



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

wanted to kill Israelis
and make Israel
uninhabitable."

What benefits – other than
virtue signaling to their left
wing and Muslim domestic
constituents – do these countries
expect to achieve by the hollow
act of recognition? It will only

Commentary...

Threatened Recognition of Palestinian State Threatens Hostages, Rewards Terrorism By Alan Dershowitz

The threat by France, England, Canada, Australia, and other American allies to "recognize" a nonexistent Palestinian "state" has incentivized Hamas to reject US peace deals and has thus endangered the lives of the 20 living hostages.

As Marco Rubio put it: "Talks with Hamas fell apart on the day Macron made the unilateral decision that he's going to recognize the Palestinian state... So those messages, while largely symbolic in their minds, actually have made it harder to get peace and harder to achieve a deal with Hamas."

I'm in Israel to meet with Israeli leaders and to try to visit Gaza. After several meetings, I have been confirmed in my strong belief that the decision by these countries to recognize "Palestine" has emboldened Hamas to persist in its refusal to release the hostages in exchange for a ceasefire.

Both US President Donald Trump and his envoy Steve Witkoff have placed the blame squarely at the feet of Hamas for rejecting US proposals to end the current impasse.

Why should Hamas make a deal requiring it to make sacrifices in its bargaining position, when it is being promised the "golden ring" – recognition of statehood – for doing nothing?

Polls show that Palestinians, both in Gaza and the West Bank, would vote overwhelmingly to be governed by Hamas rather than the Palestinian Authority if free elections were held. This would be even more certain if Hamas were credited with securing a state – something the PA could not accomplish over the many years it has been in power.

Even if Hamas itself cares more about destroying Israel than having a Palestinian state recognized, it would gain much from having secured recognition.

Recognizing statehood now would be widely and correctly seen as rewarding Hamas for its October 7 massacre, and it would send a loud message to terrorist groups around the world that terrorism is more effective than negotiation.

It will encourage more October 7s – as Hamas has already promised – not only against Israel, but against other nations that are threatened by terrorists with grievances, which includes most democracies.

Recognizing a Palestinian state without even conditioning such recognition on the release of the hostages will ensure continuing belligerence in Gaza. Hamas doesn't care how many Gazans are killed.

To the contrary, they believe their cause benefits from the death of martyrs. That is why they use civilians as human shields and prohibit them from seeking shelter in the tunnels that protect their terrorists from Israeli bombings.

It is these immoral tactics – prohibited by the laws of war – that are rewarded and incentivized by giving Hamas what it wants: credit for achieving statehood without giving up anything: a major quid without quo.

No wonder Trump, the master of quid pro quo deal-making, is opposed to giving the Palestinians something for nothing. This is especially troubling, since the Palestinian leadership has turned down offers of statehood in return for real peace on numerous occasions.

As former president Bill Clinton recently put it: "The only time Yasser Arafat didn't tell me the truth was when he promised he was going to accept the peace deal that we had worked out. Which would have given the Palestinians a state in 96% of the West Bank and 4% of Israel, and they got to choose where the 4% of Israel was. So they would have the effect of the same land of all the West Bank. They would have a capital in East Jerusalem... all this was offered including... a capital in East Jerusalem and two of the four quadrants of the old city of Jerusalem confirmed by the Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and his cabinet, and they said no, and I think part of it is that Hamas did not care about a homeland for the Palestinians. They

make it harder for positions on both sides.

The Palestinians will be encouraged to persist in the terrorist tactics that produced recognition, and the Israeli right wing will demand annexation of the disputed territories that would comprise the theoretically recognized "state" – a "state" without recognized borders and without a recognized governing authority.

It is a recipe for anarchy, terrorism, and Islamic extremism with no counterbalancing benefits. It will make a two-state solution more difficult to achieve because a Hamas-controlled state would never recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, and Israel would never recognize a "state" that was created – invented – without direct negotiations and reciprocal commitments.

So the virtue signaling and electoral pandering of these hypocritical governments will surely backfire and cause more deaths and suffering on both sides.

