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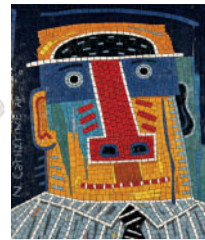
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# South African Jewish Report

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## 'Don't honour Khaled,' terror survivor urges Joburg

NICOLA MILTZ

An elderly survivor of the Lod Airport Massacre in 1972 has urged the City of Johannesburg to abandon plans to rename Sandton Drive after Leila Khaled, the Palestinian activist linked to a terror group which he says changed his life.

Tony Larroy, 80, from Arecibo in Puerto Rico, wrote a heartfelt letter to Joburg City Manager Floyd Brink, pleading with the city not to honour Khaled, a high-ranking member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

"Leila Khaled helped murder my fellow pilgrims. Please don't honour her," he wrote in a deeply personal letter sharing his experience more than 50 years ago. The *SA Jewish Report* has a copy of his letter.

The massacre at Lod Airport - now known as Ben Gurion Airport - on 30 May 1972, claimed the lives of 26 people, including 17 Puerto Ricans who were part of a Christian pilgrimage, as well as eight Israelis, and one Canadian. Larroy's girlfriend, Carmen Crespo, was among those killed in the brutal attack orchestrated by Khaled's group. "The loss was devastating for our families and our entire

community," he wrote.

Larroy was alerted to Johannesburg's renaming plans by Diego Mendelbaum, the executive director of the Jewish Community Centre in Puerto Rico. Mendelbaum initially reached out to Larroy for his reaction to the renaming of the main road outside the United States embassy in Sandton. Larroy hadn't heard about it, Mendelbaum told the *SA Jewish Report*.

Their connection stems from various memorial activities they have both participated in, particularly around honouring survivors of the Lod Massacre.

There's a memorial to the victims of the Lod Massacre in San Juan, the Puerto Rican capital. It was erected by the Puerto Rican senate and is right next to a prominent Holocaust memorial close to the country's legislature. Mendelbaum and Larroy have participated in several events at these memorials.

Mendelbaum said that when he told Larroy about Sandton Drive, he chose to write about his and his girlfriend's story in a bid to highlight the truth about Khaled's involvement.

Mendelbaum, a lawyer, assisted Spanish-speaking Larroy with the

translation of his letter before sending it to the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF).

Larroy writes in his letter that he has never visited South Africa, but believes that his story, which he describes as "personal and painful to all Puerto Ricans", matters.

"I hope sharing this with you will help guide your decision," he wrote.

throwing grenades."

He was shot in the leg. "It was terrifying," he said.

His girlfriend was standing next to him. "She was shot several times, including once in the head. She died instantly. She was only 20. All around me, people were lying on the ground, injured or dead. Blood was everywhere - on the floors, on the luggage. It was a nightmare that I've carried with me every day since."

Leila Khaled rose to prominence in 1970 for her role in an attempted hijacking of an El Al flight during a global wave of airline hijackings. Although the hijacking failed and Khaled was arrested in the United Kingdom, her involvement cemented her image as a divisive, polarising figure. Critics point to her association with the PFLP's violent acts, while her supporters regard her as a symbol of Palestinian resistance.

In his letter, Larroy stressed Khaled's direct connection to the Lod Massacre. He highlighted her role in creating propaganda for the PFLP, which glorified the attack and recruited its perpetrators. Khaled has also celebrated the attackers' actions in subsequent years, further deepening the wounds of those affected.

The PFLP later justified the attack by claiming that the pilgrims were "siding with the enemy".

For Larroy, the memory of that day remains vivid. "We weren't soldiers. We weren't there to take sides in any conflict. We were on a pilgrimage to the holy land for religious reasons, to walk in peace, not to harm anyone. We didn't deserve to be murdered."

Critics of the Sandton Drive renaming



Tony Larroy and Diego Mendelbaum



Pro-Israel groups protesting outside the City of Johannesburg Council Chamber against the proposed renaming of Sandton Drive to Leila Khaled Drive

"We had travelled so far to walk where Jesus once walked, to see the holy sites we had only read about in the Bible. It was our first time visiting the holy land."

It was a typical airport scene, he recalled, with some passengers in the arrivals hall, some at baggage claims, travellers coming and going.

"Then, out of nowhere, gunfire erupted. Three men with machine guns were shooting at everyone in sight. They were also

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## Lebanon ceasefire deal 'new phase in multifront war'

RON KAMPEAS – JTA

Israel's Security Cabinet has approved a United States-brokered ceasefire proposal with Hezbollah, which would end more than a year of conflict with the terror group on Israel's border with Lebanon.

United States (US) President Joe Biden said in an address to the nation after the agreement that Lebanon's government had agreed to the agreement, and that the withdrawal of forces starting then would take up to 60 days.

"I'm pleased to announce that their governments have accepted the US proposal to end the devastating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah," he said from in front of the White House. He also thanked French President Emmanuel Macron for helping to broker the deal.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested that one reason his government had agreed to the deal was his expectation that the incoming Donald Trump administration would be more accommodating to Israel.

He also said future plans to counter Iran factored into the decision.

On Tuesday evening, 26 November, Netanyahu said in a televised address that he would recommend that his hardline right-wing cabinet accept the deal. The deal, which would be the longest ceasefire Israel has agreed to since Hamas invaded from Gaza on 7 October 2023, launching the current conflict, signals a new phase in Israel's multifront war.

"I'm determined to give our courageous soldiers every resource to keep them safe and bring us victory," Netanyahu said. "Therefore, this evening I will bring a ceasefire outline for the Cabinet's approval."

The deal as reported would reinstitute the 2006 ceasefire that ended that year's Israel-Hezbollah war, which required Hezbollah to retreat north of the Litani River, which is about 18 miles (29km) north of Israel's border. Hezbollah disregarded much of that agreement, continuing to build up arms south of the river, and launching rockets at Israel. Hezbollah began pounding Israel with rockets following the Hamas invasion,

prompting clashes that intensified into a full-on Israeli invasion of Lebanon at the end of September.

The deal would reportedly be policed in part by the Lebanese army. It was brokered by the US, France, and other countries, and doesn't apply to the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Lebanese and international officials have also signalled optimism about the deal.

"We're in the final stages of securing a ceasefire agreement for Lebanon," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Tuesday at a meeting of the G7 group of nations. "It will make a big difference in saving lives and livelihoods in Lebanon and Israel. It will make a big difference in creating the conditions that will allow people to return to their homes safely in northern Israel and in southern Lebanon."

Blinken has been working intensively, and so far without success, to reach a ceasefire deal in Gaza. He said the deal in Lebanon would demonstrate that Hamas "can't count on other fronts opening up in the war", which could dampen its will to fight on.

Continued on page 11 >>

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Torah Thought



Rabbi Hillel Bernstein Milnerton Shul

Most of the *parshiot* of Bereishit discuss the lives of our forefathers. In fact, there are only three *mitzvot* in the entire book of Bereishit, which is one fifth of the Torah, even though there are 613 *mitzvot* in the whole Torah.

The word "Torah" means teaching and instruction, similar to the Hebrew word for a teacher which is *morah/moreh*. If so, one would expect the Torah to focus mainly on instructions and commandments for us to follow. However, much of the Torah is a narrative including the stories of our forefathers and the Jewish people. Why are there so many stories in the Torah?

There are actually many more than 613 instructions of how to live as a Jew. Every episode in the Torah is full of guidance of how to live a moral and ethical life. These are also teachings that Hashem is imparting to us with the Torah.

The lives of the forefathers are revealed to us in order for us to learn how great people live their lives, and to gain moral and ethical insights for our own lives. Avraham was the trailblazer of Yiddishkeit. He taught the world about monotheism and kindness. Yaakov was the man of truth who battled deceptive characters and eventually succeeded in establishing the great Jewish family through hard work and toil. But what about Yitzchak?

Much less is written about Yitzchak and his spiritual achievements. He was prepared to give his life to sacrifice as a young man by his father, Avraham, but what happened to him thereafter?

In our *parsha*, we read about Yitzchak travelling to the land of the Philistines. He becomes very wealthy, and is driven out of the land due to the Philistines' jealousy. Then he digs wells for water. In fact, he reopens the wells that his father, Avraham, had dug which had been closed by the Philistines. Why must the Torah tell us about Yitzchak's financial endeavours? What do we

learn from it?

The Midrash makes a remarkable point. The Torah tells us that Yitzchak named the wells with the same names his father, Avraham, had given. Why is that so great? Yitzchak could have claimed that these wells were his new business venture and called them by new names. Instead, he renamed them with the names his father had given them, claiming no credit for himself.

The greatness of Yitzchak was that he continued the traditions of Avraham. He didn't create a new path of Judaism. He carried on what Avraham had begun. This required great humility.

We all want to be a creator and leave our mark on the world. It isn't easy to follow strictly an approach that has already been established. This was the greatness of Yitzchak.

He invented the idea of tradition because he passed on the traditions of Avraham!

What was his reward? Avram became Avraham and Yaakov became Yisrael, but Yitzchak remained Yitzchak throughout his life. Yitzchak didn't need a name change. He was always Yitzchak, the son of Avraham, because he was the one to further the great leadership of his father, Avraham.

To follow a well-established tradition gives one tremendous strength, as one has a strong foundation to rely on. We are blessed to have a tradition that's strong and has been established for more than 3 000 years. All we have to do is learn about it and keep it going, and it will give us great strength in our own lives! That's the legacy of our forefather, Yitzchak.

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# Chabad rabbi's murder rocks Jewish world

NICOLA MILTZ

The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to South Africa has extended his heartfelt condolences to the South African Jewish community following the devastating murder of Chabad emissary Rabbi Zvi Kogan, killed by terrorists in the UAE last week.

Ambassador Mahash Saeed Alhameli met members of Chabad in Johannesburg this week after sending a heartfelt letter of comfort, expressing his sorrow and sympathy over the “deeply upsetting event”.

He said the UAE remained “steadfast in its mission to build bridges of understanding and collaboration”.

A week ago, Kogan, 28, a Chabad emissary in Abu Dhabi was quietly building a life of service and devotion, largely unknown to the wider world. Today, his name resonates across continents, inspiring thousands to perform acts of kindness in his memory.

