

MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE

THE PROMISED LAND

2023 - 2024



The Promised Land Project

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Canada's premier think tank, has launched The Promised Land project in the wake of Hamas's unconscionable attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, and the unprecedented wave of anti-Semitism and extremism that followed, both domestically and internationally.

On 7 October 2023, Israel endured a harrowing terrorist attack that claimed innocent lives, including seven Canadians, and shook the world. This assault targeted not just Israel but the core of Western values, challenging principles of humanity, justice, and democratic rights. In its aftermath, rising antisemitism, radical ideologies, and anti-Israel rhetoric have unsettled Jewish communities in Canada and the world. With a few honourable exceptions, our leaders have responded with equivocation and surrender. The MLI is tackling this vacuum of moral and intellectual leadership head on with its Promised Land project: a pioneering policy program that aims to address critical gaps in Canadian understanding of Israel and the Middle East, combat growing antisemitism, and counter extremism to uphold democratic values and foster informed dialogue.

The project finds its genesis in the statement we issued in the days following 7 October (see page 2). We then began to realize that anti-Semitism and extremism thrive when their opponents are silent and divided.

The Promised Land project was conceived to bring together thought leaders from across the country—Christians and Jews, Muslims and secularists, to amplify their vital voices in defence of peace, order and good government domestically and internationally, including for Jews and Israel. You can see just some of the people involved in the project on page 38. In addition, we are partnering with other organisations like Secure Canada, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Muslims Facing the Future, the International Legal Forum and others who share our objectives.

On the pages that follow, you will find a compilation of our Promised Land team's most notable efforts. We hope you enjoy the read, and that you may be inspired to join us on this important mission in defence of the values underpinning western democracy.

Table of Contents

Statement by MLI on the attacks against Israel by Hamas.....2

Promised Land in the News4

Promised Land Commentary5-33

Promised Land in Conversation with34-36

Promised Land Successes37

Promised Land Advisory Group38





THE MACDONALD-LAURIER INSTITUTE



True North in Canadian Public Policy

› Sir Antony Fisher Award for excellence in think tank publications, 2011

› One of the top 3 new think tanks in the world: University of Pennsylvania, 2013

› Top North American Social Policy think tank:
2018 Prospect Magazine Think Tank Awards

Statement by MLI on the attacks against Israel by Hamas

October 17, 2023

To our friend and ally Israel:

The State of Israel is a legitimate and welcome member of the community of nations whose right to exist is uncontested historically, legally and morally.

All states, including Israel, have the right to defend themselves and their citizens from enemies, both internal and external.

Israel has repeatedly offered its Palestinian neighbours land in exchange for peace. Those offers have repeatedly been rebuffed by Palestinian politicians who prefer to hold out to their people the vain hope that Israel will be pushed into the sea. Israel is not going anywhere, nor should it. Anyone who wants peace in the Middle East must start by recognising Israel's legitimacy and right to defend itself and its people. The Abraham Accords and other such agreements with Egypt and Jordan prove that such a peace is possible and is supported by many Arab countries in the region. It is our hope that they will soon be joined by Saudi Arabia.

Palestinians under the leadership of Hamas in Gaza, especially, will not make an honourable peace with Israel and Hamas continues to preach the destruction of that country and its people. Israel has therefore been forced to take steps to protect its people from the threat represented by Hamas's irredentists. These justified steps include building security fences and strictly controlling the movement of Gaza residents into Israel.

To Hamas:

Having created the conditions in which Israel, for its own safety and security, must protect itself from sworn enemies on its borders, Hamas and its apologists then have the temerity to blame Israel for the plight of Palestinians in Gaza and use Israel's perfectly legitimate security measures as justification for the murderous terrorist attacks of last week. This justification is dishonest, dishonourable and disgraceful and must be rejected and decried by all civilised peoples. So too must Hamas's efforts to put their very own population in harm's way in an obvious attempt to delegitimise Israel's efforts to dismantle Hamas and protect Israelis. These transparent ploys fool no one.

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.

Promised Land in the News ...



“Can the UN get much worse?” Hillel Neuer and Casey Babb on Inside Policy Talks

NATIONAL POST

Andrew Bennett: Synagogue 'bubble zones' aren't the answer to hate. Existing laws are

The Criminal Code already provides tools to protect faith communities, but the problem is they aren't being used.

Mar 28, 2024

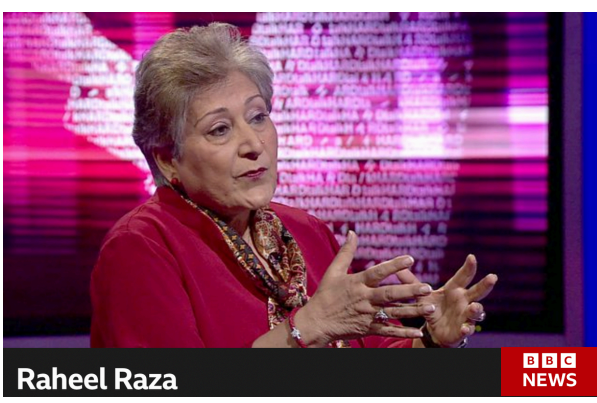
The Trudeau Liberals are sending not-so-mixed messages on their approach to antisemitism

Despite some course corrections, the Liberals haven't proven to Jewish communities in Canada why the government should be trusted to keep them safe.

OPINION | BY DAN PUJDAK | March 25, 2024



Who's bankrolling anti-Israel demonstrations? Casey Babb on Sky News Australia



Raheel Raza

THE FREEPRESS

Casey Babb, a national security expert, said Canada's Muslims should not be simply tarred with the brush of Judeophobia. But the phenomenon of fashionably "anti-Zionist" antisemitism has merged seamlessly with constituencies of newcomers from cultures where antisemitism is deeply rooted, Babb said, referencing Middle Eastern countries that once had ancient and thriving Jewish communities, now completely purged by pogrom and massacre.

"It would be insanely naive to think people would come here and abandon long held, pre-existing, religiously motivated, and culturally ingrained beliefs about Jews just because they're now in Canada," Babb told me. They haven't. And those toxic ideas about Jews have merged with critical theory leftism to bring the country to a frightening juncture. Canada has now entered what Babb called "a dark and terrible period of systemic, normalized, and institutionalized Jew-hatred."

The statistical evidence suggests that Babb is correct.

USA Today

Trump is right about radical Islam: Raheel Raza

Raheel Raza, a Toronto-based Muslim human rights activist, is featured in the Clarion Project films *By the Numbers: The Untold Story of Muslim...*

FINANCIAL POST

Recognition of Palestinian state about politics, not law

May 31, 2024 — Palestine does not fit the legal definition of a state, writes Jack Mintz. Read more.

Hamas is Palestine's worst enemy: Dan Pujdak and William Barclay in the Western Standard

This article originally appeared in the Western Standard

By Dan Pujdak and William Barclay, December 6, 2024

Since the horrific events of October 7, countless political actors have attempted to misconstrue Hamas as a cohort of embattled freedom fighters who struggle valiantly on behalf of a beleaguered Palestinian people. Unfortunately, Hamas is utterly unconcerned with the plight of the Palestinian people and for decades, Hamas's leadership has brutally oppressed Gaza.

For example, Hamas' leadership embezzles the overwhelming majority of any international aid, in order to enrich themselves and viciously attack the people of Israel. Furthermore, Hamas' leaders have imposed exorbitant 'taxes' on all humanitarian aid that enters Gaza and frequently refuse to pay for electricity in Gaza, in order to misappropriate funds towards their own hellish military endeavours and terrorist attacks against Israelis.

