies cite the NGOs without independent verification. Policymakers cite the resulting consensus. The European states that funded the NGOs making the claims then impose sanctions accordingly. What passes for evidence is often nothing more than a chain of ideological citations. And when a handful of these stories were finally forced to address facts, the narrative fell apart.

A good example is the case of Amana. Following the Biden administration’s lead, the European Union sanctioned Amana for “initiating, financing, and facilitating at least 30 violent outposts and settlements.” The word violent in that sentence is doing the work here. What makes an outpost “violent”? Amana pours concrete and lays roads. But under the definitions used by the United Nations, anything from exercising self-defense to an individual committing petty theft is classified as violence. This then allows the European Union to state with a straight face that Amana “facilitated violent outposts” without identifying a single act of violence that Amana directed, funded, or encouraged. Nowhere in its report does the Council identify one single violent incident committed by Amana. As one can see: this is not a legal standard but a word game.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that there have been isolated acts of violence by Israelis against Palestinians in the West Bank. These are illegal under Israeli law, and Israel should ensure they are prevented and punished.

However, framing settler violence as a crisis threatening global security reinforces a narrative of predatory fundamentalist Jews dispossessing Palestinians.

Criminal activity level of by Jews in Judea and Samaria is a domestic Israeli law enforcement matter and should be treated as such. As this article has shown, the ‘settler violence’ story is fabricated and often thrown into the world without any supporting evidence. The European Union should stop its policy that undermines Israel’s legitimate sovereign rights to security and territorial integrity, and even more keep itself from turning Jewish presence in the West Bank into a sanctionable offense.

The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) is a global network of international law academics, practitioners and experts in related disciplines. Founded in 2017 in The Hague—the global capital of international law—our mission is to promote peace and security in the Middle East and beyond through the fair and consistent application of international law. We challenge the political instrumentalisation of international law and legal frameworks, advocating for principled legal standards that respect the sovereign equality of states and foster regional stability and cooperation.

A Holy and Joyous Time of Year

■ Sondra Oster Baras

International President | CFOIC
Heartland

As you read this article, we will have just completed our month-long autumn holiday season. The season begins with *Rosh Hashana*, the Jewish New Year, which is first mandated in the Bible, referred to there as a Day of Horn-Blowing (*Numbers 29:1*) with a specific date—the first day of the seventh month. To this day, we follow the Biblical calendar alongside the regular calendar, and the first day of the seventh month fell this year on 12 September.

[The Biblical Calendar is a lunar calendar while our regular calendar is a solar one, which means that each year, the Biblical holidays fall on different dates on the regular calendar.]

On the tenth day of the seventh month, we mark the Day of Atonement, a day of fasting and soul-searching. (*Numbers 29:7*). And, finally on the 15th day of the month we celebrate the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles followed by the eighth and final day of celebration, known today as *Simchat Torah*—Rejoicing in the Torah. (*Numbers 29:12-39*)

But what do these holidays mean to us today, as Jews in the 21st century, and especially as Jews living in our beloved homeland Israel?

Biblical holidays are mostly marked by agricultural events and specific sacrifices. The first two holidays however, have no agricultural significance. *Rosh Hashana* is associated with horn-blowing and *Yom Kippur* with fasting. Just these two details however, make it clear that the significance of these holidays is spiritual. We do not celebrate the ingathering of the harvest in any way. We blow horns and we fast. Jewish tradition going back thousands of years, brought meaning and content to these days. We blow a ram's horn on *Rosh Hashana*, the very same animal that miraculously appeared to Abraham as a substitute for the sacrifice of Isaac, his horns caught in the bushes.

The sounding of the *shofar* is both a wake-up call to us as a people and a wordless way of communicating with God. The *shofar* reminds us to return to God, to obey His commandments and repent of our sins. But it is also our call to God to hear us, our beckoning to God to forgive our sins and take mercy upon us.

As we remember the binding of Isaac, we ask God to remember the incredible faith and obedience of our first forefather Abraham, as he prepared to sacrifice his only son, the son that God assured him would be the heir to God's promises for Abraham's descendants to



Christians from around the world visit with Sondra in her Succah. | Photo: Sondra Oster Baras

The combination of introspection and repentance, with rejoicing in God's goodness, reflects who we are as a people. We strive to be close to God while recognising our weaknesses and failings.

become a nation and inherit a land. Abraham couldn't help but wonder what God expected of him. How could He command him to kill his son, running counter to every ethical principle that God stands for? How could He command him to destroy the only possibility for God's promises to be fulfilled? And yet, despite the questions, and despite the horrific pain and tragedy of killing his only son, Abraham was willing to go forward. And the ram represents God's acceptance of Abraham's supreme faith even as it speaks volumes against the very concept of human sacrifice so common in the ancient pagan world.

As we blow the *shofar*, we ask God to remember Abraham and forgive us our sins and enable that same original promise to go forward. The promise is an eternal one and we, Abraham's children, are taking part in the fulfillment of that promise. As we continue to bear children and raise them in faith, as we teach our children the Bible and urge them to follow God's commandments, as we settle and develop the land that God first promised to Abraham, and as we strive to create a kind society in Israel dedicated to God's word, we are intimately connected to that original ram's horn and to the *shofar*.

Rosh Hashana is the Day of Judgement. It is a day when we return to God and repent of our sins. It is a day when we stand in judgement before the Almighty and hope that He will forgive us and

grant us a blessed New Year. But it is not a somber day. We spend many hours in the synagogue praying, but our prayers rejoice in God our King. We sing together as a congregation and after the services, we enjoy large family meals where we celebrate God's blessings—our children, our homes, our health and our sustenance. We dip apple slices in honey to symbolise our hope for a sweet year. And we sing songs of praise together as a family.

Between *Rosh Hashana* and the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, we continue the process of repentance, with special emphasis on introspection, prayer and charity. On *Yom Kippur* we dress in white and fast for 25 hours, no food or drink entering our mouths. We spend many hours in the synagogue where we seek forgiveness, not only as individuals but as a nation. We read an ancient poem that describes *Yom Kippur* in the Temple, when the entire nation waited with bated breath for a sign that all was forgiven. Today, when we approach the end of the day, we pray together just as the gates of heaven are closing and our fate for the coming year is sealed. But at the close of the day, we know we are forgiven and we sing and rejoice in God's goodness.

A quick meal to break the fast at home and then we are all outside our homes constructing the *Succot*, or the booths, that will become our temporary dwellings for the Feast of Tabernacles. And this is a joyous holiday indeed.