Emirates.

His death, described by Israeli officials as an “abhorrent antisemitic terrorist attack”, has shaken the Jewish world, including South Africa.

“In moments of loss, expressing condolences to individuals, nations, and communities reaffirms the values of loyalty and unity that bind us as a shared humanity,” Saeed Alhameli wrote in a letter to Rabbi David Masinter, the director of Chabad House in Johannesburg, after Kogan’s death.

“Together, we will continue to promote kindness and goodness in the world, as this is the true way to honour the memory of Rabbi Kogan,” he wrote.

Masinter was no stranger to Kogan. “Just recently, I was in Dubai, seeing firsthand the work Rabbi Kogan and fellow *shluchim* were doing there,” Masinter said. “We are all devastated and heartbroken by his senseless and cowardly murder. Just a few weeks ago, I had the privilege of standing in

his home and witnessing and celebrating a bris of a child born in Dubai, a moment of joy and renewal now shadowed by unimaginable tragedy,” he said.

Three suspects from Uzbekistan, Olimboy Tohirovich, 28; Makhmudjon Abdurakhim, 28; and Azizbek Kamilovich, 33 have been arrested and remain in custody.

His murder has struck a deep

chord within the small Jewish and Israeli community in the Muslim-majority UAE, which has been a symbol of hope and coexistence. The UAE signed a peace agreement with Israel in 2020 under the United States-brokered Abraham Accords.

Ross Kriel, who moved there from Johannesburg in 2013 and who serves



Rabbi Zvi Kogan

Born in Jerusalem in 1996, Kogan was raised in a family deeply rooted in faith and community. From a young age, he demonstrated a profound commitment to spreading light and kindness said mourners. After studying at prestigious yeshivas including Yeshiva Maoz Chayil and the Mir Yeshiva, he served in the Israel Defense Forces’ Givati Brigade.

In 2022, he married Rivky Spielman, and they embarked on a

mission to Abu Dhabi as Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries. Kogan’s dedication and vision quickly made him one of the pillars of the Jewish community in the Gulf.

He worked alongside Chief Rabbi Levi Duchman, managed Dubai’s kosher supermarket, Rimon, and played a key role in establishing the UAE’s first Jewish education centre. His efforts ensured the availability of kosher food and spiritual guidance for Jews in the Gulf, laying the groundwork for a thriving community.

Kogan’s personal story was also marked by tragedy. His wife, Rivky, is the niece of Rabbi Gavriel and Rebbetzin Rivka Holtzberg, the Chabad emissaries murdered in the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. The echoes of that loss resonate deeply as the Kogan family now grapples with another act of violence against those dedicated to spreading goodness.

Kogan’s father, Alexander, spoke through tears at the funeral, asking, “How can you already be gone?” The pain in his voice was shared by all who attended, including Sephardic Chief Rabbi David Yosef, who lamented the enduring hatred that claimed Kogan’s life.

The tragedy has sparked a renewed sense of purpose among Jewish leaders and communities worldwide. In his memory, three babies have already been named after Kogan, ensuring that his legacy will continue to inspire future generations. Jared and Joshua Kushner, along with Ivanka Trump, pledged \$2 million (R36.3 million) to support Chabad’s work in the UAE, a testament to the impact Kogan had on Jewish life in the region.



Rabbi David Masinter with UAE Ambassador Mahash Saeed Alhameli

Kogan, an Israeli-Moldovan national, was last seen alive in Dubai on 21 November. His body was discovered three days later in an abandoned car in Al-Ain, near the border with Oman, by Emirati intelligence and Israeli security services. Turkish authorities assisted in the arrest of three suspects in Istanbul who were then extradited to the

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# 'Solidarity with Palestinians didn't begin last year'

This is an excerpt from South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation **Ronald Lamola's** speech at the 47th United Nations (UN) International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at Freedom Park in Pretoria on 25 November. Below is a response from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

"Our solidarity with the people [Palestinians] did not start last year, as some would have us believe, as it was not on the instruction of another state. Those who make this claim ignore our history for their convenience; they ignore our history to blunt their conscience. Our consciousness will not be blunted.

"I seize this opportunity to add the voice of the ANC [African National Congress] to the vehement condemnation of the wanton aggression currently being perpetrated by Israel against Lebanon. In so doing, we reaffirm our revolutionary solidarity with the valiant people of Palestine, who, we are certain, will emerge, as they have done in the past, from this ongoing savage attack stronger than ever before and united under the leadership of their sole and authentic representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"That we can echo the words of the African National Congress in the UN as far back as 1982 almost verbatim today speaks of the impunity that has prevailed where Israel is concerned for decades. It was in 1948 that Israel consolidated its occupation of Palestinian territory beyond that allotted to it by the partition plan.

"Let this gathering be a call to our conscience. It cannot be that any criticism towards Israel is rendered antisemitic. It cannot be that every action aimed at justice is rendered as a proxy action by Iran or another force.

"To question who bears responsibility for the countless child corpses emerging from the rubble of what were once homes destroyed by Israeli bombs is not an act of antisemitism.

It is a profound call to humanity's conscience, a plea for justice. It is a cry for accountability, a demand that the world recognise and respond to the suffering of the innocent.

"A call for humanity [ubuntu] cannot be reduced to antisemitism.

"We have always believed that only a comprehensive and unconditional negotiated settlement can bring about lasting peace in the region. For this to happen, there is an urgent need for an immediate and sustainable ceasefire, an immediate end of the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2735 [2024], along with the blockade and

destruction of Gaza.

"Today, we should pause and reflect on the events that have unfolded from October 2023 to date, which have marked one of the most tragic and violent periods in the history of the people of Palestine and the region. Over the past year, the military onslaught on Gaza has brought untold suffering to the Palestinian population, who have suffered unspeakable

atrocities in an unrelenting campaign of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes.

"By standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, we are reminded of the resonant words of Palestinian revolutionary leader Chairman Yasser Arafat, when he stated, 'I come bearing an olive branch in one hand and a freedom fighter's gun in the other. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand.'

"In these words, Arafat captured the painful and delicate balance by the Palestinian people between the hope for peace and necessity of resistance in the face of relentless aggression. Today, Palestinians continue to extend that olive branch, yearning for their deferred freedom and to live peacefully on their rightful land in the face of continued Israeli aggression."

## Misrepresentation and gaslighting

Ronald Lamola's 25 November address, (left), embodies the misrepresentation and selective narrative that have come to define the African National Congress's (ANC's) stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The **South African Jewish Board of Deputies** responds.

### Historical context: twisting events

Lamola starts with an explanation of the history of the ANC and the people of Palestine, explaining that it "didn't start last year". In this sense, he's correct. The ANC does indeed have a longstanding relationship with the Palestinian cause.

He then goes on to "add the voice of the ANC to the vehement condemnation of the wanton aggression currently being perpetrated by Israel against Lebanon". In this case, Lamola knowingly omits critical context. Israel's military actions target Hezbollah, a militant and political entity within Lebanon, not the Lebanese state or its people. Many Lebanese civilians have expressed gratitude toward Israel for countering Hezbollah, a group that has dominated and destabilised Lebanon's diverse society. Moreover, the Lebanese military hasn't engaged directly, and the situation cannot be framed as a war against Lebanon itself.

It's also important to note that the Israel Defense Forces' campaign in Lebanon is a reaction to more than a year of terror activities and missiles launched at the north of Israel from southern Lebanon, which is entirely ignored by Lamola. Hezbollah began a campaign of rocket fire into Israel on 8 October 2023. The group has averaged 150 to 200 rockets per day for the past 14 months, causing 60 000 Israelis to evacuate their homes and become internally displaced.

### Misrepresentation of Palestinian leadership

Lamola asserts his belief that the Palestinian people will emerge from the conflict stronger and "united under the leadership of their sole and authentic representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO]". This statement whitewashes the fact that Hamas, not the PLO, is the elected government of Gaza. Palestine is in no way united or unified under the PLO. This narrative erases the complexities on the ground, and presents a sanitised version of events that suits the ANC's agenda, removing the unsavoury reality that Hamas, an Islamist terrorist organisation, was democratically elected.

### Antisemitism and criticism of Israel

Next, Lamola makes the now tired proclamation that "it cannot be that any criticism towards Israel is rendered antisemitic". We don't hold all criticism of Israel to be antisemitism, but that there are clear markers under which criticism is demonising, delegitimising, and couched in double standards that render it antisemitic.

We recall that on the steps of the Peace Palace in The Hague, Lamola said, "In South Africa, we live side by side with Jews. They run companies and thriving business. It's not about antisemitism." This statement indicates that the minister sees the Jewish population as a separate entity to the general South African population, and that he disregards antisemitism as a legitimate problem in the country.

It's also disingenuous to believe that replacing the word "Jew" with the term "Zionist" somehow sanitises the bigotry and antisemitism of a statement. Lamola's invocation of "ubuntu" is hollow in light of Hamas's actions – rape, murder, kidnapping – which starkly contradict any principles of humanity

### Distortion of Iran's role

At this point, Lamola goes on to make another blatantly gaslit statement in, "It cannot be that every action aimed at justice is rendered as a proxy action by Iran or another force." Mr Lamola, there's a big difference between a protest or political campaign aimed at gaining "justice" and the wanton rape and murder of civilians, launching of indiscriminate rockets, terror raids, and regional destabilisation that has occurred at the hands of Iran and its proxies. Creating a false equivalency by calling these "actions aimed at justice" is incredibly infuriating.

As the minister of international relations and cooperation, Lamola would be well versed in the destructive and destabilising influence of Iran across the globe. Any attempt to conceal this is clearly contrary to the stated goals of the South African foreign policy doctrine.

### Genocide allegations: misleading and unsupported

The minister states, "The events that have unfolded from October 2023 to date ... have marked one of the most tragic and violent periods in the history of the people of Palestine and of the region, who have suffered unspeakable atrocities in an unrelenting campaign of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes."

Again, the minister is using half-truths and libel to push his narrative. On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched an attack on the people of Israel resulting in 1 200 deaths and the kidnapping of more than 250 hostages. It is Hamas who started this war, and Hamas who then took refuge among the population of Gaza, using schools, hospitals, and civilian homes as shields, callously putting civilians in the firing range.

