



The Promised Land

The Israel-Hamas war and the future of the Jewish community in Canada

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To Iran:

Hamas benefits from continued support and assistance from the radical Islamist regime in Iran, which has shamefully and predictably glorified and celebrated these barbaric attacks as another step in their campaign to destroy Israel. Iran supports, both covertly and overtly, any party that can help contribute to that goal of eradicating Israel, including contributing over \$100m to Hamas last year. Iran's support of Hamas and other terrorist actors – such as Hezbollah – has gone on for years and this unacceptable act of terror adds new urgency for the Canadian government finally to place the most robust and rigorous sanctions possible on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), up to and including listing them as a terrorist group. Canada should also support the United States' call for Israel's neighbours not to exacerbate the conflict now underway in Israel and Gaza.

To our Jewish friends and neighbours around the world:

In this time of great sorrow and pain, we at MLI want to make it perfectly clear that we stand with our Jewish friends, neighbours and colleagues. The world must know that we reject anti-Jewish hatred and we urge the governments of Canada and other nations to take urgent steps to denounce anti-Semitism wherever it rears its ugly and pathetic head.

To the Government of Canada and its friends and allies:

We at MLI stand unambiguously with Israel in the face of these barbaric attacks, and wish to reiterate that Israel's existence and safety, as well as the safety and security of the Jewish community worldwide, cannot and must not be threatened with impunity. We urge the Government of Canada and the governments of all liberal democracies to do the same and to condemn in the clearest possible terms all anti-Semitism as well as the calls from Hamas supporters in their own populations to abandon our friend and ally Israel and to throw in our lot with those who kidnap and murder innocents to get their way.

Am Yisrael chai.

Shorter-term and more easily achievable measures should include severe consequences – including expulsion – for any intentionally disruptive activities, or for activities which damage school property. For instance, on August 30, pro-Palestinian protestors at McGill were seen destroying a freshly laid lawn on campus. What consequences will they face beyond the release of some dull statement by school officials? What about the people who, on May 2, set up another encampment at the University of Toronto? Will they be punished in any substantive way? Probably not.

At Dalhousie University in Halifax, students were actually given permission to “miss one class or assessment per course” to participate in the encampments until the end of August. Here is a thought – perhaps students who sympathize more with terrorists than they do with rape and murder victims should not get amnesty to torment Jews and vandalize campuses. Is that too much to ask? Further – why is it that universities seem so averse to relying on their own codes of conduct to punish students and staff who participate in activities which clearly prejudice their institutions? These codes give administrations the power to act – why aren’t they using them?

In addition, we now know many people who participate in these campus protests are not even students. Given that, schools should require proof of identification and enrollment to participate in peaceful protests or activities on campus. Everyone else should be sent packing. Masks and face coverings used to conceal identity should also be banned. The University of California has, for instance, already put in place a ban of this nature. Given there is already precedent in the U.S. for such a ban, why not enforce it on campuses here?

Universities should also work with the relevant authorities to identify and swiftly revoke the study permits of any international students who engage in antisemitic behaviours or break the law. If clear guidelines and policies do not yet exist to enable schools or government officials to pursue this – creating and clearly communicating them to incoming students should be a priority. The revocation of scholarships, grants, bursaries, co-op placement offers, exchange program offers, and other perks and benefits should also be on the table for those engaged in any of this nonsense.

Ultimately, Universities need to wake up to the fact that such overt discrimination and harassment, veiled as something positive or righteous, will, over time, move from destabilizing trolly to the normalization of widespread antisemitism. These behaviours will not remain limited to university campuses. They will permeate throughout our society. In our academic institutions, the pursuit of truth is increasingly becoming off-limits, political extremism is typically accepted and embraced, and well-informed respectful debate is becoming less common, while antisemitism is surging. All of these things are connected – and all of these things need to be fixed before it is too late. ●

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“transnational terrorism” forced Canadian agencies to regularly work with global partners in support of both high-level counter-terrorism strategies and individual investigations.

Thanks to these efforts, Canadian law enforcement has charged close to sixty people for jihadist or RMVE terrorism offences under Canada’s Criminal Code. Three others – Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, Aaron Driver, and Martin Couture-Rouleau – were not charged as they were fatally shot in the conduct of their attacks).