Coming just four days after our forgiveness, we enjoy festive meals, hiking all over the country and a celebration of God's bounty. In ancient times this was truly an agricultural festival. Even today, we mark the conclusion of the grape harvest at this time. But even in our modern-day world where we get our produce from a local supermarket wrapped in cellophane, we appreciate this time of year. The harvest is complete and the time for a new season is upon us. We pray for rain so that the new year's crops will be plentiful.

Words cannot do justice to the incredible emotional and spiritual high that this season brings to us. The unique combination of serious introspection and repentance, with rejoicing in God's goodness, would seem to be a recipe for an emotional roller-coaster. And yet, it fits in perfect harmony with who we are as a people, and to some extent, with who we are as human beings. Life is complicated and our spiritual centre is complex. We strive to be close to God even as we recognise our weaknesses and failings as human beings. And perhaps that is the greatest gift that God has given us—the ability to come close to Him and at the same time to understand our finiteness, to appreciate His all-present infinity while accepting our physical existence.

I have written often during these past three years of the odd combination in our daily lives of the stress of war and the constancy of ordinary life. And perhaps it is this combination of closeness to God and the physical reality of humanity that enables us to get through it all, perhaps even to thrive. Even as we fear for our physical safety, even as we cope with the consequences of prolonged war and our young men's frequent forays to the battlefield, we know that God is with us, that He will continue to keep His promises to us. "The Eternal One of Israel will neither lie nor relent: for He is not a man that He should change His mind." (1 Samuel 15:29) He is eternal and He will not rescind His promises to the Nation of Israel. There is a parallel modern phrase that is often sung as a statement of faith in Israel: "The Eternal Nation does not fear a long road." It may take a long time, we may suffer along the way, but we know that God will keep His promises to us and that we will prevail. *Am Yisrael Chai!* The Nation of Israel Lives!

Sondra Oster Baras is the Founder and International President of CFOIC Heartland, representing the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria to Christians all over the world. To support the urgent needs of the people of Judea and Samaria, during this terrible war, please use the form on the back page and select CFOIC Heartland.

Oslo Accords: Why Areas A, B and C Matter

■ Greg Bouwer

Israel Institute of New Zealand

Nearly every week, international news reports mention “Area C”, Israeli demolitions or settlement construction, or Palestinian structures built without permits. Yet the background is often missing: what Area C is, why Israel administers it, and why different rules apply just kilometres away.

These events cannot be fully understood without the framework that produced them—the Oslo Accords. More than three decades later, arrangements intended to be temporary still shape who administers towns, provides security, approves construction and seeks to establish “facts on the ground”.

A Temporary Agreement

The Oslo process began with the Declaration of Principles, signed on 13 September 1993 by Israel and the PLO. The famous handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, witnessed by US President Bill Clinton, symbolised an effort to establish Palestinian self-government while negotiations continued towards a permanent settlement.

The 1995 Interim Agreement, known as Oslo II, divided Judea and Samaria (the “West Bank”) into Areas A, B and C. These were not intended as international borders, but allocated administrative and security responsibilities during an interim period while permanent-status issues—including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, borders and security—were negotiated. The division was never intended to be permanent. Oslo II envisaged further Israeli redeployments and the gradual transfer of additional powers to Palestinian jurisdiction, with Area C itself eventually to be transferred.

That process was never completed, leaving the supposedly temporary map in place.

What Are Areas A, B and C?

Area A, approximately 18% of Judea and Samaria, is under Palestinian civil administration and responsibility for internal security and public order. It includes major cities such as Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem and Jenin. However, Israeli forces have continued to operate there for counter-terrorism purposes.

Area B, approximately 22%, has shared responsibilities. The Palestinian Authority administers civilian affairs and public order, while Israel retains “overriding responsibility for security”.

Area C, approximately 60%, remains under Israeli civil and security control in areas not transferred to the Palestinian Authority. It contains almost all Israeli settlements, much of the undeveloped land, key transport routes and the Jordan Valley.



Prime Minister of Israel Rabin and PLO Head Arafat sign the Oslo II Accords at the White House. | Photo: Sa'ar Ya'acov/GPO Photo Israel

Importantly, Area C was not designated as sovereign Israeli territory or as part of a future Palestinian state. Its final status was left for negotiation.

Living with Oslo

For most Palestinians, everyday civil services are provided by the Palestinian Authority, particularly in Areas A and B, including schools, healthcare and municipal services. Israeli communities are overwhelmingly in Area C, where Israel retains security responsibility.

The three-colour map therefore masks a complex patchwork of jurisdictions. Movement between areas can involve Israeli checkpoints and security controls, while construction rules change at the boundaries. A project permitted in Area B may require approval under the Israeli-controlled planning system just across the border in Area C.

These distinctions have practical consequences every day, yet are largely invisible in international reporting.

Why Does Area C Dominate the News?

Area C is where Israeli authorities oversee planning, construction, demolitions and settlements.

This can create the impression that Israel imposes planning rules across all of Judea and Samaria. In reality, the division originated in an agreement between Israel and the PLO, although its continuation three decades later remains fiercely contested.

There is another consequence. Israeli settlement construction occurs overwhelmingly in Area C and is routinely analysed in terms of its potential effect on a future territorial settlement. Palestinian construction in the same area receives much less attention as a territorial phenomenon, despite potentially affecting the same future map.

The Battle Over Building

Israel retains planning and zoning authority in Area C. Palestinian communities and international organisations argue that permits are difficult to obtain, while Israel says unauthorised construction cannot be ignored and may sometimes establish territorial facts before final-status negotiations.

Israeli settlement construction is often described as creating “facts on the ground”, but Palestinian construction can also affect territorial continuity. While not every unauthorised building is politically motivated, both sides recognise that what is built today may influence tomorrow’s map.

Europe’s Role

European involvement adds another layer, with the EU and individual governments funding infrastructure in Area C, including projects without Israeli approval. Europe argues that Israeli planning restrictions hinder Palestinian development and that humanitarian aid should not depend on permits unlikely to be granted.

Israel questions whether third-party governments should fund construction in territory where Oslo assigned planning authority to Israel. The dispute is particularly acute around settlements and strategic locations, where construction can influence the outcome of future negotiations.

Khan al-Ahmar illustrates the complexity. The Bedouin community east of Jerusalem has faced demolition proceedings for years, involving prolonged litigation, diplomatic pressure and political intervention. Such complexity can be lost when headlines simply report that Israel has “ordered the demolition” of a Palestinian structure.