Moreover, the minister knowingly misrepresents the findings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which hasn't found that a genocide is occurring. In fact, it's important to note that the ANC-led South African government immediately adopted an adversarial stance and began propagating a narrative of genocide from 6 November 2023, merely a month after the Hamas attacks. To date, the court hasn't issued any findings to the effect that Israel was acting in violation of its international legal obligations.

On 26 January 2024, the ICJ actually declined to order Israel to suspend its military operations in Gaza, instead ordering it to "limit harm to Palestinians, preserve evidence, and submit a report within a month on all measures taken in response to the court's order". This indicates that the court lacks the evidence to prove South Africa's malicious claims. Furthermore, on 28 March, the ICJ again rejected South Africa's request to order Israel to cease its operations in Gaza and its request to call on third party states supporting Israel's military effort to cease doing so.

Put together, it's clear that there's no court ruling or indication that a genocide is occurring. Thus, the purpose of the South African-led ICJ case appears less about the pursuit of justice or the application of human rights and more of a targeted political attack. The continued use of the term "genocide" and ongoing claims of war crimes are thus libel against Israel in a campaign of demonisation and delegitimation. Indeed, United States National Security Council spokesman John Kirby called it "meritless, counterproductive, and completely without any basis in fact whatsoever".

### Historical distortion

It's clear that just as the ICJ application appears to have cherry picked its facts, so, too, Lamola continued this trend, when he concluded his speech by quoting late PLO leader Yasser Arafat, who inferred that he bore both a gun and an olive branch. This statement is clearly disingenuous, given Arafat's own refusal to accept the Ehud Barak's offering of peace – a real olive branch – at Camp David in 1998.

Palestinians in Gaza and under the rule of the Palestinian Authority suffer because of their leaders, who depict Israelis as monsters and eternal enemies. They suffer because of a political deadlock created by those glorifying martyrdom and opting for violence instead of diplomacy. Lamola's speech gaslights the South African public with misrepresentations that align neither with the complexities of the conflict nor the principles of the South African Constitution. Instead of advancing constructive dialogue, his rhetoric fosters polarisation and disinformation.



Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola

Photo: Department of International Relations and Cooperation Facebook page

### Selective historical retelling

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation minister then goes on to state that Israel has enjoyed impunity for decades, and that in "1948 ... Israel consolidated its occupation of Palestinian territory beyond that allotted to it by the partition plan". This statement ignores key historical context.

The plan, though accepted by Jewish leaders, was rejected by Arab states, which then waged war against the nascent Israeli state in the belief that it could be wiped off of the map and that the territory would be incorporated into their states. The land that was gained by the Jewish forces, despite their being heavily outmanned and outgunned, was then incorporated into the new borders of Israel. Israel couldn't have "consolidated its occupation of Palestinian territory" as there was no state of Palestine before the partition and no occupying Israeli state. Jewish-owned land prior to partition was purchased legally from Arab and British landowners, not occupied or stolen through any force or coercion.

Notably, following this war, the West Bank was incorporated into Jordan, and Gaza belonged to Egypt. Neither Jordan nor Egypt chose to cede control of these territories to the Arab Palestinian population, nor did they give citizenship to these people. The same Arab population that was on territory incorporated into Israel was given full Israeli citizenship, with all the rights and benefits that this affords them.

# Sooliman says Gaza war will 'end Israel'

TALI FEINBERG

**G**ift of the Givers (GOTG) founder Dr Imtiaz Sooliman is a globally-recognised humanitarian, but his venom and hatred towards Israel and the Jewish people is becoming more and more overt and ugly.

He has now made it clear that he wants Israel to be obliterated. "This war isn't the end of Gaza, this war is the end of Israel. It's going to happen very, very soon," he said to applause at the Congress of Business and Economics (CBE) gala dinner and awards evening in Johannesburg on 23 November, a rabidly anti-Israel event.

His statement comes in the wake of his antisemitic rant at a pro-Hamas rally on 5 October 2024; GOTG allowing antisemitic graphics and comments on its Facebook page; and questions about GOTG funding Hamas.

While some South Africans would like Sooliman to be their next president, he took on some age-old antisemitic tropes at the event when he said, "The ICJ [International Court of Justice] case did something more important than taking Israel to court. It showed them that we have nothing to fear. Because they rule the world with fear, with money, with power, with influence. They're getting away with their deception, their lies, their control, and their power. It's time to expose who they are, what they do, the lies they speak, the people they control."

Sooliman was keynote speaker at the CBE event where the congress, a Muslim business forum, presented awards honouring the South African government and legal team who took Israel to the ICJ on charges of genocide.

Sooliman told the audience, "The Zionists put fear into you. I expect all of you not to be afraid of anybody. They tell you they've got money, we've got money too. They say they've got legal teams, we've got legal teams too. They say they have power, we have power too. They have influence, we have influence too. You're defending genocide, we're defending humanity. You lose. Seventy-six years of lies they've exposed to the world. It's not going to take another 76 years to free Gaza. It will happen very soon."

He went on to recount how Israel's challenges were evidence of its imminent demise, and said these challenges were being hidden from the world. "They haven't told you that two million Israeli citizens have left. That it's difficult to get a doctor, because so many medical professionals have left. That the war has cost them \$120 billion [R2.1 trillion]. That they've lost investment."

Describing all Israelis as "settlers", he said, "Two hundred and fifty thousand settlers are now living as refugees in the country, and the government has to support them." He described how tourism to Israel and within it has dropped "because Israelis are too tired, afraid, and broken" to travel inside the country. He mentioned that Israelis were suffering from mental-health challenges, but at no point said that the attacks by Hamas and

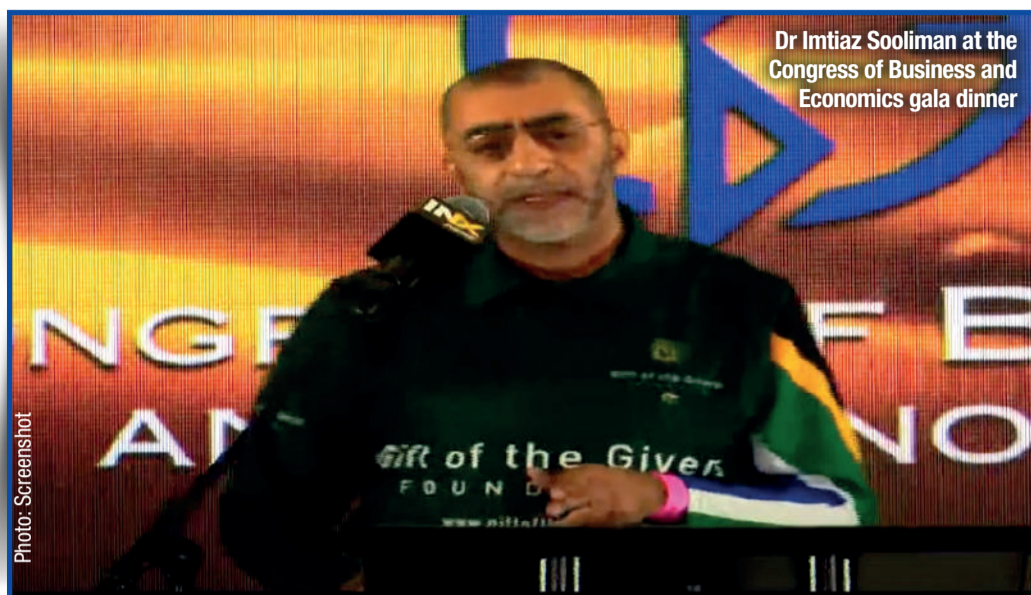


Photo: Screenshot

Dr Imtiaz Sooliman at the Congress of Business and Economics gala dinner

Hezbollah were behind the trauma of 7 October, the internal refugee crisis, and the lack of travel and tourism.

Sooliman repeated his recently-spouted conspiracy theory that Israel has to "borrow people from Africa to fight for them", and then said that Israeli soldiers don't want to go to war because they don't have the "guts, strength, and resilience to fight. These are cowards."

David May, research manager at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington, DC-based research institute focusing on security and foreign policy, says he believes Sooliman's November address may be even more concerning than his 5 October rant.

"Sooliman has doubled down on the overt antisemitism he expressed in October. He repeated his conspiratorial trope that the Zionists – in other words, Jews – control the world through money, power, influence, and fear," May says.

"It's shocking that the founder of a respected humanitarian organisation would spew such vile antisemitism using the veneer of humanitarian work, and the global resurgence in acceptance of antisemitism, to espouse views rife with classic antisemitic tropes," he says. "Sooliman's dehumanisation of displaced Israelis – falsely castigating them as 'settlers' – and jihadist view of Israel's supposed demise present a person who is firmly ensconced ideologically in the Hamas camp."

Antisemitism expert Professor Milton Shain says, "Sooliman strikes me as a desperate man whose dream of destroying Israel via his friends in Iran and that country's Middle Eastern proxies has come to nought." But Shain says this shouldn't allow him to employ "conspiracy theories and well-worn anti-Jewish tropes, such as his reference to Zionist 'money, power, and influence'."

"Sooliman simply lies. Two million Israelis haven't emigrated from Israel in the wake of the war, and it's not true that Israelis are struggling to find a medical doctor," Shain says. "The rest of the figures he cites are hopelessly wrong. In essence, for Sooliman, the only good Jew is one who shares

his narrative. Forget about a two-state solution, which is still the South African government's position, or reconciliation. The conflict is black and white for this doctor turned preacher."

Shaun Sacks of NGO Monitor, a globally-recognised research institute working to ensure that society operates with accountability, transparency, and universal human rights, believes that Sooliman has adopted some of the "most venomous conspiracy theories regarding Israel and Zionism. His rhetoric employs language such as 'world rule' and 'control by money', historically associated with antisemitic tropes.

"These phrases, when directed at Jews, are widely recognised as deeply hateful and harmful," Sacks says. "Yet, Sooliman appears to assume immunity from criticism by redirecting these age-old prejudices under the guise of anti-Zionist rhetoric. This thinly-veiled approach is a stark

reminder of how antisemitic tropes continue to resurface – reframed and repurposed – even in modern discourse."