In fact, although 80% of Gaza's population is currently forced to live in abject poverty, Hamas' leaders possess assets worth approximately \$500 million US and maintain an annual military budget of \$350 million US. As a result, Palestinians have been left bereft of vital infrastructure, as well as countless basic necessities, such as food, water and hospitals. Even Hamas' own commanders and leaders, those not living in luxury in Doha, are routinely forced to travel to Israel in order to receive medical services, despite their own emphatic desire to force every last Jew 'into the sea'.

Moreover, Hamas eagerly oppresses various vulnerable populations and minorities in Palestine. Homosexuality, for instance, is illegal in Gaza, and any suspected sexual minorities can face abuse, harassment and even death. Even the UN itself has identified the safety, human rights, and dignity of LGBTQ+ people in Palestine as an area of grave concern.

Furthermore, women in Palestine lack numerous fundamental human rights and cannot even travel without the oversight and express permission of a male guardian. Hamas has permitted sexual assault to become rampant in Gaza and girls of all ages are routinely brutalized and forced into marriages against their will. Sadly, women and girls in Gaza are also frequently the subject of 'honour killings' at Hamas' behest, and, from 2015-2020, femicide in Palestine actually increased by 100%.

In fact, although countless North American political actors and pundits furiously preoccupy themselves with abolishing the state of Israel, the Palestinian people themselves are not at all immediately concerned with erasing the Jewish nation.

Rather, the Palestinian people desperately desire to escape Hamas.

CONT'D

For example, in 2022, scores of Palestinian people and pro-Palestinian activists inundated Twitter to condemn Hamas via the hashtag #TheyKidnappedGaza. Even Amer Balosha, one of the modern era's most courageous pro-Palestinian activists, bravely risked his life to reveal that "Hamas has billions of dollars in investments in many countries, while people [in Gaza] starve to death and migrate in search of work..."

Prior to the events of October 7th, the Middle East's most comprehensive public opinion project, Arab Barometer, confirmed that over 67% of Gazans were deeply distrustful of Hamas. In addition, Arab Barometer's study revealed that 72% of Gazans believe Hamas is corrupt and that Gazans have started to reject not merely Hamas, but the entire Palestinian leadership as a whole.

More importantly, Arab Barometer's landmark 2023 study reaffirms that Gazans themselves overwhelmingly desire to escape Hamas and that the majority of Gazans favour a 'two-state solution'. If Hamas were interested in the concerns of its citizens, why would it have launched its attacks? In Hamas' own words: Our job is to fight; it is "...the UN's responsibility to protect [Palestinians]."

Sadly, although various North American politicians and pro-Palestinian activists have attempted to cultivate support for the Palestinian cause by misconstruing Hamas as freedom fighters and brave champions of the Palestinian people, it is clear that Gazans themselves overwhelmingly consider Hamas to be their own most urgent threat.

Anyone who peddles the tattered narrative that 'the state of Israel must be abolished in order for the Palestinian people to be free' inevitably prolongs the real suffering of Palestinians and Jews alike. We urge every 'Palestinian ally' to listen earnestly to the people that they purport to help: Palestinians need to be free from Hamas.

Trudeau's weak leadership is eroding Canada's moral clarity when we need it most: Dagny Pawlak in The Hub

This article originally appeared in the Hub

By Dagny Pawlak, December 5, 2024

This week's anti-Israel protest at Parliament Hill's Confederation Building highlighted the consequences of our political leadership's failure to confront the deepening divisions within Canadian society over the Israel-Palestine conflict, as radical voices found their way to the very doorstep of those in power. The protest, ending with arrests, was a visible expression of the divisions taking root in Canadian society—a needless polarization fed by the kind of equivocation we've seen from our political leaders.

For those eager to argue that the protesters' Jewish identity somehow validates the substance of their claims—think again. Spoiler alert: the merit of an argument doesn't hinge on the faith of its advocate. Whether one identifies as Jewish or Muslim holds no inherent claim to moral superiority, nor does it confer a better understanding of Israel's pivotal role as a frontline in the larger battle to protect Western ideals and the future of free societies. No belief system is immune to misinformation and bias.

To paint this as a religious issue couldn't be more misguided. Canada is grappling with the domestic consequences of a global extremism left uncondemned. In their silence, our leaders leave a vacuum where local extremism and chaos take root.

Let's take Justin Trudeau's recent endorsement of the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Israeli leaders Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, for example. Framed as a principled stand for justice, his remarks have done little to bolster international law and everything to embolden those who see moral equivalence where there is none. Less than a day after his statement, Montreal bore witness to rioters chanting for a “final solution,” and wreaking havoc under the guise of political protest. To call these events anything other than antisemitic riots is to deny the obvious.

The ICC's actions and Trudeau's remarks are not isolated moments. Together, they reflect a much deeper problem: the erosion of moral clarity at a time when it is most desperately needed.

Originally envisioned as a safeguard against atrocities like genocide and war crimes, the ICC now seems to stray from its foundational purpose. Its selective approach to justice, notably prioritizing politically charged cases while overlooking others, raises troubling questions about its credibility. For instance, in its decision to issue arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, the ICC has effectively conflated the actions of a democratic state engaged in self-defence with the systematic atrocities of Hamas, an organization defined by its deliberate targeting of civilians.

CONT'D

The flaws in the ICC's judgment are manifold. Legal scholars and commentators have pointed out that the court's interpretation of international law in this instance is not just questionable but dangerously misguided. Israel, a democracy facing existential threats, is held to a standard that seemingly ignores the broader context of its conflict. The ICC's actions imply moral equivalence between a state seeking to protect its citizens and a group actively pursuing their destruction—a distortion that undermines both the court's legitimacy and the very concept of justice.

This is where our government's role becomes critically relevant. Trudeau's endorsement of the ICC's decision amplifies its flawed logic and lends undue legitimacy to a narrative that blurs the line between democratic self-defence and acts of terror. Rather than reinforcing international law, such a stance erodes the principles that underpin it, sending a dangerous signal that terrorist violence and state self-defence can be judged on the same moral plane.

It's no coincidence that Montreal's streets erupted in hateful violence mere hours later. Nor is it a surprise that the very doorstep of Canada's political leadership became occupied by anti-Israel protestors this week. When a nation's leader refuses to draw clear lines between justice and barbarism, others step in to exploit the ambiguity.

The riots themselves, hastily labeled by some media outlets as “anti-NATO protests,” were nothing of the sort. They were fueled by the same rhetoric that has historically served as a precursor to atrocity—rhetoric that dehumanizes, scapegoats, and justifies violence under the banner of a supposedly righteous cause. To hear chants for a “final solution” in the streets of a Canadian city is to confront a failure that lies squarely at the feet of those in power.

One is reminded of Churchill's admonition that appeasers feed a crocodile, hoping it will eat them last. Trudeau's reluctance to confront rising antisemitism, coupled with his reckless endorsement of the ICC's flawed warrants, has fed the beast of extremism. His government's pattern of polite condemnations and empty gestures has done little to stem the tide of antisemitism, leaving Jewish communities increasingly vulnerable to both rhetoric and violence.

For Trudeau, this moment should have been an opportunity to lead—to unequivocally denounce the ICC's overreach and stand with a democratic ally under siege. Instead, he chose to signal his approval, amplifying a narrative that has emboldened extremists and deepened divisions. The riots in Montreal or the protests on Parliament Hill were not an unfortunate coincidence; they were the natural consequences of a leadership vacuum that refuses to address underlying rot.



CONT'D

Canada is at a crossroads. The rising tide of antisemitism and domestic extremism is not an abstract threat. It is happening here and now, with increasing brazenness. Trudeau's failure to confront these realities with the seriousness they demand not only emboldens extremists but erodes the social fabric that holds our nation together.

History reminds us that silence and equivocation in the face of hatred are never neutral acts. They embolden the aggressor and weaken the resolve of those who stand on the side of right. The choice before us is stark: to act decisively and reaffirm our commitment to the values that define us, or to falter and allow the fabric of our democracy to fray under the weight of silence.

