

russelkaplan rka
auctioneers



"Master Banker Master Of Complications" Franck Muller watch
R95 000 - R110 000

Chanel shoulder bag
R12 000 - R15 000



Mid-century Brazilian lounge chair by "Liceu L de Artes e Officious, Sao Paulo"
R20 000 - R30 000



Bernard Leach, Faceted Golbular Vase
R30 000 - R50 000

Robert Griffiths Hodgins, Two Gents and Francis Bacon
R200 000 - R300 000



SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER & DOWNLOAD OUR APP

Winter Wunderkammer Auction
Until Sunday, 28th July
LIVE ONLINE NOW

For more information 011 789 7422 • info@rkauctioneers.co.za • www.rkauctioneers.co.za
Bram Fischer Centre, Lower Ground, 95 Bram Fischer Drive, Cnr George Street, Ferndale, 2194



South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

Volume 27 - Number 24 ■ 25 July 2024 ■ 19 Tamuz 5784

www.sajr.co.za

US sanctions reveal local terror financing network

NICOLA MILTZ

Three men, two of whom are based in South Africa, were named by the United States (US) treasury this week in association with activities linked to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on the African continent.

Abubakar Swalleh, Zayd Gangat, and Hamidah Nabagala have been designated – in other words, sanctioned and no longer able to do business with the US – bringing the number of those designated from the African continent, mostly from South Africa, to 12.

It's further proof that terror financing has become an issue in South Africa, with increasing evidence that ISIS supporters and domestic-terror activists are involved in funding terrorism locally and internationally.

"Since the 7 October attack against Israel and the resultant war, ISIS, looking for relevance, has capitalised on growing levels of anti-Zionism and antisemitism, using its official and unofficial media platforms to encourage attacks against Jews across the world," said Jevon Greenblatt, the director of operations at the Community Security Organisation (CSO).

South Africa has a long and "concerning" history of ISIS-linked activities, he said.

He mentioned a few, including the Thulsie twins' plot to attack Jewish targets in 2016; the murders of Rodney and Rachel Saunders in 2018; the attack on a Shia Mosque and placement of incendiary devices around Durban in the same year; the New Year's Eve shootings across Johannesburg in 2020; and the threat against the Gay Pride parade in Sandton in 2022.

The three men have been added to the US sanctions list as part of its efforts to clamp down on the emergence of South Africa and other African countries as key places of ISIS resurgence.

According to the treasury, these individuals serve as "key financiers and trusted operatives", enabling the activities of ISIS and its leaders across Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa.

They also serve as critical links between far-flung ISIS operations, including ISIS affiliates in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Somalia, and ISIS cells in South Africa, allowing ISIS leadership to leverage each affiliate's capabilities to conduct terrorist attacks that undermine peace and security in the region.

"South Africa has been at the core of global terrorist financing for more than two decades," said Professor Hussein Solomon at the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State.

"This isn't new, and we have done nothing. Our international partners are exasperated with us. The bottom line is, we don't have the capacity or the political will to stop it. Stopping this financial support to terror groups means shutting off money laundering for corrupt elements within the state."

According to the treasury, Swalleh is a South Africa and Zambia-based ISIS operative. He's allegedly involved in

the physical transfer of funds from South Africa to the DRC. Additionally, Swalleh facilitates the movement of ISIS-affiliated individuals from Uganda to South Africa, and vice versa.

Mohamed Ali Nkalubo, a DRC-based ISIS commander previously designated by the state department in December 2023, allegedly relies on Swalleh to move funds and recruit members for ISIS's DRC affiliate.

Swalleh moved to South Africa under Nkalubo's direction, where he has been involved in robberies and kidnapping for ransom.

Zayd Gangat is a South Africa-based ISIS facilitator and trainer according to US treasury. ISIS leaders in South Africa have historically used robbery, extortion, and kidnapping for ransom to generate funds for the group.

DRC-based Hamidah Nabagala serves as an

intermediary for ISIS financial flows in Central Africa. Additionally, Nabagala has been accused of funding the October 2021 Kampala bombing, which killed one and injured at least three others. In 2021, Ugandan authorities arrested an ISIS operative that had received funding from Nabagala. She also sought to smuggle her three children out of Uganda to send them to ISIS-affiliate camps in the DRC.

In March 2022 and November 2022, the US treasury targeted ISIS's efforts to expand operations and raise funds on the African continent with designations of South Africa-based ISIS operatives, financial facilitators, and their business networks.

"South Africa's National Terrorism Financing Risk Assessment for 2024 is correct in stating that South Africa is considered to be a hub or transit point for financial flows between terror suspects in the region," said Solomon.

"The international community is willing to help us, but we don't have the political will to deal with it. Then, there's the entanglement between organised crime and terrorist groups, which makes it difficult. Two reports on our intelligence services show how politicised and factionalised it is.

"There are recommendations, and we know what to do to fix things, but our security services are incompetent and politicised. We need a truly new government not a Government of National Unity with the African National Congress still there, which goes to the heart of the problem," he said.

Greenblatt said Africa had become a primary front for terror organisations such as ISIS and Al Qaeda.

"ISIS has a well-established and interconnected network of cells and individuals across Africa, including within South Africa, and aims to establish an Islamic state throughout the continent.

"ISIS's decentralised command structures encourage the various cells and individuals to take matters into their own hands. In some cases, this involves funding, recruiting, and training for groups

Continued on page 3>>



Howard Sackstein joins DA members of parliament Glynnis Breytenbach (right) and Michael Bagraim (back) with Judge Johann Kriegler (centre) in a "selfie" moment at the opening of Parliament last Thursday, 18 July. See story on page 9

Sponsored by
Discovery Bank

TICKET TO SUCCESS

SPONSOR A JEWISH STUDENT'S TERTIARY EDUCATION BY BUYING A RAFFLE TICKET



STAND A CHANCE TO WIN

1st Prize
Toyota Vitz
valued at R170k



2nd Prize
Discovery Bank Travel Experience
Valued at R64k



3rd Prize
Full municipal water backup system
(with Jojo tank and DAB pump)
Valued at R34k



ChevrahKadisha
www.jhbchev.co.za

Society Lottery Scheme is registered with National Lotteries Commission (Reg No. 00271/08)

Dukes Gold & Diamond Exchange

We buy all your gold jewellery, Krugerrands, diamonds, luxury watches & gold coins.



072 048 6812 | www.dukesgde.co.za | info@dukesgde.co.za



Read the SA Jewish Report online and sign up to our weekly newsletter

www.sajewishreport.co.za

Facebook: sajewishreport
Instagram: sa_jewishreport

Appliance Repairs on Site

Fridges, Dishwashers, Washing Machines, Stoves, Tumble Dryers & more

Call Jason
082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532

FREE QUOTATIONS

ETERNAL MEMORIALS

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein
083-458 9965
RabbiRyanG@gmail.com

"I will help you through this difficult time in your life with all the necessary tombstone requirements"

Continuing Rabbi Sher's z"l Legacy

Biden's exit marks end of an era

RON KAMPEAS – JTA

If there's one story that defines Joe Biden's relationship with Israel, it's the famous Golda Meir anecdote.

At an Israeli embassy Independence Day bash in 2015, the then-vice president told the story he had been telling for 42 years.

He was a neophyte Delaware senator in the autumn of 1973, barely 30 years old. She was the wizened, chain-smoking prime minister. He conveyed to her his sense that Israel's enemies were about to launch a war. She seemed pessimistic too.

"She said, 'Senator, you look so worried,'" he said. "I said, 'Well, my G-d, madame prime minister,' and I turned to look at her. I said, 'The picture you paint.' She said, 'Oh, don't worry. We have' – I thought she said this only to me – 'a secret weapon in our conflict with the Arabs. You see, we have no place else to go.'"

The 2015 speech was aimed at assuaging tensions between his boss, President Barack Obama, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the Iran nuclear deal Obama was brokering that year.

But buried toward the end of the speech was a prophecy, made by a vice president and fulfilled by the same man once he became president: America would bring its military might to bear on Israel's

behalf if it came to that.

"We'll never stop working to ensure that Jews from around the world always have somewhere to go," he said. "We'll never stop working to make sure that Israel has a qualitative edge. And whomever the next president is – Republican or Democrat – it will be the same because the American people, the American people are committed. The American people understand."

those attacks, that pledge has been tested, with the administration withholding large bombs from Israel's arsenal and warning repeatedly that the counterattack that by now has killed nearly 40 000 Palestinians was in danger of going too far.

The war cost Biden political capital across the board: a rebellion among pro-Palestinian voters who voted "uncommitted" in various state primaries, and anger from

the right and the kinds of pro-Israel interests who consider anything but a full green light to Israel a betrayal of America's closest ally in the Middle East.

Vice President Kamala Harris, a front-runner to replace Biden at the top of the ticket, has stoked worries among pro-Israel voters for appearing to be more vocal than Biden in criticising what the administration sees as the oversteps of Netanyahu.

In March, she was the first administration official to call for an "immediate" ceasefire, and used

tough language to describe demands on Israel to allow in humanitarian aid. Harris, who drew Biden's endorsement on Sunday, 21 July, when he exited the race, is married to a Jewish man, Doug Emhoff, who has been a vocal advocate against antisemitism during his stint as second gentleman.

US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu embrace at Ben Gurion Airport in October 2023



Photo: Avi Ohayon, Israel Government Press Office

In 2023, President Biden made good on that promise: literally embracing Netanyahu in the wake of the 7 October attack by Hamas, and pledging, "As long as the United States stands – and we will stand forever – we will not let you ever be alone."

Over the next nine months and the war that followed

FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE

Have a love at first sound experience.

Phonak Audéo™ Paradise

There's nothing like the sound of Paradise

- Experience exceptional sound performance
- Connect seamlessly to Bluetooth® devices
- Rechargeable so you'll always stay connected
- Remote Support for the ultimate in convenience



AFFORDABLE RANGE FOR PENSIONERS

- Affordable for Pensioners
- 2-Year Warranty
- No Follow-Up Charges
- Latest Technology
- Small and Discreet
- Extensive Wireless Communication Portfolio Available
- Supplements for Tinnitus

Hearing Aid Batteries Reduced to R40

Contact us today on our new number
(011) 728 7016
082 953 4628

Fairmount
6 George Ave,
Sandringham

VEHICLES WANTED

ANY MAKE ANY MODEL ANY CONDITION

BEST PRICE GUARANTEED



Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826

Mourn, but don't despair

Torah Thought



Rabbi Yossi Chaikin
The Oxford Synagogue Centre

A breach is made in the wall. The enemy begins to pour in through the opening. Scenes of carnage follow. Burning, pillaging, murdering, torturing, and violating. Captives taken away to an uncertain fate. Screaming, wailing, pleading, contrasted with sounds of laughter and mirth by the perpetrators.

2023 or 70 CE?

On the 17th of Tammuz in the year 70, the Roman armies breached the walls around Jerusalem. Utter destruction followed, as the city was razed to the ground by the invaders, its inhabitants subjected to pain and suffering of epic proportions. The survivors were dragged away as slaves in faraway lands. This came to a climax exactly three weeks later, on the 9th of Av, when the Temple was set on fire and totally demolished.

We mourn during these three weeks, which commenced this past Tuesday, and will end on Tuesday, 13 August. Both of those days are fasts. On the intermediate days, marriages and haircuts are prohibited and we refrain from activities that will lead to joy and levity.

Sadness and the Jewish people are antonyms. We're commanded to serve G-d with joy and to be perpetually happy.

Hence commemorating this sombre period doesn't mean walking around dejected, wallowing in the past. For the Prophet Zachariah prophesied that "these days shall become occasions for joy and gladness and happy festivals for the House of Judah". This is in the same chapter where he describes how "Hashem will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem", and that "there shall yet be elderly men and women sitting in the squares of

Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their old age, and the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing".

The current three-week period is thus not only about grief and lamenting. It's also about dwelling on the future, on hope, and pondering how we can turn the dream into a reality.

The painful memories of 22 Tishrei 5784 (7 October 2023) are still etched in our mind and won't go away. While Jeremiah predicted, centuries ago, that "disaster would break loose from the north", today, we are also under threat from the west, south, and east.

Yet, we dare not fall into despair. This isn't our nature. We have continued to

celebrate marriages and other joyous life-cycle events. We are the people who adopted the slogan, "We will dance again" almost immediately after bullets rained on our young people's party. Centuries of a difficult and painful history have taught us to smile even as we cry.

For we are the indomitable people – *am hanetzch*. Nobody will break our spirit, and nobody will destroy *am Yisrael*.

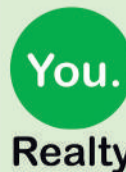
As the elders return to the settlements of the south and the north, and the children resume playing in the streets, these days will, please G-d, very soon become occasions for joy and gladness and happy festivals for the House of Judah.

Shabbat Times brought to you by

Spencer Schwartz from You Realty
Residential Property Sales and Rentals + Auctions

	Starts	Ends
Johannesburg	17:21	18:12
Cape Town	17:45	18:39
Durban	17:03	17:55
Bloemfontein	17:23	18:15
Gqeberha	17:16	18:11
Plettenberg Bay	17:25	18:19
East London	17:09	18:03
Jerusalem*	19:04	20:20
Tel Aviv*	19:20	20:22

Spencer Schwartz • 084 524 4616 • spencer@yourealty.co.za



The "Three Weeks", between the fast days of 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'Av, have historically been days of misfortune for the Jewish people. On the 17th of Tammuz, Moses broke the Tablets after the Sin of the Golden Calf, and the Romans breached the walls of Jerusalem. We observe mourning during this time, such as not celebrating weddings or cutting our hair.

South African Jewish Report

Advertising Britt Landsman: 082 292 9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za • Laura Kaufman – laura@sajewishreport.co.za

Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za • Distribution Sandy Furman • Subscriptions Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd
Tel: 0860 525 200 • Advertisements and editorial copy do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff and board of directors. Tel: 011 430 1980.