It is fitting that these phony recognitions will be announced from the podium of the UN General Assembly – the same forum that declared Zionism to be a form of racism, that welcomed a Palestinian terrorist leader wielding a gun, that platformed Holocaust denying Iranians, and that has served as the modern-day version of the notoriously antisemitic Der Stürmer of Nazi Germany.

Following the decision to equate Zionism with racism, the Israeli representative to the UN ascended the podium and tore up the text of the resolution. Several years later, it was rescinded.

The false equation did little harm aside from damaging the credibility of the UN. It won't be as easy to rescind the dangerous recognitions that will tarnish the UN this September – and will risk the lives of Israelis, especially hostages, and Palestinians.

Shame on France, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries that will have the blood of innocent people on their hands. (Jerusalem Post Aug 14)

The Palestinian Authority's Human 'Slaughterhouse'

By Khaled Abu Toameh

France, Canada, Australia, the UK and other Western countries that recently pledged to recognize a Palestinian state have said that their decision is "predicated" on commitments from the Palestinian Authority (PA) to undergo critical governance reforms, as well as excluding the Iran-backed Hamas terrorist group from a future Palestinian government.

None of these countries, however, has demanded that the PA halt its human rights violations against its own people. Ending financial and administrative corruption and excluding Hamas from governance is pointless as long as the PA continues to crack down on its political rivals and impose severe restrictions on freedom of speech.

The Western countries continue to ignore statements by Palestinian human rights organizations regarding the PA's violations. These countries, obsessed with Israel, turn a blind eye to Palestinians' complaints against the PA, which controls large parts of the West Bank.

According to the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain, the PA's torture of its own people includes beatings with cables, pulling out nails, suspension from the ceiling, flogging, kicking, electric shocks, sexual harassment and the threat of rape.

The international media also ignore the situation. Their representatives prefer stories that implicate only Israel. It is hard to remember the last time a respected newspaper or media outlet in the West reported about human rights violations committed by the Palestinian Authority against its citizens. The failure of the international community even to notice such violations plays into the hands of the PA, and allows it to continue its crackdown on public freedoms and political activists in areas under its jurisdiction.

Recently, a committee representing families of Palestinians detained by the PA complained that their sons were being subjected

to "severe torture" in prisons and interrogation centers. The committee noted in a statement that the PA security forces are using "harsh and systematic methods against detainees that threaten their lives."

This universal indifference has led to a deterioration in the health of a number of detainees, requiring their transfer to hospitals for treatment, the committee said. "Among them is political prisoner Mohammed al-Hashlamoun, who was transferred to hospital less than 48 hours after his arrest in Jericho prison."

As long ago as 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that the security forces of both Hamas (in Gaza) and the Palestinian Authority routinely taunt and threaten detainees, and use solitary confinement and beatings. These include whipping their feet, and forcing detainees into agonizing stress positions for prolonged periods, such as hoisting their arms behind their backs with cables or rope, as well as inflicting excruciating pain on critics and political opponents to elicit confessions.

The PA's notorious Jericho Prison, dubbed "The Slaughterhouse," is known as a center for extreme abuse. Suha Jbara, a mother of three, who was held in the prison on charges of "collaboration" with Israel, recounted her experience: "They [PA security forces] took me to an unknown place.... When we entered an office, the person asked me: 'Do you know where you are?' I told him: 'I'm in the General Investigation [Department].' He replied: 'No, you are in the Jericho Slaughterhouse.' Then they took me to the Jericho Hospital for a pregnancy test, although I was undergoing menstruation."

Jbara said she was then taken back to prison, where she was blindfolded and handcuffed. "The interrogator started threatening me. He told me that from my face he could tell that I'm a collaborator [with Israel]. He threatened to take away my custody over my children. He said he knows how to beat me without leaving signs on my body. The interrogation and beating lasted all night."