Oslo does not settle every legal question concerning Judea and Samaria. The international community overwhelmingly considers Israeli settlements contrary to international law, a position Israel disputes. In its July 2024 advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice went further, finding that Israeli policies and practices, particularly in East Jerusalem and Area C, entrenched Israeli control and amounted to annexation of large parts of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Oslo remains important because it explains the administrative arrangements under which Israelis and Palestinians operate. International law, Oslo’s agreements, Israeli military law and Palestinian law overlap, creating a complex legal framework.

Disagreement over the legality of settlements does not erase the administrative distinctions created by Oslo. Sovereignty, international law and administrative jurisdiction are connected, but they are not the same thing.

That complexity rarely fits comfortably into a headline.

An Interim Arrangement Without an End

Oslo’s greatest paradox is that its supposedly temporary arrangements have outlived the peace process that created them.

Rabin’s assassination, terrorist attacks, the failed 2000 Camp David negotiations and the Second Intifada eroded confidence in the process. Settlement construction continued, Palestinian politics fractured between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, and repeated attempts to restart negotiations failed.

Rather than becoming a bridge to a permanent agreement, Oslo became the framework through which the unresolved conflict is managed. The events of 7 October 2023 made the future even more uncertain, strengthening Israeli arguments for retaining security control, while many Palestinians see an interim system entering its fourth decade as evidence of permanent occupation.

The Oslo framework still shapes significant aspects of Israeli-Palestinian life, even though the peace process it was designed to support has effectively disappeared. Almost nobody intended Areas A, B and C to last indefinitely, yet there is no agreement on what should replace them.

Oslo was conceived as a bridge to peace, but its temporary map became one of modern diplomacy’s longest-lived interim arrangements. More than 30 years later, Areas A, B and C still shape who governs, polices and builds—and why today’s headlines look the way they do.

Why Should Christians Support Israel?

■ Interview with Johannes Gerloff

Christians, like all people, are bombarded daily with media framing Israel as a colonising, apartheid genocidal state—unceasing images of Israelis stealing Palestinian land, killing innocent children in Gaza, etc. This can cause us to question our support for the Jewish people. How should we deal with this? We discussed this with Johannes Gerloff, theologian and former journalist who has lived in Israel for over 35 years.

How would you answer the question: “How and why should Christians support Israel?”

In my view the why is far more critical than the how. All too often, the how has suffocated simply because the why was forgotten—or because the question was never asked in the first place. Yet it is the why that determines not only the how, but above all, how sustainably and against what resistance Christians are able to stand with Israel.

Why should Christians support Israel?

Any Christian who examines history with open eyes will quickly realise that no other name has brought as much disaster, suffering, pain, and death upon the Jewish people as the name Jesus of Nazareth.

It should have been different; it was intended to be different. But those who called themselves Christians took ancient pagan hatred of Jews and developed it to perfection—theologically, philosophically, ideologically, and practically. Islam merely adopted what it found in its originally Christian environment and adapted it to a nomadic desert mentality. To this day, the overwhelming majority of Christendom remains the driving force in the campaign against Israel.

Some Christians find this deeply

embarrassing. They want to repent and make amends—for something that actually cannot be made amends for. One does not have to be German to feel the weight of this. In many cases, it is shame, a sense of guilt, and remorse that drive Christians to support Israel.

But our support for the Jewish people should not be based on shame, guilt, and regret. Rather, it should be built on the word of God, and on our acknowledgement that we owe our identity as Christians to the Jewish people. “Because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles” (Romans 11:11). We are wild branches, who have been grafted into the Jews’ olive tree. Our identity, calling and future is inextricably connected with the Jewish people.

How do you explain the hatred of the Jewish people?

We must face the reality of the world around us. There is a virus, which I choose to term Judeophobia. It manifests differently depending on the environment: as Jew-hatred, anti-Judaism, antisemitism, or even anti-Zionism—to name just a few of its symptoms. Throughout history, this virus has inflicted infinite suffering upon the people of Israel.

However, it has never been able to destroy them—no matter how much the genocidal strain of Judeophobia dreams of doing so.

One effect of this virus, however, cannot be denied: it always kills the host harbouring it. One does not need to be a Christian to see this. Today, the devastation in the Gaza Strip and the condition of Shia villages and neighbourhoods in Lebanon cry this reality out to the world.

The living God put it unmistakably into words at the very beginning, when He



Pro-Israel rally in Amsterdam. Photo: Cees van der Wal

laid the foundations for Israel: “Whoever does not grant you the significance that I bestow upon you, I will curse” (Genesis 12:3).

The prophet Isaiah declared: “Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be put to shame and confounded; those who strive against you shall be as nothing and shall perish. You shall seek those who contend with you, but you shall not find them; those who war against you shall be as nothing at all” (Isaiah 41:11-12).

Does supporting Israel mean we ignore reality?

No, absolutely not. It is precisely because they have a realistic view of the world around them that Christians should stand with the Jewish people. Because they do not close their eyes, but rather suffer alongside those they see in the images from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Kurdistan, Iran, Afghanistan, and Yemen—and join in the cry of creation. Out of sheer self-interest, we should join in the groaning of creation, in the universe’s cry for redemption—even if

we as Christians have somehow lost sight of who the sons of the one, true, living God are, for whose revealing the world longs (Romans 8:19).

What about the current allegations that settlers in the West Bank are oppressing and even killing Palestinians?

There are about 1 million Israelis living in what has become known as the West Bank. We mustn’t forget that they are living in the land of their ancestors, where Jews have been living uninterrupted for millennia—except for the 19 years that Jordan ethnically cleansed it of Jews between 1948 and 1967. The Jewish people are indigenous to that land—not illegal colonisers. The real colonisers are the Arabs.

Of these one million, a few hundred are behaving in an aggressive and totally unacceptable way. We shouldn’t condone that. The State of Israel should crack down hard on them. But you can’t attribute their behaviour to all Jews. That is a kind of blood libel.

Earth or Land?

In this series, we examine the Beatitudes and how they guide us in experiencing true happiness in God’s Kingdom.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.”
Matthew 5:5

The third Beatitude actually belongs together with the preceding two. In some ancient Greek manuscripts of Matthew’s Gospel, it appears as the second Beatitude, which makes its close connection with the first (“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”) more apparent. These two Beatitudes also occur as a pair in a Qumran text (one of the so-called Thanksgiving Hymns).

In Hebrew, the word for meek looks almost identical to the word for poor. The difference is

only a single letter. Their meanings likewise overlap, as it were.

This Beatitude is a direct quotation from Psalm 37: “But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace” (v. 11). The context of the psalm makes it clear that we should think here of the land, that is, the land of Israel. For that reason, it is preferable in Matthew as well to translate the word as land rather than earth (the Complete Jewish Bible and the Easy-to-Read Version).

