



HOPE FOR ISRAEL

SEED OF ABRAHAM MINISTRIES, INC.

*"O Israel
put your hope
in the LORD..."*

- Psalm 130:7



IN THIS ISSUE

The Most Moral Army in the World

W O R D F R O M M O R A N



Shalom from Jerusalem!

May the grace of our God strengthen you and give you peace in Messiah Yeshua until the day of His return. In this newsletter, I would like to touch on some key issues that are important for us to understand and, in turn, act upon.

The first thing I'd like to share is that not every situation is simply black and white. This is especially true when it comes to Israel! The world is very quick to criticize Israel and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), which is the most moral army in the world. Often, the complexity of the situation is reduced to Jews against Arabs, war between Israelis and Palestinians, and terror. The reality is that here in Israel, there are many Arabs and Jews who live peacefully with one another, and who genuinely care for each other.

I was serving in the IDF in the mid 1990s, when terror attacks of all kinds occurred daily in Israel. Two incidents from those days never left me. The first one happened when I was checking cars entering Israel from Palestinian territories at a checkpoint.

continued on page 4



HOPE FOR ISRAEL

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"The Most Moral Army in the World": Little Known Facts About the IDF



The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are perhaps the most heavily criticized and maligned armed forces in the world... and the most misunderstood. It is no secret that the media throughout the world jump at any opportunity to bash the IDF, even to the point of slander. Indeed, as Professor Eugene Kontorovich prudently observed, "There is a basic appetite for criticism of Israel." But we must ask if this kind of criticism is warranted, and based on facts.

Any healthy democracy should give space for critique of its own government, policies, and yes, even its military forces. And Israel is no exception (it being the only democracy in the Middle East)! Yet, too often, these critiques are based on sensationalized half-truths that end up causing more harm than good, eroding the very foundations on which democracy is built.

This is the current situation in which Israel's Defense Force finds itself. The recent resurgence of attacks from Hamas along the Gaza/Israel border, and Israel's response, have brought a slew of renewed criticism against the IDF, most of which is based on propaganda and false reporting by the media. The fact of the matter is that Israel is held responsible for the loss of life perpetrated by its enemies who continuously provoke an Israeli military response, and for defending its civilians from terrorists who actively seek to shed their blood. In short, Israel is once again between a rock and a hard place.

It is important to point out that Israel's military is concerned with defense of its citizens. This is implied in its very name! It is a defense force, aimed at protecting its citizens - Jewish,

Muslim, Christian, Druze, Atheist, etc. - from attacks by any organization or country that seeks to cause physical harm. In fact, Israel has struck preemptively only a handful of times, but each time was in direct response to a real threat on its security. Furthermore, each strike was on military targets and not on civilians.

One of the most outspoken supporters of the IDF today is Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of British forces in Afghanistan. In a powerful speech to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Israel's 2009 war with Hamas, Colonel Kemp said, "The Israeli Defense Forces did more to safeguard the rights of [Palestinian] civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare."

What other military in the world airdrops flyers and sends text messages to civilians in times of war, warning them of an impending strike in the area, thereby giving them - and terrorists - an opportunity to seek shelter?

Other sources have also noted that Israel has consistently acted with incredible restraint, most notably the US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley. Ambassador Haley has been boldly opposing the status quo of Israel bashing at the UN since taking the position in January 2017. Writing on the most recent conflict with Hamas, Colonel Kemp stated, "Don't be fooled. Like the rockets and the tunnels, these mobs - including armed terrorists - have been mobilized by Hamas for one purpose: to force the IDF to respond with lethal force, killing as many Palestinians as possible." Hamas's use of Palestinian civilians as human shields, and worse, fodder to

**ISRAEL'S MILITARY
IS CONCERNED WITH
DEFENSE OF ITS
CITIZENS**

gain sympathy in the media, is a war crime. Tragically, the UN and other agencies fail to hold Hamas accountable time after time.

Its dealings with the provocations and attacks from Hamas are not the only area where the IDF exhibits moral behavior.

The IDF, acting through COGAT (Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories), transfers thousands of tons of medications, food, diesel, benzene, gas, and construction materials to the Gaza Strip every year. In fact, during the recent conflict with Hamas, the IDF continued to transfer much-needed medical and humanitarian supplies to the Strip, despite the fact that Hamas rejected it, sending it back to Israel.

The IDF also has responded to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, as a result of the seven-year civil war that continues to rage just over Israel's northeastern border. Not only does the IDF provide safe passage for wounded Syrian civilians to seek treatment at Israeli hospitals, but it also sends medical supplies, food, and other humanitarian equipment to assist NGOs that help the thousands displaced by the war. Syria and Israel are enemies and have zero diplomatic ties. Would any other country do such a thing for an enemy?

And the IDF's humanitarian reach is not limited to the Middle East. The IDF are always Israel's first responders to natural disasters that occur anywhere in the world. They assess the situation first, determine where they can best assist the relief efforts, and then advise other Israeli NGOs/organizations that also provide relief aid. Not only does the IDF provide crucial, practical help, but they also organize transport of medicine, food, clothing, and other vital materials for people in devastated areas. And all of this is sponsored and funded by Israel!