Hate speech expert, advocate Mark Oppenheimer, says, "One of the crucial reasons to safeguard free speech is that it reveals the true beliefs of pernicious actors in society. Sooliman's own words lay bare his disdain for Israel, his rejection of its legitimacy at its founding, and his yearning for its destruction. He celebrates Israeli suffering, takes pleasure in the displacement of 250 000 internal refugees, and revels in the economic and psychological harm inflicted on Israelis. Far from being the humanitarian he claims to be, Sooliman's rhetoric exposes a man consumed by hatred for Israel."

South African Jewish Board of Deputies analyst Adam Charnas says, "It's highly regrettable that an organisation and a leader who has such a history of assisting those in need – without reference to race or religion – has descended into perpetuating classic antisemitic tropes.

"Once again, Sooliman embarked on an extended rant about the malign control that Jews supposedly exercise, a core theme of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other classic antisemitic tracts," says Charnas. "Far from walking back on his previously antisemitic ravings, Sooliman has evidently decided to double down on them. An additionally unsettling aspect of his rhetoric is the inflammatory 'us against them' terms in which it is framed, which may be read as pitting Muslims against Jews. It's concerning that Sooliman's statements have become so conspiratorial, confused, contradictory, and delusional."



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## 'Don't honour Khaled,' terror survivor urges Joburg

>>Continued from page 1

such as the SAZF, civil society groups, residents, and businesses argue that honouring Khaled glorifies a figure tied to terrorism and undermines South Africa's commitment to human rights and reconciliation.

"South Africa is known around the world as a country that stands for freedom, democracy, and human rights," Larroy wrote. "It would be a tragedy if such a legacy were tarnished by having the name of Leila Khaled darken its streets."

Naming a road after someone with "the blood of innocent people on their hands doesn't help build peace, unity, or justice for any country", he wrote, saying that honouring Khaled this way was "painful beyond words".

"No country in the world has ever built a monument to her. It's hard to believe this is even being considered in Johannesburg." He wrote.

On Wednesday, 27 November, a protest

against the Sandton Drive renaming took place in Braamfontein outside the City of Johannesburg Council Chamber. It was attended by members of civil society and representatives of several political parties. Those opposed to it say that Khaled's legacy "starkly contrasts with South Africa's values of reconciliation and peace-building", and that the renaming had the potential to undermine the country's commitment to unity, reconciliation, and human dignity.

The office of the city manager hadn't responded to questions at the time of going to press.

A two-day council meeting is set down for this week in which this issue is being raised. The Patriotic Alliance's Kenny Kunene has a motion to rescind the 2018 approval of the name change. However, there were 5 500 objections to the renaming and around 70 000 signatures in favour of the name change. The Democratic Alliance claims the latter are invalid and have called for an independent audit.

## Lies and incorrect statistics

**A**m I the only person who gets incensed when the truth is twisted out of all proportion to fit a narrative specifically created to make Israel and the Jewish people look bad?

I'm well aware that those who dislike us for whatever reason will say that I'm suffering from "victim mentality", and that I believe that there is antisemitism when there isn't. These same people, who unfortunately are growing in number and generally aren't stupid, claim that the rise in antisemitism is a myth created by Jews. They claim that, of course, nobody has a problem with Jews, it's just the Jewish state that is monstrous. Right!

As I was driving into work earlier this week and listening to the radio, I heard a news report about the war Israel is involved in and South Africa's reaction to it. Obviously, my ears pricked up because I'm interested, but when it began by referring to 7 October in Israel as having been an "attack on 1 000 Israelis", the anger started. I already knew that what was to follow would be equally shamelessly inaccurate. It went on to make the point that the mighty and 'genocidal' Israel went into Gaza and destroyed it, brutally murdering about 40 000 Palestinians who were mostly women and children.

Here's the thing, with the preface that 7 October was an attack on 1 000 Israelis, the die is already cast in fake news. The image was of a little attack on 1 000 people in which some may have been harmed. There was no indication of brutal gang rape, burning people alive in their homes, and far worse, if that's at all possible. They also neglected to mention that it was 1 200 innocent people murdered, and many, many wounded and left homeless. That reality, which is our present-day history, was obliterated so easily and swiftly by a respected news station.

Now, this day, 7 October, which is etched in every Jewish mind around the world, and through which every Israeli lived, cannot be deleted or altered like that. In reality, the perpetrators themselves made sure of it because they proudly documented the horror they inflicted by videoing it and putting it up all over social media. Far too many of us have seen the images and the horror. There's no turning back or ignoring what happened.

Only, soon after 7 October, we started hearing how Israelis had made it up or worse, they did it to themselves to blame Hamas so they could go in and destroy Gaza.

No matter what anyone says, this is pure antisemitism. This week, when we heard the minister of international relations and cooperation giving his reasons why the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African government's attitude towards Israel was all about being humanitarian and not being antisemitic, it made it all so clear.

"It cannot be that any criticism towards Israel is rendered antisemitic," he said. He's 100% correct, only it's not just any criticism. The ANC criticises everything and anything Israel does as horrifying. Then, add to that a whole host of things Israel didn't actually do but is blamed for because, well, why not? Has the ANC missed an opportunity to criticise anything Israel has done in the past 18 months, or five years? Has the ANC even acknowledged that this isn't a one-sided war, and the rockets rain down on Israel every day? Not once!

If just one of those rockets reached its destination in an Israeli city, hundreds would die. The Iron Dome and brilliant Israeli technology are the only things stopping wholesale death and destruction in Israel. But it's pure antisemitism when it's all about one side being good, even angelic, and the other side – the Jews – being all bad.

Because of the importance of clarifying why the minister is so wrong, I handed it over to the experts to give a full and clear response. See page 4.

The real problem is that the more lies are spread about a group of people – like us – the less resistant people are to dismissing it, and the more people believe it.

And so we have terrorist attacks, like what happened to Rabbi Zvi Kogan in the United Arab Emirates, and like the attacks in Amsterdam a few weeks back.

Just this week, I had a conversation with an old friend who happened to be Jewish, but was deeply critical of Israel and claimed not to be a Zionist. However, he was clear that no matter how angry he was with the Israeli government, Israel had to survive because as Jews anywhere in the world, our survival depends on Israel.

I suggested that in fact, he was 100% a Zionist because being a Zionist means only that we believe a Jewish state is essential. It doesn't mean that we have to support Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or any policy in Israel. It just means the acknowledgement of Israel's importance, and the need to keep it afloat. If Zionism meant supporting the Israeli government, more than half of the Jews in Israel right now wouldn't be Zionists. But they are because they love their country, just not their government. And therein lies the importance of a democracy.

Our minister of international relations and cooperation doesn't believe there's a need for a Jewish state. He and the government have made it clear that they support the cry, "From the river to the sea; Palestine will be free". This is a call for Palestinian land to replace Israel from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, who has in the past motivated so many in our community to hand over lots of money to help his humanitarian causes, has shown his true colours in recent declarations that show sheer antisemitism. I guess he has stopped even trying to suggest otherwise, as the things he says about us get worse and worse.

What he is extraordinarily wrong about is his insistence that Israel is weakening. It isn't. Israel and the Jewish world are getting closer and stronger in their resolve and partnership. Israel will prevail and it will – using every humanitarian route possible – win the war.

You may wonder why I say this. It's simple. Because as the world and our haters look for everything bad Israel has done, they need to emerge with clarity that Israel has in fact been as squeaky clean as possible. And I'm sure that in the end, they will do so despite what our haters want the world to believe. *Am Yisrael Chai!*

**Shabbat shalom!**

**Peta Krost**  
Editor



## Hypocrisy of ICC exposes myth of international accountability

OPINION

ANNE HERZBERG



**M**any in the international community, including members of the South African government, celebrated last week when the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. The International Development and Affairs Department (the Department of International Relations and Cooperation) issued a statement saying that the move marked a "significant step towards justice" and demonstrated a "commitment to international law", and called on the "global community to uphold the rule of law and ensure accountability".

Far from representing the ideals expressed in these hollow platitudes, the ICC's actions actually serve as yet another example of rank hypocrisy plaguing international institutions and promoted by BRICS countries.

For instance, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), numerically controlled by the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation and BRICS (a forum including Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Arab Emirates) has yet to issue condemnation of the 7 October massacre in southern Israel. Iran, Qatar, and Turkey's sponsorship of Hamas, the terrorist organisation primarily responsible for the atrocities, has been similarly ignored. Instead, UNGA has sought to attack Israel routinely and solely, while rewarding Palestinian mass murderers with upgraded UN status.

Similarly, South Africa filed a fake and mysteriously financed case at the UN's International Court of Justice, falsely accusing Israel of genocide. The government took no action to hold the Palestinians or Iran accountable for organising the actual genocidal attack on Israelis on 7 October. Nor did it seek to enforce the rule of law against Turkey or Qatar for their ongoing harbouring and financing of the killers. Instead, South Africa embraced these governments and hosted leaders of Hamas.

And at the BRICS meeting last month in Russia, South Africa joined Brazil, China, and other hypocritical governments in feting ICC indicted-war criminal Vladimir Putin.

Supposedly insulated from these politicised shenanigans, the ICC was established in 1998 to act as an independent court of last resort in countries without functioning judicial systems. Membership was opened to recognised states with defined territory possessing the jurisdiction that could be transferred to the court. Member states were also expected to co-operate with the ICC.

In practice, however, the court and its member states have flouted these requirements. The ICC has proven itself to be a political tool susceptible to corruption and exploitation, as are most other international bodies.

First, the prosecutor and later the pre-trial chamber, ignored the very clear rules of the court's foundational Rome Statute and decided they would simply re-write the rules of the treaty in order to target Israelis. Israel isn't a member of the court, the Palestinian Authority (PA) isn't a state and has no defined territory, and under the terms of the Oslo Accords, the PA has no ability to transfer jurisdiction over Israelis to the ICC.

