

Are All Israeli Teachers Armed?

There is a picture going around the Internet I have seen about a dozen times that claims that Israeli teachers are packing heat. Well, are they? The answer is "NO."

There may be some exceptions in dangerous areas like the West Bank (where five percent of Israelis live), but in general, Israeli teachers are not walking around like it's the Wild Wild West, strapped with a six shooter. No, our teachers are not focused on shooting, but educating. That doesn't mean, however, that we don't protect young students.

In the picture, the students are on an outing. While it appears that the teacher is holding a rifle, I have never seen such a thing in ten years of living here. Rest assured however, they are under armed protection. In most cases it is an armed guard or a soldier that will accompany a class, not the teacher. And my guess is that the woman with the gun is a security guard, not a teacher.

Secondly, they are not armed in the classroom. Is that really the image you want to imprint on the minds of six-year-olds? (That would be Hamas). On the other hand, I have never seen a school in Israel that was not *fenced in*. You must go through a locked gate that is guarded by an armed *shomer*, a security guard. He or she, on the other hand, is not concerned with educating, *but* protecting. He or she will ask you why you are there? What is your child's name? Show me your I.D. card. And he or she would not let you bring a weapon inside.

These types of massacres don't seem to happen here for other reasons as well. Despite the stereotype of Israel being a violent nation, it is a million times (slight exaggeration) easier to get a weapon in the U.S. than it is in Israel. Gun

control laws are very strict here.

Two types of people have guns in Israel: Soldiers and those with licenses. Mentally unstable people don't have guns—and thus, don't shoot people. And it is not as easy to steal a gun as it is in the U.S. When you are drafted you go through mental tests to see if there are any red flags. If so, you will be discharged or placed in an area where you would never see a rifle.

Only those with the rank of Captain or Lieutenant Colonel for at least two years can qualify to own a gun after the army. And those who do have guns are taught to guard them carefully. For soldiers who take their weapons home, it must be on their person at all times or under lock and key.

Losing a weapon will get you a jail sentence, as my wife's childhood friend, Moti, found out two decades ago. He left his gun in his car because he was just running into a minimart. He came back and the gun was gone. He spent six months in jail and God only knows where that gun ended up.

Hunting is not popular in Israel, so it would be rare to see someone with five or six hunting rifles and therefore, neither would their son, who spends ten hours a day playing mortal combat, have access to them.

We are fond of saying "Guns don't kill people, people do... But we could also say that mentally unstable people who can't obtain assault rifles or even pistols are far less likely to commit mass murder.

Assault rifles are banned in Israel, except in areas where there is a security risk such as the West Bank.

"Unlike in the United States, where the right to bear arms is guaranteed in the Constitution's Second Amendment, Israel's department of public security considers gun ownership a privilege, not a right. Gun owners in Israel are limited to

owning one pistol, and must undergo extensive mental and physical tests before they can receive a weapon, and gun owners are limited to 50 rounds of ammunition per year." ()

I don't think that those who drafted the Second Amendment imagined that those who feel rejected at school or who were bullied would have access not merely to a musket that fires one bullet at a time before reloading, but to an arsenal of pistols, assault rifles and more, such as in the case of James Holmes, who killed several people earlier this year during a screening of Batman.

I think the amendment was for people like Israelis who live in the West Bank and are under the threat of attack all the time. I am far too ignorant concerning the "Gun Control" issue to give much of an educated opinion. But I don't like people using Israel as an example, since we make it very difficult to own a gun.

However, I think we should be an example of a country that makes sure that the right people get guns and the wrong people don't. In 2008, an Arab terrorist opened fire in a Yeshiva (school for religious boys) killing eight young men. An off-duty IDF officer grabbed his gun, just as he was putting his kids to bed. He ran out of the house and into the Yeshiva, where he hunted down the terrorist, shooting him before a security guard also put two bullets in his head.

In another incident not long afterwards, a Arab worker went berserk with his bulldozer turning it into a killing machine. Oron Ben Shimon, an armed civilian, jumped onto the bulldozer along with a soldier. Ben Shimon struggled with the terrorist, while the soldier, at Ben Shimon's urging, shot him dead, saving many lives.

Israel's successful gun ownership laws both serve to make sure upstanding, brave and mentally sound citizens have access to guns, and that those who present even a minor threat are

prevented from possessing one. It would be a mistake to use Israel as the poster child for more weapons in the U.S., as our success here is much more connected to limiting weapons and enabling strategies such as gates, fences and armed guards (not armed teachers), to protect our children. Sorry to disappoint, but the truth is important.

For the original article, visit .

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