Ahmed Harish, another Palestinian who was held in Jericho's "Slaughterhouse," testified: "For the past week, I have been beaten all over my body, my hands tied in all kinds of positions that leave my back bent or my hands hung above me, and they leave heavy objects made of iron and bricks on my legs."

Last week, the Palestinian Committee of Detainees' Families said that "the continued policy of political detention and torture constitutes a crime and a flagrant violation of Palestinian law and international human rights conventions."

In June, Palestinian human rights groups reported that Ahmed al-Safouri, a Palestinian from the West Bank's Jenin Refugee Camp, died as a result of "horrific torture," in a PA detention center. According to the groups, the death of al-Safouri "was not an isolated incident, but rather represents a stark illustration of the suffering of hundreds of political detainees [in PA prisons] who are subjected to grave violations during their arrest and interrogation."

Amnesty International quoted former Palestinian detainees in 2022 as saying that they had been whipped on their feet and repeatedly beaten with clubs.

Last month, Palestinian Authority security officer Ammar Saeed Abu Tahri reportedly died while in PA custody. It remains unclear why Abu Tahri was arrested by PA security forces in the first place. His family accused the PA security forces of torturing their son: "We mourn our son who was betrayed by the [PA] oppressors and passed away. We hold the [PA] Military Intelligence responsible for his arrest and torture and call for the formation of a serious and impartial investigation committee to uncover the circumstances of the incident and hold all those involved accountable. This crime must not go unpunished."

The Palestinian human rights group Lawyers for Justice said that the PA security forces have stepped up their crackdown on political opponents. "We are currently monitoring the cases of 17 detainees held by the Palestinian Authority," the group revealed. "Most of the arrests were related to freedom of expression or participation in demonstrations in solidarity with the Gaza Strip."

Lawyers for Justice pointed out that Palestinian Authority security officers who beat political activist Nizar Banat to death in 2021 have still not been punished. Banat, an outspoken critic of the PA leadership, was beaten to death by PA security officers in Hebron. Although a number of officers have been formally charged, they have been released from prison, while their trial has been repeatedly delayed. The group stated: "The trial proceedings have remained at a standstill since the start of the court sessions in September 2021 amid

unjustified procrastination and suspicions of a lack of seriousness, particularly after the defendants were released within a year of the crime. We have documented hundreds of cases of arrest, torture, and ill-treatment of activists and political opponents since Nizar's killing. Since October 2023, 22 Palestinians have been killed [by PA security forces]. Those involved in most of these crimes have not been held accountable."

If France, Australia, the UK and Canada really cared about the Palestinians, they should be demanding that the PA respect public freedoms and stop its crackdown on political and human rights activists. The last thing the Middle East needs is another Arab dictatorship run by corrupt leaders whose main goal is to batter their own people while siphoning off still more European and international aid money into their own bank accounts. (Gatestone Aug 18)

Gaza Disengagement's Overlooked Villain By Seth Mandel

Twenty years ago exactly, Israel began its disengagement from the Gaza Strip. Every last civilian and soldier would leave the enclave, though evidence of the Jewish communities would remain in the form of greenhouses, roads, and other infrastructure that was gifted to the Palestinians as they began their first serious experiment in independent self-rule.

What ensued was anarchy and violence. Even the greenhouses were destroyed and looted, an unsuitable metaphor for the unfolding disaster, the self-nakba of the Palestinians.

Much of the debate around the disengagement centers on the question of whether it was a mistake to offer the Palestinians in Gaza freedom, independence, and peace, since they razed all three to the ground. And of course Hamas is the villain of the entire tragic episode; no one else even competing for the title.

But there is another villain that, less than Hamas but more than anybody except Hamas, deserves the scorn of history.

A new working paper by the cognitive scientist Netta Barak-Corren of Hebrew University sheds some light on this topic, though it isn't the focus of her research. Barak-Corren was studying aid diversion in war zones, including but not limited to Gaza. But she offers crucial context about the primary aid agency, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, that paints a clear picture not only of the agency's problems but of its quasi-governmental status.

