

You're Fired, 'Prophet', and You Know Why

If you're following the war against Hamas now, you're likely bombarded by news of suffering of Palestinian Arabs, almost as much as we have been bombarded by Palestinian Arabs' rockets. Much of this is fake news, perpetrated by Hamas and other Arab/Islamic terror groups using images and "statistics" of "suffering" to play to your sensibility.

Don't get me wrong. There is suffering; and it's a shame. But any real suffering is largely self-inflicted, and you're simply not seeing the whole story and context. Let me explain.

It's not only the "suffering" that you are seeing that we should care about, but the suffering that you are not seeing. There are many Palestinian Arab victims of the war, but these are all a direct consequence of Hamas' terror.

One that you're not seeing is economic. I live in a Judean-mountain community south of Jerusalem with Palestinian Arab communities surrounding us. Before Oct. 7, there was not peace in the sense of the relationship as between the U.S. and Canada. But there was peaceful coexistence, even mutual respect, and a sense that we relied upon one another.

Before Oct. 7, hundreds of Palestinian Arab men and women came to work in our community from adjacent Arab communities daily. I joked that on some days, there were more Arab men in our community than Jewish men, because the Arabs come in to work here, and Jewish men commute to their work elsewhere. In my home alone, we've had Arab workers such as Ahmed, Omar, Mustafa, Fares, Imad, Auni, Morad and Mohammed, among others.

In all cases, *all* cases, we had cordial to friendly and respectful relations with all these people and their staff. They provide services we need at a good value, and we pay them

much more than they could earn in their communities (if any work were to be found there). A free market can do wonders for coexistence. We offer them coffee and cake regularly, and cold drinks and watermelon on hot days.

After Oct. 7, all these people and many others who earned a living in Israeli Jewish communities (about 1/3 of the Palestinian Arab economy) will suffer, as people like us no longer want to risk having Arabs in our community and homes. Across the street from my daughter's home is an elementary school where a Palestinian Arab woman cleans the school and is there all hours of the day. After the slaughtering of scores of infants and children on Oct. 7, no parent is going to want an Arab woman working among their children. The same as in one of our shopping centers. And much more.

Before Oct. 7, the dusty parking lot adjacent to my town where Palestinian Arabs would park before coming to work and undergoing a security check was full, Sunday-Thursday. It looked like a commuter parking lot anywhere, minus neatly lined-up cars. Now it is empty.

Maybe indeed many of these people are truly good people; they want peace, or at least accept and respect us enough not to drink the terrorists' vile Kool-Aid that we are foreign occupiers and must be killed. These are not hollow threats. Maybe. But in the wake of Oct. 7, Israeli authorities have detained and interrogated many who once worked in the communities in which they committed inhuman atrocities.

There are reports of former workers mapping out the communities which they raided, identifying homes of security personnel, who had dogs (that might threaten the terrorists) and more. How do I know that Ahmed, Omar, Mustafa, Fares, Imad, Auni, Morad or Mohammed are not spies for Hamas, or that Hamas won't threaten them to commit a similar act of murder here by threatening their own families?

The year we moved to Israel there was once such instance. A Palestinian Arab worker who was well known and had been hosted in many of my Jewish neighbors' homes came into town on a Friday, the Muslim sabbath and usually a day off. A curious neighbor followed him until it became clear he was about to detonate a bomb under his coat. Fortunately, my neighbor was armed, and quicker than the terrorist. But the carnage inside the grocery store could have been vast.

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In Jerusalem, it's worse. There have been widespread celebrations of the massacre of Oct. 7 by Jerusalem Arabs: in public, on social media and even where they work, "peacefully" among Jewish Israelis. To say that Israeli Jews feel insecure and unsafe around their Arab Muslim coworkers and neighbors is an understatement.

It is the literal and proper definition of Islamophobia, and for good reason. It's a thin line between celebrating the inhuman massacre of civilians and perpetrating those acts themselves. As a consequence, many Jerusalem Arabs are going to find themselves out of work too. All thanks to their terror masters of Hamas and in Iran.

Whether in Jerusalem, or Gaza or Judea, where I live, let's be clear: There is no perceived wrong to anyone that justifies the horrors that we've witnessed and, from which, more than two weeks later, bodies are still not yet able to be identified. The rape, beheading, burning alive and execution of Jewish Israelis in their homes is not "resistance" or the work of "freedom fighters."

It is the work of evil, an evil that goes to the core of extremist Islam housed in Iran, with tentacles around the world in places like Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and

more.

But let's return to sympathy for the "suffering" Palestinian Arabs. It cannot be overstated enough that all this suffering is self-inflicted. It is self-inflicted because of the evil of Hamas using its own civilians as human shields and robbing them of any opportunity for prosperity as billions in cash and tons of supplies have been used to build up its war machine rather than investing in the well-being of average Gazan Palestinian Arabs.

But let's also be clear about one more thing. The average Gazan Palestinian Arab actually supports Hamas. According to a recent poll by a respected Arab pollster, 57% of Gazans support Hamas. Many more support other even more extremist groups (if that were even possible). So, before anyone turns to blame Israel for any of their suffering, let them look into the mirror, and let the rest of the world hold their lies under a microscope on full view for all to see.

Indeed, the economic consequences will be significant. But it's far more than economic. To the extent that there were trust and opportunities for peaceful coexistence, these are also Hamas' victims. Palestinian Arabs who used to be able to make a good living in places where they were appreciated and respected, and be able to put food on their own tables, will no longer be able to do so. Thanks to Hamas.

Muhammad, I'll miss your visit and talking about our families. I'll regret when I used to pass you a few 100-shekel bills for your work, that now you may have less food for your family.

I am sorry for the situation, really, because I saw our relationship as a microcosm of what could be. But now, I am not willing to take any risks for my family, even at the consequence of you and your family suffering. {eo}

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