Jesus says that the meek will receive as their inheritance the land that God has promised. It is the land of promise. The Jewish teachers of that time also understood this promise as pointing to God’s future. The same expression, to inherit the land, occurs in Isaiah 60:21. Concerning this

passage, the early rabbis taught:

“All Israel has a share in the world to come, for it is said: ‘Your people, all of them, shall be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are a shoot planted by Me, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.’”

According to this interpretation, the land symbolises the future, the world to come, the kingdom of heaven.

Seen in this light, this Beatitude runs parallel to the first, and the two illuminate one another. The kingdom of heaven is breaking into the world. This is the heart of Jesus’ ministry: “The kingdom of heaven has drawn near” (Matthew 4:17). Jesus’ coming is aimed at enabling Israel to fulfil the purpose God has given it: to be the place where He dwells among His people. Jerusalem is the centre where He makes Himself known and may be encountered.

Recommended Reading

**Fighting the Hate:
A Handbook for
Jews Under Siege**

by Melanie Philips

Book review by C4I Netherlands

Since 7 October, many Jews have felt isolated and abandoned, observes the British journalist Melanie Phillips. Her new book, *Fighting the Hate*, aims to provide a practical: a guide to fighting back.

While travelling abroad, Melanie Phillips repeatedly met Jews who asked her the same questions. How should we respond to the wave of hatred directed at Israel and ourselves? Why do people seem impervious to our arguments? And how can we stand up for ourselves without jeopardising our safety?

Their questions form the basis for *Fighting the Hate*. In her book, Phillips describes a Jewish community that, since 7 October, has been shocked not only by Hamas's massacre, but also by what followed in the West. People from whom they expected support turned against Israel, while accusations they regarded as false became widely accepted. Phillips wrote a handbook for how to deal with this wave of hatred.

Her most important piece of advice sounds strange at first: stop defending Israel. By this, Phillips does not mean that Jews should leave the accusations against Israel unchallenged. On the contrary. But those who respond by saying, "Israel is not committing genocide, is not deliberately starving people and is not stealing land", allow the other side to dictate the narrative without realising it. Turn it around and ask questions yourself, like: "Why is Israel judged by different standards to other countries?", "Why does someone accept certain claims about Israel without question?" You need to be prepared for this, so learn about Israel, Judaism and antisemitism, and prepare concise responses in advance.

Phillips also points out that you do not always have to engage in a discussion, safety comes first. Do not pick a fight you cannot win. And look after yourself by finding people with whom you feel safe and connected. Even if the divide runs right through families. The answer is not to seek confrontation. Preserving the bond may ultimately be more important than winning the argument.

Phillips wrote the book primarily for a Jewish audience. At the same time, many Christians also face a lack of understanding and hatred because of their support for Israel. This handbook is therefore also suitable and valuable for Christians who need guidance in their fight against hatred.

When Israel's Fullness Comes

■ Johannes Gerloff

Theologian, Journalist, Lecturer & Author

In this article we continue our study of Romans 11, focusing on the 'mystery' referred to in Romans 11:25.

For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from dead?

In Romans 11, Paul explains that the "failure" of the Jewish people, their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth as Israel's Messiah, became a wealth for the world. Through the "diminishment" of the Jewish people, the non-Jewish peoples gained free access to God. "Through their fall, salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:11). The community of believers in the Messiah, from the non-Jewish peoples, could only come into existence because Jesus was not successful as the Saviour of Israel.

From this the apostle concludes, as he did at the beginning of the chapter "from the lesser to the greater"... how much more [will] their fullness [be riches]! Romans 11:12b

If Israel's "loss," its "failure," its "misstep," or "diminishment" is already riches for the world, how much more riches for the Gentiles will their "fullness" bring.

Paul here demonstrates a law of salvation history that has not lost its validity to this day. Jesus did not tell the woman at Jacob's well that "salvation from the Jews" had come at some point in the past and was now freely available to the non-Jews. He let her know: "Salvation is coming (present tense!) from the Jews" (John 4:22).

Likewise, in Romans 11, Paul refers not only to the historical roots of our Christian worldview, but to the spiritual foundation of our being in Christ when, with reference to the olive tree, he points to Israel: "It is not you who supports the root, but the root who supports you!" (Romans 11:18).

To this day, the spiritual condition of the non-Jewish peoples is directly dependent on the spiritual condition of Israel. Not only have the Gentiles benefited in the past from the rupture in the relationship between God and his people, but they will be even more blessed when the relationship between Israel and its God is healed. Three verses later, Paul says the same thing again in different words:

"For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from dead?" Romans 11:15

The Greek usage connects the root of the expression "rejection" (ἀποβολή/apobole) with the idea of dry, falling leaves, of waste that is good for nothing, of something unclean and



| Photo: Shutterstock

therefore "rejectable" (1 Timothy 4:4). Thus, according to the Greek translation of the Septuagint, Abraham "rejected" his old homeland in order to be free for God's plans (Deuteronomy 26:5). Likewise, the blind man at Jericho "rejected" his cloak and threw it away to be free for Jesus (Mark 10:50).

"Their rejection"—this could mean that Israel was rejected by God; but also that the Jewish people rejected Jesus as their Messiah. "Their acceptance" could therefore either mean Israel's re-acceptance as God's people or Israel's recognition and welcoming of Yeshua as its Messiah: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 23:39).

Their rejection was the reconciliation of the world—their acceptance will be "life from dead." The expression "life from dead" (ζωὴ ἐκ νεκρῶν/zoe ek nekron) occurs in this combination only in this one place in the New Testament. A host of commentators, from the fathers of the ancient Church, such as Origen and Chrysostom, to the most recent times, have interpreted the expression "life from dead" as "resurrection from the dead". In fact, the second part of this expression, "from dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν/ek nekron), is usually used in the New Testament in connection with the resurrection of the dead.

However, this interpretation leaves open the question why Paul uses the word "life" here and not the term "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις/anastasis). Furthermore, he did not use the article before "life," which would have referred to eternal life, which begins with the resurrection from the dead. If the apostle meant that the redemption of all Israel was the starting point for the resurrection of the dead, why didn't he say this unequivocally?

We must infer the meaning of this unique expression "life from dead" from the context. In doing so, we do not forget that in the New Testament the term "dead" may also refer to "spiritually dead".

But first, let us note Paul's comparison: The misstep, the fall, the failure, the rejection of Israel brought "wealth" to the Gentiles. From this he concludes: How much more "riches" will their fullness, their reconciliation, bring (verse 12). By "riches," Paul meant "revival" and "church building" among the non-Jewish peoples. Why should he speak in parallel in verse 15 in a completely different way about "resurrection from the dead"? Wouldn't it be much more logical if, corresponding to "reconciliation of the world," he meant "more reconciliation of the world" and "much more revival"?

