

Israeli Security Breach Draws Little Attention

Last Independence Day, Israel Hayom photographer Ziv Koren and I toured Israel's borders. We went to the Egyptian and Gaza Strip borders, as well as the Syrian and Lebanese borders, the crossings to Jordan and the West Bank separation fence in northern Samaria.

We saw the incredible investment Israel made, both in money (billions) and equipment (technology), to stop infiltration and reduce threats.

So when we got a phone call from farmers in Lachish about the numerous break-ins in their area, we were incredulous. But the stories were so troubling—and the statistics so dramatic—that we decided to drive there on Wednesday and see things for ourselves. To speak in cliches, what we saw was not a fence but a hole—a black hole.

Our talks with security forces revealed that everyone is aware of the problem, and every week the item appears on their desks at the Judea (Hebron) Brigade, which is in charge of the territory; at the Judea and Samaria Division; at Central Command and their counterparts in the Israel Police; at Border Police; and at Shin Bet.

Everyone knows just how big the hole is, the extent of the damage that has already been done and how troubling its future potential is. Just to clarify things, since the beginning of 2013, more than 20 terror cells in the West Bank were busted and their members arrested for planning to abduct Israelis. Had one of them decided on Wednesday to use one of the surrounding Palestinian villages as a launching point, nothing would have stood in their way of kidnapping a soldier at the Lachish training base or a civilian at any one of the nearby

communities.

Despite the clear and present danger, nothing is happening to remedy the situation. Members of the security establishment talk about tactical operations, but the herders and farmers in the area can't remember the last time they saw an Israel Defense Forces ambush in place, or even a patrol. They now take it upon themselves to defend the fence and secure all the cattle and every tractor.

Sound ridiculous? This is the day-to-day reality at the Lachish strip.

Even repair work on the breached fence hasn't been carried out, making the barrier that was meant to stop terrorist attacks and thievery one big, inviting hole. One feels compelled to say that one day everyone will wake up when it's too late, after a terrorist attack or abduction is carried out, yet still, we should hope that someone— the defense minister, public security minister, chief of general staff or police commissioner—will decide this very morning to act and do what's necessary.

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