Canada's dirty money is funding instability in the Middle East: Christian Leuprecht and Joe Adam George in the Globe and Mail

This article originally appeared in the Globe and Mail.

By Christian Leuprecht and Joe Adam George, November 14, 2024

“War is a matter not so much of arms as of money,” according to ancient Greek historian Thucydides. Indeed, the gruelling year-long, multifront counteroffensive is costing Israel's economy \$260-million – a day.

The other side deals with a similar problem, which is compounded by the fact that Hamas has impoverished Gaza. Yet, until recently, Hamas seemingly had no shortage of cash.

Sophisticated terror operations such as the Oct. 7 attacks are costly. So is sustaining Hamas' protracted insurgency. Both Hamas and Hezbollah enjoy state-based backing; receiving an estimated \$100-million and \$700-million a year, respectively, from Iran. And how does Hamas raise the balance of its estimated \$1-billion a year in foreign revenue?

Hamas' and Hezbollah's financial tentacles span the globe and reach deep into Canada.

Canada's outsized problem with dirty money has been well-documented for decades. During a 1998 Senate committee hearing, Ward Elcock, former director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), testified on terrorist organizations raising funds in Canada. Mr. Elcock bluntly warned that Canada “cannot become, through inaction or otherwise, what might be called an unofficial state sponsor of terrorism.”

A weak national security posture, failure to enforce, and under-resourced and overstretched intelligence agencies have made Canada safe for terrorists. A 2006 Fraser Institute report estimated terror financing in Canada at \$180-million annually.

Various law enforcement bodies have laid out a litany of accusations: Hezbollah uses Canada to launder billions in transnational narcoterrorism. It colludes with Chinese triads and Mexican cartels to fund extremist violence, including by way of the now-defunct Lebanese Canadian Bank, which denied wrongdoing but later reached a settlement with U.S. authorities. Having been active in Canada since the 1990s, Hezbollah is “primarily involved in logistics and operational support activities and fundraising” such as underground banking, car theft, immigration fraud, weapons smuggling and procuring dual-use equipment.

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Last year, the [Cameron Ortis trial](#) revealed how a major Hezbollah financier allegedly liaised with Middle Eastern organized crime groups operating in Canadian cities to bankroll billions. Canadian nationals and underground currency exchanges have [reportedly](#) been laundering funds for terrorist financing operations of both Hezbollah and Hamas.

Following the Oct. 7 attacks, Hamas has taken advantage of [compliance-related loopholes](#) and poor counterterror financing practices to fundraise through established and emerging online financial platforms to fund its insurgency in the Gaza Strip. Hamas leverages [donations from](#) western charities via cash couriers, front companies, bank transfers, [hawala](#) networks and popular money transfer services.

In 2021, a [Canada Revenue Agency](#) (CRA) audit alleged that the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC), one of the largest Muslim charities in the country, was involved with “an apparent Hamas network.” (MAC countered by accusing CRA of “systemic Islamophobia.”) The end-use of resources is notoriously difficult to untangle. [Hamas](#) and [Hezbollah](#) use social service organizations to obfuscate the purpose for which resources are raised.

Illicit financing goals are also not limited to supporting acts of violence directly. According to Haras Rafiq, a British security expert, foreign adversaries have been funneling money into Canada and laundering it to promote Islamism, an extremist religio-political ideology that advocates for Sharia law and the destruction of Israel.

Yet, [Canada has been slow to act on terrorist financing: long overdue reforms](#) of Canada’s Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act (PCMLTFA) [have not been a priority for the Trudeau government](#), which voted down an anti-money laundering bill last year.

Canadians disturbed by the calamity unfolding across the Near East may do well to look closer to home. In its criminal indictment of TD Bank, the [United States Treasury recently determined](#) that the ledgers and transactions of Canada’s financial system have been actively enabling extremist violence.

The [continuing periodic review of the PCMLTFA](#) provides an opportunity for the federal government to atone for past sins: disrupt the flow of terror money, forfeit civil assets that resource terror and bolster the [reputational damage to the integrity](#) of Canada’s financial system. Failing to address Canada’s complicity in funding global terrorism bears a great risk to Canadian prosperity.

The economic consequences of grey-listing in the upcoming [Financial Action Task Force country review](#) would be debilitating and depress Canada’s GDP by up to 10 per cent. When will the government make good on its [integrated plan](#) to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, announced in Budget 2019? The federal government’s intransigence effectively makes Canada complicit in nurturing and exporting terrorism it purports to denounce.

The modern intellectual diktat for Jewish authors: Bruce Hoffman and Casey Babb in the Hill

This article originally appeared in the Hill.

By Casey Babb and Bruce Hoffman, November 10, 2024

Nearly a century ago, the Nazis burned the books of Jewish authors. Today, the publishing world is attempting to resurrect the exclusion of writers because of either their faith and nationality or their refusal to conform to a new intellectual diktat.

Books deemed “degenerate” by the Nazis for being “un-German” — especially those written by Jews — were purged from bookstores and libraries for reasons of racial as well as intellectual superiority. This self-righteous effort to purify German thinking targeted such Jewish luminaries as Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Lion Feuchtwanger and Vicky Baum, whose works were either banned outright or torched by Nazi Stormtroopers.

Nearly a century later, a new effort is afoot to compel Israeli authors into a contemporary variant of ideological submission. Last week, more than 1,000 writers, including acclaimed Irish author [Sally Rooney](#) and award-winning Indian author Arundhati Roy, [signed a letter](#) calling for a boycott of Israeli writers, publishers, book festival organizers and literary agents who have yet to publicly denounce the “genocide” in Gaza.

Boycotts like this are self-licking ice-cream cones, enabling the signatories to congratulate themselves for taking a stand on the “[right side of history](#),” as Iran’s Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last spring fittingly described the protestors in Western countries championing groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. That such literary boycotts are as blatantly antisemitic as they are hypocritical is of course ignored by their exponents.

To read the full article, visit: thehill.com

As Oct. 7 victims sue Samidoun, Canada continues to provide it shelter: Casey Babb and Sheryl Saperia in the National Post

This article originally appeared in the *National Post*.

By Casey Babb and Sheryl Saperia, October 10, 2024

A new lawsuit has been filed by Canadian victims of the October 7, 2023, terrorist attacks in Israel. The victims are seeking over \$250 million in compensation from defendants including Hamas, the Palestinian Authority, Iran, Syria, and, shockingly, a Vancouver-based organization called Samidoun.

Samidoun, which styles itself as the Palestinian prisoner solidarity network, is alleged to have direct links with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a listed terrorist organization in Canada, the U.S., Israel, the U.K. and the European Union — including substantial overlap between the leadership of the organizations. According to Israel's internal security service, Khaled Barakat — the husband of Samidoun leader Charlotte Kates — is also a senior figure in the PFLP, and the Israelis aren't alone in their assessment. Palestinian outlets have described Barakat as a leader of the PFLP, or a member of the group's governing central committee. Further, the Israelis have alleged Samidoun acts as the PFLP's primary recruitment and propaganda arm overseas.

According to the newly issued statement of claim in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, "(T)he plaintiffs plead that the Samidoun Defendants have committed offences including, but not limited to, providing or collecting property for terrorist activity, providing or collecting property for the benefit of persons facilitating or carrying out terrorist activity, participating in the activity of a terrorist group, leaving Canada to participate in the activity of a terrorist group, and facilitating terrorist activity."

Regardless of how this lawsuit unfolds, the Canadian government has the authority and likely an obligation to designate Samidoun as a terrorist entity for a variety of reasons.

For starters, one of the main criteria under Canada's Criminal Code enabling the federal government to list a terrorist entity is if the person or group in question has "knowingly acted on behalf of, at the direction of or in association with an entity that has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity." It is well documented that the PFLP has a lengthy history of carrying out assassinations, suicide bombings, hijackings and murders — and if Samidoun is doing its dirty work in Canada — which many suspect it is — it needs to be listed.