This is also indicated by the one passage which clearly does not use the expression "from dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν/ek nekron) in connection with the resurrection of the dead: Romans 6:13. There Paul writes: "Neither offer your members as instruments of unrighteousness for sin, but present yourselves to the one God as those alive from dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to the one God." The "living from dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας/ek nekron zontas) are people who—even before their physical death and resurrection!—were revived and saved through an encounter with the Risen One and, on the basis of this experience, presented their bodies to the God of Israel as instruments of righteousness.

"Life from dead" is a "radical transformation from evil to good, whatever its nature, which will benefit all peoples." It is a revival of the world of nations on a scale never seen before.

Going Up to Jerusalem

Will the UN Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles?



Participants in Jerusalem's annual Sukkot parade, attended by delegations from Israel and abroad. 9 October 2025. | Photo: Flash90.

Kees de Vreugd

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

"Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:16).

"For seven days you are to live in booths. All native-born Israelites are to live in booths" (Leviticus 23:42).

The shofar sounds today to gather Israel. But it also sounds to awaken the Church and the nations. The seventh month of the Jewish calendar speaks of the future.

Living in booths for seven days, this is what Israel has been commanded. Dwelling in booths recalls the journey through the wilderness, where God made the Israelites live in booths (v. 43). Yet the Feast of Tabernacles is also a harvest festival, celebrating the good land into which God brought His people. The "four species" (v. 40), the fruit of the beautiful tree (*etrog*) and the branches of palm, leafy tree (myrtle) and willow of the brook, represent the Land of Israel.

But compared with Israel's other pilgrimage festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles is also a festival of the future, of the Messianic age.

It is in this sense that the prophet Zechariah speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles in chapter 14. Zechariah 14 is read on the intermediate Sabbath of Sukkot. The prophecy tells that history has entered a new phase. The hostility of the nations towards Israel and Jerusalem has come to an end. God has

defeated the enemies. He has revealed Himself as the Holy One before the eyes of Israel and the nations. God has become King in Jerusalem.

And then the nations come. No longer do they come to wage war against Jerusalem, as at the beginning of Zechariah 14. They now come with a new commission. Why at this particular festival?

According to Jewish tradition, the nations of the world have always been in view at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Numbers 29 describes the special festival offerings. On the first day, thirteen young bulls were to be offered; on the second day, twelve; on the third day, eleven; and so on, until finally, on the seventh day, seven young bulls were offered. Altogether, this amounts to seventy bulls. According to Jewish interpretation, these seventy bulls were offered on behalf of the seventy nations of the world, to make atonement for them.

Seventy is the number associated with the nations of the world, as the number of the nations listed in Genesis 10 amounts to seventy. Deuteronomy 32:8 says moreover: "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel." Jacob-Israel came to Egypt with seventy people.

Passover is the festival of the Exodus. The exodus marked the birth of Israel as

a people. The formation of the nation of Israel was ratified in the covenant at Sinai, where the Torah is given. That is celebrated on the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*). These festivals therefore emphasise the existence and calling of Israel among the nations.

With the Feast of Tabernacles, that calling reaches its fulfilment. The nations are invited to walk in that light. They are called to go up to Jerusalem and bow before the God of Israel and His Anointed King.

This is not a matter of choice. The Feast of Tabernacles marks the beginning of the rainy season in Israel. In the liturgy, the prayer for rain, and therefore for a fruitful harvest, is resumed (in fact, God is praised for giving rain; during the summer, when there is no rain in Israel, God is praised for giving the dew).

The nations are invited, or better summoned, to join Israel in this praise and thanksgiving. A nation that does not go up to Jerusalem deprives itself of that blessing. The same applies even to a country such as Egypt, which in ancient perspective was not dependent upon a rainy season, but derived its fertility from the annual flooding of the Nile.

The united nations face a choice: to march together against Jerusalem in battle (Zechariah 14:1), or to join Israel in worshipping God (v. 16). The verb translated with worship implies bending down and stretching oneself flat on the ground.

This is the challenge to the nations today: bowing down and honouring God as the God of Israel, and His Messiah, or calling God's wrath upon them. We are living in exciting, crucial times!

Biblical Roots

By David Nekrutman

The Meaning of the Scar

We are currently in the sacred season between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. It is a window of time dedicated to self and national reckoning. Yet often the heaviest burden an honest soul brings before God is not the hurt others inflicted on them, but the grief over the wounds they caused someone else.

There is an unsettling finality to the past: words spoken cannot be unsaid, and betrayals cannot be undone.

The Hebrew Bible understands this tension deeply. The *Book of Genesis* refuses to conclude with tidy amnesia, or Joseph triumphant on an Egyptian throne. It ends with a family terrified by its history. After their father Jacob dies, the brothers who threw Joseph into a pit fall to their knees, convinced that divine retribution has finally arrived. Joseph answers with one of the most explosive revelations of grace in Scripture: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:20).

Notice what Joseph refuses to do. He does not minimise their sin or pretend the chains never existed. He names the evil plainly: "You intended harm". But he reveals an Almighty God whose providence is larger than human wreckage: "God intended good". The brothers could not erase the crime, but the Creator transformed what that crime ultimately produced.

In Hebrew, our word for repentance is *teshuvah*—which literally means "to return home". Biblical repentance means an absolute pivot: stopping dead in your tracks, turning 180 degrees, and marching in the opposite direction. It is not an emotional performance or a sentence of lifelong self-loathing.

God doesn't require a pristine past to build a meaningful future; He requires an honest, surrendered heart. Joseph's brothers could never claim, "We never did it." They did. But by the end of Genesis, they could truthfully declare, "We aren't those men anymore."

The scar remains on your skin, but it changes from a badge of shame into living evidence that the wound did not destroy you. The failure stays in your story, but it transforms from a prison cell into a lighthouse for someone else walking through the dark.

Your past is an event; it is not your identity. You cannot edit yesterday, but when you return to God with an undivided heart, yesterday loses the power to write tomorrow. If the Almighty is still giving you breath, your worst chapter does not get the final word.



Iran Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

■ Kameel Majdali

Director | Teach All Nations Inc.

Of the nations of the world, it is among the most consequential. A large, resource-rich land, with a long, illustrious history, educated population, and high culture, it wields significant influence regionally and internationally. The nation is called Iran but is also referred to by its ancient name, Persia. We will take a brief panoramic look at what the Bible says about this nation, especially in prophecy.