Editor Peta Krost – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • Sub-editor Julie Leibowitz
Intern Lee Tankle • Editorial co-ordinator Dylan Berger – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za
Proofreader Kim Hatchuel/A-Proofed – kim@a-proofed.co.za • Photographer Ilan Ossendryver



South Africans stirred but not shaken by Houthi attack

TALI FEINBERG

South African Ronli Dorfman was sleeping peacefully in a Tel Aviv hotel in the early hours of Friday, 19 July, when she heard an explosion that awoke her from the deepest of sleeps. “The boom was so intense that I actually thought the whole area was going to start imploding,” she says. “It just felt like everything was going to start collapsing.”

Dorfman has heard bombs before while spending a few weeks in the south of Israel with the current Gaza war not far away, but she says “this was on another level”. She didn’t understand why she hadn’t heard a siren, or why the Iron Dome hadn’t intercepted what sounded like a rocket attack.



Pictures taken by a South African tourist in Tel Aviv of the Houthi drone attack damage

woken up “even though I live in a completely different part of town. It was very loud. It was shocking to see the ease with which the drone could enter Israel without any siren alert. However, I can’t say I’m particularly shaken by it. On 7 October, I was out stocking up on groceries and a rocket decimated an apartment block less than 100m from where I was standing. Perhaps that numbed me to the threat.”

A fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute, Hyde says, “It’s concerning that something like that was put down to human error. Of course, it’s possible and these things can happen, but it was one drone. If it escalates to a situation where there’s 200 coming and they’re flying at a low level like that, one would hope that they’d be able to pick them up, otherwise it would have really catastrophic effects. “What it means for the war is that it’s probably going to remain contained,” he says. “Things were really heating up between Israel and Hezbollah on the northern front, and I don’t think Iran is ready to sacrifice Hezbollah in the way that it allowed Hamas to be sacrificed. The firing of the drone from the Houthis was a distraction to balance out ‘the heat’ in the north.”

Israel retaliated on Sunday, 21 July, with airstrikes against the Houthi-controlled port of Hodeida in western Yemen in an operation, dubbed “Outstretched Arm”. According to the military, the strike on the fuel depot was a major blow to the Houthi economy, and the cranes taken out of service prevents the group from bringing in more Iranian weapons via the port that has been used to target Israel along with commercial and military ships in the Red Sea.

A South African *oleh* who asked not to be named to protect his privacy says, “The explosion was about a kilometre and a half away from us, and it was a huge boom. People need to know that this isn’t just happening in the heart of Tel Aviv, this is happening all over Israel, so it’s not just an isolated incident. The world needs to understand that everyone is targeted, not just Jews. It’s also targeting Muslims, Druze, and Christians. The rockets don’t discriminate. We need the world to be behind us all, and we need to be strong throughout the whole country, not just when it happens in Tel Aviv.”

A South African businessman speaking anonymously to avoid backlash in South Africa says he was also staying in a hotel nearby when the explosion woke him and his

i-deal



FURNISHERS

Midways Mall,
280 Corlett Drive, Bramley Gardens
Monday to Friday 9:00 – 17:00
Saturday 9:00 – 13:00 | Sunday 9:30 – 13:00

COST + 10% on appliances, furniture and beds
T's & C's apply

BIG DISCOUNTS
on Simmons and Sealy base sets
plus FREE mattress protector

☎ 011 887 5456 | 011 440 9571 | www.idealdeal.co.za

For the best deals! Come meet Nathan (from I. Lubner and Sons and HNT) and Mendel (from Ultimate Beds and HNT) and the i-deal team.

family. Though his children and wife panicked, “I was in denial. It was terrifying, but I just never thought anything like that could happen in Tel Aviv, and there hadn’t been any siren.”

He says there was no protocol about going into a shelter, which added to the chaos and confusion. Eventually he went out into the street and saw the blown-out windows, damaged cars, and people in shock. Later, in daylight, he took harrowing photographs of the damage.

“It was incredibly disconcerting to see families from the north who were living in my hotel and others in the area, with kids coming out, crying, clearly traumatised. That’s when it really hit home. But Israelis are amazingly

resilient, and a sense of calm quickly prevailed.

“What I found sad was that the next day, there was media from all over world,” he says. “Meanwhile, no-one cares about attacks on the north, which are happening daily. It’s so hypocritical. I also think it definitely was aimed at the US embassy, and the US should acknowledge it and respond – or is it going to let anyone attack its embassy?”

He and his family come to Israel on holiday every year, and say they still feel safe in Tel Aviv and are out and about enjoying everything Israel has to offer. “It took us a long time to fall back asleep that night, and we’ve never experienced anything like it before. However, it hasn’t made us want to run away. In fact, we want to stay longer.”



US sanctions reveal local terror financing network

>>Continued from page 1

and activities in other countries, but in many instances, it means planning and preparing for terror operations within their home country.

“Much of ISIS’s media structure is aimed at inspiring lone-wolf style attacks on ‘home soil’, so we can conclude that some of the funding, recruitment, and training is being dedicated to activities in South Africa. The nexus between terror groups such as ISIS and organised crime in South Africa, together with factors like poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, fuels an environment where radicalisation and terrorism can thrive,” he said.

Since the Financial Action Task Force’s grey listing of South Africa due to deficiencies identified in the country’s anti-money laundering and the combatting of the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime, there has been a concerted effort to address these deficiencies by the South African authorities.

“The question remains whether this is too little, too late. Only time will tell if these efforts have a positive

effect in combatting radicalisation, extremism, and the proliferation of terror groups and ideologies within the country and the continent,” said Greenblatt.

“The action this week underscores the crucial work of the Counter ISIS Finance Group [CIFG] and the importance of effective information sharing among coalition countries to target ISIS’s facilitation networks,” said Brian Nelson, the undersecretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence.

The CIFG is a working group of the global coalition to defeat ISIS and curb ISIS financing worldwide, which includes more than 80 countries and international organisations.

“While we have made considerable progress over the nearly 10 years since the establishment of this group, we must all remain vigilant because ISIS continues to develop new financial methods. The US, in close co-ordination with its key partners, remains committed to disrupting the key nodes that enable disparate ISIS groups to work together and their ability to finance the group’s terrorist activities.”

JAWITZ
PROPERTIES

Leading
REAL ESTATE COMPANIES
OF THE WORLD

FOR SALE



GLENHAZEL | R 1 799 000

4 3.5 Web Ref: JRL21020

Border Sunningdale. A large stand, 4 reception areas leading out onto patio with gas braai, sparkling pool and large garden. Well fitted kitchen and walk in pantry. 4 Bedrooms. 2.5 bathrooms, a Jacuzzi room and dressing room. Double garage plus double lock up car port. Double shade cloth. Good security. Double staff accommodation.




Joel Harris: 082 926 0287
Lauren Shalpid: 083 789 0229

FOR SALE



GLENHAZEL | R 3 600 000

4 4 Web Ref: JRL20309

Unbeatable location. 4/5 Bedrooms, 4 bathrooms. Open-plan dining and lounge area. Playroom. Covered patio overlooks a lush green garden with fishpond. Sparkling pool. Kitchen with separate laundry area, Pesach kitchen, and sukkah area. 2-Bedroom cottage. Carports for 6 cars.




Joel Harris: 082 926 0287
Lauren Shalpid: 083 789 0229

FOR SALE



WAVERLEY | R 1 850 000

2 2 Web Ref: JRL6293

Own your piece of a secure lock and leave lifestyle. Ground floor unit of 2 beds, 2 baths (1 ensuite). Open concept floor plan with kitchen/dining/lounge, combines the 3 zones into one integrated living space. Neat, compact, front garden with storeroom, 2 carports, complex pool, access-controlled keypad entrance & 24/7 off-site monitoring.



Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

FOR SALE



BEVERLEY | R 2 899 000

3 2.5 Web Ref: JRL20879

Walking distance to Beverley Schul. This gorgeous double-storey home offers the perfect blend of luxury, comfort & modern living. 3 Spacious Beds Upstairs, 2.5 Bathrooms. Main en-suite & Guest powder room. Entertainers garden. Double garage with extra storage. Close in proximity to schools, shopping centers & recreational facilities.



Ashe Thaver: 078 460 7011

Bereaved mom finds true north with leadership academy

NICOLA MILTZ

Israeli soldier Regev Reef Amar dreamt of becoming prime minister of Israel one day and always told his friends and family he was prepared to die for his country.

He was killed by Hamas terrorists on 7 October last year, just two weeks before his 21st birthday.

Regev also dreamt of visiting South Africa, the birthplace of his mother, Gilanit, and his beloved grandparents, Tamara, and the late Zammy Reef, who lived in Sandringham before making aliya in 1974, settling in Herzliya.

"He insisted on using my maiden name, Reef, as his surname," said Gilanit, to retain a bit of her history and connection to South Africa.

Regev, a staff sergeant in the Israel Defense Forces, is said to have saved many lives on that Black Sabbath, when Hamas terrorists infiltrated the Israeli border to go on a killing spree.

He was stationed at Bislach Yerucham in the south, serving as a combat soldier in the 101st Battalion of the Paratroopers Brigade, when news of the massacre along the Gaza border erupted. He was sent by his unit to kibbutz Kissufim, one of the worst effected, to rescue civilians from further attack. It's understood that he continued fighting even though he had been shot himself.

"When soldiers wanted to rescue him from the gunfire, he told them not to go near him because he knew they would be shot and killed," said Gilanit. Instead, he continued to fight alone.

The Friends of the Israel Defense Forces reiterated this, saying that Regev "kept his comrades from rescuing him, knowing their own lives would be at risk".

"He was severely injured by a hand grenade, but it was a rocket-propelled grenade which finally killed him. He fought valiantly until the very end," said Gilanit.

Regev has been hailed a hero by his community in kibbutz Sde Nehemia in northern Israel.

The kibbutz is 4km from the Lebanon border, and experiences at least two red alert sirens a day.

"We're living in a war zone. We can sometimes hear the bombs going off from Lebanon before the sirens sound for us to be in our bomb shelters," said Gilanit.

"We have zero seconds to get to a shelter. Sadly, this has become a way of life for those of us who have chosen to stay here," she said. "People aren't allowed to gather in groups of more than 30."



Regev Reef Amar

About 40% of the kibbutz has left the area for safety's sake, and only 700 of the 1 370 residents have returned.

In the past, residents of kibbutz Sde Nehemia would shop, bank, or visit doctors in nearby Kiryat Shmona, however the town has been evacuated, which means they now have to travel more than an hour to Tiberius. "It's not easy because we cannot leave our homes for long, and must always be near

a bomb shelter," said Gilanit.

"My husband, David, and I won't leave the north. Our son is buried here," she said.

"A lot of our neighbours have left. My mom lived with us until 7 October, but she has moved to a retirement home further south because we were afraid that she couldn't run fast enough to a bomb shelter."

Her mother, Tamara Reef, was a teacher in South Africa and taught at Dawnview and Edenvale High School. Her late sister, Anita Poplak, taught Grade 6 at King David Linksfield for more than 40 years.

"I came to South Africa for my Batmitzvah," said Gilanit. A leadership academy for young adults is being established

in kibbutz Sde Nehemia in Regev's memory, she told the *SA Jewish Report*.

The Derech Regev leadership academy for young adults aims to impart the values of the late Regev, a man who cherished his land, loved his country, enjoyed volunteering, and was dedicated to his community. The academy seeks to teach potential leaders how to embrace the future, develop resilience, and build a better tomorrow. It's envisioned that the academy will house about 47 young pioneers of the Derech Regev programme each year.

"There are a lot of leadership programmes in Israel, but there's great need for one in the north where people are living under constant pressure from the war," Gilanit said.

A fundraising campaign has so far brought in a substantial amount of money, which will go towards renovating two existing buildings which will house the pioneers of the leadership academy and help accommodate children from kindergarten to the age of 17 who will be looked after by participants of the leadership academy. Funds raised will also help to finance infrastructure, electricity supply, and other kibbutz necessities.

Kids and the elderly in the north are finding it difficult to cope with constant bomb threats from Lebanon, Gilanit said. "Retirement villages up north have closed, so many of the elderly need company and activities. The academy will provide this," she said.

"Participants will visit the elderly and keep them company, help them with computers, do crafts, and sit with them. The elderly say they don't want to leave the kibbutz which they helped build. They say nothing will push them away, not even Hezbollah."

Young children will also be looked after while their parents are at work, she said.

"Since my son died, I believe everything is meant to be. If my time comes, it comes. I can't let fear manage me. It's easy to be sad the whole day, but my son wouldn't want that. This leadership programme helps me to wake up in the morning and face the day. I lost a son, but I'm gaining 47 young people each year, who will come here and spread hope."

Regev is survived by his parents, Gilanit and David, and his two sisters, Roni, 24, who works for the Israel Agency in California, and Shaked, 18.

For those wanting to donate to the Derech Regev Leadership Academy, email gilanit007@gmail.com

Refugees at home: the plight of Israel's evacuees

TALI FEINBERG

Living just 400m from the Lebanese border, South African *olah* Adrienne Chonowitz thought she was leaving for only a few days at most when she, her husband Hilton, her daughter-in-law, and grandchildren evacuated their homes on Kibbutz Ma'ayan Baruch, on 8 October. The Chonowitz's two sons stayed behind to guard the kibbutz as part of its emergency squad.

Almost 10 months later, she and her family have moved four times and have been able to visit their kibbutz home briefly to swap out clothes as the seasons changed. "Those few visits have been filled with mixed emotions," she says from her current accommodation near the Kinneret.

"It feels like my house no longer has a soul, no longer has a heart. The hardest part of being displaced is not being in your own home and not knowing when you'll be able to return."

This is the reality for 151 families of South African origin who have been evacuated since the beginning of the war along with the thousands of other displaced Israelis, suffering silently as refugees in their own country while the world ignores their plight. South African *olim* who are displaced expressed positivity, hope, and gratitude when speaking to the *SA Jewish Report*, yet at the same time say that lack of communication from the government and the endlessness of not knowing if they will ever be able to return is difficult to endure.



Adrienne and Hilton Chonowitz outside their hotel room at Ein Gev

"Very few have returned home," says Telfed Chairperson Maish Isaacson, who has travelled up and down the country to visit displaced families and support them through Telfed's work. "From the north, there are 32 families of South African origin, and from the south, there are 19 families of South African origin who have been evacuated."