CONT'D

In addition, a terror designation would also help Canada align with some of its closest allies. In 2021, Israel designated Samidoun a terrorist organization and an arm of the PFLP, while Germany banned Samidoun's operations in October 2023, given the group's alleged ties to Hamas. Barakat and Kates were also allegedly deported from Germany in 2019 and denied entry to the EU in 2022, both times being returned to Canada, where they live and carry out activities with relative impunity. Canada actually appears to be the headquarters of Samidoun's global operation, where the organization enjoys non-profit status. Indeed, Samidoun was incorporated in Canada shortly after Kates and Barakat were expelled from Germany on account of their terror-supporting activities – something that didn't appear to be an issue for Canadian authorities.

Fundamentally, it is well known that Canada is facing increased scrutiny from allies on a wide range of national security and defence issues, and Canadian authorities should take every opportunity to prove they remain a trustworthy partner committed to fighting terrorism. Relative to other issues the country needs to face, designating Samidoun a terrorist organization would be an easy win.

Moreover, we believe listing Samidoun as a terrorist organization would be an important public step in a country that feels increasingly lawless when it comes to extremism, fanaticism, hate speech, Jew hatred and incendiary rhetoric. In addition to engaging in activities that may warrant a terror designation, Samidoun routinely uses language that shamelessly glorifies barbaric acts of terrorism. At a rally it organized in Vancouver on Monday – the one-year anniversary of Hamas's October 7 attacks – protesters were seen burning the Canadian flag, chanting “death to Canada” and “death to the United States,” along with “we are Hezbollah and we are Hamas.” Perhaps being listed as a terrorist organization would have a welcome quieting effect on this insanity.

Where U.S. President Joe Biden described Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah's killing as “... a measure of justice,” and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated that Nasrallah had been responsible for “... immense suffering across the region,” Samidoun stated that it was “mourning” Nasrallah's death, and that it would continue on its “... jihadist path (and) follow (Nasrallah's) approach.” Kates has actually described listed terrorist organizations – including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Hezbollah – as “heroes.”

All told, Canada is becoming a hub for terrorism and extremism – and the world is noticing. If Canada is serious about restoring law and order to its streets, one meaningful action would be to designate Samidoun as a terrorist entity. It can, and should, do it now.

Moral clarity needed from Canadian politicians on Oct. 7 anniversary

This article originally appeared in the *Financial Post*.

By Jack M. Mintz, October 4, 2024

Writing on antisemitism, German-American historian Hannah Arendt quoted a joke from the First World War: “An antisemite claimed that Jews had caused the war. The reply was ‘Yes, the Jews and bicyclists.’ ‘Why the bicyclists?’ asked the antisemite. ‘Why the Jews?’ replied the other.” The joke illustrates the scapegoating that has prevailed against Jews for centuries. “The Jewish question” has been obsessed over despite Jews being only a small part, if any part at all, of most countries’ populations.

In his masterful book, *Anti-Judaism*, David Nirenberg, now at Princeton, treats antisemitism as “historical thought” rather than simply scapegoating. Reviewing Egyptian, Christian, European and Islamic history, he provides a thread showing that Jews could not be accepted, given their unwillingness to change religion. For that matter, Karl Marx argued not even conversion to Christianity could free Germany from Judaism. He argued Judaism is an attitude, and money and property its “God.” Capitalism could produce “Jewishness” whether people were Jews or not.

Canada’s record on antisemitism is far from pristine. In the late 1930s, Mackenzie King’s Liberal government allowed only 5,000 Jewish refugees from Europe to come to Canada. In 1939, it turned back the German merchant ship *St. Louis*, with the result that 254 Jewish passengers met their death in the Holocaust. In 1946, almost half of Canadians were opposed to immigration, but the doors began to swing open after 1947, as popular opinion changed. Even so, restrictions on Jewish access to certain professions and educational institutions persisted. It wasn’t until 1968 that Herb Gray, appointed by Pierre Trudeau, became the first Jew in the federal cabinet.

Monday marks the one-year anniversary of the horrible attack by Hamas on Israel, in which approximately 1,200 people were murdered and 240 hostages taken. Oct. 7 was a very dark day, not only for Israelis but also for Jews in the diaspora. Its horror brought back terrible memories of the Holocaust, in which the Nazis murdered six million Jews, almost destroying a vibrant European community — almost: it is now back up to 1.4 million people.

Oct. 7 also brought a resurgence of antisemitism. Jews today feel alone and worry about security. Though many non-Jewish Canadians have expressed strong support for Jews and Israel, it has been more than disconcerting to see some union leaders, students and professors support Hamas and Hezbollah, two terrorist organizations. Some Hamas supporters have even denied atrocities took place — despite Hamas having recorded them.

CONT'D

B'nai Brith identified 5,791 antisemitic acts in Canada in 2023, more than double the number in 2022. Jewish university students have been intimidated, mezuzahs pulled off doors and schoolchildren threatened. Toronto's largest Jewish high school has had two bomb scares. Indigo stores, owned by Heather Reisman, have been defaced. One of the worst incidents saw an attacker pummel a Jewish high school student in Fredericton last May.

Demonstrations and encampments at universities grew this past year, with participants, including outside agitators, chanting "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." Not all who shout it understand the implications of this statement (which is now banned in Germany) or can name either the river or the sea. Hamas makes no bones about its meaning, however. It means establishing a Palestinian state between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea by ridding Israel of its "racist, aggressive, colonial and expansionist Zionist project."

The Hamas Charter, revised in 2017 to reduce its antisemitic tone, states: "Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine. Yet, it is the Zionists who constantly identify Judaism and the Jews with their own colonial project and illegal entity." The slogan "anti-Zionism is not antisemitism" is double-speak.

On Oct. 7, Hamas made clear that any Israeli "colonizer" – i.e., Jew – will be treated as military, not civilian. Its ally Hezbollah has attacked diaspora Jews in countries the world round, including Argentina, Sweden and Bulgaria.

Like Palestinians who seek self-determination and statehood, Jews pined to re-establish the state of Israel. Two millennia after the Romans colonized Judea and forced many Jews to live elsewhere, Israel remains a critical part of Jewish identity (though a small number disagree). In 1948, Israel was created as an independent nation after Arab states rejected an earlier UN resolution supporting a two-state solution – a dream that remains far from reality today.

Antisemites understand that attacking Israel and Jews goes hand in hand. That is why federal and provincial leaders need to be clear on how they stand on Israel, which is a wedge for antisemites. Instead, our leaders have been ambivalent. After Oct. 7, Canada and Japan were the only G7 countries whose leaders did not go to Israel. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned antisemitism and supported Israel's right to self-defence, but he has also sent mixed messages, criticizing Israel for the lives lost in Gaza without calling out Hamas to surrender rather than put Palestinians at risk.

CONT'D

Unlike the United States, Canada has renewed payments to Gaza's UNRWA, though a number of Hamas members worked for it, including a recently assassinated Hamas general. Canada has halted some new arms sales to Israel even though it is a country at war. For the first time, Canada did not vote against an unbalanced UN resolution calling for Palestinian statehood without any pre-conditions. Today, Canada calls for ceasefires after Israel is attacked by Iran and its proxies without Israel having yet had the opportunity to establish deterrence.

If ever we needed our leaders to exhibit moral clarity on Israel, the time is now. Canada should not join in making Jews scapegoats for the world's ills.

Canada's Jihadi crisis should worry America

This article originally appeared in the [Newsweek](#).

By Casey Babb, October 1, 2024

People often think of Canadians as overly polite, and as a people with a predilection for saying “sorry” too much. But what about Canadian-grown terrorism, extremism, or antisemitism?