"There is abundance of evidence to indicate ... that the relationship between UNRWA and Hamas was symbiotic to a degree that UNRWA sustained much of the Hamas apparatus in Gaza, via various methods, allowing Hamas to build and sustain its war machine and authoritarian rule," Barak-Corren writes.

The UN agency was Gaza's largest employer and at one point provided four out of every five Gazans with some form of aid, she writes. It is, alone among refugee agencies, a "permanent state of affairs" rather than a temporary solution to a particular postwar problem.

As such, the UN and Hamas have essentially "formalized" a system of aid diversion. The UN also insists on Hamas-linked escorts for its aid convoys rather than independent security. And it has taken steps to prevent employee-identification policies that aid groups have acquiesced to elsewhere.

Yet the aid problem is almost beside the point when looking at the UN's activities in Gaza. As Barak-Corren writes, "the focus on physical aid diversion and taxation is to some extent a distraction from the role UNRWA plays in Hamas finances: Hamas has used its influence to insert its operatives and their family members into UNRWA, so that they account for 49% of UNRWA employees."

UNRWA also has successfully prevented an independent audit of Gaza aid and refused to report diversion incidents regarding Hamas. That means—and this is really the kicker—that "UNRWA should be seen as a streamlined aid diversion operation enjoying a unique level of international immunity and freedom from accountability."

That is, the UN agency is itself designed to be an adjunct of Hamas. Except in name, the UN is essentially not only part of the Hamas government but the key to Hamas's ability to sustain its power over the Palestinian enclave.

What does all this have to do with the 2005 disengagement? As Jonathan Schanzer has argued, Hamas's program of "Talibanization" of the Gaza Strip began almost immediately and has smothered the enclave in the nearly two decades since Hamas took full control.

But as we see from Barak-Corrin's analysis, Hamas had a partner in that process: UNRWA. Especially considering the various Western boycotts of Hamas after it dislodged Fatah from Gaza by force, sustaining a totalitarian regime and its war machine wasn't easy or cheap. The UN didn't merely abet Hamas; it was designed to be part of Hamas's key governing infrastructure. Rather than being an aid organization that Hamas took advantage of, the UN agency was constructed as a pipeline to assets and materials and influence on the outside for Hamas.

And Hamas used those resources to take the Palestinians' best chance at full self-government and turn it into an argument against Israeli disengagement from further territory. It became an engine of war and death, and then on Oct. 7, 2023, it became a symbol of world-historical evil. Gaza since disengagement is a profound condemnation of the UN and its entanglement with Hamas. Both must go before Gaza will ever get another chance. (Commentary Aug 15)

Between Illusion and Imitation: The IDF and the West's War Dilemma By General Yoav Gallant and John Spencer

No military is more publicly condemned today than the Israel Defense Forces. Yet behind closed doors, few are more studied. Western generals and defense officials routinely seek Israeli briefings, request access to doctrine and tactics, and pursue cooperation on training and technology. These efforts continue even as their political counterparts issue statements of moral outrage and condemnation. The contradiction reflects more than a double standard. It reveals a deeper divide between political perception and military reality, between external messaging and internal understanding, between illusion and experience.

Since the war in Gaza began, Israel has hosted dozens of foreign delegations. Military officers and defense officials observe Israeli operations firsthand. They ask technical questions about targeting processes, coordination between air and ground forces, real-time intelligence integration, and how combat units distinguish between civilians and combatants under fire. Some return weeks later to formalize cooperation on areas ranging from tunnel warfare to hostage recovery to civilian harm mitigation. Meanwhile, many of their political counterparts deliver rehearsed remarks emphasizing restraint, proportionality, and civilian protection, often with little connection to the operational context or ground realities they were just briefed on.

This is not just political inconsistency. It is strategic dissonance. War is never clean. Urban warfare against a hybrid enemy embedded in civilian areas is among the most complex challenges modern democracies will face. Yet the public discussion is often dominated by expectations of precision and perfection that no military force can guarantee. In many capitals, political performance overrides professional understanding.