During post-arrest interviews, most people charged with terrorism offences in Canada claimed to be motivated by the country’s foreign policy. They condemned Canada for being too “pro-Israel,” or for taking part in Western military counter-terrorism operations in South and Central Asia that they believed indiscriminately targeted Muslim populations.

Diminishing concerns and shifting priorities

As years passed, the threat of jihadist terrorism in Canada gradually receded into the background – surfacing occasionally in the media when an attack was successful, or when intelligence and law-enforcement agencies successfully thwarted planned attacks.

Fortunately, planned or successful attacks were typically ad-hoc (i.e. not part of any sustained or organized strategy), amateurish, and infrequent, with generally little impacts on broader society. As a result, the public generally grew more confident in security and law-enforcement agencies to keep them safe from radical jihadism.

However, after more than a decade of focusing almost exclusively on the jihadist-motivated threat, national security and law-enforcement practitioners and policy-makers within Canada and the US began to redefine the scope and nature of what constituted “terrorism.”

This occurred even as the Islamic State reached the peak of its geographic occupation of sections of Syria and Iraq in 2015, and despite the fact that jihadist-motivated terrorism, when considered from a global perspective, was (and still remains) the dominant terrorist threat in terms of the number of attacks and associated lethality.

Despite this, US law enforcement and security agencies began to shift their concern, and attention, to the spread of extreme right-wing or white supremacist violence in that country. A succession of high-profile attacks – Charleston in 2015, Pittsburgh in 2018, and El Paso in 2019 – motivated by extreme right wing narratives, highlighted the threat. A 2021 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies organization (CSIS, based in Washington, DC – not to be confused with the Canadian security agency) indicated 94 per cent of recent terrorist incidents in the US were linked to what it defined as “domestic terrorism,” while jihadist-based attacks amounted to only five percent. In October 2020, the Department of Homeland Security stated for the first time that domestic violent extremists, rather than “foreign terrorist organizations,” were the most persistent and lethal threat to the nation.

On October 31, 2023, FBI Director Christopher Wray told the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, “We assess that the actions of Hamas and its allies will serve as an inspiration the likes of which we haven’t seen since ISIS launched its so-called caliphate years ago. In just the past few weeks, multiple foreign terrorist organizations have called for attacks against Americans and the West.” In its 2023 annual report (*Mission Focused: Confronting the Threat Environment*), the Canadian Security Intelligence Service noted that IMVE-motivated terrorism within Canada remained a prime threat, religiously motivated attacks in particular would likely rise in 2024. “CSIS assesses inspired attacks across the globe will continue during 2024, at an unpredictable pace, related in part to world events... [and] charismatic RMVE leaders in Canada continue to use international events to amplify their propaganda to radicalize and recruit vulnerable individuals while encouraging both domestic acts of violence and international travel to conflict zones.”

Since the October 7 Hamas terror attacks, Europe has seen a disturbing rise in religiously motivated terror-related arrests, with nearly two-thirds of the cases since October 2023 involving teenagers. At the time of writing, the most recent example involved a knife attack in late August in Solingen, Germany, that killed three people and wounded eight. The suspect, a 26-year-old Syrian immigrant, was allegedly inspired by Islamic State ideology.

The attack took place less than three months after a similar attack in Mannheim, an ethnically diverse city in the country’s west, just over 200 kilometres south of Solingen. In that case, a knife-wielding Afghan refugee allegedly attacked a crowd gathered for an anti-immigrant rally, killing a police officer who tried to intervene.

Still in Germany, police foiled a terrorist plot targeting the Euro 2024 soccer tournament hours before the final game between England and Spain. And, of course, there was the high-profile Islamic State-inspired attack in Moscow in March of this year, and the cancellation of Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna in August due to a threat from jihadist-motivated, Islamic State-inspired terrorists aged 19 and 17 years of age. The suspects in the foiled plot reportedly sought to kill “tens of thousands” of fans before the CIA discovered intelligence that disrupted the planning and led to arrests, according to the agency’s deputy director.

Terror on the home front?

Closer to home, Canadians are increasingly concerned about the threat of rising jihadist-inspired terrorism.