Isaacson saw the horrors of 7 October firsthand. As a Zaka volunteer, he helped to process bodies for identification. Now, he works tirelessly through Telfed to assist South African *olim* and all Israelis to navigate their new reality. From the earliest hours of the war, Telfed reached out to evacuees with financial, emotional, and social support that continues to this day. In the early days,

this meant providing new laptops for school and work, vouchers for food and clothes, and social support. Since then, it has meant driving long distances to visit them, bringing them gifts, and providing ongoing assistance.

For evacuees, "there's no light at end of the tunnel", he says. "Some don't want to return, and for some, it will take years to rebuild. In addition, many can't work and need financial assistance. That's why Telfed is here. Please support us so we can support them."

Chonowitz says that she and her family evacuated voluntarily on 8 October when the possibility of infiltration from the north loomed large in their minds. The kibbutz was officially evacuated only 10 days later. The couple stayed with friends, then family, and then joined their community at a hotel on the Kinneret. When their daughter-in-law struggled to live in a single room with her children, they moved to a hotel that provided a lounge, and the Chonowitzes followed.

The hotel is now their home for the foreseeable future.

After she and her husband made aliya in 1987, they settled on Ma'ayan Baruch and have lived there ever since. "Three years ago, my son and his wife built their own home on the kibbutz," she says. Living close to her grandchildren in the close-knit environment of the kibbutz was a dream come true, but that idyll was shattered on 7 October. Then on 13 July, a Hezbollah rocket hit the kibbutz, causing a fire that severely damaged the young family's new home. Though it was empty at the time, it's a severe blow. Chonowitz says at least 21 houses were affected.

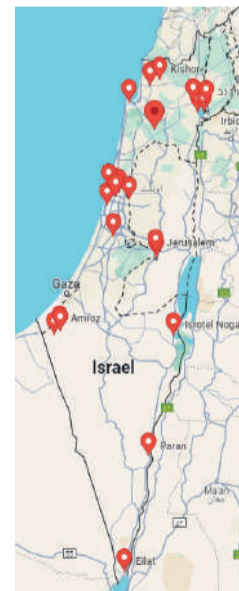
For now, her life remains in limbo. "There are little things people don't realise are hard, like having to find a new doctor in your area or not being able to cook a meal," she says. "It's like starting your life over again."

She has witnessed her grandchildren battle with living in a tiny room and not being able to attend regular schooling. Many of the displaced families viewed the beginning of the school year, 1 September, as the time that they would hopefully return home, and at first, the government set it as a deadline. But with the possibility of a northern war growing by the day, that 1 September deadline has become a distant dream. Children will be reabsorbed into the schools near where they are staying, and "we will continue to adapt to our new reality", says Chonowitz.

She and her husband try to stay positive and busy. She says hotels across the country have gone out of their way to provide activities and outings for displaced communities. Being close to other kibbutzniks has helped them feel less alone. "Telfed has been amazing, going way beyond the call of duty," says Chonowitz. "They have driven up north to visit us and bring us gifts, and we constantly get phone calls to check how we're doing. We're very grateful."

Another South African *olah* who asked to remain anonymous to protect her privacy was also evacuated from the only home she has ever known in Israel, Kibbutz Matzuva, also in the north. "We've lived there for

almost 50 years," she says. Like Chonowitz, she packed a few things on 8 October to move away for a few days, not knowing she wouldn't be able to return. She is now also living in a hotel near the Kinneret. "Never in my wildest dreams did I think this would happen to us at our age, but it did."



A map showing the locations of displaced families that Maish Isaacson has visited

"I've never been away from my home for this long," she says. "You feel uprooted and disconnected, physically and emotionally. We lived a simple life, but it's my life, and I miss it. Our house is standing empty with no water or electricity, and our garden has grown into a jungle. However, we're grateful. We're with people who are much less fortunate, who don't have a home to go back to." She is also grateful to Telfed and her kibbutz leadership for their constant support.

"The best thing for us at the moment is to stay here and wait things out," she says.

"We're a resilient nation, and we'll continue to support each other," says Isaacson. "Before 7 October, we had *sinat chinam* [baseless hatred] and now what we need is *ahavat chinam* [baseless love]." Isaacson is planning to visit Kibbutz Kissufim soon, a kibbutz that was attacked on 7 October that Telfed is helping to rebuild. "It was there that Saar Margolis [37], who has South African roots, died defending the kibbutz on 7 October," says an emotional Isaacson, who will visit Margolis's sisters. "There are so many heroes who went way beyond the natural call of duty, and we need to continue their legacy by caring for those left behind."

Board takes ANC to task for excluding SA Jewry

TALI FEINBERG

In a significant moment for the South African Jewish community, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has laid a complaint against the African National Congress (ANC) about the community's exclusion from national interfaith events.

This is possibly the first time that a complaint against the ANC has been lodged at the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission), a constitutional body tasked with the promotion and protection of the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities.

"The South African Jewish community has always stood proudly as citizens of this country and as an intrinsic part of our rich multicultural tapestry," said the SAJBD in a statement released on 22 July. "Our community has engaged in active citizenship, and has valued the comradeship we have across all sectors of our country. We have always played an integral role in interfaith and social-cohesion events and initiatives, including with the ANC.

"Sadly, this year, the Jewish community was systematically and repeatedly excluded from events hosted by the ANC, including national prayers and interfaith events," the statement continues. "In addition to this, the Jewish community has been treated with expedience by the ANC for its political machinations.

"At the inception of the Government of National Unity [GNU], which is designed to incorporate the diverse voices of South African society, we intend to ensure that our Jewish community is reinstated as a vital part of this national unity. For this reason, the SAJBD has lodged a formal complaint at the CRL."

The complaint deals with four incidents in which the Jewish community was excluded or discriminated against at the hands of the ANC. These included Jewish communal leadership's exclusion from a government interfaith engagement in the Western Cape on 3 May;

the Jewish community being the only faith community left out of the ANC interfaith "day of prayer" on 19 May; and the ANC boycotting the SAJBD pre-election debate because it was held at the South African Jewish Museum, on 19 May. Finally, for the first time since the dawn of South African democracy, the Jewish community wasn't invited to give a prayer alongside other faith groups at the ANC's final pre-election rally on 26 May.

"As a longstanding cultural and religious community, the democratically elected representatives of South African Jewry reject and challenge the treatment we have received from the ANC," the Board's statement reads. "We believe that this case at the CRL Rights Commission will ensure that no community, regardless of size or political influence, will have its rights infringed upon and used as a political tool."

He said lodging a formal complaint with the CRL was decided as the best approach because "our Constitution was designed for all South Africans to live together, irrespective of their diverse views and backgrounds, and was carefully constructed for this purpose. The pillars of this Constitution are the Chapter 9 bodies that were established to protect and promote these pivotal values and principles. If any South African feels excluded from the fabric of society, they are encouraged to use these Chapter 9 bodies for a remedy.

"The primary mandate of the CRL Rights Commission is to uphold the cultural, religious, and linguistic rights of South Africans. As a religious and cultural community which was excluded from religious and cultural cohesion events, we believe that in order to address our exclusion by the ANC constructively, this constitutional body is the

the ANC in past months."

The SAJBD had engaged with the ANC on the issue, he said. "We wrote to the deputy president's office on 3 May regarding our exclusion from the interfaith event on that same day, and were assured that it was 'looking into the matter and the reasons for the exclusion of leaders from the Jewish community,'" said Krengel. "In spite of assurances that it would revert once it had determined the facts, to date we've still not heard from it."

In addition, "our Cape office engaged extensively with the ANC Western Cape office with regards to the cancellation of its participation in a pre-election debate because it was at a Jewish community venue, but the ANC still boycotted the event."

To the community, he said, "The SAJBD will continue to defend and uphold the rights of Jewish South Africans, as it has done for 121 years. Over the past 30 years of our democracy, we have been privileged to have Chapter 9 institutions that assist cultural, religious, and linguistic communities where there has been a breach of constitutional rights. We do this at a time when South Africans are uniting in a GNU. All South Africans have a right to be included and live in dignity in our country, and we're embarking on this process in this light."

CRL Communications Manager Mpiyakhe Mkholo told the *SA Jewish Report*, "The CRL Rights Commission has received the complaint from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Our investigations and conflict resolution unit will look into it and engage/respond to the complainant accordingly. The complaint is still undergoing our internal processes."

ANC acting spokesperson, Zuko Godlimpi told the *SA Jewish Report* that "The ANC has never and will never target any religious group or community for deliberate exclusion. We have no such policy. Our approach has always been to take the lead in nation building and forging a common South African-hood that embraces virtually all of our people regardless of religious creed, race, ethnicity, or political beliefs."



The ANC boycotted the SAJBD pre-election debate on 19 May because it was held at the South African Jewish Museum

SAJBD President Zev Krengel said it decided to lodge the complaint following incidents that arose "that we found deeply concerning, the last of which occurred just before the elections. For logistical reasons, including the CRL Rights Commission's recent conference, we were able to meet with the chief executive of the CRL only recently to discuss this situation, and the complaint was submitted thereafter. The decision to raise this with the CRL wasn't taken lightly, and was the result of much engagement."

most appropriate forum.

"We would like the outcome to be a strong message that even in disagreement, South Africans should still be able to sit around the table and work together," he said. "All political parties, and all facets of society should adhere to the basic tenets of our Constitution to live together irrespective of our different political, religious, and other views. No community in South Africa should be excluded in the way that South African Jewry has been excluded by



24/7 Emotional Support Line

Toll-Free 0800 233 711



A conversation can change a life

Whenever you notice someone that you care about isn't themselves, if there's a change in what they are doing or saying or if they are going through something, trust your gut and ask if they are ok?

If you or someone you know is going through a hard time, we are here to listen. You are not alone. **Call us on our confidential toll-free line which is open 24/7, 0800 233 711 or visit our website on www.hatzolahruok.co.za for more information on how to reach out to someone you're worried about.**

A Project of  **HATZOLAH**
CARING FOR LIFE

29 Durham Street, Raedene. Tel (Office): 0860 100 101 Email: info@hatzolah.co.za
Emergency Medical Response : 083 222 1818

 HatzolahSA  @hatzolahsa  www.hatzolah.co.za

Happy to sweat the small stuff

I love sweating the small stuff. It's great when all our problems aren't overwhelming and we can make huge issues out of things that aren't really harming us. We get our proverbial knickers in a knot, and it makes us mad.

When my colleague Howard Feldman told me how women in the community were on his case because he had upset them by calling nappy pants unattractive, I realised that our lives had normalised a bit.

When something like this captures people's imagination and ire, we're doing okay. It means people aren't stressing over far bigger things. Do you remember how during the COVID-19 pandemic, nobody got upset about such things? We were dealing with life and death daily – nappy pants didn't touch sides.

It's not to say that when the United States points out ISIS activity in South Africa, that it's a small thing. It's extremely concerning, and something we must take seriously. However, it isn't having an impact on our lives right now.

When we are writing more about what's happening in Israel than what's happening here, it means there's an element of quiet to our lives on the southern tip of Africa.

I caution myself and you all, as it doesn't take much to take our lives back to the craziness, so I have to say that this is case of "*blee ayin harah*" (protect us from the evil eye). We certainly want things to stay calm and on an even keel.

When we can tell stories about our communal leaders taking the former ruling party to task, it means they have time on their hands to do this. Not that it isn't important, it's extremely important not to let politicians ride roughshod over us. But it means that we aren't putting out urgent, massive fires but rather cleaning up after the fact.

This isn't the case in Israel, which is why we're still writing so much about what our expats are going through there. Calling life in Israel tough horribly underplays what people are experiencing.

Last week, a woman allegedly murdered her own little boy, their dog, and took to the streets with an axe (page 13). Days before, people who saw her said she looked like she was managing her life well. She had a close relationship with her son, and her husband was on *miluim* (reserve duty). But something snapped.

Living under the duress of war in Israel from at least two sides of the country is tormenting people.

I recall on my recent trip to Israel, how I was sitting at a restaurant with a dear cousin of mine having a lovely meal and a chat. Her phone beeped, and I witnessed her face go from happy and relaxed to pure anguish in split seconds. She started sweating and went pale.

I discovered that she had received an alert to say the moshav next to the one she and her family live on had a break in, and its residents were ordered to the safe rooms in their homes. They were given strict instructions not to make a sound, and not to come out until they had the all-clear. The authorities believed it could have been a terrorist infiltration as the moshav was close to the West Bank.

My cousin panicked as her 18-year-old daughter and friends were at her home baking, and it was impossible to know if the incident involved only the moshav next to them. Should she go home and fetch her daughter, or should we both go back there? She called her daughter and told her to go into the safe room immediately with her friends even though her moshav hadn't been given the alert.

In one minute, I witnessed the true impact of this war on Israelis who live in the centre of Israel and appear to be unscathed. Nobody is unscathed by the war! Even if you're safe. The fear and insecurity that arose from 7 October last year hasn't diminished, it has been exacerbated. We now know what terrorists are really capable of, and how the world is capable of ignoring and downplaying it.

It turns out the infiltrator was a criminal and not a terrorist. My cousin and everyone on the moshavim nearby were relieved. That was a little odd for me when our biggest fear is crime, but their reasoning was obvious.

As much as things may appear normal on the streets of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, there's nothing normal about living there. This week, we spoke to expat refugees who are trying to survive living away from their homes (page 4). We find out from experts just how the lives of Israelis are underneath the surface (page 13), and how they are withstanding the incredible pressure they are living under.

We also speak to South Africans who found themselves close to the building hit by a drone strike in the tourist area of Tel Aviv close to the United States Embassy (page 3).

Having been there so recently, there's something so disconcerting in knowing just how close I was to it. It's frightening to think about all our family and friends who live that life under threat.

Truth is, as much as we would like to believe that Israelis are safe, they are in a country at war and are doing their utmost to keep going as normally as possible under the circumstances. What's the alternative? There simply isn't one.

The problem is that this war is going on for way too long and the collateral damage is massive. The damage to Israeli society is still unknown, and it will take a long time to determine the toll this war has taken. May Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu find a way of bringing home the hostages and ending this war. It's time!