Second, ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan deliberately slow-walked seeking arrest warrants against members of Hamas, even though he

could have filed against them beginning on 8 October. He chose instead to wait until he could manufacture charges against Israelis. Furthermore, in an unprecedented step, he announced the move on CNN with anti-Israel host Christiane Amanpour, knowing full well all the attention would be on Israel and no-one would focus on Hamas's crimes. His surprise appearance occurred just as his team was supposed to fly to Israel to discuss how the country was handling investigations of potential wrong-doing during the war in Gaza. The ICC staffers thumbed their nose at their obligations under the Rome Statute, and didn't board the plane.

This unethical act followed a friendly meeting a few weeks prior between Khan and Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan dictator. Rather than threatening Maduro with arrest warrants from the court, he signed a co-operation agreement with him. We later learned that Khan's sister-in-law is on Maduro's defence team.

We also recently discovered that, at the same time that Khan decided to go after Israel, he was dodging accusations of sexual misconduct against a female colleague. What better way to deflect from these serious allegations than to go after Israel.



The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant

Photo: Screenshot

Moreover, accountability for the situation in Gaza was hardly the driving force for Khan's actions. If so, he would have also moved for arrest warrants against Iran for financing, supplying weaponry, and training Hamas for 7 October. He would have wanted to end the impunity for UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) teachers who have indoctrinated generations of Palestinian children to antisemitic hate and violence. He would have gone after UN officials and nongovernmental organisations for allowing Hamas to steal humanitarian aid and use their facilities to launch thousands of rocket attacks on Israeli cities – each one a war crime.

These acts are responsible for the crisis in Gaza, but instead, he chose to blame Israel, which facilitated the transfer of billions of pounds of food, water, and shelter equipment to Palestinians. Far from "starving" Gazans, Israel has done more than any other country in history to provide for an enemy's population, even while engaged in a vicious war and while 250 of its citizens were held hostage in the territory.

ICC member states have been no better during this farce. Apparently, South Africa's obligation to co-operate with the ICC and its supposed "commitment" to international law had little meaning as its officials were dining with Putin in October.

Unfortunately, the idea that there can be international institutions upholding lofty principles and existing above politics is a fantasy. South Africa and its allies have made sure of it.

• Anne Herzberg is the legal advisor of NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute.



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# Ramaphosa puts Israel bashing on G20 agenda

OPINION

All eyes will be on South Africa in 2025 as it hosts the Group of 20 (G20) leaders of the world's most significant economies next November. Judging from what President Cyril Ramaphosa said at this November's G20 Summit in Rio, he will seek to bring the Palestinian issue onto the G20's packed agenda. South Africa has made "solidarity" a guiding principle for its chairing of the summit. Among other things, this appears to be code for maligning Israel. The *SA Jewish Report* spoke to some analysts to get their take.

Ramaphosa stressed the centrality of the United Nations (UN), and said that all states must comply with international law, with no exceptions. "The people of Palestine have been denied their right to self-determination and are under the yoke of a brutal and violent occupation. As the G20 collective, we need to add our voices to ensure that the carnage that is taking place in Gaza is ended and that we work towards a just and lasting peace for both Palestinians and Israelis." The UN should counter the use of starvation as a weapon of war, Ramaphosa said, which was what Israel was doing in Gaza.

Funnily enough, Ramaphosa didn't mention that Russia should follow international law with regard to its invasion of Ukraine. He seems determined to use every avenue to push the Palestinian cause though.

"The G20 will afford South Africa a particularly prominent platform from which to pursue its foreign policy including that towards the Middle East," said independent analyst Frans Cronje.

"The Palestinian cause is close to the ANC's heart – it's a genuine, deeply ideological concern – and so, it appears pretty much everywhere," said Terence



President Cyril Ramaphosa at the G20 Summit in Brazil

Corrigan, project manager at the South African Institute of Race Relations.

"So, expect this to be a theme of its chairing of the G20. It's doubtful that this is a forum that offers much scope for dealing with it as it contains countries both sympathetic and hostile to Israel. The G20 is fundamentally premised on dealing with economic matters. Injecting a deeply divisive issue like the war in the Middle East, statehood for the Palestinians, or even whether Israel should exist – and it's my view that South Africa is increasingly coming to an eliminationist position on this – will serve only as a major distraction. What it can do, though, is take attention away from growth or developmental matters – investment, trade, infrastructure support, health and climate funding – in which Africa has a very substantial interest and to which the G20 is far more appropriately suited."

Gustavo de Carvalho, a senior researcher at the South African Institute of International Affairs, said, "President Ramaphosa's vocal stance on Israel at the recent G20 Summit is hardly unexpected. It aligns with South Africa's longstanding

support for a two-state solution and its active condemnation of Israeli actions perceived as violations of international law. We can expect the country to continue advocating for its established foreign policy positions including support for Palestinian self-determination. However, such issues rarely dominate the G20 agenda. The presidency is anticipated to prioritise instead inclusive economic growth, food security, and advancements in artificial intelligence, continuing the group's ongoing decisions."

The Middle East may well prove a distraction, but South Africa also firmly believes that development is harmed by conflict and instability, in Africa and further afield.

"Ramaphosa will be using the G20 platform to talk about Israel-Palestine. He is definitely going to try to hit home on this issue, using every kind of convening power that he has," said Sanusha Naidu, senior research associate at the Institute for Global Dialogue. "It will be important to watch if the Israel issue gains traction in the G20."

She also notes that Pretoria will have

to work closely with Washington as the United States assumes the G20 chair in November 2025. Their opposing views on the International Criminal Court arrest warrants for Israeli leaders and the International Court of Justice "genocide" case brought by South Africa against Israel won't help. "I think the G20 and other forums will be affected by the crises in the international system, which is at an inflection point," Naidu said.

Israeli journalist Rolene Marks points out South Africa's hypocrisy in claiming the moral high ground. "President Ramaphosa's remarks at the G20 Summit are actually quite extraordinary," she said. "He talks about complying with international law, yet South Africa failed to hand over Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir when there was a warrant for his arrest by the ICC. He also makes these loaded statements about respect for the principle of self-determination for the Palestinian people. However, he has cozied up to rogue states like Iran which sponsor Hamas and Hezbollah, inhibiting any peaceful resolution between Israel and the Palestinians, with their constant reiteration of the need to exterminate the state of Israel. South Africa isn't an honest broker in any of this, having taken sides with countries like Russia, Iran, and China. Ramaphosa is trying to make a coalition of the anti-West."

All in all, Israel should gear up for some criticism from the G20 in 2025, especially from South Africa and especially if the war in Gaza and Lebanon drags on.

• *Steven Gruzd is a political analyst in Johannesburg. He writes in his personal capacity.*



STEVEN GRUZD

# Praying for our dear son

OPINION

It has been a harrowing week for my family and me. Our beloved son, Noam, sustained serious injuries while serving in Lebanon, courageously defending our people and our land. As I write these words, he remains intubated and sedated, but stable. We, along with countless others, continue to pray for his complete recovery.

We are suffering deeply for our son – the anguish of his pain, the weight of his medical struggle, and the daunting path that lies ahead. This week has been soaked in tears, a cascade of sorrow and heartache that seems unrelenting. Yet, amidst this sea of sadness, we optimistically cling to hope and faith that the same strength that carried him will guide us through this turbulent storm. I'm deeply grateful to everyone who has held our son in their hearts and prayers.

This painful week has been a stark reminder of the intricate emotional challenges life places before us, testing our resilience and faith. Life often challenges us to carry a mixture of conflicting emotions, holding joy and sorrow side by side in a delicate and painful tension.

The midrash portrays Avraham's emotional state during the Akeida (binding of Isaac) as a profound paradox. He sheds tears of sorrow at the prospect of sacrificing his son, yet his heart brims with joy at the opportunity to fulfil divine will and shape the destiny of Jewish history. Avraham was called upon to embody two opposing emotions simultaneously. Perhaps for this reason, Hashem designed the heart as a multi-chambered organ, capable of holding feelings that seem to contradict one another.

Similarly, the *Gemara* in *Bava Batra* teaches that upon the passing of a close relative, one recites the *beracha* of *dayan ha'emet*, humbly accepting the divine decree. Yet, upon receiving the inheritance from the deceased, the very same individual is instructed to recite the *beracha* of *hatov ve'hameitiv*, expressing gratitude to Hashem. This delicate juxtaposition reflects the profound challenge faced by Avraham at *har haMoriah*: the ability to hold contrasting emotions in tension, balancing grief and gratitude, while maintaining unwavering faith in moments of profound complexity.

I have wrestled deeply with the delicate balance between joy and sorrow. Despite the severity of his injury, my heart overflows with gratitude that Noam's life was spared and that he has a positive prognosis. He endured the impact of a direct drone attack, yet Hashem, in His infinite kindness, shielded

my precious son. I thank Hashem for this miraculous gift of life, and continue to pray that He will watch over my dear Noam, granting him strength and guiding him toward a complete and lasting recovery.

Yet, my heart remains heavy. My son's condition is still precarious, and *bezrat Hashem*, when he recovers, the path forward will be long and arduous. I'm overwhelmed with grief for the suffering he must endure.

Beyond the struggle of toggling between sadness and grief, this week I found myself grappling with the complexity of each emotion, as each carried charged secondary responses. My gratitude that my son's life was spared felt tinged with guilt when I thought of the soldier who was killed in the same attack, and certainly when I considered the immense pain and suffering that so many have endured over the past year. Am I allowed to feel even this small trace of joy and gratitude? It also felt wrong to feel even minimal gratification while my son still suffers and while we continue to live in a state of constant and uncertain stress.

Yet, not feeling gratitude toward Hashem felt like a denial of the protection He granted my son. How can I not thank Hashem deeply for protecting my beautiful Noam from this deadly attack?

It's one thing to reconcile two opposing emotions; it's much harder when each emotion is layered with secondary feelings of guilt and concern about being insensitive or imbalanced. I hope that I will find a way to remain grateful for the miracle while not overlooking our suffering nor the immense suffering of others.

This trauma opened my heart in a new and visceral way to the immense suffering our people have endured. As much as we try to empathise with others' pain, as much as we shed tears for their suffering, it's difficult to understand the depth of their anguish until we ourselves experience something that begins to approximate it.