Since the terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7, Canada has become a hotbed of radicalization, fanaticism, and jihadism. As un-Canadian as it sounds, Canada has a terrorism crisis on its hands and that should worry the United States for a whole host of reasons.

Acts of radical Islamic terrorism in Canada are not a new phenomenon. Examples include, the al-Qaeda-inspired “[Toronto 18](#)” plot in 2006, the planned attack of Canada’s [national railway](#) service in 2013, the shootings on [Parliament Hill](#) in 2014, and a foiled [ISIS-inspired attack](#) in 2016, among others. All told, Canada has experienced its fair share of jihadist activities, but things are getting worse—a hell of a lot worse—and fast.

In the last 11 months there have been at least eight Islamic terrorism-related incidents in Canada or that involved Canadians abroad. These include—a father-son duo planning a violent [attack in Toronto](#), [two Ottawa youths](#) plotting to attack the city’s Jewish community, and the arrest of a Pakistani man studying in Toronto planning an [ISIS-inspired attack](#) against Jews in New York.

These and other major incidents—many of which Canadian authorities thwarted with information provided by U.S. intelligence—are in addition to shootings of Jewish day-schools, synagogues being burned, routine public calls for violence against “Zionists,” openly antisemitic rhetoric at pro-Palestinian rallies, and other dangerous acts targeting the country’s Jewish population. B’nai Brith, a Jewish advocacy organization based in Toronto, [logged nearly 6,000 incidents of antisemitism](#) between Jan. 1, 2023, and Dec. 31 of 2023.

Canada’s antisemitic terrorism crisis should solidify the fact that Canada is a national security risk to the U.S. A 2023 [report](#) by the International Coalition Against Illicit Economies, a Washington, D.C.-based non-governmental organization led by former U.S. national security officials, suggested that Canada has become a “safe zone” for global criminal networks—including terrorist groups.

Iran, for example, which effectively commands and controls the world’s deadliest terrorist organizations, including [Hamas](#), Hezbollah, and the Houthis, is perhaps more active in Canada than in any other country in the world outside of the Middle East. Prominent Iranian American journalist Masih Alinejad has [stated publicly](#) that the [FBI](#) told her to avoid all travel to Canada.

CONT'D

Others, like Gabriel Noronha, who served as special advisor on Iran to the U.S. State Department from 2019 to 2021, stated that Iran's presence in Canada is "far, far worse than you can imagine." It's even been reported that the Iranian regime was behind at least one of the campus protests in Canada during the last academic school year.

In sum, the world's most significant state sponsor of terrorism is clearly using Canada as a base of operation in the West.

Ultimately, the U.S. can't afford to ignore the growing Islamic terror threat amassing on its northern border. As is too often the case, making substantial changes to improve Canada's national security may require a stern warning from our southern neighbors and closest ally.

Without a not so gentle nudge from America, Canada's little-known extremism crisis will worsen—something neither Ottawa nor Washington can afford.

Muslim radicalization has increased, not decreased, since 9/11

This article originally appeared in the *National Post*.

By Mohammed Rizwan and Raheel Raza, September 10, 2024

As we prepare to navigate the almost intersecting anniversaries of 9/11 and October 7, it feels like we have been on this roundabout for 23 years. ISIS-Hamas-Hezbollah-Houthi terrorism — including the killing of six Israeli hostages this past week — has been like a gruesome, never-ending horror show on loop.

The world is where it is after a grinding 23-year slog that saw a 20-year-long Afghanistan war, a bloody conflict in Iraq, another four years of having to endure ISIS terror in Iraq as well as in Syria, and a permanent low-intensity sideshow of Houthi violence in the Red Sea area. During all of this, Hezbollah (Iran's proxy in Lebanon) kept reminding us not to count it out.

Fighting these Islamist terror groups was not the only challenge. Certain Jihadi elements in Pakistan also played a role in promoting extremism and violence, allegedly including their intelligence services and some senior military personnel. We saw how the U.S. and the West desperately doled out billions of dollars in an attempt to reform the madrassas — the religious seminaries in Pakistan that worked to produce jihadis. Unfortunately, much of that money ended up lining the pockets of the powers-that-be. Pakistan played a double game — which is why U.S. security experts deemed it a "frenemy" (friendly enemy).

Terrorist ideology did not diminish because supportive Pakistani military elements and their terror proxies in Afghanistan stood to lose. The reform agenda of the West was denounced as something evil — beneficial to the West and harmful to Muslim society — with the assistance of lapdog media.

The situations in Iraq and Syria were a little different but produced the same results. These were less wars than firefighting missions without a clear end-goal. There was no bruising of terror ideology along the way.

After more than two decades we see the resurgence and rejuvenation of this terrorist ideology among a visible portion of Muslims. Is it because these Muslim populations don't have political empowerment? The people of Gulf countries have zilch political rights, but they are largely happy and peaceful populations. Is it because of economic opportunities? Not sure. Because when we look at the recent behaviour of some Muslim people on our streets, where they are far better economically empowered than in the countries and societies they left behind, we see an ideologically charged crowd that doesn't like any symbol of western values.

CONT'D

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.

Canada and its allies need better tools to combat the scourge of hostage diplomacy

This article originally appeared in the *The Hub*.

By Sarah Teich and Marcus Kolga, August 28, 2024

In the days following the historic prisoner swap on August 1 that saw Canadian-American Paul Whelan and another 15 people released from Russian prison, there are growing questions about how democracies can counter the rising tactic of hostage diplomacy.

Russia continues to hold Westerners hostage, and the use of hostage-taking and arbitrary detention by authoritarian regimes to advance their own ends is a phenomenon that will only expand unless the West takes a stronger stand.

The safety of Canadians all over the world is at stake. This is a phenomenon that goes beyond Russia. Many Canadians—including Huseyin Celil, Zahra Kazemi, Homa Hoodfar, Sun Qian, and Xiao Jianhua—have been seized as hostages by terrorist groups and by authoritarian regimes including China and Iran. Several—Huseyin Celil, Sun Qian, and Xiao Jianhua—remain imprisoned as hostages today. For others, their status is unknown. For instance, the family of Behnoush Bahraminia, an Iranian-Canadian woman, believes she is currently detained in Iran along with her partner, Majid (Mathew) Safari.

In response to all these incidents, it is time for Canada to introduce effective and specific legislation to combat hostage-taking and arbitrary detentions, sending a clear signal to perpetrators that these crimes are unacceptable.

While diplomacy and back-room negotiations can at times result in the successful release of hostages and those arbitrarily detained, it is currently one of Canada's only options for response.

There are also limited options for government officials to use existing human rights laws to leverage pressure. For example, while Canada's version of the U.S. Magnitsky Act theoretically permits targeted sanctions to be implemented in response to any gross human rights violations, British barrister Amal Clooney has noted that there is an "apparent reticence among some policy-makers (across the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and Canada) to use sanctions in response to cases of arbitrary detention or against judicial officers for such detention or unfair trials."

CONT'D

To address the law and policy gap in relation to hostage-taking and arbitrary detention, Co-Deputy Conservative Leader Melissa Lantsman last fall introduced the [federal private member's bill C-353](#), the Foreign Hostage Takers Accountability Act. Bill C-353 passed second reading on June 5 and is expected to be considered in committee when Parliament resumes.

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.

TDSB wrong to adopt 'anti-Palestinian racism' policy

This article originally appeared in the *National Post*.

By Raheel Raza, July 2, 2024

Last week, [Pe'er Krut wrote](#) in this paper about an assembly at a Catholic high school outside Toronto in which students were subjected to a rant that presented a very one-sided view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This was bad enough because there was no opportunity for alternate perspectives to be presented.

But now adding insult to injury, the Toronto District School Board has voted to incorporate the concept of anti-Palestinian racism (APR) within its broader anti-discrimination strategy, which has the potential to shut down another avenue for debate and discussion within the education system.