We all need this war to be over so that Israelis can also get back to sweating the small stuff.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost
Editor



Deny, attack, reverse: Hamas's abusive arsenal

OPINION

ROZANNE SACK



Some light is finally beginning to emerge out of the darkness of denial and lies told the world over about the Hamas attack on 7 October. In a startling departure from its traditionally held anti-Israel views, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has in the past few days published a 236-page report titled "I can't erase all the blood from my mind: Palestinian armed groups October 7th assault on Israel".

Ida Sawyer, crisis and conflict director at HRW, says, "HRW research found that the Hamas-led assault on 7 October was designed to kill civilians and take as many people as possible hostage."

The report documents several dozen cases of serious violations of international humanitarian law by Palestinian armed groups at nearly all the civilian attack sites on that fateful day. According to the report, the crimes include "deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects; wilful killing of persons in custody; cruel and other inhumane treatment; sexual and gender-based violence; hostage taking; mutilation and despoiling [robbing] of bodies; use of human shields; and pillaging and looting"

Hamas responded to this damning report using behaviour typical of narcissistic abusers. Its lies and denials strike a familiar chord for those of us working in the field of abuse. Instead of taking responsibility for their behaviour, a narcissistic abuser commonly projects their bad behaviour onto the victim. Avigail Lev, a clinical psychologist and the founder of the Bay Area CBT Center in California, has coined the acronym "DARVO", which stands for "deny, attack, reverse victim and offender". It describes a manipulative tactic often used by abusers to avoid taking responsibility for their actions and shift the blame onto their victims.



Screenshot of some of the locations that were attacked on 7 October 2023 by Hamas terrorists

In a stunning distortion of the facts, Hamas uses the DARVO tactic of attack, whereby it accuses Israel of embedding the military within the kibbutzim. It states that "the Israeli army bears great responsibility for the killing of many settlers, as noted in Israel's own reports, either during the targeting of the spring festival with planes and artillery shells, or the bombing of homes where there were Israeli civilians". The tactic of reversing victim and offender is obvious in its assertion that "some sites that were attacked were located inside Israeli kibbutzim and settlements that contain civilian facilities, which indicates Israel's use of these civilian objects as human shields".

These lies, attacks, and reversals of offender and victim are particularly galling in light of the HRW's finding that "the widespread attack was directed against a civilian population. Killing civilians and taking hostages were central aims of the planned attack, not an afterthought, plan gone awry, or isolated acts".

We see Hamas's strategy of shifting responsibility and blame onto Israel, where

it blames Israel for the deaths of its own civilians which it attributes to the "ongoing Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip", as well as the "famine and lack of services that our people are experiencing". It also accuses Israel of being responsible for the hostages' ongoing captivity, stating that in the first days of Israeli aggression, Hamas was ready to hand over civilian detainees freely, but Israel refused. It claims that subsequently, it handed over a number of them on its own initiative despite Israel's refusal and procrastination.

The reversal from offender to victim is again seen in its response to the hostage crisis, in which it paints itself as the preserver of the lives of the hostages whom it needs "to move from place to place in fear of their life from the savage Israeli bombardment".

The final manipulative tactic used by a narcissistic abuser is "gaslighting". When criticised, they deny their cruel behaviour, and accuse the victim of lying or not understanding the way things "really happened". In the Hamas response to the HRW report, it asserts that the civilians who came across the border to rape and pillage were totally separate from its own militants, and that it bears no responsibility for their crimes. Anyone in their right mind understands very well that the thousands of Gazans who poured across the border on the heels of the Hamas terrorists came with the same set intention as that of Hamas – to rape, murder, and take as many hostages as possible.

Furthermore, it claims that "the 7 October attack was carried out at specific sites with light military equipment, meaning that much of the violence and destruction were caused by weaponry not owned by Palestinian resistance fighters but by the Israeli military. Many photographs have been published showing

destroyed homes, roads torn up by tracked vehicles, holes in walls, and lines of burnt out and destroyed cars. None of these things relate in any way to the specific action of resistance fighters."

As I sit here and write this article, I feel completely discombobulated at the insane reversal of facts and truths. I can only imagine that this feeling is consistent with the hurt and frustration that abuse victims feel when they aren't believed and their version of reality is turned on its head.

Just as an abusive partner leaves behind a traumatised victim, filled with shame, fear, and often little support, so Hamas has left behind a traumatised nation alone in the world. Its lies, distortion of facts, denial, and justification are its playbook for discrediting the victims and laying fault at the doorstep of the very nation which was mercilessly attacked on 7 October.

Our dignity may be assaulted, demolished, and cruelly undermined, but it can never be taken away unless it is surrendered. We must never surrender. *Am Yisrael Chai!*

• Rozanne Sack is a co-founder of Koleinu SA, a helpline and advocacy organisation for victims of gender-based violence and child abuse in the Jewish and wider community.

Lessons from AMIA bombing – more relevant than ever



ALANA PUGH-JONES BARANOV

OPINION

A calm July winter morning in Buenos Aires turned into a nightmare when a suicide bomber drove a car laden with hundreds of kilograms of explosives into the Jewish community's Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building.

Eighty-five people were brutally murdered and hundreds injured that day – the single deadliest antisemitic attack in more than half a century. For several days following the explosion on 18 July 1994, survivors were trapped under the rubble, fighting for their lives.

This was the second attack against Jewish and Israeli targets on Argentinian soil, after the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was attacked just two years earlier in 1992. Twenty-nine innocent civilians were killed and scores seriously injured.

The AMIA bombing foreshadowed a wave of global terror that has swept the world and, tragically, has only escalated in the decades since.

Adding to the heartbreak of the bombing itself, and the attack that proceeded it, is the fact that in spite of the concerted efforts of the Argentine authorities and local Jewish community, the perpetrators of this horrifying violence haven't been brought to justice.

In 2003, judicial investigators found enough evidence to show that the Iranian government had ordered and financed the terrorist attack, which Hezbollah then executed. Two trials have followed since the bombing and, in spite of Interpol red alerts being put in place, no-one has been jailed or convicted.

In a shocking turn of events, Albert Nisman, the main prosecutor in the case who led the special investigation into the bombing and subsequent judicial cover-up, was found dead in his home on 19 January 2015, just one day before he was to testify in the Argentine Congress on the case.

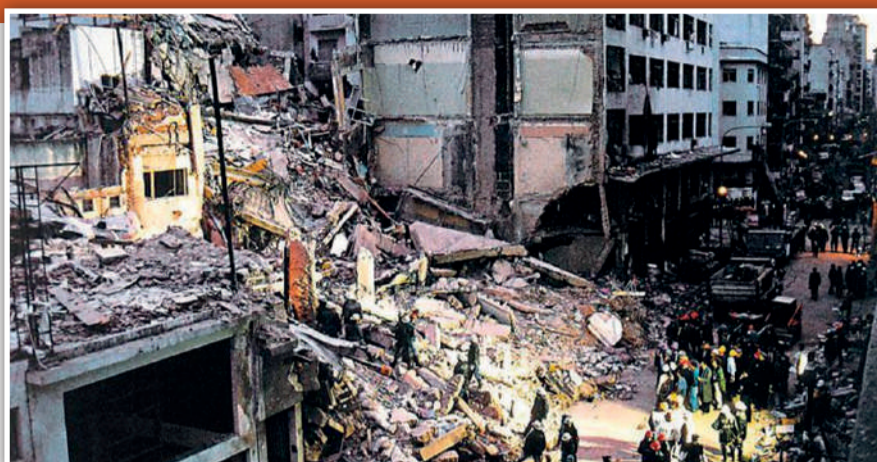
Twenty-five years after the AMIA bombing, Argentina officially designated Hezbollah a terrorist organisation and froze all assets linked to it. This was the first designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist group in Latin America, and other states soon followed, including Colombia, Paraguay, Honduras, and Guatemala.

In South Africa, the AMIA bombing had a significant impact on our own Jewish community. The attack was a sobering wake-up call to diaspora Jewish communities around the world that all Jewish community buildings and institutions could be targets of terror. Various safety and security measures for South African Jewish installations were put in place following the bombing and, sadly, the need for these measures to protect our local community remains ever present.

In 2016, the leadership of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) travelled to Argentina to be part of AMIA bombing commemorations. Wendy Kahn, the national director of the SAJBD, recalls hearing from survivor Daniel Pomerantz who witnessed the AMIA centre collapse following the explosion. "The darkness, the screams, the pain, the horror," Daniel shared. These harrowing memories have never left him. Kahn was deeply moved to be in a community that had lost so much to terror and violence, but remained determined to continue to live and celebrate Jewish life and not give in to fear.

For the 25th anniversary of the attack, the SAJBD held a moving event in Johannesburg with the Argentinian ambassador to South Africa. Screening a film on the bombing and sharing an interview with a survivor, the commemoration brought home the horror of terror attacks and lives forever changed.

Thirty years since that dreadful day, the calls for justice continue. The Latin American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress have called on the international community to commemorate the AMIA bombing by organising events to honour the victims. They also call for the designation of Hezbollah in its entirety, both its political and military wings, as a terrorist organisation. And, they have condemned the Islamic Republic of Iran as the world's leading state-sponsor of terrorism and for the destabilising role it plays not only in Latin America and the Middle East but globally. Iran continues to target Israel, financing and training Hamas terrorists in the lead-up to the 7 October massacre last year, in which 1 200



Aftermath of the bombing that destroyed the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AIMA) headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1994

Israelis were slaughtered, and 250 men, women, and children were kidnapped from their homes and a music festival. In the case of Hezbollah, the World

Jewish Congress points to the fact that it has launched thousands of rockets against Israel since 7 October, and Iran launched more than 300 drones and

missiles targeting Israel during the night of 13 April 2024.

The lessons of the AMIA bombing are as relevant as ever: to pursue justice for the victims of terror no matter the obstacles and pressure faced; the dire need to strengthen international collaboration on counter-terrorism measures; and the importance of countries taking a strong stance against all forms of state-sponsored terrorism.

Three decades on from that terrible July morning in Buenos Aires, it's more important than ever for international

judicial bodies to bring the culprits to justice and for governments and citizens across the globe to root out and address the causes of terrorism. As Jewish communities face rising levels of antisemitism worldwide, while remembering those lives that were forever changed on 18 July 1994, let's stand together with all innocent people targeted by terror based solely on their identity.

• Alana Pugh-Jones Baranov is a steering committee member of the World Jewish Congress's Jewish Diplomatic Corps as well as the co-chairperson of its Women's Representation Steering Committee.

SOLIDARITY MISSION 2 ISRAEL

Cost: \$2650 per person sharing | \$3500 for singles excludes flights

20 - 26 September 2024

Meet fighter pilots

Dinner with President Herzog

JNF SA Memorial Forest for Daniel Perez z'l

Bring in Shabbat at the Kotel

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Friday 20th to Monday 23rd
Jerusalem (King David Hotel)

- Kabbalat Shabbat at the Kotel
- Historical walking tour of Jerusalem's charming German Colony neighbourhood
- Captivating light and sound show at Tower of David
- Exclusive Knesset meetings with esteemed Israeli political leaders
- Mount Herzl tribute to our fallen heroes at Israel's military and national cemetery
- Exclusive dinner with President Herzog

Monday 23rd to Tuesday 24th
The North
(Elma Arts Hotel Zichron Yaakov)

- Memorial service in the JNF-KKL Memorial Forest for Daniel Perez and the South African victims of October 7th with Rabbi Perez and family
- Meet with fighter pilots at the IDF air force base
- Demonstration by Israeli firefighters in their efforts to limit the damage from Hezbollah rockets
- Visit the IDF dog unit to learn about Israel's elite Gaza tunnel busting heroes
- Discover Israel's first hydroelectric power station on the borders of Syria and Jordan
- Security briefing on the situation on the Northern border
- Dinner at the Zikron Yaakov winery

Tuesday 24th to Thursday 26th
Tel Aviv and the South
(Royal Beach Hotel)

- Connect with injured soldiers
- Show support to families at Hostage Square
- Security briefing by experts on the Gaza war
- Pay respects to those killed on October 7th at the site of the Nova festival
- A memorial tree planting in the Be'eri forest, followed by lunch in the Negev desert with international JNF representatives
- Visit kibbutzim on the Gaza border affected by the attacks on October 7th. Meet the residents and learn about their efforts to rebuild their lives
- Drinks and dinner at Israel's first whiskey distillery

Your BEIS at the BASE

JNFSA

Email admin@jnfsa.co.za or call us on 011 645-2579 to reserve your spot

ICJ 'occupation' opinion heaps pressure on Israel

STEVEN GRUZD

Israeli President Isaac Herzog accused the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague this week of mixing politics with law, rejecting what he called the court's outright one-sided and ill-judged advisory opinion.

Israel's president, a lawyer by profession, was referring to the opinion that the ICJ issued on

19 July that Israel's presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem contravened international law.

The court said on 19 July that the "occupation" was illegal, discriminatory, and should end as soon as possible.

Herzog maintained the ICJ's words undermined the entire notion of the process of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. It also blatantly ignored the Jewish people's historic connection to

Israel and our eternal capital, Jerusalem.

Although the ICJ's opinion is non-binding, "it will likely embolden a South African government that persistently uses the ICJ as a propaganda tool", said Rolene Marks, the spokesperson for the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF).

"The opinion demands that Israel end its rule in [the West Bank and East Jerusalem], dismantle Jewish communities and cease all new activities, and provide restitution and reparations to Palestinians. Such a move would inevitably result in the areas

suffering the same fate as Gaza after Israel's 2005 withdrawal: [becoming] a breeding ground for terror and rocket attacks threatening Israel's existence," Marks said.

She said the SAZF "rejects and condemns" the ICJ's opinion, which "is merely another explicitly political gesture from a partisan institution, deeply flawed on legal and moral grounds. These accusations are an attempt to delegitimise Israel's right of self-defence and to deflect attention from Hamas's actions."

"The South African government's support for these proceedings exemplifies a foreign policy trajectory that risks severe economic repercussions, as evidenced by [Trade] Minister Parks Tau's upcoming shuttle diplomacy in the United States [US] to protect South Africa's preferential access under AGOA [the African Growth and Opportunity Act]."