It would be dishonest to claim that the IDF always act in an honorable and ethical manner; there are times when criticism, and sometimes even strong condemnation, is warranted. And yes, there are times when soldiers must be held accountable if they act outside of the IDF's code of ethics. One such instance happened in February 2017 when an Israeli soldier, Elior Azaria, shot dead a Palestinian terrorist, after he had been shot for stabbing another IDF soldier. While this is a very controversial incident and we do not know all the circumstances surrounding it, an Israeli court determined that the Arab man presented no imminent harm after he had already been subdued. Azaria was



tried and convicted, and served time in an Israeli prison as a result. While this is still a contentious issue among Israelis, it is just an example that Israel holds accountable soldiers who do not act in accordance to the IDF's strict code of conduct.

Israel is faced with an increasingly difficult task of defending its borders and its citizens from a virulent enemy that grows stronger and stronger. This is an enemy sworn to bring about Israel's total destruction, and is funded by powerful regimes in the Middle East. We would be wise to understand Israel's terrible predicament, and be a voice for the truth. To again quote Colonel Richard Kemp, "Those who falsely condemn Israel play into Hamas's hands, fuel their terrorism, encourage their use of human shields and contribute to the death and bloodshed. Standing up for the IDF is also standing up for innocent Palestinian civilians so betrayed, exploited, and sacrificed by their leaders." 🌐

W O R D F R O M M O R A N

continued from page 1

I asked the driver of one car to roll down his window. To my surprise, the driver was an Arab man that I had worked with in the fields of my Kibbutz; he and I had become very good friends. I was embarrassed and I apologized to him that I was required to check his car. He told me to stop apologizing and do my job. Afterwards, he thanked me for doing my job and for protecting him.

The second incident happened shortly after I lost several friends in a particularly heinous suicide attack. I was still serving in the IDF at this point and was devastated by such a severe loss. When I arrived to my kibbutz for Shabbat, I went to eat lunch in the main dining room, which in those days was our main gathering place. As I went to greet one of my friends, an Arab man sitting at his table lowered his eyes with such sorrow and shame, and told me how sorry he was about what had happened to my friends. I was deeply touched and told him to lift up his face because it was not his fault. That was a profound moment in my life and I've never forgotten it.

My dear friends, our reality in Israel is very complex. The truth is people from both sides are suffering. In fact, this is because of Hamas and other terror groups that not only attack Israel, but also rule Palestinian civilians with a cruel iron fist. This is all the more reason that when I hear the world constantly blaming only one side (Israel), I get frustrated.

There is no doubt that many Palestinians in Gaza live under extremely difficult circumstances! It would be dishonest to ignore this fact. However, do we ever stop and ask ourselves why? Is

it really Israel's fault? In 2005, about 8,600 Israeli Jewish people were forced to leave their homes in the Jewish communities in what is known as the Disengagement (from the Gaza Strip). Israel completely left the Gaza Strip in hopes for peace; however, it wasn't long after that many of us realized that the other side has no desire for peace. In short, "land for peace" was shown to be what it really is - a myth.

In June 2007, almost two years after the Disengagement, Hamas gained control over the Gaza Strip after fake "elections" and a series of bloodshed between the different Palestinian terror groups. Since then, instead of taking the billions of dollars that have been sent to the Palestinian people in Gaza in order to build infrastructure (universities, schools, hospitals, hotels, sewer systems, etc.), Hamas has used those funds to terrorize the people of Israel. For years it was through rockets attacks, and then came the terror tunnels, and most recently, terror has come from burning kites and helium balloons sent over the border to ignite the fields, forests, and nature reserves of southern Israel. It is sad to see thousands of acres of nature reserves burnt down! Every winter in southern Israel, you can see thousands of acres of red anemone fields spread out like a carpet of flowers. We refer to this as the "Red South" in Hebrew. Sadly, because of the damage to the earth from the fires, this next year will be the "Black South".

continued on page 5



***Pray for
the peace of
Jerusalem***

Psalm 122:6



How tragic that Hamas has turned something that children are supposed to play with into weapons of destruction. My friends, the Palestinian people are victims of their own leadership (and other countries such as Iran that support terror), which oppresses and abuses them for their own agenda. Hamas leaders brainwash the people, use them as human shields in times of conflict (often with brute force), and as slaves when it comes to building the underground tunnels.

As followers of the Messiah, we should not be surprised by the events taking place here in the Land this past month. Israel has faced numerous fronts - the Iranian threat on the northeast border with Syria; the increasing threat from Hezbollah on our northern border with Lebanon; and the constant terror coming from the different terror organizations in the Gaza Strip. But this is no surprise because we know what the Scriptures say about all this.

In closing, I am issuing a call to action! I call on all followers of the Messiah to take an active role in praying for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6), keep informed of the situation taking place in Israel and the Middle East, and share with others. But choose your information sources very wisely! There's a lot of propaganda and false reporting in the

media that misleads people - sometimes even well meaning believers, sadly!

Finally, come see the truth for yourself by joining one of our tours to Israel. Not only do our tours educate you more about God's Word, but they also reveal the true face of Israel. Now, I know coming to Israel may not be your first response after I've just written about the conflict and war! In fact, it may sound pretty scary. However, when it comes to being afraid of coming to Israel, I always pose a couple of questions: Do you trust God, first and foremost? If you believe His word is true, do you have a reason to fear anything?

The reality is that Israel is one of the safest places to be; I encourage you to search the crime rate in your area, and see how the numbers compare to crime in Israel. You might be surprised at what you'll find!

I hope to see you with us on one of our tours, and want to encourage you to continue to be a good ambassador for the full truth of our God and His plan of Salvation... To the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Shalom from Jerusalem,

Moran

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- A.T. 2017 Tour Participant

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