Canada does not have a large Palestinian population (there are only around 4,000 people of Palestinian descent in the entire city of Toronto), or a history of tensions between Palestinians and other groups. Racism specifically targeting Palestinians is thus not a pressing issue in Canada.

Introducing a very specific term like APR is unnecessarily divisive and a distraction from more evidence-based racial inequities experienced by minority groups in Canadian society. Promoting its inclusion in anti-discrimination policies could set some concerning precedents, especially when it comes to influencing young minds.

Hamas is listed as a terrorist organization in Canada. Hamas is also Palestinian. So if a concerned Canadian says that Palestinians who belong to Hamas are a threat, will she be accused of being racist, according to APR? Adopting APR risks legitimizing fringe movements trying to manufacture racial grievances for groups that don't have long-standing histories of oppression in Canada. And it may distract from confronting more measurable, well-documented forms of racism and discrimination experienced by various segments of Canadian society.

The APR policy threatens to open a Pandora's box. Recognizing one minority-specific term could set a precedent for endless other hyphenated terms like "anti-Greek racism," "anti-Bolivian racism" and so on. Creating such a confusing landscape would detract from current anti-racism efforts.

APR is also highly likely to be misused, in order to enable antisemitic rhetoric and narratives. It could provide cover for spreading anti-Jewish prejudices by framing them as opposition to alleged "racism" against Palestinians.

CONT'D

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.

Could Iran avenge Israeli strikes by unleashing Hezbollah terror overseas?: John Gilmour in the Globe and Mail

[This article originally appeared in the Globe and Mail.](#)

By John Gilmour, November 4, 2024

After Israel's military and intelligence agencies launched devastating and dramatic attacks against Hezbollah in recent weeks, it would be easy to assume the terrorist group has been neutered.

In the last month, air strikes have killed many Hezbollah leaders, including its secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah, who has been a target for decades, and his likely successor, Hashem Safieddine. Exploding pagers and walkie-talkies killed dozens and injured hundreds of Hezbollah members. Now, Israel is working to dismantle the group's financing wing, throwing it into further disarray.

Iran, which has long used the terrorist group as a crucial proxy and deterrent in its conflict with Israel, is now a target of direct Israeli intervention, with Israeli missiles striking Iranian military bases in three provinces last week. But Tehran still has cards to play as part of its broader deterrence strategy – including asking Hezbollah to undertake terrorist attacks overseas, threatening Israelis abroad and Jewish communities around the world.

Since its inception in the 1980s, Hezbollah has built an international network to finance, recruit, arm and plan operations abroad. These cells sometimes co-operate with other terrorist organizations and are entangled in organized crime. Hezbollah's External Security Organization, which runs these networks from Lebanon, is the lead for terrorist attacks overseas, including in Europe and North America. While the group's focus remains on Lebanon and Israel, its networks abroad are just as active.

For decades, national-security and law-enforcement agencies have monitored these networks, and intervened when warranted. Hezbollah's networks are pervasive in virtually all regions, including in the United States and Canada. Indeed, Canadian authorities have described Hezbollah as “one of the most technically capable terrorist groups in the world.”

More ominously, these cells have positioned themselves to undertake attacks against Israeli or Jewish targets worldwide at Hezbollah's or Iran's orders if either perceives a threat to their interests or “should the diplomatic situation deteriorate,” according to a British intelligence assessment document. A 2022 George Washington University report noted that “while Hezbollah has not executed a successful attack in the United States, the group still attempts to develop the operational capacity to do so.”

CONT'D

These cells have killed many over the decades, including in the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, a pair of well-publicized attacks in Buenos Aires on the Israeli embassy and a Jewish cultural centre in 1992 and 1994 respectively, a 1996 attack on a facility housing U.S. troops in the Saudi city of Khobar, and, most recently, the alleged involvement of Hezbollah in a targeted bombing of a bus of Israeli tourists in Bulgaria in 2012. In that particular case, one of the plotters associated with the suicide bomber was a Canadian.

This modest track record hasn't stopped Hezbollah from trying, however. Authorities have thwarted them on several occasions: an attempt to bomb the Israeli embassy in Bangkok in 1994; a plan to attack Israeli and U.S. targets in Azerbaijan in 2008; plots in Turkey in 2009 and 2011; and preparations to attack Israeli tourists in Cyprus in 2012. A convoy of Israeli diplomats in Jordan also narrowly avoided a roadside bombing in 2020. Threat warnings from Israeli intelligence agencies to Israeli or Jewish communities in Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia occur on a regular basis.

Shortly after 9/11, Hezbollah's leadership appears to have decided that the best strategy was to use its global network of cells mostly in under-the-radar facilitation roles, such as financing, recruitment, weapons-smuggling and the reconnaissance of possible targets in other countries. Hezbollah leaders in most cases did not see risking exposure by undertaking actual attacks as justifiable in the face of intensified U.S. counterterrorism activities. But this calculus has likely changed after recent events. Not only might Hezbollah deem it the right time to activate its cells abroad, Iran and its deterrence strategy may call for it.

With Hamas in tatters and Hezbollah on the defensive, Iran's traditional means of deterring Israel have been undermined. Hezbollah's fighting wing may quickly reconstitute itself like it did after the Israeli intervention of 2006, but until such a time, Iran is more vulnerable to Israeli strikes, as this weekend's air strikes proved. As a result, Tehran may seek to rebalance the equation with the asymmetric means of mobilizing Hezbollah's international terrorist cells.

Western national-security and law-enforcement agencies face a tough task with the uncertainty surrounding the nature and sources of this sort of transnational threat. Canada needs to prioritize counterterrorism efforts against Hezbollah's global reach, now more than ever.

The Root Cause of October 7 – Iran’s Regime

This article originally appeared in the *Hoover Institution*.

By Mariam Memarsadeghi, June 10, 2024

For students condemning Israel in protests on America’s campuses, the October 7 terror attack is to be ignored, whitewashed, denied, justified, and even celebrated. To really think about the savagery and profound suffering of October 7 would elicit empathy for other humans who are Jews. To speak honestly about the killing, gang rape, mutilation of even babies, torture, scorching, public humiliation, and hostage-taking would require reflection on the existential threat to the Jewish people and the state of Israel by Islamists. It would require thinking about how Islamists’ genocidal hatred for Jews is one and the same as the Nazi dehumanization that resulted in the Holocaust, the singular horror that forever marks mankind’s capacity for evil. It would require an examination of the modern ideological drivers of such terror, and the training, financing, technology, weaponry, and international propaganda needed to sustain it.

It is easier for student protestors to begin and end their outrage with only Israel’s bombing of Gaza and the suffering of Gazans – and this is just what Hamas and its backer, the Islamic Republic of Iran, intend. Iran’s regime has demonstrated its willingness to kill via execution, assassination, torture, and indiscriminate shooting on the streets of Iran, as well as through its sponsorship of terror and wars abroad, and notably through Bashar Assad’s war on the Syrian nation that has taken the lives of over 500,000. For 45 years Tehran has promulgated “Resistance” in the name of the Palestinian people but in reality, has sacrificed the lives and livelihood of Palestinians at every turn to sustain its rule.

The war that Israel has been forced to wage has resulted in the deaths of Palestinian civilians as well as losses for Hamas, the Houthis, and other Iran regime terror proxies, but for the Ayatollahs these are expendable lives and proxy forces; their “martyrdom” ensures the survival of the Islamic Republic itself as a revolutionary state and an imperial Islamist project founded on hatred of Jews and Israel as oppressors. , It transcends the Shia and Sunni split and even the geography of the Middle East, seeding resentment and conspiratorial, anti-Semitic worldviews at even the most elite of American universities, as evidenced by the Hezbollah flag displayed at Princeton University, not to mention the physical assault of Jewish students and persecution of Jewish professors.