South Africa's relations with the US have already been strained due to Pretoria's positions on the Ukraine and Gaza conflicts.

This ICJ case is separate from the charge of "genocide" brought by South Africa against Israel in the ICJ earlier in 2024.

As in the "genocide" case, the vice-president of the ICJ, Ugandan Judge Julia Sebutinde, disagreed with most of her colleagues. Though not binding, this opinion will add to the mountain of international condemnation heaped on Israel. It won't bring peace any closer.

Those on the political right in Israel don't consider this an "occupation". They refer to the West Bank territories by their biblical names of Judea and

Samaria, and consider these areas to be part of the land promised by G-d to the Jewish people. And you wouldn't find many Israelis who would want to see Jerusalem divided or shared with a Palestinian state.

This case was launched in late 2002 at the ICJ after a referral from the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. In its advisory opinion, the ICJ concluded that "the state of Israel is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible ... cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to

evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory". It further said Israel should make reparations to the Palestinians, and urged all other states not to recognise Israel's "unlawful presence" in the territories.

The ICJ said the UN "should consider the precise modalities and further action required" to end

the "occupation" as rapidly as possible.

South Africa joined 48 UN members in delivering a statement on the issue to the ICJ in February 2024. Unsurprisingly, the South African government welcomed the advisory opinion.

As expected, this added fuel to the South African government's views on Israel. Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola claimed the ICJ opinion "affirms South Africa's long-standing position that the occupation by Israel of Palestinian territory remains unlawful under international law".

"The international community must act to bring an immediate end to the occupation and the gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people," Lamola said. "There's now an additional legal obligation for all states to end complicity in Israel's illegal actions, and to act to ensure respect for international law. This finding reaffirms that the Israeli government is guilty of practicing the crime of apartheid, as the court put it."

Israel's ministry of foreign affairs said, "The court's opinion is fundamentally wrong. It injects the politics of the corridors of the UN in New York into the courtrooms of the ICJ in The Hague." The ministry said the opinion ignored the 7 October attack and Israel's right to defend itself.

It added, "The Palestinian Authority, which initiated the move, isn't interested in peace, only in slinging mud against Israel. Peace can be achieved only through direct negotiations between the parties, and the Palestinian Authority will not be able to evade this reality by turning to international tribunals."

There was a difference of opinion among ICJ judges. In her dissenting opinion, ICJ Judge Julia Sebutinde criticised the opinion for "the lack of accurate, balanced, and reliable information to arrive judiciously at a fair conclusion upon disputed questions of fact".

She also said the complaint's wording was biased, and the ruling wouldn't lead to reconciliation. She said the advisory opinion omitted "the historical backdrop crucial to understanding the multifaceted Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and is tantamount to a one-sided 'forensic audit' of Israel's compliance with international law that doesn't reflect a balanced and impartial examination of the pertinent legal and factual questions".

Though the advisory opinion isn't binding, it's unpleasant and will add to international condemnation of Israel and pressure to end the war in Gaza before Hamas is fully defeated, and indeed to withdraw from the territories. Neither look to be on the cards. The ruling will probably lead to a further damnation and delegitimation of Israel in the court that matters - the court of public opinion.



Vice-president of the International Court of Justice, Judge Julia Sebutinde (centre), voted against calling Israel's presence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem an 'occupation'



Pre-Sale In Jerusalem

Pastoral project by ICR is located on the Jerusalem mountainside between Ein Kerem and Kiryat HaYoval, embraced by the beautiful natural landscape, spectacular uninterrupted views of gorgeous scenery of Ein Kerem!

Unique opportunity to purchase an apartment in Jerusalem with special prices and payment terms!

For more information scan the QR



Or contact us by email / phone:

Selwyn@homeinIsrael.net

+972-52-777-1715 | +27-87-5503194



2 Boutique Buildings In The Heart Of Ra'anana!

Enjoy the high quality and specs, and most importantly pre-sale prices,

The project is located within walking distance of "Ahuza" and shopping centers

For more information scan the QR



Or contact us by email / phone:
Selwyn@homeinIsrael.net

+972-52-777-1715 | +27-87-5503194

Parliament – high stakes, high society, and high fashion

OPINION

HOWARD SACKSTEIN



There I was imbibing the glitz and glamour of the opening of South Africa's seventh Parliament, which couldn't have been scripted by Monty Python with greater irony.

As I stood on the sidewalk outside the magnificent edifice of the Cape Town City Hall, which now houses our Parliament since Christmas Mafe braided the old building, a clown car mounted the pavement to drop off one of the guests.

The words "Cape Town Comedy Club" were emblazoned on the bonnet of the vehicle. Nowhere was the presence of this vehicle more fitting. Out popped jester Kurt Schoonraad, the star of *Going Nowhere Slowly*, another great irony, and the delightful TV presenter and disability advocate, Tarryn Tomlinson. Tomlinson informed me that one of her areas of specialisation was to consult to hotels on how to cater for transgender guests. I was fascinated.



Economic Freedom Fighters member, Carl Niehaus

The politicians milled around the red carpet desperately seeking acknowledgement and media attention. Carl Niehaus, the Economic Freedom Fighter's (EFF) brand spanking new white Afrikaans parliamentarian, looked lost, desperately walking around alone searching for relevance. The communists were there too, wearing their expensive Rolexes and tailored suits, soon hopefully to be redistributed to the masses.

I know nothing about fashion, but that's never stopped me before, and those attending the opening of Parliament know how to put on a show. There were feathers, head beads, blankets, and leopard-skin cloth. Not to be outdone, there were also red overalls, Gucci, the lounge curtains, and repurposed glitter disco balls which once adorned some nightclub and now bejewelled the couture of some "tenderpreneur".

Palestinian keffiyehs were almost nowhere in sight. Apparently in parliamentary fashion, they are "so last year", a vestige of an African National Congress electoral experiment that went horribly wrong.

Julius (Malema) arrived looking dashing in red and svelte as an anorexic nymph. He's the poster child for gastric bypass surgery. I'm a huge fan.



Howard Sackstein with Democratic Alliance Members of Parliament Darren Bergman and Michael Bagraim

Almost no-one in the crowd reacted to his wave. Moments later, the EFF's Mbuyiseni Ndlozi, "the people's bae", arrived. Women ululated, females – and some males – swooned, and Ndlozi levitated into the parliamentary building upon the cheers of adoring poster boy fans.

Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament (MP) Michael Bagraim looked great in a matrix black leather coat, and our electricity minister, Sputla Ramokgopa, looked like he had just stepped off the cover of *GO* magazine.

Far be it from me to fat-shame our MPs but, from the looks of them, they deal with some weighty issues.

The night was replete with pomp and ceremony. Red uniformed marching bands and green jacketed soldiers in front of the colonial edifice of Cape Town's beautiful City Hall. Now that's a colonial treasure that Helen Zille should have tweeted about.

The sounds of a smoky jazz band drifted in the air from the sacred halls of power as the president's cavalcade meandered down from the lofty heights of Fresnaye. President Cyril Ramaphosa was escorted by an overhead helicopter which drowned out the sounds of the band. Ramaphosa's neighbours on Top Road complained bitterly about the noise of the chopper hovering above his house as they sipped their G&Ts, watching the sunset on a crisp Cape Town evening, as the fiery ball of gas sank slowly into the frigid waters of the Atlantic, lighting the sky in hues of amber with touches of magenta and gold.

Ramaphosa's arrival was heralded by a troupe of horses, motorbike outriders, and an entourage of black SUVs igniting the night in a burst of blue flashing lights. The epileptics among us were throwing a fit or having seizures.

The president, atop a podium accompanied by the woman who is occasionally referred to as his wife and more often called "Patrice's sister", inspected the troops and listened to the band play the national anthem while cannons fired a 21-gun salute. There was so much shooting, it sounded like a Saturday night in Joburg.

As the speech began, I was WhatsApped the full text of his yet to be delivered address. I decided to skip to the good part. I couldn't find any good parts, so I entertained those around me by telling them how many pages were left till the end.

In the days when I would occasionally write a speech for a president, I would begin with the question of what I wanted the newspaper headline from the speech to be. Unlike Castle Lager, that lesson appears not to have "stood the test of time".

How I wish the president had used the services of Hollywood screen writer Aaron Sorkin, whose lines for the fictional President Jed Bartlet on TV's *West Wing* made him the greatest president that never existed. "Every time we think we've measured our capacity to reach a challenge, we look up and we're reminded that capacity may well be limitless." I still have chills.

The president delivered his lines without passion or emotion, reading competently from his teleprompter. It may have been the same speech he delivered last year or the year before, no-one would know the difference. This year's content was peppered with a few GNU (Government of National Unity) references thrown in to keep his new alliance partners happy and to trigger the EFF and

uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) parties.

As TV screens flickered and organisers had problems with the sound in the VIP holding area, members of the audience, in their tuxedos and matric dance ball gowns, led the crowd in a passionate and stirring rendition of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*, our national anthem.

On a political level, there were two nuanced hints in the president's address. The dreaded NHI (National Health Insurance) which has the ability to bankrupt the country, encourage most of our doctors to emigrate, and cause cardiac infarctions among those of us with medical aid, is now up for re-negotiation. "In implementing the NHI, we are confident that we will be able to bring stakeholders together, and that we will be able to resolve differences and clarify misunderstandings."

The second and generally overlooked announcement was that land release would begin with state owned land, a welcome announcement given that the government, municipalities, tribal trusts, and SANParks owns much of the land of South Africa. "It will also focus on accelerating the release of public land for social housing and redirecting our housing policy to enable people to find affordable homes in areas of their choice."



Selfies of Members of Parliament outside Cape Town City Hall

Jacob Zuma missed the show, but arrived the next morning in the parliamentary gallery, where I had the pleasure of watching Pieter Groenewald, our new minister of correctional services being constantly interrupted by the EFF, and the charismatic Gayton McKenzie being chirped by "the people's bae". MK MPs constantly interrupted speakers to acknowledge the presence of the former president in the chamber.

The highlight of Friday's No Confidence Debate appeared to be the announcement of lunch. With John Steenhuisen, McKenzie, and Groenewald now in government, the opposition is now left to the crazies in MK and the EFF and the coherent centrists – Mmusi Maimane from Build One South Africa and Athol Trollip from ActionSA.

McKenzie skipped lunch. As our newly appointed minister of sport, he has taken up running, with a marathon planned for next year. I suggested to him that he encourage Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe, who pushed in front of me, to join him.

The opening of Parliament is a beautiful display of South African democracy and style. It melds culture and class, resulting in a remarkable explosion of South African grandeur and colour. This year's opening celebrates 30 years of true democracy and a semi-transition of power, a state where we can say what we want, mocking our politicians, and miraculously remain outside of jail. For that alone, I consider my outing on that chilly night in Cape Town more than worth my time.

• Howard Sackstein is the chairperson of the SA Jewish Report, but writes in his personal capacity.

ONLY AT
LIMMUD WILL
YOU HEAR...

Top Israeli
Journalists,
Academics &
Commentators
Across the
Political Spectrum

- 30 Years of Traumatic Peace-making
- Israel Tomorrow and the Day After
- Being a Progressive & Zionist Jew in 2024
- Temple Mount: Different Perspectives
- Advancing the Abraham Accords
- Where was G-d on October 7th?
- And Much More!

Will YOU Be Part
of the
Conversation?

Spaces are limited so
SIGN UP NOW
Go to:
<https://limmud.org.za>

Cape Town
17-18 August

Durban
19 August

Johannesburg
23-25 August



Evidence of evil in document trail



ROLENE MARKS

OPINION

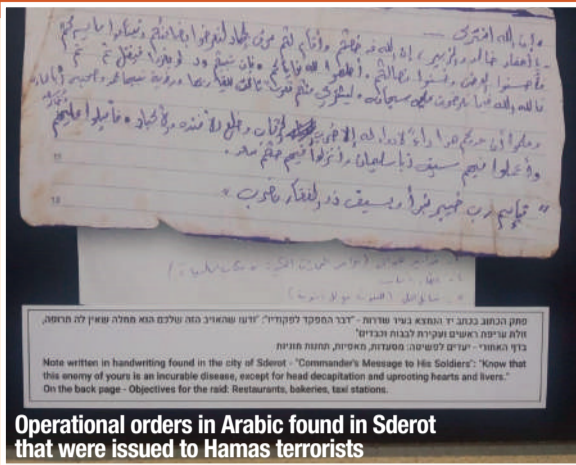
As a journalist, I've covered a lot since 7 October. I've been down to the south, walked the killing fields of Kfar Aza, Nahal Oz, the Nova site, and more. I've looked into the eyes of the families of hostages as they have pleaded for us to keep telling the stories of their loved ones to remind the world to fight for their release.

I've interviewed lawyers and first responders who gathered the evidence to speak for our women and men who have been and continue to be sexually violated by Hamas. I've seen more footage and photography of the atrocities committed by Hamas than the human soul can bear, but this week I saw the evidence of another side of this evil.

As journalists, we're recorders of history, witnesses that often speak for those who cannot, storytellers of events and the pursuers of truth. Since 7 October, it has been at times an excruciating job, but one that's almost sacred. In the face of growing denial, we have a duty to remind the world of what happened that Black Sabbath.

I was invited with a small group of journalists to view evidence at the Israel Intelligence Commemoration Centre (IICC) that the Israel Defense Forces intelligence captured in Israel and Gaza on 7 October and throughout Operation Swords of Iron. It's a chilling testament to the depths of evil and meticulous planning that resulted in the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust and of foreign nationals. There's no end to the depths of the depravity, in intention and action.

Evidence includes examples from the arsenal of weapons used by Hamas terrorists such as Bangalore breachers to breach fences and walls; rocket-propelled grenades; AK-47s; bayonets; thermobaric bombs; grenades; improvised explosive devices; and much more, as well



Operational orders in Arabic found in Sderot that were issued to Hamas terrorists

as headbands; identity documents; backpacks; and personal effects belonging to various terror factions.