It was important to us to learn about every step of my son's journey to the hospital. It brought me great reassurance to hear from the soldiers who saved his life how quickly they responded, and how they acted with such precision to keep him alive. Similarly, speaking to the doctors and hospital staff who

admitted him, knowing that my child was under the care of people who were doing everything they could to alleviate his suffering, was a source of comfort. Though I cannot speak to him, I take solace in knowing he has been cared for every step of the way.

But my mind cannot escape the unimaginable suffering of the families of the hostages. To not know anything about your child's fate, and to live with the knowledge that they are in the hands of brutal terrorists who have no respect for human life and are consumed by hate, must be an unbearable burden, one that requires immense strength just to wake up each day. I apologise to them if I haven't felt this grief as deeply as I should have. I will try harder.

Likewise, it brought me immense comfort to hear that my son's unit operated exactly as it should have. Having been attacked by a drone, they feared a terrorist infiltration, and my son immediately ran from his tent to guard the perimeter. After being attacked by mortars and taking shelter, he rushed to a lookout post, following protocol, at which point the second drone fell directly on the guard post. His friends quickly rushed to provide medical care for him and for the other wounded. Within little more than an hour, he was in the operating room. This rapid response undoubtedly saved his life.

I have been haunted all week, thinking about situations where soldiers are injured or killed in accidents, friendly fire, or, *chas v'shalom*, other malfunctions. It's agonisingly painful to suffer a loss without a storyline to hold onto, without the clarity of a defined sequence that can offer some sense of peace or understanding.

The war persists, and our sacred struggle to safeguard our land and protect our people remains unwavering. While the headlines have shifted to politics, diplomacy, and elections, it's crucial to remember, especially for those far away where the echoes of war may seem distant, that pain and hardship endure.

Please keep our pain and suffering front and centre as you continue your daily routine. Please continue praying for my dear son, Noam Avraham ben Atara Shlomit.

• *Moshe Taragin is a rabbi at Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush, a hesder yeshiva. He has smicha and a Bachelor of Arts in computer science from Yeshiva University as well as a Master's degree in English literature from the City University of New York.*



RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN





# Reflections of an Afrikaner at Auschwitz

OPINION

DR ERNST ROETS



One of the great Afrikaner philosophers of the previous century, NP van Wyk Louw, remarked that the love and respect we develop for a nation isn't primarily based on its achievements, but on its hardships.



This is the type of observation that seems strange at first, but it becomes more obvious the more you think about it. I would add only that it's the combination of hardship and accomplishment that serves as a source of appreciation.

My great-grandfather was only a toddler when he was taken captive with his mother during the (second) Anglo Boer War and taken to a concentration camp. Through his mother's resolve, they were able to escape *en route* to the camp, after which they had to survive in the veld for several weeks. Had they not escaped, I cannot say with certainty that I would have been here today. That was the first war in which concentration camps were used on a large scale. Tens of thousands of Boer women and children died in those camps. The same goes for black Africans.

Once the atrocities of that war became known, the Afrikaner people fostered the hope that such atrocities would never repeat themselves. Within decades, that hope was dashed.

During a recent trip to central Europe, I made sure to fulfil my longstanding wish to visit Auschwitz. It's difficult to express the emotions that gripped me upon walking through the camp and seeing what remains of this place where unspeakable horror occurred on a scale that's unimaginable.

In scale, the atrocities of the Anglo Boer Wars are by no means comparable to those of the Holocaust. However, being a descendant of the survivors of our own historical atrocities, and having an emotional connection with my own history, made the hardship suffered by the Jews so much more relatable on an emotional level.

What's even more remarkable is the extent to which the Jewish people were able to rise from the ashes to become an immensely successful people again. Herein, too, lies a certain comparison with the Afrikaner people, considering the rapid industrialisation of South Africa after the Anglo Boer War.

This happened largely as a result of the *Helpmekeer* movement – a mutual aid movement which, literally translated, means helping each other – when in the aftermath of the war of 1899 to 1902 and the Afrikaner Rebellion of 1914, the Afrikaners declared that “*n volk red homself*” (a nation saves itself).

I published a video on YouTube with some impromptu thoughts and observations on my Auschwitz experience. Most of the responses were supportive, however there were also a few negative responses, some even highly derogatory and antisemitic.

What concerns me most is the growing sense of frustration pertaining to the mere topic of the Holocaust.

Douglas Murray recently remarked that our generation would probably be remembered for its inability to make sense of World War II. It's obvious that we should learn some extremely important lessons from that war, but what

exactly those lessons seem not to be quite as obvious.

And so, many on the ideological left would like us to believe that we can learn from the Nazis that the very notion of cultural, national, or communal identity provides the foundation for evil. If this is true, it would imply that communal matters such as heritage and tradition, cultural diversity, and a particular perspective on history and religion are inherently bad and have to be destroyed in order to achieve “progress”. Not only that but, according to this perspective, those who cherish these things should be regarded as part of the problem.

Unfortunately, we seem to be seeing more of this as time progresses and “wokeness” has taken over the political discourse in the Western world. To accuse people of racism for expressing opinions that one disagrees with has become commonplace. So common, in fact, that the accusation has lost its value. Even though racism is an abhorrent thing, a growing number of people have lost all concern about being labelled racist – and I might add, for good reason. Bizarrely, some even regard such accusations as a token of honour.

Instead of rethinking this approach, wokeness has doubled down. All of a sudden, people who say things they disagree with aren't racists anymore, but Nazis. This was especially evident during the recent American election, with some in the mainstream describing Trump as Hitler and his supporters as Nazis.

This has had a double negative impact. First, likening people who say offensive things with Hitler and the Nazis is a form of Holocaust denialism, as it not only suggests that such people are the same as the Nazis, but that the Nazis were in fact the same as these people.



Regardless of what you may think of someone like Donald Trump, equating him to Hitler necessarily implies equating Hitler to Trump. I have had my own flabbergasting experience of this sort of rhetoric when a news anchor of a mainstream TV network in South Africa confronted me during a live interview, saying that to be a black person living in a township in South Africa today is just as bad – or perhaps worse – than being a Jew in a Nazi concentration camp. This is a glaring expression

of Holocaust denialism.

Second, continued superficial accusations of Nazism necessarily lead to a situation where the accusation loses its value. Accusing people of Nazism is the ideological equivalent of quantitative easing – of printing more money to grow the economy. And so, as with accusations of racism, the accusation loses its value. Imagine for a moment how much damage ought to be done for people to start wearing accusations of Nazism like a badge of honour. Yet, somehow, the idea doesn't sound that far-fetched anymore.

The way I see it, there is only one way forward. It implies fostering mutual recognition and respect, not just between individuals, but also between nations and communities, appreciating that having different opinions about contemporary politics is often the result of differing historical experiences. The way forward isn't to reduce humankind to the lowest common denominator, which necessarily implies the destruction of culture and tradition, but to recognise diversity as it ought to be recognised.



This brings me back to NP van Wyk Louw, who added, with reference to Evelyn Beatrice Hall, that the fundamental principle of liberalism is that we may differ from what others say, but should fight to the death for their right to say it, and the same principle should be applied to nations. Nations and communities may have different views on current affairs, but attempting to force them from the outside to change on the inside isn't just futile, but dangerous.

As to what the most important lessons of World War II are, I'm sad to say that this conversation is far from over.

• *Dr Ernst Roets is a South African attorney, author, and documentary film maker. He's the executive director of The Afrikaner Foundation, and head of policy at the Solidarity Movement. The foundation was established as part of the Solidarity Movement with the goal of encouraging international co-operation and support.*

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# Sense and security at matric Rage

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

As experts ease parental concerns around possible antisemitism at the upcoming Matric Rage Festivals in Ballito and Plettenberg Bay, the Jewish Community Security Organisation (CSO) has advised attendees to de-escalate any potential confrontation.

Holidaymakers in general are also being urged to make wise decisions.

"Hopefully nothing will happen, but I've never seen the world in the state that it's in," said Nicole Nathan, whose daughter will attend the Ballito Rage Festival which begins this weekend. Her main concern, she said, was how any potential antisemitism among students on Rage would be dealt with. "Those attending have only just finished school, and things happen on a rugby field with swearing and fights, for example, and I wasn't sure of the security situation at Rage."

Yet her concerns, shared by some matric parents, were largely put to rest by both the organisers of Rage and the CSO.

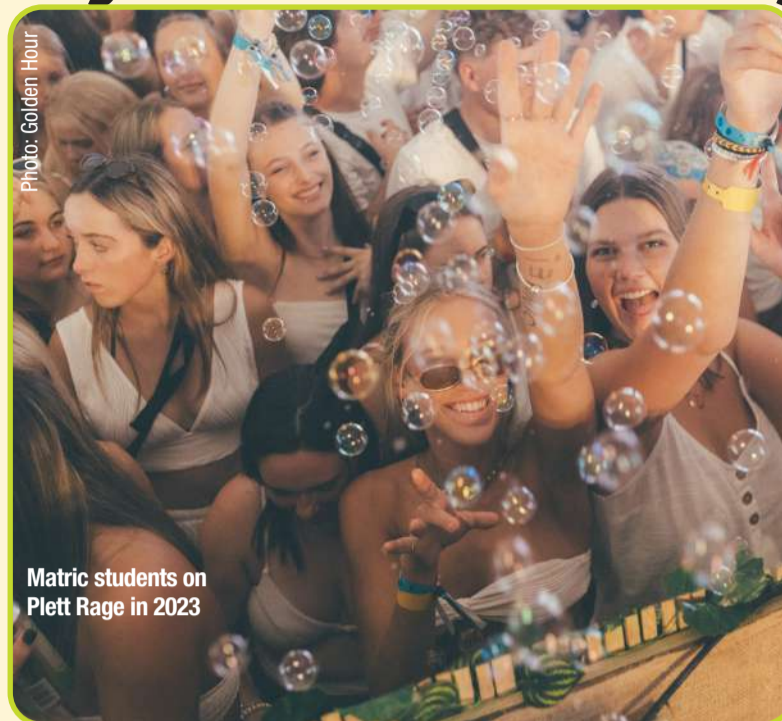
Replying to an enquiry from Nathan, Ballito Rage Festival organiser Brendan Keen stressed that festival organisers

understand the importance of creating a secure and inclusive environment.

