

Haaretz | Opinion

Israelis' post-October 7 Humility Is Gone. The Arrogance Is Back

Thursday 1 February 2024, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 31 January 2024).

An IDF tank with an Israeli flag in October. Credit: Ilan Assayag

After the Yom Kippur War, Israel humbly bowed its head and reshaped itself. The traumatized country drew into itself and mourned. The post-Six Day War arrogance and boastfulness disappeared, along with the militaristic personality cult and worship of the army.

It is already clear that this time, it will be different. The arrogance, boastfulness and worship of armed might are back, in a big way. In fact, they never disappeared. Shock and helplessness, horror and even humility, reigned in the first days, but the haughtiness quickly returned.

As if Israel was not taken by surprise and was not attacked by a besieged, ragged army while its own army was in absentia, its military might revealed to be unreliable. Israel was deep in mourning and anxiety like after the Yom Kippur War, but with no indication that it would change its thinking.

The argument that continuing to live by the sword would only lead Israel to destruction is considered heresy. The damage from the October 7, 2023 war is therefore worse than the damage from the October 6, 1973 war. After the latter, there was a correction; this time, there is no sign of one.

An IDF soldier in Khan Yunis on Tuesday. Credit: Rami Shllush

A different response could have been expected. On October 8, Haaretz published what I wrote the previous afternoon, before the full scale of the atrocities were revealed: "Israeli arrogance is behind all of this. We thought we could do anything and never be penalized for it.

... We will stop, we will kill, we will abuse, we will dispossess, we will protect the pogromist settlers, we will make pilgrimages to Joseph's Tomb, to Othniel's Tomb, to Joshua's Altar and of course to the Temple Mount; we will shoot the innocent, we will gouge eyes and smash faces.

... Yesterday, Israel saw in the south's pictures that which it had never seen before. Palestinian military vehicles patrolling in its cities, motorcycle riders entering its gates. These pictures must rip away the veil of arrogance."

Now, four months later, Israel is acting like it's post-June 5, 1967, not post-October 7, 2023. The talk is arrogant. The generals babble in the studios - we will strike here, conquer there, move forces from Beirut to Tehran, including the Philadelphi route and Yemen, as soldiers and settlers run wild in the West Bank.

The media discussion moves between the convulsions of the army to a syrupy trade in national sentiment. A useless war is depicted in a different light: a dim light of imaginary achievements. There is no evening without praising the glorious army, the 162th Division and the 401st Brigade

combat team, as if it was not the same army of October 7, as if it is leading Israel to a better place.

No one is voicing a different, skeptical, subversive opinion. Only sappy flattery of the army, for the war, the People of Israel, Israel forever, for everyone. The majority of the Israeli media has betrayed its mission and its professionalism in favor of denial, cover-up and enlistment in the service of propaganda.

There is a disgraceful absence of reporting on what's happening in the Gaza Strip - the ruins and the dead, wounded, crippled, starving and displaced people - accompanied by arrogance that has taken over the national discussion and national life.

Displaced Palestinians flee from Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday.Credit: Mahmud Hams/AFP

In Jerusalem's International Convention Center, we are building settlements in Gaza [1]. In Jenin, we are disguising ourselves as medical teams, in a gross violation of international law, to the roars of applause. In Gaza, we are destroying everything as if there is no tomorrow.

In the world's capitals, we are waging a campaign to defund UNRWA, and in The Hague we are trying to ignore the International Court of Justice. Nowhere is there any humility, modesty, different thinking, thoughts of a new path or listening to the world, which is so critical now.

To continue to knowingly lie to ourselves, to continue to believe we can live by the sword forever, that we are always the most righteous, the strongest, more than everyone else, more than the whole world. This wouldn't be as terrible if not for the knowledge that it will lead to the next disaster.

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P.S.

• Haaretz. Jan 31, 2024 11:36 pm IST:
<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-01-31/ty-article-opinion/.premium/israelis-post-october-7-humility-is-gone-the-arrogance-is-back/0000018d-60b3-d6d3-a98d-ecff5b600000>

Footnotes

[1] <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-01-28/ty-article/ministers-from-netanyahus-party-join-thousands-of-israelis-at-resettle-gaza-conference/0000018d-512f-dfdc-a5ad-db7f35e10000>