Guides and manuals found on terrorists included Islamic State instructions on how to create a toxic gas weapons. Two of the motorcycles that were among those used by the terrorists are also on display. Hamas breached Israel at 30 different points, and entered in 150 pick-up trucks and 350 motorcycles. Its intention was to get as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Kidnapping kits taken from the backpacks of terrorists are testimony to how meticulously planned the invasion was. The plan was to kidnap as many civilians as possible, and take them to Gaza. Kidnapping kits include tourniquets, syringes, tasers, and drugs to take hostages. Hostages had more value alive than dead, but we know now how many corpses were kidnapped as well.

The most chilling part of the exhibition is the collection of documentation and evidence of incitement. Operational orders found included the instructions, "Know that this enemy of yours is an incurable disease, except for head decapitation and uprooting hearts and livers." A translation document explains how to say

Hebrew phrases such as "women here", "children here", "take off your pants", and "take off your clothes".

Other documents include detailed layout of a training area designed to look like a kibbutz, and plans for where to kidnap civilians. A map of Kibbutz Be'eri with neighbourhoods clearly marked was also found. The map, found on one of the Hamas terrorists, had been torn up as he tried to destroy it before it was discovered. It shows areas of entry into the kibbutz, after Hamas gathered intelligence from Gazans who worked on the kibbutz and had entered Israel with work permits. The area purposely targeted contained the houses to the south side of the kibbutz where families with young children lived.

Evidence from Gaza included copies of *Mein Kampf* translated into Arabic, and documents proving employment at UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), as well as photographs and the identity documents of Ashraf Mahd el Madhoun, an Islamic Jihad operative, posing with his family. He was an employee of UNRWA. Hamas would regularly have property ownership relationships with UNRWA, and there's a collection of signed contracts as well as certificates of course completion.

We hear a lot about incitement in the Palestinian Territories, but when you're confronted with the evidence of it, it's a punch to the solar plexus. One of the most popular books found in your average Gazan home, displaying the level of indoctrination from cradle to grave, is a book for children about killing Jews with their car.

There are also books about the "history of the Jews", in which the worst antisemitic tropes are presented as fact. There are numerous books of collections of

religious decrees or *fatwas* that share religious justification to commit the unspeakable atrocities that were committed on 7 October.

As journalists who have covered the atrocities, seen the footage and photos, and are familiar with the methods used by Hamas and other terror organisations, hearing medical and forensic explanations was as horrific as it was in the days and weeks that followed the invasion. I'll spare you the details.



UNRWA ID card of Islamic Jihad operative, Ashraf Mahd el Madhoun

The IICC will open a permanent exhibition of the evidence on 7 October 2024 which will be open to the public. "Major T", who guided us through the evidence, told us, "People can see that 7 October was well planned for many years. It's important for people to see what happened because there's so much denial."

Evil exists. I know, because I saw the evidence with my own eyes.

• Rolene Marks is a Middle East commentator often heard on radio and TV, and is the co-founder of Lay of the Land and the SA-Israel Policy Forum.

World starved of facts around aid to Gaza

OPINION



EYAL DROR

Israel is accused by Palestinians and international entities of starving Gazans despite the humanitarian aid Israel is helping to get into the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the Swords of Iron war on Hamas. The truth is that the forces operating in the Palestinian arena are deliberately obstructing the aid. There's a holistic solution to this problem.

Eight years before Swords of Iron, I was the commander of Operation Good Neighbour, on the Israel-Syria border between 2016 and 2018, which was considered the longest and most successful humanitarian operation ever carried out by Israel.

During the operation, 700 humanitarian aid missions delivered thousands of tons of aid such as medical equipment, food, and more to a Syrian area inhabited by about 250 000 people.

Additionally, about 6 000 Syrian patients and injured individuals, including 1 400 children, were treated in Israeli hospitals, and various projects were supported beyond the border, such as the establishment of a field clinic and more.

In contrast, during Swords of Iron, Israel allowed the transfer of a significantly larger amount of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, a region home to just more than two million people. For example, from the start of the war until June 2024, more than 507 000 tons of food has been delivered to Gaza.

The external factors operating in Gaza that contribute to the creation of negative narratives against Israel are as follows:

Politics: this relates to the Palestinian narrative of the struggle against Israel and

the desire to create an image of misery and victimhood. Despite the traditional hostility between the leadership of the Palestinian Authority and that of Hamas, the Palestinian authorities operate in parallel to echo narratives of "Israeli occupation" on the one hand and the legitimacy of "resistance" on the other.

This aims to delegitimise Israel among opinion leaders worldwide and citizens in Arab and Western countries.



Trucks carrying aid for Gaza on the way to the Gaza Strip in April 2024

Throughout the world, massive demonstrations in support of the Hamas terrorist organisation are being held on the streets and on campuses, relying on well-marketed slogans and edited videos that evoke sympathy. They also contribute to damaging Israeli legitimacy and lead to actions against the country on international and civil levels.

Distribution of humanitarian aid by Hamas primarily to its affiliates. This leaves much of the needy population without aid. As part of the directive to create a deliberate crisis, Hamas's interest is, of course, to create a false impression of starvation.

Though Hamas does provide for the population in Gaza, it prioritises aid to those perceived as loyal to the organisation – members of the military

and civil wings and their families – before being distributed to the broader Gazan public.

Additionally, it should be noted that Hamas and other terrorist organisations fire at border crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip and surrounding areas, particularly the Kerem Shalom crossing.

These targeted attacks are intended to disrupt crossing operations and lead Israel to close them.

Then, with unfathomable hypocrisy, Hamas raises the tone of lamentation, accusing Israel of "starvation" and not allowing aid into Gaza.

The presence of United Nations (UN) entities operating in Gaza with significant sympathy with the Palestinian public. Various UN organisations, particularly UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), which are intended to aid Palestinians, have over the years become almost entirely controlled by Hamas.

UNRWA, one of the largest employers in Gaza with most of its staff being locals, has become a significant employment source for Hamas members. As was exposed during the Swords of Iron war, some of its employees were in fact military operatives of the organisation.

Beyond the political issues surrounding UNRWA, the organisation also fails to fulfil its responsibility to distribute necessary food supplies. Part of this failure stems from the fact that it hasn't managed to adapt to wartime conditions which require different mobility capabilities than routine times.

Thus, it can be understood that it doesn't matter how many aid trucks are sent into the Gaza Strip or how many

COGAT (Co-ordinator of Government Activity in the Territories) announcements are distributed on the subject. The overarching interest of the Palestinians is to continue to create a false impression of starvation.

They understand the high sensitivity of this issue in Western consciousness and the ability of the masses in the West and in Arab countries to empathise with this supposed suffering.

What can be done, and how can the success of an operation in a different time and arena be applied to a similar situation in the Palestinian arena? In my understanding, a significant element missing in Israel's approach to the humanitarian situation is a holistic response.

Over the years – and unfortunately today – the humanitarian response is perceived as a problem for COGAT rather than the entire defence establishment or the Israeli government as a whole.

This means that although the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) is certainly involved in the complex co-ordination of humanitarian aid delivery, it remains a purely technical involvement.

In contrast, Operation Good Neighbour was a humanitarian aid operation that was part of a comprehensive operational concept developed by the Bashan Division. It was accompanied by countless additional actions to reinforce and embed the messages we wanted to convey to the Syrian population.

Today, the Israeli system in the context of Gaza seems to be fighting windmills. COGAT's publications and the IDF spokesperson's videos on the subject fail to combat the Palestinian narrative and slogans surrounding this issue.

In this context, it's appropriate for Israel to develop a comprehensive system of significant information mechanisms

surrounding the issue of humanitarian aid delivery.

This should include a structure that relentlessly promotes these messages – from the quantities of aid to Hamas corruption, to the lack of shortages in the markets, and so on.

To translate this statement into practical terms and be highly effective, it's necessary to engage IDF spokespeople fully in all languages and involve Israeli state mechanisms – government ministries, pro-Israel organisations, and influencers who are prominent on social media – to post content countering Palestinian claims on these issues.

Additionally, it's important to place interviewees on international networks to articulate the issue of humanitarian aid in all languages. They need to point out the difficulties and obstacles that the Palestinian side presents for aid delivery; echo messages on social media through advanced influential methods; and conduct psychological operations campaigns on the subject. These and other measures can change the situation significantly.

Despite the objective complexity of the situation, we need to create a comprehensive approach well-versed in the data and capable of presenting it on various platforms to as broad and diverse an audience as possible. This will constitute a refreshing change in a battle which we have seemingly been losing from the start.

Unfortunately, much of these activities are carried out voluntarily by various social media influencers rather than as part of an overall, integrated operational plan.

• Lieutenant Colonel (Reserves) Eyal Dror served in the IDF for 24 years, most of which were with COGAT.



PRESIDENT
NELSON MANDELA
1999 SA Jewish Report
Humanitarian Award



Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2024

25
YEARS

Call to Nominate

3 ways to Nominate

1 bit.ly/ja2024nom



2

3 nominations@sajewishreport.co.za

- > ABSA BUSINESS ICON AWARD
- > ABSA BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD
- > ABSA PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD
- > ENTREPRENEUR AWARD
- > MANN MADE MEDIA COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD
- > EUROPCAR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AWARD
- > KIRSH FAMILY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
In honour of Helen Suzman
- > ART, SPORT, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE AWARD
- > BERTIE LUBNER HUMANITARIAN AWARD
In honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris
- > RISING STAR AWARD

Nominations close on 15 August 2024 at 17:00



Why hi-tech Israel struggles against low-tech threats



AMIR MIZROCH

When a Houthi drone launched 2 000km away in Yemen struck a Tel Aviv apartment building last Friday, 19 July, killing one and injuring eight, it exposed more than just a gap in Israel's air defences. The incident, and hundreds of others involving drones and short-range guided missiles since 7 October, highlight a critical weakness in the country dubbed the "start-up nation" – its struggle to rapidly innovate in defence technology.

The demand for battlefield innovation from field officers is coming in thick and fast, according to industry insiders. There's an urgent need for solutions in tunnel detection; counter-drone measures; artificial intelligence (AI)-powered sensor analysis; predictive gun sighting; advanced robotics; and other areas. These technologies wouldn't just save lives, but also redefine Israel's approach to asymmetric warfare. While it's true that an unknown number of innovative solutions remain classified, the defence-technology entrepreneurs and industry insiders I spoke to say the defence establishment's ability to supply those innovations rapidly remains patchy.

For thousands of techies, who in their day jobs are software developers, system architects, product managers, DevOps (development operations) engineers, chief technology officers, heads of research and development, and many other titles, the urgency is keenly felt. Many have experienced combat up close, and have firsthand experience of things that need quick technology solutions.

The challenges they describe in breaking into the Israeli defence industry are significant: projects can languish for months or even years, mired in evolving demands and personnel changes; spiralling development costs; a culture favouring established defence giants over disruptive upstarts; limited access to battlefield validation and data; onerous requests for information (RFIs) that risk IP (internet protocol) exposure and don't guarantee follow-on engagement; and heavy export regulations driven by opaque geopolitical considerations.

Many civilian entrepreneurs working on defence technology say they're stymied by a system resistant to the very traits – fast prototyping, risk-taking, multidisciplinary approach, and a global-first outlook – that make Israelis world-beaters in fields such as cybersecurity, AI, digital health, and life sciences, financial tech, enterprise IT, and other sectors.

Financial hurdles are equally daunting. Risks and timelines are lengthy. Traditional venture capitalists have shied away, leaving start-ups unable to bring innovation to fruition. They risk running out of runway or being acquired by larger firms, stifling competition and innovation.

The numbers are stark: in cybersecurity, 523 active firms have raised a total of \$43 billion (R789.9 trillion); in fintech, 416 start-ups have secured \$19 billion (R348.6 trillion). But defence tech? A mere 176 start-ups have raised just \$1.58 billion (R29 trillion), according to Start-Up Nation Central's data platform.

"Israel needs to bridge the divide between start-up nation innovation and military might," says Hamutal Meridor, a Unit 8200 veteran and former Palantir Israel general manager. "If it does, it could emerge stronger and smarter. But tough bureaucracy can stifle the entire sector."

Moshik Cohen is a rocket scientist behind some of Israel's top missile defence systems. In 2019, he developed an autonomous situational awareness system for tanks. The defence ministry's response? Thanks, but



The distance that the Houthi drone travelled from Yemen to get to Tel Aviv

no thanks, there's no need for this. Now, Israeli tanks in Gaza and near the Lebanese border face the very threats Cohen's system was designed to counter.

"Before this war, there was almost no room for Israeli start-ups in the defence establishment. Our defence system is broken. From strategic management, through procurement and equipment, to politicking, as a system, it's broken," Cohen warns.

The massacre of 7 October and the ensuing war should

shake things up, at least in the short term, he says. Cohen is launching a new start-up based on his years of experience building autonomous missile defence systems for IAI (Israel Aerospace Industries) and the Israeli military.

The stakes are high. As Israel battles on multiple fronts, its ability to innovate at start-up speed could determine not just its military edge, but its economic future and global technology standing. For investors and entrepreneurs alike, the message is clear: solving Israel's defence innovation paradox isn't just a national security imperative, it's a market opportunity with global implications.

There are some positive developments. The defence ministry's Innofense accelerator has backed more than 40 dual-use start-ups. Elbit Systems, a defence giant, recently partnered with auto-tech start-ups to develop anti-drone technology. A new tech commando unit of Israel Defense Forces IT reservists aims to speed up battlefield software development.

Tel Aviv University and the defence ministry are collaborating on fast-track battlefield engineering problems, including solutions for booby traps; drone interception; adding night vision capabilities to mobile phone cameras; a USB phone charger for tanks; live video streaming for tactical dogs; and other applications.

But these developments don't add up to a system-wide change. To move innovation faster through the defence establishment, several structural changes are needed. The first step is to recognise defence innovation as critical to Israel's long-term security. That demands streamlined bureaucracy, simplified procurement, and a culture shift valuing speed and agility over rigid protocol.

To sustain defence-tech and dual-use start-ups, new funding models need to be created with a mix of government grants, tax incentives, and dedicated defence-tech funds. Rethinking IP rights, revenue agreements, and export controls for easier commercialisation could also help.

In the end, Israel faces a stark choice: disrupt its own defence establishment or risk being disrupted by nimble adversaries. If ever there was a time Israel needed its start-ups to move fast and break things, it's now.