In Gaza, Hamas constructed more than 300 miles of fortified tunnels beneath civilian infrastructure. It operates from hospitals, schools, and mosques by design, not necessity. Early in the war, the IDF learned a simple rule: if you want to find a tunnel, look beneath a school. If you are searching for an enemy headquarters, start under a mosque. If you suspect an arms depot, check the basement of a hospital. This is not coincidence; it is a consistent, deliberate tactic. Hamas has blocked evacuations, placed command centers inside humanitarian zones, and taken hundreds of hostages. These are not side effects of war. They are deliberate features of a strategy built to paralyze democracies, provoke condemnation, and weaponize civilian suffering. The targeting of civilians is not incidental. It is essential to Hamas's operational concept.

Many political leaders respond by invoking past conflicts. They reference battles in Mosul, Aleppo, Fallujah, or Raqqa, assuming these comparisons provide meaningful precedent. But most of these conflicts did not involve an adversary intentionally preventing civilians from leaving combat zones. Most did not involve hundreds of hostages dispersed across a dense urban battlefield. Most involved insurgencies, not foreign-backed terror armies. Many involved military forces that did not follow the same standards of precision and accountability expected of Israel. These differences matter. Failing to account for them leads to flawed analysis and unrealistic policy prescriptions.

These dynamics are not limited to Gaza. Across the region, similar tactics are emerging. In southern Syria, the Julani regime has carried

out atrocities against the Druze population while embedded within civilian areas. These acts of cruelty follow the same playbook used by Hamas. Yet few international voices draw consistent lines between them. This silence reflects another gap: the unwillingness to apply standards evenly when the political costs differ. Condemnation is directed at those who can hear it. Those who operate beyond the reach of democratic norms often face no scrutiny at all.

While calls for humanitarian concern grow louder, few political leaders press for solutions that would actually reduce civilian harm. Egypt continues to keep its border with Gaza closed, despite being the sole neighboring country uninvolved in the conflict and capable of providing immediate relief to civilians seeking safety. Evacuation routes remain blocked. Temporary refuge for civilians is politically possible but diplomatically ignored. Not a single major European government or United Nations body has mounted sustained pressure on Cairo to open the Rafah crossing or to establish a displaced persons or humanitarian zone a few kilometers into the Sinai. Instead, criticism centers on Israel, the only actor currently conducting both combat and humanitarian operations in the same battlespace. The imbalance distorts both perception and policy.

This is not the first time democracies have confronted hard choices. The wars of the twentieth century were waged with heavy costs. Civilian casualties were tragically high. But the principle of civilian protection was strengthened over time, especially with the Geneva Conventions adopted after World War II. Those conventions remain the foundation of the modern laws of war. They prohibit intentional attacks on civilians and impose a duty to take feasible precautions to avoid civilian harm. But they do not demand perfection, nor do they outlaw war itself. When adversaries exploit civilians to provoke condemnation and delay operations, the responsibility lies with those who commit the violations—not those who attempt to respond within the law.

The numbers bear remembering. Two million civilians died in the Korean War, averaging over 50,000 per month. More than ten thousand were killed in the liberation of a single city, Mosul. Hundreds of thousands died during military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Cities were flattened in the campaign against ISIS. These are not historical footnotes. They are reminders of what war has always entailed, especially in dense urban environments. Today, only one military—the IDF—is expected to achieve battlefield success without error, without civilian harm, and without criticism, even as it faces enemies who deliberately try to make this impossible.

Despite this, militaries around the world continue to seek Israeli knowledge. Governments initiate formal cooperation agreements. Officers train in Israeli facilities. Procurement programs focus on Israeli defense technologies developed through experience in real combat conditions. These are not isolated interactions. They are serious, structured engagements based on the recognition that similar wars may lie ahead. European and NATO militaries understand that future threats may look more like Hamas than like conventional armies. They are preparing accordingly.