"Our team works closely with professional security personnel and local authorities to ensure a high standard of security throughout the festival," Keen said. "The event is categorised by South African Police Service [SAPS] as a medium-risk event, which means that not only do we have security plans in place, but these plans have also been vetted, checked, and signed off by SAPS. Additionally, SAPS plays an integral role in our operations, with a dedicated team onsite, running our Venue Operations Centre to assist with any potential issues."

In terms of health and safety for attendees, there are medical tents on site, and Rage works with the Red Frogs, a volunteer support network for students. Among other offerings, the Red Frogs walk attendees home safely should they not use provided transport, help out in difficult situations, and provide counselling. Keen also expressed his willingness to connect with the CSO should the need arise.

Ahead of a CSO Rage briefing hosted on 27 November around the dos and don'ts of the festival, Steve Goldberg, the chairperson of the CSO, told the



Matric students on Plett Rage in 2023

*SA Jewish Report*, "The concern isn't only about Rage," he said, "it's about being Jewish in a post 7 October world. While for adults, it might be easier as they've thought about it before, for kids going on Rage, it might be one of their first experiences of adulthood, independence, and of not being in a purely Jewish environment."

Yet he stressed that Rage appeared to be well organised and managed. Asked for his main tips, Goldberg said attendees need to be sensible.

"If someone is being antisemitic towards you, you've got a choice to make: to take the high road or the low road. The high road would be to de-escalate it, report it to the relevant

authorities, and to make sure that you can continue to enjoy Rage with as few issues as possible. The low road is always violence, which we never encourage anyone to engage in, and we absolutely would discourage violence among kids on Rage."

The CSO isn't aware of any specific antisemitic threats over the holidays, he said, but it's always on alert. "Our CSO office in Durban is well aware of Rage, and there will be resources and experts on standby. I've got two of my own kids going on Rage, so whatever I'm cooking, I'm going to eat it too."

Goldberg reassured holidaymakers in general, saying that CSO protectors would travel throughout the country during the season. "We know exactly who's where, and we have a plan," he said. Though CSO Cape Town is independent from CSO Johannesburg, the branches work closely together.

Ronen Klugman, the director of Plett Rage, said that though antisemitism at the festival isn't a concern, he's prepared to deal with it should the need arise. "I'm a proud Jew, and my business partner is Jewish. At Rage, there's zero tolerance for any hate speech, including antisemitism. We don't really ever have these issues though. These kids all know each other, they all play sport together, and if incidents are to happen, they will occur on the sports field. If it happens, though, I'll address it, I promise you."

Highly trained security personnel familiar with managing the movement of big crowds will be overseeing the festival, with all events meeting mandated security regulations, Klugman said. Medics and ambulances are also on site, he said, stressing the need to wear sunscreen and drink enough water, common health concerns. The Red Frogs will also be around to provide security and emotional support. Though there's a full turnkey transport solution for attendees travelling to festival grounds, a group of local volunteers called the Shepherds also drive around at night in branded vehicles to fetch stragglers.

The festival employs internal and external security officers, Klugman said. "The outside safety officer pulls together law enforcement, police, disaster management, and all the private security companies, and they operate out of one command communication centre." The team gets daily security updates, and sees camera footage.

"The amazing thing about this event is they arrive as school kids, and they leave as students," Klugman said. "There's such a beautiful thing that takes place where you've got thousands of 18-year-olds all celebrating the exact same moment in their life together."

Brothers Jesse and Benno Leibowitz, who attended Plett Rage last year, just months after the 7 October massacre, said they didn't encounter any antisemitism. Most of the attendees were Afrikaans, they said, and their being Jewish didn't come up at all. "The only 'incident' was when we overheard an Afrikaans girl telling her friends about how Israel was completely right in the war," said Benno.

As for this year, Nathan said she felt a lot better after engaging with Rage organisers and the CSO. "I believe that if there's a threat, the CSO will hear about it and deal with it. The kids just need to be aware as well," she said.

## 'Less censorship is better – even on the internet'

LEE TANKLE

Franz Auerbach, the late Holocaust survivor and human rights activist, would have been lost in the morass of social media today, said veteran media specialist Professor Anton Harber, the executive director of the Campaign for the Freedom of Expression.

At the annual memorial lecture in tribute to Auerbach, the late educationist and liberal humanist, Harber said Auerbach would have struggled to be heard in today's social media discourse due to its pervasive nature and lack of regulations.

However, Harber believes that freedom of expression is nevertheless vitally important, "not just because we like to be free to say what we like".

"Nobody liked it more than Franz Auerbach, but it's important because it's the most fundamental part of our democracy and our economy. It's the right that gives the space and power to all our other rights," Harber told the 18th Franz Auerbach Memorial lecture at Beit Emanuel Shul on 21 November.

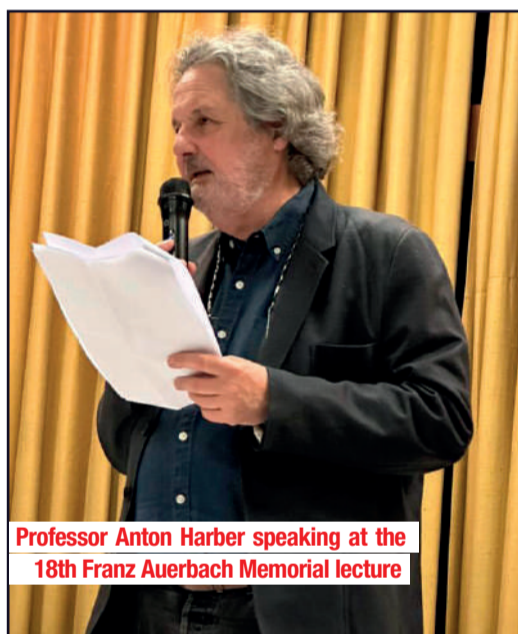
"The media today often forgets how important the free flow of information is to the effective running of our economy," said Harber. "The right to hold and express strong and divergent – even uncomfortable – views is the most powerful tool we have to tackle crucial issues of inequality."

Harber said that today, the main way we voice our opinions is through social media.

"Around the world, citizens have used the digital space to rise against authoritarian regimes and advocate for change in democracies. It has proved to be a most powerful weapon in the hands of those fighting tyranny and oppression, disposing of wrongdoing, and mobilising against it, whether it was during the Arab Spring; Black Lives Matter; MeToo campaign; the plight of the Uyghur in China; or Alexei Navalny's campaign against President Vladimir Putin. We have witnessed the use of social media in all four corners of the world.

"Social media shapes public debate, and mostly it's fragmented, abrupt, rude, consists largely of assertions, sideswipes, and shout-outs," said Harber, "not to speak of how it's unfiltered, riddled with disinformation, and often stoops to harassment and abuse."

Auerbach was a prolific letter-to-the-editor writer, and would often criticise the political policies of the day through his many writings,



Professor Anton Harber speaking at the 18th Franz Auerbach Memorial lecture

which used measured language. Today, however, Auerbach would fail to be heard among the noise of social media, Harber said. This is because social media favours provocative, aggressive, and conflictual material over careful argument and delicate wording.

"Outside of extreme cases, there are no clear lines between information, mistaken information, and disinformation, nor between abuse, offensiveness, and hate speech," said Harber.

But Harber advocates for less censorship on any programme. Such measures, if done carelessly, can do more harm than good, he said, and it usually comes down to two issues – discrimination and hate speech.

In several African countries, the new laws against online disinformation are used primarily against journalists, Harber said, because you can label what they do as disinformation quite easily. Similarly, something might be offensive, but it quickly gets labelled as hate speech.

"What we must target is speech that presents clear and present danger, and leave the rest alone. If we are to prevent a negative impact on free speech and protected speech, then we need to target only that."

Said Harber, "Social media has opened up our discourse, but it hasn't democratised it as was originally hoped. We learned over time that the internet was brilliantly constructed to make it hard for governments to control. It's not impossible, as the Chinese have shown us, but extremely difficult."

What emerged, though, were a few dominant platforms under the control of a small set of billionaires with absolute control over the algorithms that determine what information we receive and consume.

Said Harber, "We thought that the internet would bring a world with fewer gatekeepers, and it is a world with fewer gatekeepers, but we didn't realise just how few and how powerful they would be."

He said the value of open information and discussion, of free speech, outweighed its abuse. This could only be achieved by establishing a system whereby the platforms where the content is held – such as newspapers or news stations – are held to account.

The internet, however, is a completely different beast as there is no universal standard among the many social media platforms.

"Never has there been an institution that can exert such control over what is being said, read, and shared around the world," Harber said.

He explained that through each social media platform's algorithms, the owners of those platforms can show us what we want to see and can do so because of the personal information they store, pointing out that Facebook probably knows more about ourselves than we do.

Panic about the dangers of social media isn't unfounded, Harber said. "Every new media technology has brought panic, an elite panic, a fear that it will spread dangerous disinformation, undermine the status quo, and be controlled from above."

The radio once posed a danger to the parents of teenagers in 1936. Newspapers wrote in 1984 about the dangers of a landline telephone. Television was often compared to a narcotic, as were at different times novels, comic books, computer games, and videos.

"But with the internet, the panic is particularly acute," said Harber, "because disinformation and hate speech spread so fast, so wide, so perniciously in this new medium."

"The panic follows a regular pattern," he said, "First, there is unbridled hope in a new technology, then a period of disillusionment and abuse, which often leads to attempts to control and over-control, even suppress, and then over time, society learns how to manage these technologies. They are, after all, just tools that can be used for good or bad, and almost always are used for both."

# SA film association calls for Israel 'blackout'

TALI FEINBERG

The Documentary Filmmakers Association (DFA) of South Africa is calling for all media film and cultural institutions to cut all ties with Israel. This organisation, ostensibly there to assist, protect, and promote filmmakers, has called for a "cultural, diplomatic, and economic" boycott.

The DFA put out a press statement on 18 November stating that "documentary filmmakers have a duty to bear witness and cannot ignore the suffering displayed on screens around the world", ignoring the fact that Israeli filmmakers could be telling stories that do just that.

Even if Israeli documentary filmmakers criticise their government, highlight the plight of Palestinians, document the horrors of 7 October, or record testimonies of hostages, the DFA wants them boycotted.