• Award-winning writer and editor and host of *The DeJargonizer Podcast*, Amir Mizroch was born in Israel and raised in South Africa (Krugersdorp), studying journalism at Rhodes University. He worked at *The Mail & Guardian* before making aliyah in 2000. In Israel, he worked at *The Jerusalem Post* and *Israel Hayom* and was later director of communications at *Start-Up Nation Central*.

Online barmy teacher gives Zoom to remote simchas

LEE TANKLE

Preparing for Barmitzvahs and Batmitzvahs is hard work, but much harder if you live in outlying towns or even countries where there are no Jewish communities. But commemorating a Jewish coming of age ceremony has been made doable in areas like Nelspruit, Lusaka, Knysna, George, or Polokwane by Joanne Bernstein and Rabbie Moshe Silberhaft.

Bernstein, better known as Morah Joanne, is a Johannesburg Hebrew and Jewish Studies teacher who has taken on the task of teaching and preparing children from anywhere for their Barmitzvahs and Batmitzvahs over Zoom.

"People living in these little *dorpiets* away from the centre of the Jewish community shouldn't have to suffer not being able to have a basic Jewish education because of where they live," said Silberhaft, otherwise known as the "travelling rabbi".

Silberhaft, who has been travelling through South Africa and nearby countries for more than three decades, saw the need for someone to help children with Jewish education where Jewish life is inaccessible.

So, he recruited Bernstein four years ago, and she has now enabled at least eight children to perform their coming of age ceremonies.

Bernstein, a family friend of Silberhaft, has been teaching for more than 30 years, working in various Jewish schools around Johannesburg. She was drawn to this opportunity because, she said, "I've always loved the history of South Africa and all the small *dorpiets*. As a child, I would sit with the old *Zionist Record* newspaper for hours on end to see what was going on around the country."

Bernstein grew up in Durban, "so I know what it is like to grow up in a smaller Jewish community".

She often starts at square one when preparing these children for their *simchas* over Zoom. "Often, these children don't know which way Hebrew is read or what a Hebrew letter looks like," she said. "So, we start simply. I introduce them to Hebrew letters for one hour a week over a six-week course. This is done just to get them to read Hebrew."

After that introductory course, Bernstein works with the children over a few weeks, teaching them their Torah portions and the *brachot* for the Torah, tefillin, and tallit.

She also discusses what their portions mean, the different *chaggim* around the date of their *simcha*, and the laws and customs around the *chaggim* so they can get a more rounded education.

"Rabbi Silberhaft helps to teach them to sing their Torah portions because it's not halachically allowed for me to sing. So, I just teach them to read the information they need, and give them reading materials so they

are adequately prepared for the day," said Bernstein.

Bernstein said that in one instance, after the Barmitzvah lessons were over, the father of the child asked if the rest of the family could get lessons on how to read Hebrew as well.

"Joanne has a good understanding, and can judge the child's enthusiasm and abilities to help them prepare for their *simcha*," said Silberhaft. "This gives them a lot of encouragement and builds them up for the actual event."

Bernstein isn't able to be at every *simcha*, but she has attended a few, such as Nelspruit-based students Joseph and Bella Borman, for his Barmitzvah in April 2021 and her Batmitzvah in December 2023. "Although I couldn't stand next to Joseph on the *bima*, I was waiting in the wings with such *naches*," she said.

Bernstein was introduced to the Borman family in 2020. Said Lisa Borman, Joseph and Bella's mother, "The rabbi suggested that Joseph needed help with his Hebrew and *cheder* lessons for his Barmitzvah and put us in touch with Morah Joanne. She was kind and supportive. He studied well under her tutelage. When my daughter did her Batmitzvah it was Morah Joanne who offered to help prepare her for her special day."

Borman said that having her children learn with Morah Joanne was the perfect choice because they didn't have access to a *cheder* in Mpumalanga. "Their experience of having a Barmitzvah and Batmitzvah in unique venues in the bush will forever remain in their memories. Thanks to Morah Joanne for preparing them and affording them the chance to study online, and making this possible without having to travel through to Johannesburg each time, which was a huge cost and time saver."

"For those *simchas* that I can't travel to, I try to attend through Zoom and I get such *naches* watching the children succeed at something they thought impossible a few months before," Bernstein said.

"We all suffer through loadshedding and connectivity issues, and the lessons are always difficult to begin with because we don't have that initial connection we would have if we were there in person, but as we move on, the connection grows. The results are there."

One of her students, Qori Singer in Rheenendal on the Garden Route, started learning with Bernstein in May 2023, and celebrated his Barmitzvah in October 2023.

"Morah Joanne was a lifeline for Qori's Barmitzvah," said his mother, Shireen Singer. "The fact that she could teach on Zoom was essential for us out in Rheenendal. And, she could start from scratch, which was also vital



Morah Joanne Bernstein

because Qori had started learning Hebrew with us only that year in preparation for his *barmy*, but we weren't getting very far on our own."

Singer said Bernstein not only taught Qori his Barmitzvah portion, "she included a lot of teaching on *Yiddishkeit* that we would have potentially missed out on".

After four and a half months of intense preparation with lessons once a week, by the time of Qori's Barmitzvah, he was more than prepared for this important threshold in a young Jewish person's life.

"The whole Barmitzvah experience was much more than I expected," Singer said. "I was hoping we could do something special for Qori, but we were limited out in Rheenendal. Finding the rabbi and Joanne making sure Qori was prepared and having the day at home so beautifully held together and with so many community members stepping in, was incredible. The memory of this transition for my son is something I'll treasure."

Said Bernstein, "I'm working with a young girl in Polokwane preparing her for her Batmitzvah in September, and since it's close by, I'll travel to that one. I'm excited to see her progress."

Bernstein keeps in touch with the families she has interacted with through her teaching, and ensures them that "if there's something Jewish that they need to deal with and don't want to go to the rabbi, I'll always be there."

"It's good to know that there are people not in the hub of *Yiddishkeit* that want to get a bit of knowledge and the gift of Hebrew and Torah," she said.

War trauma reverberates across Israeli society

ELKA COHEN

A 33-year-old woman was recently arrested at a mall in Herzliya in Israel after attacking a security guard with an axe. Appearing barefoot, laughing, and covered in blood, she's now suspected of murder after the body of her six-year-old son was discovered in their apartment by the child's grandmother, along with the stabbed corpse of their family dog.

The child's father, who had just returned from reserve duty near the Gaza border, was confronted with the heartbreaking news. While police take charge of the investigation, the woman remains in hospital under psychiatric evaluation.

This gruesome story which sent shockwaves through the community has shed light on the trauma of living through a war.

"What happened on 7 October began a trauma that is ongoing and has profoundly disrupted our society's sense of safety," says South African psychologist Dr Stacey Leibowitz, who specialises in complex trauma at her practice in Israel.

"Post 7 October many of my clients with general stress and anxiety disorders are experiencing exacerbated symptoms. There's a widespread sense of pervading insecurity and future uncertainty," Leibowitz says.

Says Amit Levy, an anger management specialist who facilitates small group workshops in Israel, "When you're living under the stress of war, trauma triggers are experienced more easily and more frequently. Naturally, because the area of the brain activated when one is afraid and responding to threat is the same area that lashes out in anger.

"Many people are experiencing an escalation in anger," Levy says. People who find it difficult to express their feelings are experiencing a bottleneck of emotions. One small trigger is all it takes to set off an outburst.

In order to deal with non-threatening, everyday situations more rationally and not reactively, Levy advises taking what he calls "a smart time out" where you ask yourself, "Am I under threat?" It's a quick and easy way to ensure you don't activate the anger response unnecessarily.

It's important also to be mindful that over exposure to media can trigger complex emotions and generate feelings of alienation and loneliness.

Says Leibowitz, "People with generalised anxiety disorders who are over-exposed to negative news tend to start catastrophising, anticipating, or seeking the next focal point to fixate on, and this can result in paranoia."

Young mothers are particularly affected by the stressors of the current war. Children are also showing increased symptoms of anxiety, triggered by the sound of sirens, with uncertainty about strangers and questions about whether they are safe in their own homes.

Mothers of soldiers fighting in the army are also experiencing tremendous anxiety. "Although Israel's community support is strong, the reality is that those directly impacted by war who are seeking emotional support are surrounded by people under the very same strain, which has both positive and negative effects,"

Leibowitz says.

People with predisposed conditions or a trauma history, particularly sexual-abuse trauma, will undoubtedly be more vulnerable during this time and easily triggered by recent events.

There's also the realisation among many Israelis that Israel is in this for the long haul, so the pressure of war feels more persistent and continuous. "It's important

She says the societal impact of war has a ripple effect, "The closer you are to the epicentre of the war, the more you experience its impact."

Direct impact is felt by those who have experienced atrocities first hand – from the terror invasion to the hostages taken, to the many soldiers who continue to witness horrors in the aftermath of the ongoing war. This feeds into their immediate support circles – the parents of hostages, wives of soldiers, extended family members, and friends," says Leibowitz. "And it doesn't end there. It's felt daily across society, even going beyond borders, where people worldwide are feeling deeply insecure with a Jewish homeland at war. This, coupled with the rise in global antisemitism, adds to growing fear and increased isolation."

While Israelis love to travel, especially at this time of year, they are finding themselves much more reluctant to leave the country. "Israelis don't feel as safe or secure as Jews in the world. In Europe particularly, many are making more researched calculations when it comes to travel, choosing rather to go to Balkan countries," says Leibowitz.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, Jews have an intergenerational trauma legacy, which means they also have a built-in trauma-survival pack.

"As Jews, we expect to go through trauma, survive, and rebuild. We're a people of great resilience and tenacity. By keeping the greater long-term perspective in mind, it can help to manage the distress of the current situation," says Leibowitz.

Finding meaning also makes a difference to one's ability to cope with the trauma of war. Whether it's within a religious context or from a Zionist or nationalistic perspective, it encourages optimism in dark days.

Broad-based Israeli society is still suffering disillusion over Israel being an unsafe home for the Jewish people. They have emerged from the haze of grief that overwhelmed them in the first few months following 7 October.

"Israelis are coping," says Leibowitz, "because as humans, we're built to survive."



Living in a constant state of stress and anxiety has become the norm for many Israelis since 7 October

to keep as much stability, certainty, and safety within your own microcosm at home and within community environments," advises Leibowitz.

When you're in a prolonged situation like this there's a lot of emotional unfamiliarity and many internal dilemmas and struggles on a daily basis. Leibowitz faces many such struggles among her clients, with things like, "I should be getting on with my life, but I don't feel able to. I'm unmotivated and slow at work. I should book my holiday, but how can I enjoy myself when I know that there's a soldier fighting on the border in 40-degree heat?"

Youth not wasted on our Rising Stars

DYLAN BERGER

The number 25 in Judaism signifies grace and glory, and it's fortuitous that this is the SA Jewish Report's and the Jewish Achiever Awards' 25th anniversary year. It's also the age at which our budding stars move out of the running for the Rising Star Award.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1999, South Africa had just completed its second democratic elections, Thabo Mbeki was president, and there were jitters in the air about the Y2K virus. It was then that the brand new SA Jewish Report and later the inaugural Jewish Achiever Awards were launched. At the twilight of the 20th century, South Africa and its Jewish community were pushing forward and building a foundation for the next generation.

"We have our own version of the 'born frees', those within our community who were born after 1999, who have grown up and have never known a time before the SA Jewish Report," says Howard Sackstein, the chairperson of the SA Jewish Report and Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

"To them, we pay a special tribute. They are the future leaders of South Africa and the future leaders of our community. That's why we wanted to encourage and foster them. We wanted to recognise them and acknowledge the contribution that they make even at the tender age of under 25," Sackstein says.

"We want to acknowledge their uniqueness and celebrate them in a fitting manner. That's why we relaunched the Rising Star Award, an award for those under the age of 25 on the date of the awards who have contributed so greatly to our community and South Africa at large."

Last year, 14 nominees ranging from

entrepreneurs to student activists as well as an actor, singer/songwriter, and a sportsman found themselves shortlisted for the coveted award. Matriculant and head boy of King Edward VII School, David Teeger, who was at the time the captain of the Proteas Under-19 cricket team, took home the Rising Star Award. In doing so, Teeger set the benchmark for what it means to be a rising star when he went on to represent South Africa at the Under-19 Cricket World Cup.

Teeger proved his mettle as a star in the dignity and strength he showed when he became the focus of antisemitism when Cricket South Africa took away his captaincy of the Under-19 team ostensibly to appease the anti-Israel lobby.

The Rising Star Award acknowledges and rewards those who go way beyond expectation for someone of their age. It's awarded to someone who is innovative and doesn't see their youth as a barrier to doing what they do. A rising star is someone who is making a real difference long before there are any expectations of her or him.

While the average age of world leaders is on the rise, it's becoming increasingly evident that now is the time to pass the torch to a new generation.

Passion and dedication go a long way to help fuel the ambition of our rising stars, with many excelling in fields such as sport, culture, humanitarian endeavours, education, and entrepreneurship. Israel is commonly known as the start-up nation, while South Africa is increasingly becoming the do-it-yourself nation. This has however opened doors and created opportunities for rising stars to thrive and make their mark at a very exciting stage of their lives.

Much like having water running through our taps and electricity with no loadshedding, our rising stars can't and won't be taken for granted. Nominate those you know in our community who are helping build a better future and deserve this Rising Star Award. To nominate, go to <https://bit.ly/ja2024nom>



David Teeger accepting his Rising Star Award at the 2023 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards

WANTED!!!

TOP PRICES PAID

Free Evaluation & Buying on:

- South African & International coins and banknotes
- Medals and Militaria
- Silver and Gold Jewellery in any condition
- Silverware
- Collectable Items
- Pocket and wrist watches

Remember your I.D. and banking details if you wish to sell your items

Collectors Investments

Dealers in Coins, Medals & Banknotes

Enquiries:
Tel: 011 880 9116 / 076 741 8801 • WhatsApp: 079 784 0101
32 Fricker Road, Illovo, Johannesburg

www.collectorsinvestments.com

Ackerman touched by World Cup rugby

SAUL KAMIONSKY

The recently concluded 2024 Touch Rugby World Cup in Nottingham, England, was certainly touched by the presence of Daniel Ackerman, who played for the South Africa men's 30s team and had coaching roles with two other teams.