Prior to ongoing Hamas-Israel war, Canadian authorities had charged only a handful of individuals for jihadist-motivated terrorism. Recent cases include a knife attack by an ISIL adherent in British Columbia and an instance of incitement/recruitment in support of terrorism in Montreal (both events happened in 2023). But within the past two months alone, there have been five separate incidents where Canadians or people with domicile in Canada have either launched jihadist-motivated attacks or been involved in their planning.

entails when it comes to the threat and risk posed by jihadist-motivated terrorism in Canada. ●

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The examples of many in the Arab/Muslim diaspora in the West and Arab citizens of the Gulf tell us that lack of democracy and social development are not triggering their restless and violent behaviour. Despite all these years of attempting to combat terrorism, the radicalization of Muslim populations has become worse, not less, since 9/11.

Is it the Palestinian question that has triggered recent protesters? Again, no evidence. They don't rise and protest human rights violations in their own home countries.

Let's put this question in another way. Would these protesters be happy if Palestinians got their state? Still no evidence. Because for most of them, the demand is for all the land "from river to the sea," which means they want Jews and Israel gone. If Jews agreed to leave and Israel was no more, would attacks against the West and Jews in other parts of the world end?

The answer is a big no.

Here's the problem. Due to regressive education systems in the Muslim world, many of their populations live in a perceived glorified past. Many are indoctrinated as being culturally and religiously superior to the West – meaning Christian and Jewish cultures. They want to bring everyone else down so they can maintain their supremacy.

Fighting wars will not change this mindset. And democracy and social development will only work if someone wants them.

Amid the rise of woke-ism and political correctness, many are almost forgetting that 9/11 ever happened. The gen Z generation has no recollection of this horrific event.

The only thing the West can do is protect its communities and streets with strong law enforcement and promote Western values to immigrant communities. ●

Raheel Raza and **Mohammad Rizwan** are members of The Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism. **Raheel Raza** is also a Senior Fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Bill C-353, which is based on the January 2021 legislative proposal co-published by Secure Canada (formerly known as the Canadian Coalition Against Terror) and the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, would provide Canadian officials with more tools to effectively combat hostage-taking and arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations.

The first part of the bill would create a dedicated sanctions mechanism whereby sanctions can be imposed on foreign nationals, foreign states, or foreign entities responsible for, or complicit in, the hostage-taking or arbitrary detention of Canadian nationals or refugees. Sanctions may also be levied against foreign nationals, foreign states, or foreign entities that have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, such hostage-taking or arbitrary detention.

The second part of the bill would require Canadian officials to provide more consistent support to family members of those held hostage or arbitrarily detained abroad. A *Toronto Star* investigation from 2016 exposed the inconsistent, inadequate nature of the government's support and communications with families of hostages, but very little has changed in this regard since then.

The third part of the bill would encourage and enable increased multilateral cooperation by, among other things, enabling the Canadian government to provide monetary rewards and/or refugee protection to foreign nationals who provide information leading to the release and repatriation of a Canadian hostage or individual arbitrarily detained. These discretionary tools may serve not only to incentivize cooperation but also to protect those who help us by bringing them to safety in Canada.

In February 2021, Canada launched the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations in Ottawa. The next natural step is substantial legal reform to address specific gaps.

Going beyond declarations and passing substantive law to combat hostage-taking and arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations will help improve the safety of Canadians abroad by giving greater teeth to the government's efforts to combat these crimes and, ultimately, deter the behaviour in the first place. Such legislation may embolden policymakers to leverage a variety of tools to pressure those responsible and raise the costs associated with taking Canadians hostage. ●

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Immigration Minister Marc Miller countered Sen. Rubio's claims, calling them "categorically false" and maintaining that approved Gazans would be ineligible for citizenship.

While Rubio did mischaracterize the special measures being offered to Gazans, falsely suggesting they would be issued refugee travel documents to replace their foreign passports, his concerns are still justified given the ubiquitous nature of Hamas in Gaza.

In addition to expressing widespread support for Hamas and the atrocities of October 7, the deep-rooted antisemitic and anti-western views among the Gazan population are well-documented.

Moreover, Miller's claim about their citizenship ineligibility is inaccurate, as the Gazans who immigrate under this program are able to apply for open work permits, which could make them eligible for permanent residency under the Express Entry program.

Although the governments of Israel and Egypt are assisting Ottawa with this initiative, an Israeli government official, who requested anonymity, admitted to me that they had "obvious security concerns about Canada taking people out of Gaza."

