

OPINION

Palestine/Israel: Arriving Again at the Cycle of Vengeance

Tuesday 10 October 2023, by [HASS Amira](#) (Date first published: 10 October 2023).

“Therefore, this must be said once again - we told you so. Ongoing oppression and injustice explode at unexpected times and places. Bloodshed knows no borders.”

In a few days Israelis went through what Palestinians have experienced as a matter of routine for decades, and are still experiencing – military incursions, death, cruelty, slain children, bodies piled up in the road, siege, fear, anxiety over loved ones, captivity, being targets of vengeance, indiscriminate lethal fire at both those involved in the fighting (soldiers) and the uninvolved (civilians), a position of inferiority, destruction of buildings, ruined holidays or celebrations, weakness and helplessness in the face of all-powerful armed men, and searing humiliation.

Therefore, this must be said once again – we told you so. Ongoing oppression and injustice explode at unexpected times and places. Bloodshed knows no borders.

The world has suddenly turned upside down, and the Palestinians’ daily nightmare has shattered the façade of normalcy that has characterized Israeli life for decades. Hamas crushed it by means of the surprise operation it launched, which demonstrated its military ingenuity and its ability to make plans, keep them secret and employ diversionary tactics.

Its operatives displayed [creativity by using a variety of methods](#) to break through the walls of the world’s largest prison, into which Israel has crammed two million human beings. Its armed men embarked on this campaign with a willingness to sacrifice their lives, knowing full well that they had a good chance of being killed. Some of them murdered hundreds of Israeli civilians in what seemed like orgies of vengeance, which their commanders weren’t wise or didn’t deem it important to prevent, if only for tactical reasons.

Three days later, the enormity of those mass acts of Palestinian rage is still unfolding, while Israel’s intensive aerial onslaught on Gaza has already resulted in the deaths of over 560 people, most of them civilians, over 120,000 displaced and thousands wounded.

As in every Israeli war against the Gaza Strip that Hamas had an interest in, especially given the murder of civilians, one should ask: [Does this organization have a realistic plan of action](#) and a realistic political goal, or did it mainly want to rehabilitate its own position in the eyes of Gaza residents? Was its military operation accompanied this time by a logistical plan to assist and rescue Gazan civilians under attack? Or will this once again fall on international aid agencies?

The gleeful Palestinian reactions to Hamas’ current achievement shouldn’t surprise anyone. After all, the all-powerful enemy has been revealed in all its nakedness – an [unprepared army that is busy protecting settlers](#) praying in the West Bank town of Hawara and Jews who take over Palestinian springs. Confused soldiers and police officers who have gotten used to thinking that combat means

rousing children from their sleep with drawn bayonets, or invading a refugee camp in an armored jeep. Inventors of spyware and collaborator-running Shin Bet agents who were so content about their achievements that they neglected the human factor – that is, the yearning for freedom shared by every human being.

Photo: A soldier runs in the streets of Sderot, on Monday. Credit: Ilan Assayag

“Half of Sderot’s residents are in Gaza, and half of Gaza’s residents are in Sderot,” Gazans joked over Shabbat after the [number of Israelis taken captive became clear](#). These are the jokes of detainees sentenced to life, people acquainted only through the stories told by their refugee grandparents with the landscapes of Jiyya, Burayr, Hamama, Najd, Dimra, Simsim and other destroyed villages around today’s Gaza Strip, where the attacked kibbutzim and Israeli towns are now located. But what comes after that joy and that feeling of achievement?

The automatic Israeli conclusion, as on previous occasions when its normalcy was shattered a bit, is that if death and destruction haven’t achieved their goal until now, more aerial killings of Palestinians and more destruction and vengeance are the answer. That’s the conclusion of both the government and the army, but also of many Israelis. And it’s also apparently the [conclusion reached by Western governments](#), which raced to voice support for Israel while ignoring Israel’s structural violence and cruelty, and the context of the Palestinian people’s ongoing dispossession from their land.

Amira Hass

P.S.

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- Amira Hass’ articles in Haaretz:
<https://www.haaretz.com/ty-WRITER/0000017f-da24-d494-a17f-de27b9aa0000>