

On the day this book went to print, Israel was locked in a fierce battle against Iran-backed terrorists on several fronts. What follows is up to date as of the beginning of October 2024. We pray by the time you read this, the war is over, the hostages have been returned home safely, and the terrorists have been vanquished.

THE OCTOBER 7TH MASSACRE & OPERATION IRON SWORDS

As the Sabbath's early morning sun gently kissed the rolling farmland and small towns of southern Israel, the peace and tranquility were shattered by the wail of incoming rocket fire. Families awoke suddenly, knowing they had seconds to grab their little ones and dive into the bomb shelter. They believed that once inside, they would be safe. They believed that the rockets would be intercepted by Israel's hi-tech missile defense shield. And they believed they would see the sunset.

For 1,200 innocent people, including more than 30 Americans, the sunset never came. They were **slaughtered**. Men, women, and children were **brutalized, raped, tortured, burned, shot, and murdered**; among them, 260 young adults were **massacred** at a peace festival in the countryside; and over 230 innocent people, young and old, were **kidnapped** and whisked away to a Hamas-built underground hellscape.

Following the initial chaotic hours of the Hamas invasion, the Israelis managed to vanquish the terrorists inside Israeli communities in the south.

On October 8, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Hamas, commencing Operation Swords of Iron. In the subsequent hours, an unprecedented 360,000

Israeli military reservists reported for active duty. This was the most rapid mobilization in Israel's history. In the following weeks, as Israel's adversaries in the halls of power became more brazen in their denial of Hamas's atrocities and Israel's right to defend itself, American Zionists responded in force. On November 14th, 2023, the largest pro-Israel gathering in American history took place in Washington, D.C.

The event featured a diverse group with a wide array of opinions on a variety of issues, yet all united in one common purpose: standing with Israel. It was an awe-inspiring event during which Pastor Hagee was among the featured speakers. His message of love and support, as well as his vigorous defense of the Jewish state, were warmly received by the nearly 300,000 Zionists in attendance.

Ten days later, a four-day temporary cease-fire was agreed to between Israel and Hamas via Egyptian and Qatari intermediaries. The cease-fire saw **more than 100 hostages released** in exchange for three times that number of terrorists set free and a multi-day pause in the Israeli offensive. Despite international pressure to extend the cease-fire once more, Hamas violated the agreement, resumed its rocket attacks against Israel, and fighting resumed.

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By February 2024, Israeli ground operations in northern Gaza rooted out terrorists and took control of the region. On February 12, the IDF heroically rescued two hostages from Hamas's captivity. Khan Yunis, the first major southern Gaza target, largely fell to Israel, and Hamas's Khan Yunis Brigade was defeated.

In June 2024, Israeli special forces staged a dramatic hostage rescue operation in Nuseirat in central Gaza, rescuing four of the hostages, including Noa Argamani, who was reunited with her terminally ill mother. While Israelis rejoiced at the hostage rescue, the Jewish state also mourned the loss of Israeli Border Police Chief Inspector Arnon Zmora, who was killed during the mission.

In the ensuing weeks, Israel has rendered Hamas battalions in Gaza City and Rafah – the final Hamas stronghold to fall to Israel in mid-August – militarily ineffective. As of this writing, Hamas has lost at least half its initial military strength, with an estimated remaining strength of between 9,000 and 12,000 terrorists.

Despite Israel's military gains, as of publication, more than 100 hostages remain in Hamas captivity. Approximately

one-third of these innocents are believed to have died since their kidnapping. Tragically, cease-fire negotiations have repeatedly broken down as a result of Hamas rejectionism. As such, Israel continues operations to free captives and root out Hamas.

Fighting in the urban environment of Gaza has proved perilous as Hamas uses human shields and abuses hospitals and schools, turning them into terror bases. In an example of Hamas's brutality, just days before this writing, the IDF recovered the bodies of six hostages whom Hamas abducted on October 7. The six people were taken by Hamas into Gaza alive, but tragically the men were executed in cold blood just days before their remains were found.

Despite Hamas's continued cruelty, the world repeats accusations perpetuated by terrorists and their sympathizers against Israel and the IDF, ignoring, time-and-again, overwhelming evidence against Hamas's and others' claims. The most oft-repeated lie associated with this conflict is the falsified, Hamas-provided casualty figures that had been quoted by the United Nations, media, officials, and President Biden but were later confirmed – by none other than the United Nations – to have been falsified.

THE WAR HAS NOT BEEN LIMITED TO GAZA.

The regime in Iran funded, trained, and provided weapons to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (the two terror groups who led the barbaric October 7th Massacre). Likewise, Iran's ally in Yemen, Ansar Allah (Houthis), has fired numerous missiles and drones at the Jewish state while also terrorizing international shipping in the Red Sea. Nonetheless, the Lebanon-based Hezbollah, not Hamas nor any of the others, is Iran's preeminent terrorist proxy.

Since October 7th, Hezbollah has launched thousands of attacks against Israel, killing 30 and wounding dozens more. Tens of thousands of Israelis have been forced to flee northern Israel and have not been able to return

to their homes for well over six months. As a result of Hezbollah's aggression, there are tens of thousands of internally displaced Israeli refugees.