A Canadian MP familiar with the Gaza program told me that even though the Palestinians may have cleared the security process, there is no way of really knowing "what is in their hearts," and whether they will end up being potential threats to Canada or its allies.

It is worth pointing out that, following the October 7 attacks, Canada has taken in the most Palestinians – 987 are presumed to have travelled to Canada as of April 30, according to Miller – while the wealthy Middle Eastern states continue to refuse Palestinians entry.

The warning signs are flashing. Terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State are capitalizing on the Israel-Hamas war to propagate attacks against the West. It should be clear by now that Ottawa's security screening process is unreliable and a broken immigration system poses a serious threat to public safety and the national security of Canada and its allies.

Policy decisions on critical files like immigration and national security should not be based on diaspora politics. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would be wise to learn from the failed immigration policies of Europe and the United Kingdom, and prevent Canada from going down a similar path. ●

Joe Adam George is a national security analyst on Middle East and South Asia affairs and has written for the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

Extremist voices could try to legitimize overtly antisemitic speech and conspiracy theories about Jews by couching it in the language of anti-racism. The artificial term also risks conflating Palestinian identity and rights with opposition to the world's only Jewish state, essentially defining anti-Zionism as anti-racism in a manner that provides cover for antisemitic expression. Both these trends are currently being witnessed on university campuses throughout the country.

Just promoting the concept could cast a chill on free speech, academic inquiry and open discourse relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict out of fears of facing accusations of anti-Palestinian racism.

The push to include the concept of anti-Palestinian racism in our school systems' anti-discrimination policies is designed to perpetuate age-old prejudices against Jewish people and undermine societal solidarity against antisemitism. School boards should not allow their own fears about being called racists prevent them from standing against this ill-conceived policy. ●

Raheel Raza is the director of the Council of Muslims Against Antisemitism.

freedom of religion and speech aim to corrupt the region with their secular values, thereby making the Islamic Republic's worldview unpalatable to its neighbours.

However, government leaders in Ottawa have rarely blamed or even mentioned Iran for enabling and encouraging the October 7 massacre. Instead, their policies and rhetoric have effectively treated the war in Gaza as a self-contained, localized conflict untethered to any broader struggle between Iran and the West. This blind spot has led Ottawa to articulate an incoherent Middle East policy that unintentionally benefits both Hamas and Tehran.

Consider Trudeau's response to Hamas's slaughter of Hersch Goldberg-Polin and five other Israeli hostages. The murders are "devastating and enraging," he wrote on X. "Canada stands with the victims' families in your grief." He added: "Hamas must release all hostages, lay down its arms, and have no future in the governance of Gaza. Leaders must reach a deal to bring the rest of the hostages home and end the violence."

Notably, the prime minister makes no mention of Iran. Rather, he effectively treats Hamas, and by extension Tehran, as a political actor that the West can constrain with an agreement that provides its adversaries with concessions. Thus, rather than consistently support Israel's military campaign in Gaza, Trudeau has called on Jerusalem to exercise "maximum restraint." In March, Ottawa froze arms exports to Israel. In June, Canada endorsed a ceasefire plan outlined by the United States that would have left Hamas intact, contradicting Israel's stated war objective of completely destroying the terrorist group.

These policies are music to Hamas and Iran's ears.

Hamas is no ordinary political party. Rather, it's a hate-driven antisemitic force, reminiscent of ISIS and al-Qaeda, that harbours genocidal aspirations against the one and only Jewish state. Concessions will not lead such an organization to reform. Rather, to eliminate the threat, Canada and the West need to back Israel's military campaign. As importantly, they must explicitly blame Iran for fueling Hamas's aggression.

Such steps would directly advance Canadian interests. The Islamic Republic is unlikely to bring the perpetrators of Flight PS752's downing to justice so long as it has a de facto green light from the West to wreak havoc against Israel and the West. Likewise, Tehran may not hesitate to attack Canadian citizens directly – whether in Canada, Israel, Iran, or elsewhere – if the regime perceives Ottawa as weak and unprincipled by failing to support the Jewish state in its time of need.

In her eulogy for her son, Rachel Goldberg-Polin said, "I also pray that your death will be a turning point in this horrible situation in which we are all entangled." Ottawa should take these words to heart. Only a resounding Hamas defeat backed by the West can persuade Iran that its grisly agenda stands no chance of success. All Canadians should regard themselves as personally invested in this outcome. ●

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