Israel’s killing of Gazans is what Iran’s regime wants: it fuels global outrage and is a propaganda victory, mobilizing opposition to the Israeli state from the most educated and privileged milieus of the West. Liberals in the West may be united in support of Ukraine, but Israelis fighting for the very same values and right to exist are not only denied support, they are publicly shamed. Israel’s war produces a universal propaganda victory for Iran’s regime in the form of an illiberal, reactionary solidarity for Palestine. Secondarily, the effects in America – the Great Satan – are especially potent, including social polarization, a sense of chaos, self-loathing, cynicism, and the breakdown of respect for the university.

CONT'D

This a moral failing of the West but one that is a calculated political strategy on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran to weaken democratic states, exert its soft power, export its ideology, and buttress itself as it pursues a nuclear weapons program and expands global dominion for its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) mafia overlords. These overlords and the Hamas leadership are comfortably ensconced in their luxury homes in Tehran and Doha, exalting in the damage to Israel's international image from the war they have forced upon it. Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic sells oil to China despite US sanctions, and its diplomats and lobbyists manage to shield the IRGC from terrorism designations and sanctions by the European Union, Canada, Australia, and other democratic nations.

The Islamic Republic wins from both the October 7 attack itself and from Israel's response to it. The regime's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was quick to celebrate the slaughter with a video on X showing young Israelis running for their lives at the outdoor Nova music festival. Shortly after, he provided plausible deniability of any Iranian involvement, a claim President Joe Biden affirmed publicly just days later, despite reporting of the Khamenei regime's direct involvement by the Wall Street Journal. An IRGC spokesman even claimed the October 7 attack was retaliation for the US assassination of former Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani (before retracting the statement because of a spat with Hamas). The Biden administration has compartmentalized Hamas from its backer the Islamic Republic, with which it continues to hold mediated bilateral negotiations, that its state media have also confirmed, even after its direct bombing of Israel.

The October 7 attack was timed to shift the focus from fundamental challenges to the survival of the decayed, inept Islamist theocracy. Iranians' unprecedented nationwide mobilization for peaceful overthrow – the Woman, Life, Freedom movement – was being brutally suppressed at home as Hamas butchered in Israel. Had the community of democratic nations seized the opportunity and found the will to support the mass uprising in Iran (rather than give mere lip service to the violation of Iranians' human rights), the seat of Islamist revolutionary terror could have been sacked and a difficult but viable transition to a responsible, reasonable Iran at peace with Israel and the world could well have been fostered. Instead, with the October 7 attack Khamenei and his IRGC henchmen sealed the indifference of Western politicians toward Iranian liberal aspirations and enabled the regime to tighten its grip on the thousands of young protestors it was torturing and raping inside its prisons. The expansion of the Abraham Accords was also in the sights of the ayatollahs. It was imperative that a new bilateral peace between Saudi Arabia and Israel be thwarted. The shock and awe of October 7 was so severe, and the Israeli response to it so massive, that it forced the Saudis to cancel overtures to the Israeli government. October 7 took the Middle East backward to a time when world media attention on the region was dull and flat, concerned only with the seemingly implacable “Arab-Israeli conflict” rather than hopeful transformation by Iranians and Saudis pressing for an entirely new future.

CONT'D

The Iran regime's role in the October 7 attack is fundamental and a manifestation of its daily "Death to Israel" chants and call to wipe Israel off the map. The Biden administration, however, has chosen to minimize the fact that Hamas has been developed and directed by Tehran, deflecting scrutiny from the world's top state sponsor of terror. This appeasement mindset helped Tehran to believe it could get away with a massive terror attack on Israel in the first place. The Biden foreign policy is predicated on a worldview that seeks to end American presence in the Middle East region, has little interest in aiding democracy movements to topple authoritarians, rejects as the Obama administration did the post-9/11 vision to link democratization with security and sustainable peace in the region, sees appeasement of the ayatollahs as means to minimize instability and its own involvement in the region, and so has lifted the Maximum Pressure placed on the regime by the Trump administration. But feeding the crocodile has resulted in only a bigger appetite, as the delisting of the Houthis, a first move by the Biden administration to show its willingness to please Tehran, quickly proved. On the nuclear file, too, Iran's regime has taken advantage of Washington's overtures and willingness to turn a blind eye on sanctions to up its enrichment.

The October 7 attack on Israel is part and parcel of the Islamic Republic's larger, multifaceted war on the West and liberalism. It has resulted in suffering and insecurity for the Israeli people, rising antisemitism across the globe, and moral confusion within democracies. Terror that should have been met with global condemnation and solidarity with the Israeli people instead resulted in the proliferation of the hate projected by Iran's regime. Any policy truly designed to prevent Islamist terror and cultivate peace for the region must begin with a strategy to bring down that regime, but as evidenced by messages of condolences on the passing of the mass executioner Raisi, Western governments remain determined to appease it.

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Hamas has a secret weapon no one talks about – Western stupidity

This article originally appeared in the *Times of Israel*.

By Casey Babb, April 15, 2024

Since the advent of social media, the world has undergone an unprecedented period of mass stupefaction. To put it bluntly – large groups of people on both the left and the right are getting dumber faster. Sadly, this trend has proven to be tremendously beneficial for Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist group hell-bent on Israel's destruction.

In his 2022 [article](#) “Why the Past Ten Years of American Life Have Been Uniquely Stupid,” social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt explains how online echo chambers have significantly weakened people's ability to communicate with one another – particularly those with opposing views. As Haidt notes, tribalistic enmity which has been amplified and accelerated by things like Facebook's Like and Share buttons, or X's retweet function, has not only corroded nuanced thought and conversation, it has “supercharged” confirmation bias, the most significant obstacle to “good thinking.” However, what Haidt doesn't address is how beneficial this tsunami of stupidity has been to the most nefarious people on earth – including terrorists.

From jihadis in Beirut to extremists in Tehran, the erosion of thoughtful conversation combined with an explosion of algorithmically enabled animosity has emboldened the world's most dangerous groups, particularly Hamas. Indeed, since their heinous attacks in Israel on October 7, Hamas appears to be winning the war of public opinion in the West – not through strategically designed information campaigns – but through an international army of thoughtless individuals with an aversion to critical thinking and any information that could, God forbid, potentially challenge their worldviews.

For years, we have known that the Internet has been – as Charlie Warzel recently [described it](#) – a “window” through which virtually everyone on the planet has observed many of the most heinous acts ever committed. In fact, despite my own best efforts, I've been exposed to a variety of terrible videos and gruesome content which, in many ways, has shaped my perspective on the world. From the barbaric execution of the late great Daniel Pearl (to whom I dedicated my PhD dissertation) in Pakistan in 2002, to the sadistic murder of Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh by ISIS in 2015, to footage of Hamas's massacre in Israel, recorded violence on the Internet has become sadly familiar. However, what isn't familiar is what we have seen since October 7, which is the pairing of violent online content with seemingly endless mis- and disinformation, spread, embraced, and amplified by millions of willfully blind people using it to validate their own identities, confirm preferred beliefs, and convince themselves they're standing up for the oppressed.

CONT'D

This deadly and destabilizing convergence of terrorism-related content, pervasive manipulation of information on social media, and the hijacking of Jewish trauma for political and ideological gain, is legitimizing and strengthening Hamas in unprecedented ways.

For starters, it is important to note that while Hamas might be utterly barbaric – the group isn't stupid. In fact, they stated publicly in [an interview](#) with The New York Times, that they've been exploiting a lack of content moderation on X to post graphic and violent videos designed to terrorize Israelis – part of the psychological warfare they've unleashed on the Jewish state since October 7. This includes bodycam footage of Hamas terrorists murdering Israeli families, images of dead Israeli soldiers, burned-out homes, and injured hostages being violently dragged back into Gaza.