While the Islamic Republic's animosity and aggression towards the Jewish state is far from veiled, in April, it took on a new dimension. For the first time in history, Iran's regime launched a direct assault from Iranian territory onto Israeli territory. Around 170 drones, over 30 cruise missiles, and more than 120 ballistic missiles were launched at Israel. Thanks to Israel's aerial defense systems and a coalition including the United States, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, 99% of the Iranian projectiles were intercepted.

Israel responded with a single limited, pinpoint strike on a high-value Iranian target. While footage emerged from Iran of the aftermath of the strike, the Iranian regime denies it took place to save face domestically.

On July 27, 2024, during one of Hezbollah's near-daily rocket barrages, an explosive struck a soccer field with children at play. Twelve young innocents from the village of Majdal Shams were killed. Dozens more were wounded.

Four days later, Fuad Shukr, the military chief of Hezbollah, was killed in an Israeli strike. That same night, the head of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, was assassinated in Tehran after attending the inauguration of Iran's newly installed President Masoud Pezeshkian (Pezeshkian's predecessor died in a helicopter crash in May 2024).

As Hezbollah continued to bombard Israel's North, the government pledged to bring peace to the northern communities. The IDF began intensifying its focus on Hezbollah. And then, in a series of stunning military and intelligence actions, Israel used exploding communications devices that had been sold to Hezbollah months earlier by Israel's intelligence service (presumed) to wound and kill thousands of Hezbollah terrorists in one fell swoop. This was followed by an intensive Israeli air campaign that culminated in the elimination of arch-terrorist long-time Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, ending his bloody reign.

Shortly thereafter, the IDF launched small-scale special ground operations into Lebanon. The Lebanese Armed Forces retreated three miles from the border prior to Israeli soldiers crossing the border, emphasizing the fact that Israel's war is against Hezbollah, not Lebanon.

With the Islamic regime in Iran reeling after the removal of its clients Haniyeh and Nasrallah, it launched a massive ballistic missile attack at Israel, firing over 180 missiles. Thankfully, Israel's air defense systems once again ruled the day; the one fatality being a Palestinian man killed by falling rocket debris.

Israel has pledged to respond to this violation of its sovereignty; the regime in Iran sought to murder millions of Israelis in its attacks. This horror was only prevented by Israeli technology and bomb shelters.

The regime in Iran continues to attack the Jewish state on multiple fronts.

As of this writing, there has been no direct Israeli strike on Iranian targets following the ballistic missile attack. While many choose to speculate about what Israel may do next, at CUFI, we simply reaffirm Israel's right to self-defense against the evil of the regime in Tehran and its sovereign right to make decisions of war and peace free of international interference.

WORLDWIDE ANTISEMITISM

The regime in Tehran is no less responsible for the atrocities committed on October 7th than are the war criminals who physically committed those heinous acts. Despite these facts, the world has chosen to focus its ire on Israel.

Immediately following news of the savage 10/7 Massacre, crowds of pro-Hamas **supporters celebrated** worldwide and antisemitic **threats and attacks spiked** across the globe – including in the United States.

Even as emergency workers searched for hundreds of missing Israelis, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, **cheering** Hamas's atrocities. Less than a week after the massacre, a "Day of Rage" drew tens of thousands of anti-Israel agitators together across the Middle East.

In Beirut, supporters of Hezbollah held a **rally chanting**, "Death to Israel" and "Death to America," as Hezbollah leaders vowed to stand by Hamas.

In Russia, an attempted pogrom occurred as a horde of assailants broke into the airport in Dagestan, Russia in search of Jews to lynch after the **mob** learned a flight was arriving there from Israel. Local media reported that assailants stopped cars outside the airport demanding to see documents in search of Israeli passports.

Across Europe, antisemitic **threats** and **attacks** also skyrocketed after the 10/7 Massacre. Reports surfaced of **bomb threats** to Jewish stores, **firebombed synagogues**, and **demonstrations** calling for Israel's eradication.

Antisemitic rallies, threats, and **attacks** also occurred throughout the United States, including pro-Hamas **demonstrations on college campuses**. Since the massacre, Jewish Americans have been subject to levels of antisemitism not seen in at least decades. The Anti-Defamation League **reported** well over 3,000 antisemitic incidents took place across the United

States between Oct. 7, 2023 and Jan. 7, 2024 – triple the number of recorded incidents during the entire calendar year of 2022.

Likewise, America's institutions of higher learning suffered over **500 incidents** during the same three-month period. There was a **700% rise** in the number of antisemitic incidents on campus between October and February relative to the same period a year earlier. Forty-four of these were attacks – constituting more physical assaults on Jews on campus during this three-month period.

Another recent development has been the "encampments" that started at Columbia University but have cropped up throughout the nation. They have been hotbeds of antisemitism and anti-Americanism and have created an increasingly toxic, anti-Jewish campus climate. Many college administrations have allowed these violent encampments to thrive while Jewish students are being banned from certain areas on their own campuses. Notable exceptions include the University of Florida and Texas A&M, which enforced a zero-tolerance policy for pro-Hamas criminals.

Eighty years after the attempted extermination
of the Jews by the Nazis during WW2,

FEWER AND FEWER SEEM TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE PROMISE OF "NEVER AGAIN."

As we noted at the top of this missive, we pray that by the time you read this, the conflict has ended, Hamas has been destroyed, and all the hostages have been returned safely to their families.

We share in the joy of those families who've had their loved ones returned to them and weep with agony for those whose loved ones remain captive or were killed due to Hamas's barbarity.