Daniel and the Prince of the Kingdoms of Persia (Daniel 10)

The Persian Empire (539-335 BC) was one of the largest, liberal, and most enlightened empires in history. In the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's statue in *Daniel 2*, the Persian Empire is the "arms and chest of silver".

The Prince of Persia is the invisible spiritual principality (see *Ephesians 6:12*) that covers Iran. He is a relentless opponent of God's kingdom. When Daniel prayed and fasted for the kingdom, God dispatched a heavenly messenger that very day. But the messenger was kept from reaching Daniel for 21 days because of the furious pushback from the prince of Persia. He is still opposing God's kingdom today, especially the growing indigenous Iranian church. Yet the spiritual prince knows he is fighting a losing battle.

Good Persia/Bad Persia

When it comes to a Biblical assessment of Persia and its conduct towards the Lord and His ancient covenant people, the reviews are mixed. For example, it was Cyrus, King of Persia, whose appearance was prophesied by Isaiah (*44:28; 45:1*) 150 years before his birth. Though he may not have known God personally, he is called the Lord's "shepherd and anointed".

His commission? To (re)build God's house—the temple in Jerusalem. He provided the money, building permits and materials, furnishings, and all that was necessary. In his grand proclamation (*2 Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1*) he invited—indeed, commanded—the exiled Jews to go home to Jerusalem and build the temple of the Lord their God. This heralded the end of the prophesied 70-year Babylonian captivity of the Jews. So with no promise of earthly acclaim or reward or political advantage, Cyrus set the captives free and rebuilt the Lord's house simply because God told him to. This is an example of Good Persia and is happy and wonderful; the Bad Persia was horrible and wicked, even genocidal and annihilationist. Its evil outstripped the Babylonians, Assyrians and Romans.

It has been said that crucifixion as an instrument of execution came from Persia.

The Book of Esther details the grand example of Bad Persia. The prime minister Haman wanted to execute all Jews in the empire, all because one Jew named Mordechai refused to bow down when the PM came by. Despite the massive overreaction, there are reasons for such irrationality.

First, Haman is an Agagite, of the royal household of Amalek, the ancient enemy of Israel. When Israel wins, Amalek loses. Second, God's plan for redemption through an everlasting king and kingdom came via the covenants He made with Abraham and David. Between the ratification of the covenants and their fulfilment is a chain link in which the *Messiah* and the Jewish people play the key roles. The third reason is spiritual: The Prince of Persia knows all of this, and if he can motivate Haman to destroy the Jews, the chain will be broken and the plan of salvation ruined (*John 4:22*).

Though Haman's decree to destroy the Jewish people was unchangeable, God raised up a Jewish orphan named Esther to win the beauty pageant, marry the king, and persuade him to issue a second unalterable decree giving the Jews the right to defend themselves. The chain of redemption remained intact unto the coming of Jesus.

Elam and Prophecy: Jeremiah 49:34-39

Elam was the region of Persia in the SW of the country, where Susa, the royal city, was located. Jeremiah's prophecy is neither long nor detailed, but it has echoes of the present. For example, the Lord speaks about breaking the bow, just like the world today wants to send the sword after them to strip Iran of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

God's judgment is more than disarmament: it includes widespread exile, confusion, and danger. The Lord will send His sword after them until He consumes them. Then, God sets His throne in Elam and restores their fortunes. Isn't this "Amazing Grace" in action?

Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39

This detailed and fascinating account has Persia join a coalition of nations in attacking Israel. The leader is Gog from the North, and he leads the others in a well-armed, unprovoked, spontaneous invasion when Israel is living in peace. Caught off guard, it looks like Israel will finally be destroyed by its enemies, but divine intervention steps in and incinerates the invaders.



Gate of all Nations, Persepolis, Iran. | Photo: Adobe Stock

A trend to watch: on 7 August 2026, Pakistan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia formed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, with other Muslim nations to join this "Islamic NATO". This means a military attack on one is treated as an attack on all. Will it mean more weapons in a highly weaponised region?

Will Iran join? Will the Red/Green Alliance (Marxist/Islamist) take advantage of this? Watch and pray.

There is good news at the end of the Magog invasion: The final ingathering of the exiles takes place, and God puts His Spirit on them (*Ezekiel 39:28-29*). Thank God for some more amazing grace.

The Bible Speaks

"And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem." Isaiah 27:13

The *shofar*—the ram's horn—sounds today to gather Israel together. But its sound also calls the Church and the nations to awaken and take heed. The prophet Zechariah speaks of the day when God, as King, will reign from Jerusalem, and when the nations will come together with Israel to worship the God of Israel and bow down before Him during the Feast of Tabernacles.

May the Church and the nations hear the sound of the *shofar*, recognise the significance of its call, and take its message to heart.

Photo: David Cohen/Flashgo

Short News

Naoera Opens
Embassy in Israel

The Pacific nation of Naoero (formerly known as Nauru) opened an embassy in Jerusalem in September, becoming the ninth country to locate its diplomatic mission in Israel's capital.

"Israel's relations with the nations of the South Pacific are advancing tremendously," Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said at the event. "Today two ancient peoples stand together in Jerusalem, proud of our identity, our heritage and our friendship."

He continued: "We see opening an embassy here in Jerusalem not only as strengthening our ties with Israel, but also as a message to the world of where we stand. Our motto is God first, and Israel always has a special place in our hearts." | Photo by Shlomi Amselam/GPO.

AI Eye Scan Study
Detects Anemia

Israeli researchers say a simple video scan of the eye could one day help detect anemia without a needle in ten seconds, pointing to a future where basic blood screening may become faster, cheaper and far more accessible. The breakthrough comes from Tel Aviv University and Sheba Medical Center, where scientists developed an artificial intelligence system that analyses tiny blood vessels in the conjunctiva, the clear membrane covering the white of the eye. Instead of drawing blood, the system uses a short, high-magnification video of blood flow in the eye and converts it into digital data that can be read by AI.

Torah Scrolls Stolen

Thieves stole 13–15 Torah scrolls worth US\$90,000–\$113,000 from the main synagogue in Levallois-Perret near Paris. Two men entered through a window, stole only the Torah scrolls, and were captured on surveillance cameras. Philippe Cohen, president of the local Jewish community association, described the theft as "a spiritual trauma for the entire Jewish community in France and around the world," noting that no other property was damaged or stolen. Rabbi Chalom Lellouche called the incident "an antisemitic act that targeted the Torah."