Unfortunately, many people who consider themselves to be “progressive activists” have taken troves of this content and repurposed it for their own agendas. In their view, the victims seen in videos, heard on recordings, and shown in images, aren't victims at all, they're settlers, colonizers, and Zionists – fair game when it comes to “armed resistance.” From this perspective, Hamas has achieved a double whammy. They've been able to traumatize Israelis and the Jewish diaspora in ways not seen since the Holocaust, while simultaneously relying on their progressive western sympathizers to dehumanize their victims and justify their atrocities in the name of liberation.

Then there is the issue of Hamas intentionally polluting the information space with false or misleading content. From pointing the finger at Israel for the deadly Al-Ahli Arab Hospital bombing in Gaza (which Western media outlets quickly ran with), to conflating civilian deaths with fighter casualties, to suggesting Israel has fabricated what happened on October 7, Hamas has flooded the online environment with dangerous and misleading information that social media users around the world have eaten up, turned around, and parroted themselves.

For instance, [one study](#) found that in a single 24-hour period, a series of posts on X sympathetic to terrorist activities in Gaza and Israel, which also contained misleading information, received over 16 million views. In addition, the Atlantic Council [found](#) that the Telegram channel for Hamas's military wing, Al-Qassam Brigades, had “tripled in size from pre-war levels” while the account of Gaza Now, an online group linked to Hamas, has seen their average views per post increase roughly tenfold since October 7. While much of this disinformation is harmful in that it obfuscates reality and increases support and sympathy for Hamas, it also plays into a variety of antisemitic conspiracy theories, including that Jews lie, that they're untrustworthy, and that they're a scheming tribe of nefarious individuals committed to Palestinian oppression.

CONT'D

In addition, there are the online echo chambers fueling confirmation bias that Haidt warned us about. Since October 7, people obsessed with Israel and already set on their favored Palestinian narratives, have found an endless stream of social media content to validate their preferred beliefs, beliefs which thanks to Hamas are known to be only partially true or even entirely false. To the benefit of Hamas, these echo chambers have evolved quite dramatically over the last several years. While Western activists once appeared at least notionally interested in improving the lives of Palestinians and having somewhat moderately reasonable conversations about things like a two-state solution and specific Israeli policies, the post-October 7 echo chambers have been dominated by blatant Jew-hatred, conspiracy theories, fabricated information, and content explicitly calling for the complete erasure of Israel.

At the heart of this thought decay are a number of trends, likely driven by social media, that are diminishing people's ability to listen to each other, to communicate, and to think. From dropping IQ scores, decreasing attention spans, and increased rates of loneliness and isolation, Hamas has been able to capitalize on the West's addiction to social media and subsequent stupefaction to mobilize public support for their genocidal cause. Ironically, the loudest Western voices incessantly echoing Hamas talking points are people the group would likely consider infidels or apostates, people the group would waste no time killing – after dealing with Israel first, of course.

All told, if we don't find ways to reform our new digital public squares on platforms like TikTok, X, and Instagram and curtail our eroding abilities to think constructively and speak thoughtfully, the West will face a precipitous social and cognitive collapse – precisely what Hamas and its backers need and want.



Irwin Cotler and Cochav Elkayam-Levy in conversation with Brian Crowley

On November 26 2024, we had the pleasure of hosting Irwin Cotler and Cochav Elkayam Levy, chair of the Civil Commission on Oct. 7th Crimes Against Women and Children, for a sobering conversation on Israel's widely misunderstood struggle against forces of hatred and violence, in the context of international law.



Arsen Ostrovsky in conversation with Casey Babb

On November 18, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute hosted Arsen Ostrovsky for a compelling discussion on Israel's conflicts with Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, exploring the broader implications for Canada and global stability. In this episode, we'd like to share that discussion with you.



Einat Wilf in conversation with Casey Babb

On September 25, the MLI hosted a conversation between Einat Wilf, a former Knesset member and expert on Israel's foreign policy, and Casey Babb, a Senior Fellow at MLI. Babb and Wilf discussed Israel's strategic position in the Middle East, as well as the alarming rise of antisemitism globally and in Canada in particular.



Tony Abbott in conversation with Brian Lee Crowley

Tony Abbott, the former Prime Minister of Australia is recognised as a strong, principled political leader throughout the Anglosphere. We were pleased to welcome him to the Institute as a Visiting Fellow and to have him share his views about the moral imperative of standing up for Israel, for our Jewish friends and neighbours, and for the foundational principles of Western societies, including Canada.



Douglas Murray in conversation with Brian Crowley

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute was pleased to host esteemed author and journalist Douglas Murray in Vancouver for an armchair discussion with Brian Lee Crowley on why Western Civilization is worth defending.



John Spencer in conversation with Casey Babb

Casey Babb interviews world leading urban warfare expert John Spencer about Israel's complex battle against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Spencer outlines how Hamas' guerrilla tactics (embedding themselves within dense civilian areas) complicates hostage rescue efforts for Israel.



Mustafa Akyol in conversation with Peter Copeland

Deputy Director of Domestic Policy and Promised Land project lead Peter Copeland interviews Mustafa Akyol, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, where he focuses on the intersection of public policy, Islam, and modernity. Together, they discuss Islam and western civilization, Islamic extremism and the Israel-Palestine conflict.



Ambassador Iddo Moed in conversation with Casey Babb

Casey Babb sits down with Ambassador Immo Moed to discuss how the escalating conflict in the Middle East, particularly in Israel, is reverberating through Canadian society. Ambassador Moed sheds light on the challenges facing Jewish communities in Canada as they confront rising tensions and antisemitism.



Promised Land Project Launch

On the anniversary of October 7th, the MLI launched its landmark Promised Land project. Peter Copeland, our project lead, hosted a panel to discuss the international effects of the Israel-Palestine Conflict and began to address the critical gap in expert thought leadership that has enabled antisemitism to thrive in Canada.

Via the Promised Land project, the MLI aims to fundamentally reshape how Canadians view Israel, the Middle East conflict, antisemitism, and extremism.



Samidoun: Terrorist Designation

In October, Canada designated Samidoun as a terrorist entity. This long-overdue designation is not only a victory for justice but a testament to the diligent work of MLI's Promised Land project. Through our commentary, media engagements, and policy recommendations, we have consistently highlighted the danger posed by Samidoun and the need for swift government action.

This milestone builds upon MLI's earlier successes, including the push to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization. MLI has consistently made the case that Canada must stand firm against those who threaten peace and security.



Framing the Challenge to Western Civilization

At an MLI event in Toronto, Tony Abbott speaks about the danger to western countries that is represented by antisemitism and the attacks on Israel. Through thought-provoking discussions such as these, the MLI is successfully shaping the national discourse on the rise of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment as more than just a Jewish problem, but rather a threat to western civilization as a whole.

"These times are harrowing and difficult. The West is confronted with enormous challenges that we could hardly have imagined just a few years ago. The hour is late, and yet, because our values are good and our cause is right, I think we can and will recover. But it will only be because decent people stand up for our countries and our civilization in a way that we haven't done adequately in recent times." - Tony Abbott



World Anti Extremism Network

Peter Copeland, deputy director of MLI's domestic policy program provided opening remarks at the World Anti Extremism Network's Toronto Democracy Forum, in November 2024 joined by colleagues Jonathan Berkshire Miller, Casey Babb, Dagny Pawlak - Loerchner, and Paul Weisz. The Macdonald-Laurier Institute was a proud sponsor of the event.

Peter spoke about extremism in the middle east and in Canada, the scourge of antisemitism, and the need to balance rights with responsibilities.

Promised Land Advisory Group



Casey Babb



Kaveh Shahrooz



Hillel Neuer



Rev. Andrew Bennett



Marcus Kolga



Mariam Memarsadeghi



Raheel Raza



Dan Pujdak



Khalid Ramizy