This is not a blanket condemnation of all political leaders. Many do understand what modern war demands and the reality Israel is confronting. Nor is the political-professional divide a one-way street. War is ultimately the pursuit of political objectives, and in a democracy, those objectives are set by political leaders based on the best advice of their military advisors. At the same time, senior military leaders must understand the domestic, international, and geopolitical factors that frame and constrain the use of force. Political leaders cannot speak about war without accounting for context, history, strategy, tactics, and operational reality. And military leaders cannot speak about war without understanding the political environment that defines it. The tension between political and professional perspectives is not a flaw. It is a feature of democratic governance. But it must be informed, mutual, and honest.

Unfortunately, that equilibrium is too often lost. Political leaders too often avoid difficult truths. Some present war as inherently unjust. Others suggest that all violence can be avoided with diplomacy or restraint. Few acknowledge that, in extreme cases, force may be both necessary and lawful. This avoidance does not strengthen democracy. It weakens it. It misleads citizens, erodes deterrence, and gives adversaries greater freedom of action.

In Israel, such illusions are not possible. Conflict is measured in meters. Homes sit a few hundred yards from hostile territory.

Missiles arrive in seconds. Tunnels turn rear areas into front lines. Civilian buildings become military objectives by design. This is not theoretical. It is a daily reality.

On October 7, Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis, many through direct atrocities. Adjusted for population, that would be the equivalent of over 40,000 Americans or more than 8,000 Britons killed in a single day. International law permits self-defense, even in war. It also permits the use of force against military objectives. Proportionality accounts for the presence of civilians, even when they are unlawfully placed at risk by those who violate the laws of war. It requires that civilian harm not be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage and that every feasible precaution be taken to minimize that harm. Israel has done both.

Democracies must regain strategic clarity. They cannot afford to treat war as a morality play while military officers prepare for reality. They must explain to their populations that war, when necessary, is not only legal but at times morally required. They must recognize that the expectations placed on allies today may become the burdens they bear tomorrow. The next war will not wait for consensus. It will demand readiness, resolve, and truth.

If democratic leaders continue to separate what they know privately from what they say publicly, the result will not be greater morality. It will be greater suffering and failure. Silence will not deter enemies. Illusion will not protect civilians. And condemnation, without context or consistency, will not produce peace.

The hard lessons of war must be faced, not avoided. Military professionals understand this. It is time for political leaders to do the same. (X.com Aug 6)

The Winograd Commission's Unheeded Hostage Lessons

By Ruthie Blum

Anyone who thinks that Sunday's national strike is anything other than a mass tantrum is delusional. It certainly isn't helping the hostages. In fact, such displays of malaise and hysteria have been serving to encourage Hamas since before it launched its horrific invasion of southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Today, on the heels of the Cabinet decision to take over the last terrorist strongholds in Gaza—and in light of reports that Hamas might be willing to renegotiate the ceasefire proposal put forth by U.S. special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff—the attempt by the protest movement to shut down the economy is worse than counter-productive.

Indeed, the only effect such a strike can have is to convince Hamas that its intransigence works to cause a societal schism in the state it aims to annihilate. It knows that what it lacks in battlefield prowess against the Israel Defense Forces, it makes up for in the ability to play on Jewish heartstrings.

None of this is relevant to those who consider Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to be a greater threat to Israeli security than any external enemy. These people are especially buoyed by the prospect of an early election. And their use of the hostages for political gain is as transparent as it is ugly.

Predictably, these are the same people who've been insisting that a state commission of inquiry be established to examine every aspect of the Oct. 7 attacks and attribute blame where it's due. The government and its supporters want a different kind of commission—one that's not tainted by deep-state bias, particularly where the role of the courts in the debacle is concerned.

So, the argument between left and right isn't about the need for a comprehensive investigation, but rather on the makeup of the committee and the identity of its chairperson.

Setting aside the specifics of the controversy, pundit Kalman Libeskind raised a broader question in his column on Friday in the Hebrew daily Ma'ariv: "To what extent do we take the conclusions of such committees seriously, and how much interest and will do we really have to change our ways as a result of their recommendations?"