European Jews:
Herzl's Final Years—Part 5

■ Edda Fogarollo

Historian | President | Christians for Israel Italy

As we saw in the previous edition, Herzl spent his final years working to secure official recognition of the Zionist movement from the major European powers. He believed that international support would help raise the funds needed to purchase land in Palestine for Jewish emigrants who were increasingly forced to leave Eastern Europe as waves of pogroms spread throughout the region.

For Russian Jews, Zionism was more than a simple diplomatic matter; it had to be instilled into people's heart and soul in order to grow steadily into a tree with strong roots. The problem of the Land could not be solved in such a short time. They recognised Herzl's good organisational and leadership skills, but pointed out his lack of knowledge about the people, not fully comprehending the intrinsic strengths of the Russian masses. When Herzl began to get to know the Russian Jews, he was surprised and wrote: "They possess that inner unity which has disappeared from among Westerners. They are steeped in Jewish national sentiment without betraying any national narrowness and intolerance. They are not tortured by the idea of assimilation. They do not assimilate into other nations, but exert themselves to learn the best in other peoples. In this way they manage to remain erect and genuine. And these are still the Jews living in ghettos! The only ghetto Jews of our time! Looking on them, we understand where our forefathers got the strength to endure through the bitterest times." Despite the fact that Herzl drew close to the Russian Jews, many Jewish people in Eastern Europe did not see Western Zionism as representative of their thoughts and soul as it was based on abstract ideas that had no foundation in Jewish tradition and sentiments. Different currents of thought appeared among the Jews in Western Europe (represented by Herzl, Max Nordau, David Wolffsohn and others) and Eastern Europe (represented by the likes of Martin Buber and Chaim Weizmann).

The Uganda Proposal and the
Crisis within Zionism

The pogrom that broke out in Kishinev, capital of Bessarabia (now Moldova), on 19 April 1903, was another example of open massacre (45 Jews were killed, 102 people were seriously injured and about 1,500 houses were razed to the ground) that considerably worried the Zionists.



The grave of Theodor Herzl on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, where he was reburied in 1949. | Photo: Flash90

Herzl, shocked and worried for the fate of the Jews, hurried in order to avoid any further slaughter. After what happened in Kishinev, he was received in London by British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain to discuss the question of a motherland. The Minister proposed Uganda as the perfect place to give refuge to the Jewish people risking their life in the pogroms. Herzl saw Uganda as a temporary solution in view of the fate of his people in Russia, but stressed the importance of finally gaining political recognition of a territory. Clearly, Uganda was not Palestine, but this could be acquired directly from the Sultan at a later stage as soon as they collected enough funds for the purchase.

In the seventh Zionist Congress, held at Basel on 21st August 1903, Herzl proposed Uganda as a temporary solution to the Jewish question. However, this proposal led to the division of Zionism and the Congress was remembered as the most turbulent gathering of the movement. It was chiefly the Russian Jews, victims of the Kishinev persecution, who rejected the proposal as this was interpreted as a form of deviation from the original focus on Palestine. In fact, for the Eastern Jews, the heart of Judaism, with all its bonds of affection and tradition, was found in Palestine. It was this need and desire for the native land that gave them the strength to move forward and even surpass the fear of death and devastation of the pogroms. It was this irreplaceable bond that, on the one hand, strongly motivated the Russian Jews and, on the other hand, eluded the Western Jews.

Herzl's Legacy

The differences between these two cultures, characterised by distinct

historical and socio-political realities, were striking. This did not deny the geniality and uniqueness of Herzl who succeeded in awakening the world's interest towards his people in just a few years. Since ancient times, no-one had managed to interpret and manifest the need for a land for the Jewish people. Only Herzl succeeded in exposing the Jewish people's case on an international level. He gave voice to some of the very powerful people of that time who until a few years before were not even aware of the Jewish question and need. A few months before his death, Herzl, who had given himself completely to the Zionist cause, regretted the fact that he had started his mission so late. While he conversed with one of his friends, the writer Stefan Zweig, in a park of Vienna, he uttered these words of reproach: "It was a mistake that I began too late; no-one can make up for the years of the past." Herzl died in Vienna, aged just 44, on 3 July 1904.

Herzl succeeded in awakening the world's interest towards his people in just a few years.

Almost ten thousand people attended his funeral. The *Hatikvah*, a song of hope, which has since become Israel's national anthem, officially accompanied his burial. And so the father of Zionism remained in the cemetery of Döbling (Vienna), next to his father's grave, until the day when the Jewish people could take his remains to Israel.

Myth: Pro-Palestine Demonstrations are Peaceful

■ Bryce Turner

Executive Director | Christians for Israel
New Zealand

Faced with a barrage of misinformation, distortions, and blatant lies, supporters of Israel are constantly challenged to defend their position. We continue addressing this issue, bringing information and resources to combat these myths. Oscar Lohuis of the Netherlands has written specifically on this topic, and we thank him for permission to use his work in this section.

Myth: Pro-Palestine Demonstrations are Peaceful

During a lecture I gave in the city of Den Bosch, a lady wanted to speak after the break. She referenced *Romans II*, where believers from the nations are described as being grafted, like wild branches, into the noble olive tree. She said: “When that olive tree is violated, the branches will also be shaken.” That’s exactly what she felt on 7 October and in the days that followed. I found that very relatable. The unimaginable brutality of the massacre Hamas carried out in Israel deeply shocked me, and the surge in antisemitism worldwide is equally disturbing. Thousands of pro-Palestine demonstrations have taken place in Europe, America, and across the globe. The organisers claim to stand up for justice and peace, but these demonstrations are anything but peaceful.

Are You Pro-Hamas?

At the time, I was staying in Amsterdam, so I took a train from Central Station there to Den Bosch for my lecture that evening. Outside the station, a group—mostly people with a migration background—was preparing for a pro-Palestine demonstration. I approached a young man holding a large Palestinian flag and I asked him, with genuine curiosity: “Are you pro-Hamas?” “No”, he replied. “So, you are against Hamas?” I asked. “No”, he said again. “Then you are pro-Hamas?” “Yes”, he admitted. “Do you think Hamas is good for the Palestinians?” I asked. “Yes”, he said. “Anyone who fights against the Israeli occupation is good for the Palestinians.” “But Israel hasn’t occupied Gaza since 2005, has it?” I pointed out. In a moment, I found myself surrounded by ten men.

I asked others around them: “Are you for Hamas?” Several responded that they were indeed demonstrating for Hamas. I managed to get a leaflet that boldly read:



Palestinians attend a National Return Festival in southern Gaza, 11 May 2026. | Photo: Flash90

“The question is: what exactly are these people demonstrating for? Are they standing up for the people of Gaza, or are they supporting the survival of the Hamas dictatorship in Gaza?”