Besides helping the men's 30s team place seventh overall out of 19 countries, this 35-year-old director of sports at Johannesburg-based Dainfern College also served as the assistant coach for the South African mixed open side and as coaching consultant for the ladies 27 team.

The latter team claimed the bronze medal, while the mixed open side, which had men and women take to the field, would have made the round of 16 if it had won one more game during the seven-day tournament between 14 and 21 July.

Ackerman's most memorable moment from the World Cup was scoring a try in a televised quarter final match against Australia. Although the men's 30s side ended up losing against the eventual champions, Ackerman was touched by the world champions saying that his side was the toughest opposition they faced at the World Cup so far.

Australia won 12 of a possible 13 gold medals across all teams. "It's the strongest country in the touch world," Ackerman says, "so to get it in the quarter final was just bad luck."

The match gave Ackerman a bittersweet feeling. "Going

up against Australia, you know you're going to lose given how strong it is. It's Australia's most popular social sport. It has numbers and support that we simply don't have, but we played our best game against it."



Daniel Ackerman in action against Belgium at the Touch Rugby World Cup

Ackerman has been involved with the national touch rugby team for about eight years. He was very disappointed to miss out on playing in the 2019 World Cup after getting injured in the final warmup game. He has coached in two World Cups: 2018 and 2023.

Leading up to this year's World Cup, he trained two or three times a day, getting up early to be at the gym at 04:00. He also spent time studying the game from a technical analysis viewpoint. "I mean, I wasn't going out with my friends on weekends. The past few months revolved around the World Cup. Touch rugby is a massive part of my life. I play four times a week on a social level. It really is all-encompassing in my world."

Ackerman says he could write a book about why he's so passionate about touch rugby. He has been involved in the sport for nearly 20 years, and Gauteng provincial touch rugby since 2006, now serving as the association's chairperson.

"It's incredible in its accessibility," he says.

"No matter who they are, what they look like, how fast, how slow, how good, how bad – it just provides an opportunity for everyone. It has given me a family away from my immediate family. The majority of my friends play the sport.

"Touch rugby has taught me life values. It's an honesty-based sport. If I make minimal contact, even with one finger, it still counts, so it teaches you to be honest. It has changed my life.

"When I was in high school at Crawford College International in Sandton, I played tennis, cricket, soccer, and contact rugby. One day, we had a touch rugby coach [Thabo Motsumi] come during an activation drill, and within the first practice, I was hooked. He later became one of the mentors in my life."

Ackerman would love touch rugby to be included in the Maccabi Games. After all, he knows of four or five Jewish players who represented South Africa at this year's World Cup. One of them, Capetonian Hayley Landau, played for the over-35 women's team that

attained the bronze medal.

Ackerman says touch rugby was growing exponentially in Johannesburg until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. "It has taken quite a knock with the arrival of other sports like padel and five-a-side soccer. Without funding or government support, it relies on individuals to fund and grow the sport."

Ackerman self-funded his World Cup trip. "Each player had to pay about R60 000 to try to get to the World Cup. We lost a few of our strong players who have come from underprivileged communities. They couldn't afford it. Being a pay-to-play sport, we lose out on so much talent."

Ackerman says a country like Australia doesn't necessarily pay its players but their transport and accommodation are covered by a sponsor.

Ackerman played at least one game a day at what was the largest touch rugby World Cup in history, with 39 countries and 190 teams. "With about 4 500 players, coaches, managers, etc, playing in a tournament that size across 23 fields, just the sheer scale of the tournament was unbelievable to see."

He sometimes played as many as three matches in one day. With each match having two halves of 20 minutes, "playing three in a day really does take a toll on the body".

Nevertheless, Ackerman aims to continue playing for as long as his body allows it. He has by no means reached the twilight of his playing career. "There's a 55-plus age category at the World Cup, so I've still got another 20 years," he marvels.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Drawing a line against discrimination

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies is the democratically elected representative body and civil rights guardian of South African Jewry. As part of this mandate over the past 120 years, the Board has diligently managed its relationships with political stakeholders to ensure the security and rights of South African Jews.

Over the past three decades, in spite of often divergent opinions, we have always been able to approach the government, led by the African National Congress (ANC), in times of need, and have been received warmly by every democratic president. These relationships have at times become personal, and these open lines of communication allowed us to air concerns safely and ensure the protection of our community's rights and the continuation of our way of life in South Africa.

However, this longstanding relationship has deteriorated under President Cyril Ramaphosa's administration. Following the events of 7 October, the ANC's failure to condemn Hamas and its subsequent engagement with its representatives marked a significant shift. Following this, for the first time in our history, the Jewish community was excluded from a number of interfaith and cultural events.

It's particularly hurtful that in spite of our shared history, the ANC chose to exclude the community from its events and refused to engage with us. As a ruling party, the decision to refuse to engage with a single religious group and remove that group from the public space sets a worrying precedent.

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Katz couple celebrate 70 years together

Platinum is usually sourced from mines in Limpopo but last month, it was found in Glenhazel when Kenny and Belle Katz celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary.

Seventy years ago on 27 June 1954, Kenny and Belle tied the knot at the Berea Shul in downtown Johannesburg and started their journey, which included four children and three grandchildren.

Communal leadership stalwarts, this nonagenarian couple dedicated many years to community organisations. Kenny, who still works as a chartered accountant, says the key to a long happy marriage is to enjoy each other's company.



Belle and Kenny Katz

ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



While we hope that there can be an improvement in the community's standing with the ANC, these exclusionary and punitive actions cannot be overlooked.

For these reasons, the Board was compelled to take the landmark decision to file a complaint against the ANC at the Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Rights Commission. This marks a pivotal moment in our commitment to safeguarding the civil rights and liberties of the Jewish community.

Disagreement and the peaceful resolution of differences are hallmarks of a healthy democracy. All South Africans should be free to voice their opinions openly, unafraid of exclusion from the public space. It should be self-evident that a ruling party cannot simply choose to cease engagement with any cultural or religious group based solely on a political disagreement. This runs contrary to the foundational principals of the Constitution.

The Board has an unwavering dedication to our mandate of protecting our community's interests. It is thus extremely important to demonstrate that as a community, we won't accept discrimination and we won't bow to any actor who doesn't treat us as equal and valued members of this society. We have been a proud and vibrant community of South Africans for more than 175 years, and we wish to remain so well into the future. We remain steadfast in our dual identity: proudly Jewish and proudly South African.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM, every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00.

Ageing disgracefully – Nik Rabinowitz unbottled

Nobody loves the ageing process, but stand-up comedian **Nik Rabinowitz** is making it public in his latest show, *Pension Killers*. The SA Jewish Report spoke to him before he took to the stage.

How do you feel about the ageing process, especially yours?

Ageing in general isn't that bad. It does wonders for a good wine or whisky. But I guess it's easy to age well and gracefully if you're safely tucked away in an oak cask or a bottle. It's ageing while carrying on like you used to that's a bit of challenge. I can't say that I feel any smoother or more wooded with a fruity nose than I did before. In fact, I'm starting to worry that I might be corked.

Why make it so public?

As a comedian, if I don't make my personal life public, I don't know if it's actually even happening to me. "I tell people all my thoughts and feelings through a microphone, therefore I am" – isn't that what Descartes said?

It's mostly in my joints. I still absolutely destroy my kids at bunny rugby though. Even after I showed them *Chasing the Sun* – seasons one and two – the eight-year-old still has absolutely no tackling abilities.

Is there anything about getting older that appeals to you?

When you get older, people don't mind as much if you say exactly what you think out loud, which I mostly do now anyway, but I'm looking forward to having something to blame it on.

Do your children see you as old?

How do you react to that?

The other day I told my son that we share the same curly hair, and he said, "You don't have hair." I didn't react at all, but I did immediately call Dr Larry the hair transplant *wunderkind* to find out if he's

still willing to give me the plugs in exchange for a plug, which he is.

What inspired you to create *Pension Killer*?

My father was nearly 60 when I was born, making me an "OG pension killer".

Forty years later, at our third child's bris, we asked Rabbi Liebenberg to name her "Rivka Brocha Chutzpah Perogen Pension Killer Rabinowitz" as a way of honouring her father having to work for three extra decades to support her financially. I'm joking – it was a naming ceremony not a bris. She's a girl (who only sometimes identifies as circumcised).

What really inspired me to create this show is that I've just always had this inherent drive to live my passion, share my journey, tell my truth, and make my monthly payments. This should help with some of that.

When you go on about getting old, how do your parents feel about it? Do you care?

My mother worries about my receding hairline. My dad doesn't seem too bothered though.

What do you hope your *Pension Killer* audience will take home from your show?

Increased dopamine levels, and none of Daphne's glasses.

Where did most of your material for this show come from, and were any elderly people harmed in the process?

I got some of the material from my experiences at Highlands House in Cape Town, where I have a multitude of rabid female fans. Also, how dare you call me "elderly"? This interview is over!

• *Pension Killers* opens on 23 July until 3 August at *The Theatre On The Square* in Sandton. Tickets are available at www.computicket.com





Master of Business Administration

MBA

in the field of
Healthcare Leadership

Join Wits Business School as we create
leaders for the healthcare sector of tomorrow.

Embark on a transformative journey with our MBA-HL.
For more information contact Lerato Mogale:
lerato.mogale@wits.ac.za or +27 11 717 3148



Visit wbs.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



100
1922
2022

WBS Wits
Business
School
Sculpting global leaders

Dogged by antisemitism

I'm becoming increasingly concerned that Penny might be an antisemite. Or that even if she isn't an overt Jew hater, she harbours a deep seated and latent bias that she's unaware of.

I suspect that if she is one, it's a lineage thing. She is, after all, a poodle of the French kind. And in spite of having lived with us since she was a puppy and she was able to leave her family, she hasn't fully integrated into our very Jewish lifestyle.

I first realised that she wasn't Jewish because in spite of her penchant for pastry, she never put on weight. Further, she loves her daily exercise but doesn't post it on Strava. She prefers Britbox to Netflix, and if that wasn't suspicious in of itself, I've noticed that she has her hair done on a Tuesday.

She seems to tolerate us but not really like us. There are times I catch her looking down her very French (poodle) nose, wondering how it was her lot to land up in Glenhazel of all places, and not Bryanston, where her "people" are. She has an "old money" air about her, and seems to consider our ways a little uncouth.

To date, Penny has never so much as

acknowledged 7 October, asked us how we are managing, and doesn't sport a yellow "Bring them home" dog tag – which would make sense – or a yellow collar. It's like the events of the past nine months matter not a bit to her.

Penny lives amongst us, but feels none of our pain. In spite of our expectation that she does so.

I talked about this with a Catholic colleague, who came to her defence. He explained that if there were to be an attack or a tragedy that befell fellow Catholics in South America, he would of course be saddened. He might relate to it more than to another event, but he would be shocked if someone were to text him to ask him if he was ok. "Why wouldn't I be?" he would wonder, considering that the South American tragedy had taken place on another continent with no connection to him.

It's only his exposure to the Jewish community that gave him insight into an alternative, and had him checking up on his Jewish friends. All of whom really appreciated it, but would probably have noted it had he not done so. And so, he

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



argued, I should cut Penny some slack and not take what I perceive as lack of care as anything other than an expression of her own perspective.

We live in a world of our own construct. We surround ourselves by like-minded people, and we work with those in industries we're drawn to. Our social media algorithms feed us the opinions that we want to hear, we're offered the products that we like to buy, and we're sent articles that will be of interest to us.

It's easy to forget that not everyone's construct is the same as ours. But for our own sake and for theirs, it's worth remembering.

I remain unconvinced about Penny. And whereas I'll try and judge her more favourably, any hint of an encampment in the garden and she can go straight back to Dainfern.

Giving 67 minutes



Eric Samson Legacy Fund



Yad Aharon & Michael



Union of Jewish Women



South African Zionist Federation



South African Friends of Israel



Herzlia Alon Ashel Pre-Primary School



Israeli Embassy



Bet David Progressive Synagogue

MANY MORE SPECIALS IN-STORE

KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER

99⁹⁹ This Week's Specials

ביחד נניצח גיבוש ישראל



VILLA CAPE GRANDE RESERVE CHARDONNAY 750ML



SOGA ORGANIC ORANGE JUICE 500ML



TASTIC RICE 1KG



CIAO BEANS ASSTD 400G EACH



CIAO TOMATO ITALIAN CHOPPED & PEELED 400G EACH



HOMEGROWN TOMATO SAUCE CHILLI & ORIGINAL 700ML EACH



MONTAGU MANGO STRIPS 250G



MONTAGU MIXED DRIED FRUIT 200G



SAN PELLEGRINO SPARKLING ASSTD 330ML EACH



FRY'S GOLDEN CRUMBED SCHNITZELS



CAPE POINT HAKE FILLETS 800G



OK SUNFLOWER OIL 750ML



BAKERS RUSKS ASSTD 450G EACH



FUTURE LIFE SMART FOOD CEREAL CHOC & VANILLA 500G EACH



OK JA JA OAT & SOY MILK 1L EACH



ANAT FLAVOURED PITA PUFFS 150G EACH

Hometown Pharmacy

Water for Wound and Sinus Irrigation



24⁹⁹ DISTILLED WATER (1 LITRE)



25⁹⁹ STERILE SALINE SOLUTION (1 LITRE)

087-803-4000 | 082-711-4342
HOMETOWNPHARMACY@PROPHARM.CO.ZA

OK DOG WET BEEF, CHICKEN & LIVER 425G EACH

17⁹⁹

TUFFY DRAWSTRING REFUSE BAGS 20'S

59⁹⁹

IN A HURRY? FRESH BLOOMS, CONVENIENTLY READY FOR YOU.

Feigels



Yummy!

Tray of 6 Perogen

89⁹⁹

KOSHER AT EVERYDAY PRICES CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE orders@kosherworld.co.za

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. KosherWorld is available at selected Checkers stores. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. E&OE.

Offers valid till 31 JULY 2024 or while stocks last

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel
011 440 9517 | www.kosherworld.co.za