

Haaretz | Opinion

Opinion | Resistance Is a Just Struggle: on the decades-long battle for Palestinian freedom

Sunday 3 November 2024, by [LEVY Gideon](#) (Date first published: 3 November 2024).

A Palestinian boy carries a national flag during the funeral procession of four militants, in the West Bank, in October. Credit: John Wessels/ AFP

The decades-long battle for Palestinian freedom is among the most just struggles in the world today. The means that some of them employ are among the most heinous.

The means that Israel employs against them are equally and sometimes even more heinous, certainly in quantitative terms.

The Palestinians use abhorrent terrorism as a means to a just end and, in the case of [Hezbollah](#) and [Hamis](#), also towards ends that are manifestly unjust; those of religious fundamentalism. Terrorism is a weapon of the weak and desperate, which does not necessarily give it legitimacy.

Israel uses its formidable military power to suppress their rights and their resistance. The fact that it does this by means of an army, not a terrorist organization, does not make its actions legitimate. Most of its actions in the past year were not legitimate.

Recent [remarks by Haaretz's publisher](#), Amos Schocken, entered this picture – which in my view is clear and not at all complex – and set off a storm. His subsequent clarification, stating that Hamas does not belong to the category of freedom fighters, should have calmed the storm. But there are those who seek to heighten it.

There are those who seek to take revenge on Haaretz and want to see it shut down. The last established media outlet reporting the whole truth, especially over the past year, irritates many, and now they have an opportunity to retaliate.

But the criticism of Schocken's statement crossed ideological lines. Among the right, which would like to see a state with one TV channel and one newspaper under close supervision, there are also many in the opposing camp who were upset by the term "Palestinian freedom fighters." That's where the debate should be.

Ravit Hecht wrote that it is not only Benjamin Netanyahu's Israel that calls those who commit crimes against humanity terrorists. "We, the opponents of [Kahanism and the government](#) of Jewish supremacy, call them that. Because that is what they are."

But [crimes against humanity](#) are now being committed by both sides. In view of what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank, no one can deny this anymore. Is Israel a terrorist state? The measures that Israel takes do not abrogate its right to defend itself.

It has this right, but it has no right to utilize the means it is employing. Palestinians have a right to fight for their rights and their liberty, and they must not commit crimes against humanity. Hecht's definition of her camp as "the opponents of Kahanism and the government of [Jewish supremacy](#)" also blemishes the truth and beautifies Israel's center left. Israel has never had a government that is not a government of Jewish supremacy, because it has never had a government that is not Zionist.

Hecht and that camp which agrees with her err in their basic stance toward the occupation and Zionism. This is how Hecht describes the situation: "Yes, Israeli security forces have been harassing innocent Palestinians ... includ[ing] minors ... as part of the tragic reality of controlling another people."

It is the security forces that are harassing, not the entire State of Israel; "often," instead of "always." This is the essence of the center left's cloying "how beautiful we are." It's the "security forces" who harass, as if they were a separate, independent entity rather than the heroes and the sacred cows of all Israelis, especially in the center left.

The truth is that we all, down to the very last leftist, are culpable, because it is not the security forces who are harassing but rather the State of Israel; and not "often" but always, by the very definition of occupation. Hecht and her ilk still believe in an enlightened [occupation](#).

If only the security forces would harass a little less often, everything would be fine. But there is no occupation without harassment. Harassment is the essence of the occupation. An occupation of this kind provokes resistance. There has never been an occupation that did not provoke resistance. This resistance is called a struggle for freedom, and no struggle could be more just. It has no other name.

Gideon Levy

P.S.

• Haaretz. Nov 3, 2024 2:12 am IST:
<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2024-11-03/ty-article-opinion/.premium/resistance-is-a-just-struggle/00000192-ee0c-d3da-a5b7-ff1ea6fa0000>