To answer his own rhetorical query—in the negative, of course—Libeskind pointed to the "commission of inquiry into the events of military engagement in Lebanon 2006." Known familiarly as the Winograd Commission, since it was headed by retired justice Eliyahu Winograd, it researched and drew lessons from the Second Lebanon War. It first convened on Sept. 18, 2006 and submitted its final report to then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and then-Defense Minister Ehud

Barak on Jan. 30, 2008.

Libeskind focused on Chapter 15 of the 600-page report, titled "Kidnapping as a Strategic Threat." Since much of his piece is "inside baseball," a review of the period in question is in order.

A Hezbollah ambush on an IDF patrol along the Lebanon border precipitated the 34-day war. In the incident, which took place on July 12, 2006, three soldiers were killed and two others—Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev—were taken hostage. It was assumed that both had been seriously wounded.

It wasn't until 2008, when their bodies were returned to Israel in exchange for Lebanese terrorist Samir Kuntar, four Hezbollah terrorists and the remains of some 200 additional Lebanese and Palestinian terrorists that they were officially pronounced dead.

Meanwhile, less than three weeks before the abduction of Goldwasser and Regev, IDF soldier Gilad Shalit was captured by Hamas terrorists in a raid via a tunnel next to Israel's southern border. He was held by Hamas for more than five years—from June 25, 2006 to Oct. 18, 2011—and was freed in a ransom deal that involved the release of 1,027 terrorists serving life sentences in Israeli prisons.

One of those many monsters was Yahya Sinwar, the mastermind of the Oct. 7 attacks, who was thankfully killed by IDF troops in Gaza on Oct. 16, 2024. It bears repeating, especially in this context, that part of his well-planned operation was the kidnapping of 251 Israelis and foreign nationals.

Some were murdered on the fateful day and dragged into Gaza. Others were killed during their captivity. Twenty of the 50 who remain—after most were either rescued or released in ceasefire deals—are still alive, starved and tortured by their sadistic captors.

Their plight pains every Israeli. How to save the living and retrieve the dead for burial, however, has become the source of an ideological battle between opposing camps.

The left is calling for a complete capitulation to Hamas as the only way to rescue them. The right is campaigning for total victory over the savages as the sole solution to the current disaster and for the sake of the future.

This is the very subject of the section of the Winograd report that Libeskind discussed in his piece. The following excerpts from the document are worth repeating to the irresponsible crowds chanting, halting commerce and blocking roads:

- "It is clear that kidnapping in our region is not only a possible event, but a central element in the operational planning of some of our enemies. This is against the background of the fact—already established as precedent—of prisoner-release deals, in which negotiations drag on for many months under enormous public pressure surrounding the families' anguish. In these deals, dozens or hundreds of people imprisoned in Israel are released to secure the release of each abducted or captured Israeli soldier or civilian, alive or dead. As a result, the practical and psychological 'profit' of a successful kidnapping event for our enemies may be significantly greater than the 'profit' from another type of attack, even if that attack causes many casualties. This situation creates an inherent incentive for the enemy—created by Israel's own policy—to attempt kidnappings."
- "We do not belittle the importance of soldiers and their families—or indeed all Israelis and their families—knowing that Israel stands behind them. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that if the captives and their families know this, so too do their abductors. It is self-evident that the more our vulnerability is perceived as greater, and the more importance we ourselves ascribe to the return of captives—the higher the 'price' demanded, and ultimately paid, for their return. To the same degree, the incentive to carry out further kidnappings increases. Therefore, the argument that almost everything must be done in order to return captives, despite its emotional force, cannot withstand scrutiny. If we act to release captives in a way that significantly increases the likelihood that others will be killed or kidnapped, then the message we are sending is not one of immense respect for the life of every soldier and civilian, but of emotional conduct that necessarily creates unnecessary risks to the lives and security of soldiers and civilians."

These conclusions were published by a committee of the sort that the protesters keep harping about. Ironically, had the above message been heeded in the 17 years since it was conveyed, the current situation might have unfolded differently. (JNS Aug 17)