“From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.” I had to leave at that point, but had I been able to speak with them calmly, I would have asked: “How many Palestinians has Hamas killed since they took control in 2007? Are you aware of the brutal ways they treat their own political opponents? Do you know that Hamas is also holding Arab Israelis hostage in Gaza? Do you realise that Hamas leaders openly call for the complete annihilation of Israel and the murder of all Jews? Would you want to live under a regime like that of the Ayatollah of Iran? A regime where there is no freedom, no democracy, and no equal rights? How can you support that?”

Deceive the Infidels

The question is: what exactly are these people demonstrating for? Are they standing up for the people of Gaza, or are they supporting the survival of the Hamas dictatorship in Gaza? If they truly care about the people of Gaza, then it seems to me they should be supportive of what Israel is doing there, as Israel’s actions are aimed at ending the terrible neglect and oppression that Hamas has inflicted on the Palestinian people. Ayaan Hirsi-Ali, who grew up in an Islamic fundamentalist family, has commented on these pro-Palestine demonstrations. She says: “People think they are marching for the Palestinian

people, but they are not. They are marching for Hamas. There is something in Islamic ideology that teaches “deceive the infidels” (*Da’wah*). Many people are being deceived by Hamas. Hamas does not care about the people of Gaza, it only cares about the destruction of Israel. According to Hamas and its supporters, Israel and the Jews are the greatest enemy of Islam. Israel must be wiped off the map, and Jews must be killed. So, if you think you are marching for the Palestinian people, you are lying to yourself. You are not doing that at all.”

Testimony of an anonymous Jewish Amsterdammer

The following message appeared on Facebook in October 2023. It was written by a Jew from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, who chooses to remain anonymous for security reasons. “As a born-and-bred Amsterdammer, I feel compelled to share something. On 15 October, I saw a crowd of people with Palestinian flags marching through the city from Dam Square. The noise was overwhelming. What I saw was a mass of angry individuals, chanting things such as “Free Palestine” and “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, a kind of indoctrination mantra. The hatred I saw in their eyes was unlike anything I have ever witnessed. Everything about this crowd felt

menacing and tense. There was an almost tangible atmosphere of hostility and aggression. It was incredibly intimidating.

Just three days earlier, on 12 October, I had walked past Dam Square again. I pass by there two or more times almost every day. But on that day, I saw a completely different scene: a crowd of people with Israeli flags. There were speeches, singing, and people laying flowers. It was a world of difference!

From my parents, I know the stories of the last century, when people took to the streets with hate-filled mantras and marched through cities. That had led to a totalitarian regime, where ultimately not only Jews, but also all other minority groups were persecuted and murdered: Sinti and Roma, LGBTIQ+ individuals, people with intellectual disabilities or Down syndrome, political opponents, and so on. Last Sunday, I saw people marching through the streets once again, chanting hate mantras. This time, they are followers of a totalitarian faith. I am deeply concerned about the consequences in the Netherlands and Europe, because history teaches us that such movements are serious: their opponents must die.”

We Can’t Reach Them

In an interview, Dutch-Jewish columnist and writer Leon de Winter said: “Thousands fill the streets, waving flags and chanting absurd slogans. This small group gets its information from one-sided, completely distorted sources—TikTok and Al Jazeera—and we can’t reach them. This explosion of hatred has been building up for decades, out of our sight, and it creates a fundamental divide in society. The vast majority of people want nothing to do with that inhumane and reprehensible noise.

Conclusion

Pro-Palestine demonstrations are not peaceful. They are organised and funded by fundamentalist Islamic organisations (such as Samidoun, and Students for Justice in Palestine) and by countries that are intent on the destruction of Israel, the Jews, the West, and the values upheld in the Western world. They are focused on the establishment of a global Muslim caliphate and the spread of the Islamic revolution.

Find Oscar Lohuis’ book on Amazon:
<https://www.amazon.it/-/en/Oscar-Lohuis/dp/9082000369>

Life Saving Mobile Bomb Shelters

For decades, residents in both Israel's north and south, and most recently the entire country, have faced relentless attacks, with little time to reach safety.

country, especially in the north and south, continues to be extremely tense. There is no indication when the incessant attacks on the Israeli civilian

In some northern cities and towns, people have mere seconds to take cover in public bomb shelters. These seconds can make the difference between life and death.

In southern cities such as Sderot, Ashkelon, and Be'er Sheva, citizens have endured relentless rocket fire for over 20 years, with thousands suffering physical and psychological trauma. In the north, residents of Kiryat Shmona, Nahariya, and Metulla are under constant threat from Hezbollah. An entire generation has grown up in the shadow of emergency sirens, whether as babies in their cribs at night; as children in nursery, kindergarten and elementary school; as college students; and as working adults living their daily lives. The level of danger in Israel is high and the security situation throughout the

population will end and residents must take precautions to safeguard themselves and their families. While permanent shelters exist in some areas, mobile bomb shelters are critical for ensuring accessibility to safe spaces, particularly in agricultural and rural communities.

Christians for Israel supports a mobile shelter initiative to protect civilians under fire. These shelters offer essential refuge, ensuring residents can take cover within seconds—making the difference between life and death. The deployment of mobile shelters will significantly enhance security, allowing residents to



continue their daily routines with a greater sense of security.

and well-being of Israel's citizens, who are under attack. | Photos: Jewish Agency for Israel

Your generous donation will help safeguard Israel's civilians by providing life-saving protection to northern and southern communities on the frontlines. Together, we can help ensure the safety

Support this important project, select Emergency Aid Israel on the coupon on the back page. **Every amount helps.**



FOOD AID BY CHRISTIANS FOR ISRAEL IN 2025

Together, we brought hope and practical support to thousands of vulnerable people in Israel and Ukraine.

Meals Provided

180,000 meals

50,000 meals through Hineni Jerusalem

50,000 Meals on Wheels in Ukraine

80,000 meals through organisations serving people living in poverty in Israel

Food & Support Parcels

44,600 parcels distributed

10,000 holiday parcels to families in need

30,000 food parcels for vulnerable Jewish families, elderly people, and Holocaust survivors in Ukraine

4,000 support parcels in Nazareth

600 support parcels in Bethlehem

Practical Assistance

250 families supported 4 times per year

Food vouchers for supermarket shopping through the Domari Society for Gypsies

Impact

Because of generous supporters like you, thousands of people received food, care, and hope in 2025 across Israel and Ukraine. But many families still struggle every day. Help us continue this vital work and reach even more people in need.

Will you help?

Please complete the coupon on the back page and choose one of our social welfare projects to support.

