

## **Hamas is not the Vanguard You Want to Support**

If you've been following the news from Israel and Palestine closely in recent months, you might not have been surprised by the violence that erupted last weekend. Since the beginning of the year, more than 200 Palestinians have been killed, making 2023 the deadliest year for Palestinians since the Second Intifada (2000-2005). 35 people in Israel lost their lives due to terrorist violence.

In light of the daily bloodshed, the current Israeli government does little to nothing other than deliberately adding fuel to the fire. It's impossible to see the escalation of violence unfolding now in a vacuum.

The systematic violence of the Israeli state — [labeled as an apartheid regime by Amnesty International](#), is a crime against humanity, and resistance against it is justified. There's no question about that. But I was appalled by the euphoria I encountered on social media after it became clear that Hamas had launched its deadly attack on Israel.

### **Horror Stories**

On the day of the attack, I received horror stories not just from the media, but largely from friends and acquaintances in Israel. Videos of crying women being thrown into pickup trucks and driven to Gaza. Rumors of rapes being live-streamed on TikTok. People being slaughtered in their own homes. It didn't stop.

At the end of the day, I received a message from a good friend. He wrote that his sister and brother-in-law had been murdered by Hamas. He shared screenshots from the family's WhatsApp group, showing the absolute terror of his family members when it became clear that murderers were at their door. His niece -the sole survivor- lay hidden under her parents' bodies for hours.

I read about the massacre at the music festival in the Negev Desert, where terrorists unleashed their revenge for hours, killing 260 concert goers. I saw images from Gaza City depicting mutilated bodies of naked women paraded through the streets as trophies. And I also saw the other images of Gaza City. Images that gave me a painful sense of desensitization: entire buildings reduced to dust.

### **Glorifying Violence**

The images of terror sharply contrasted with the downright festive atmosphere on my Instagram feed. In various posts, I saw people glorifying the violence as 'the revolution that had finally begun.' Alongside the empty statements from liberal Dutch political parties about Israel's right to self-defense, which didn't mention the ongoing 17-year blockade of the Gaza Strip, I also read equally empty statements from progressive parties and activists, framing the violence merely as a decolonization struggle without a word about the civilian casualties.

The feeling that stays with me as a Jew and a supporter of Palestinian liberation is this: if the struggle for Palestinian freedom is a just fight for human rights and against oppression, then Hamas is not the vanguard you want to support. The fact that the biggest donor to Hamas is the Iranian regime should make all of us bristle.

The same Instagram commentators who now revel in how Hamas is liberating Palestine were posting the words 'Woman, Life, Freedom' on their timelines just a few months ago. The slogan was adopted from the Kurdish freedom movement and made a comeback in the recent struggle for women's rights in Iran. Now that it's Jewish women being paraded dead, naked, and with broken limbs through Gaza City, the silence is deafening.

### **Not a Competition**

The dream of an Israel/Palestine where everyone – [from the river to the sea](#) – is free will not be liberated by a gang of misogynist murderers in the service of the ayatollahs. And while the Palestinians' struggle for freedom is justified, the dehumanization that turns every citizen into a legitimate target is not.

The fact that almost all Jewish Israelis are descendants of survivors of the Holocaust and/or Jews that were expelled from Arab nations between 1948 and 1967, is not in competition with the daily structural violence and the history of dispossession and humiliation that Palestinians face. [The massacre in Be'eri](#) is not in competition with the horrific bombings in Gaza.

If we want to fight for a just world, let's not succumb to dehumanization and bloodlust. Let's mourn, let's hold each other. Let's not just dream of the better world we want to see for those who happen to be the star in our Instagram algorithm, but for everyone.