The director of the Free Speech Union of South Africa, Sara Gon, says, "The DFA's statement is troubling because it appears to negate its very purpose. As it appears to service the interests of an industry, it seems that its support is confined to a narrative that is largely false and defamatory. While documentaries invariably have a certain slant, the DFA's failure to at least research the other side of the conflict and weigh up the respective evidence is lamentable."

Though the DFA's statement acknowledges that "more than 1 700 Israelis, including more than 900 civilians, have lost their lives [since 7 October 2023]", it demands that these stories be silenced by the cutting of ties. The statement calls for the "protection of storytellers", but makes it clear that this doesn't include Israeli storytellers.

The organisation said it stood in solidarity with the call for "an immediate ceasefire, and the release of all hostages and prisoners". It also expressed support for South Africa's "genocide" case at the International

Court of Justice, and said Israel's "violations of international law bear similarities to, or exceed, the racial segregation of apartheid".

It maintained that it was guided by its responsibility to "support oppressed and marginalised people across Africa and beyond."

"As part of a global community of media



professionals, we understand that any attack on journalists reverberates across our industry," the statement read, oblivious to the fact that the DFA's call for a boycott is an attack on Israeli journalists.

The statement notes that the "systematic shutdown of media outlets, restrictions on independent access to conflict zones, and violence against our colleagues set a dangerous precedent for media workers everywhere". Yet, somehow, the organisation neglects to see that by boycotting Israeli documentary filmmakers, it's doing the same to them.

"Together, we must protect freedom of expression [and] foster critical dialogue," continues the statement, while at the same time calling for the curtailment of freedom of expression of Israeli creatives who could foster critical dialogue.

The DFA describes Israel's self-defensive war against Hamas as "war crimes, genocidal actions, ongoing atrocities [and] a humanitarian crisis", and Israel's existence as "Israeli apartheid and colonial occupation".

It demands urgent "international intervention to protect journalists and filmmakers", specifically regarding the "risks faced by Palestinian and pro-Palestinian voices".

Says Gon, "There has been a plethora of information about the war from the Israeli side, refuting much of what the DFA relies on in its statement."

"How would the DFA square the evidence it relies upon with the many documentaries featuring victims of the 7 October atrocities?" she asks.

"Have they watched any of them? If so, do they dismiss the veracity of

that evidence? If so, on what basis?

"It appears that by virtue of referring to themselves as 'progressive', it means that the organisation wouldn't be a resource for documentary makers whose stance differs to its singular and uncritical view of one side while having no regard whatsoever for the other," she says. "If this is the case, then it cannot pretend to represent the interests of documentary filmmakers as an industry. Surely, the search for truth requires being openminded about views across the spectrum? If not, then it serves no purpose."

Analyst Adam Charnas says, "This statement is yet another example of political grandstanding by organisations seeking to gain relevance by attaching

to a 'cause célèbre'. While we all mourn every loss of life in this horrific conflict, meaningless gestures such as these do absolutely nothing to ease the suffering of the people of Gaza. It's laughable that an organisation that represents journalistic integrity would do so little to balance a statement that doesn't mention the violence and rape perpetrated on 7 October."

South African Zionist Federation spokesperson Rolene Marks says the world needs to bear witness to the atrocities committed on 7 October, and Israeli documentary films are one way to do this. "It's a great pity that scenes of terrified Israelis running for their lives from the Nova festival as nearly 400 were slaughtered, kidnapped, and raped aren't shown to the wider public," she says.

"Then there's the footage of the 7 October massacre, which Hamas gleefully filmed in real time as it provoked a war with Israel," says Marks. "In the interest of balance and not sowing hate and division, we appeal to the DFA that such documented scenes aren't boycotted, but shared with a public that needs to know."

Professor Anton Harber, the director of nongovernmental organisation the Campaign for Freedom of Expression, says, "Anyone is entitled to call for boycotts, especially given Israel's growing clampdown on free speech and the death of dozens of journalists. However, we should be speaking out against all attacks on all citizens, and all those who restrict media."

"I'm concerned about a blanket call against all Israelis, including those who are critical of the Netanyahu government," says Harber. "We learnt in apartheid South Africa that what's most effective is targeted, select boycotts that offer encouragement to those who are calling for peace and a political solution."

The SA Jewish Report reached out to the DFA for comment, but didn't receive a response by the time of going to print.

## Lebanon ceasefire deal 'new phase in multifront war'

>>>Continued from page 2

Biden in his remarks said the Lebanese army would assume control of areas Israel had cleared of Hezbollah. "Over the next 60 days, the Lebanese army and state security forces will deploy and take control of their own territory," he said. "Once again, Hezbollah terrorist infrastructure in southern Lebanon will not be allowed to be rebuilt. And over the next 60 days, Israel will gradually withdraw its remaining forces and civilians."

Hezbollah's position isn't known, but Lebanon's government probably wouldn't have given the deal the nod without the assent of the terrorist group or its backers in Iran.

One new wrinkle is that the US would play a role assessing violations, Biden said, but this wouldn't involve the stationing of US troops in Lebanon.

In his own address, Netanyahu began by listing what he said were Israeli successes in what he described as a seven-front war, in which Israel is fighting in Gaza, Lebanon, and the West Bank as well as directly with Iran and its proxies. Among the achievements he claimed were the decimation of Hezbollah's forces and the elimination of much of its leadership. He vowed that the tens of thousands of Israelis evacuated from the Lebanon border would be able to return to their homes.

Then he listed the three reasons for agreeing to the ceasefire in Lebanon.

"The first reason is to focus on the Iranian threat, and I will not expand on that," he said. Then he implied that Trump's return to office could change the outlook for Israel's military.

"The second reason is to give our forces a breather and replenish stocks," Netanyahu said. "And I say it openly, it's no secret that there have been big delays in weapons and munitions deliveries. These delays will be resolved soon. We will receive supplies of advanced weaponry that will keep our soldiers safe and give us more strike force to complete our mission."

Netanyahu in June said the US government was slow-rolling weapons deliveries. Biden administration officials have adamantly denied any delay, beyond one on 2 000-pound bombs President Joe Biden didn't

want to deliver for the war in Gaza, because he said they were inappropriate for use in areas where civilians were concentrated.

"There was no policy to delay weapons to Israel for either Lebanon or Gaza operations, save the one shipment of 2 000-pound bombs," a senior administration official told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "The US government was methodical in ensuring that the provision of US weapons wasn't used in violation of our law or our policies. That takes time."

Biden in his remarks squarely blamed Hezbollah for the conflict, and noted the assistance his administration had given to Israel.

"Let's be clear, Israel didn't launch this war," he said. "The Lebanese people didn't seek that war either. Nor did the United States. Over the past year, including the days immediately following 7 October, I directed the US military to flow assets and capabilities into the region, including aircraft carriers, fighter squadrons, a sophisticated air defence battery to defend Israel and deter a common enemy."

The Biden administration has sent reinforcements to the area whenever Iran has threatened retaliation in what has been an escalating series of attacks and counterattacks. The latest round came on 26 October, when Israel, heeding Biden, limited retaliatory strikes to military targets and avoided hitting oil extraction and nuclear sites. Trump, campaigning at the time for the presidency, said Biden should have greenlighted attacks on nuclear sites, though he didn't say he would assist Israel in carrying out such attacks.

Netanyahu's third reason, similar to what Blinken said, was to isolate Hamas. "With Hezbollah out of the picture, Hamas is left on its own," he said. "We will increase our pressure on Hamas, and that will help us in our sacred mission of releasing our hostages."

Netanyahu didn't say what the ceasefire would compromise, except to claim that it wouldn't stop Israel from re-entering Lebanon should Hezbollah violate its terms, and that would include not just the movement of forces across the Litani River, but simply the act of rearming.

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## SA psychiatrist awarded for extraordinary contribution in Israel

LEE TANKLE

Professor Rael Strous received a special award from Israel's ministry of immigration and absorption on 10 November for his extraordinary contribution as an *oleh* in the field of medicine. He's one of the first South Africans to be honoured with this award.

His contribution is in the field of psychiatry.

Every year, the Ministry of Aliya and Absorption selects four or five *olim* who have made a special contribution as an *oleh* in the past few years to the country and the people of Israel. They are awarded in five different areas: medicine, science, sport, community, and culture.

Strous is head of the psychiatric department at Maayeni Hayeshua Medical Center in Bnei Brak. He is also a professor of psychiatry

at the faculty of medicine at Tel Aviv University, and is the head of the psychiatry study programme at the faculty of medicine at Ariel University.

Strous was notified of his award two days before the "Iron Swords" war began in 2023. His award was then extended to include 2024, and the ceremony postponed until 10 November this year when he was given the award by Israel's President Isaac Herzog and Aliyah and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer.

Strous said Herzog told him how much he admired the South African Jewish community. "South Africans don't usually win these kinds of awards. It's always Americans, Russians, or Europeans. The minister told me that he thought it was the first time that an *oleh* from South Africa had won this award. I was proud because we're a relatively small community of South African *olim*."

Strous told the *SA Jewish Report* that though being recognised by the Israeli government was a massive personal achievement, he felt a bit embarrassed as he doesn't like the limelight. Rather, he said, he prefers to view this award as giving much-needed recognition to the field of psychiatry and advocacy of mental health care.

"I received the award not necessarily for me, but for the importance of investing in the mentally ill," he said, "and as an *oleh hadash* [recent immigrant], if I can do that and make a difference, it's very meaningful.

"Especially now with the war, everyone is seeing how important mental health is for the country," said Strous, "Everyone is suffering on so many different levels, and mental health isn't less important than anything else. The pain of mental illness is no less than other things, and it should be recognised as nothing to be ashamed of and people should get help and treatment when needed."

Strous said mental illness should have the same treatment as any physical illness in terms of the professionalism of the doctors and the conditions of treatment.

"Where medical hospitals look like hotels in Israel, the psychiatric hospitals don't," Strous said. "The mentally ill deserve to be treated in better conditions."

He said the award gave him hope that Israeli society was recognising an area of medicine often forgotten.

"It contributes towards decreasing the stigma of mental illness when they aren't shying away from recognising the area of mental health as an area of importance to give an award," he said.

Strous said that from the age of seven growing up in Durban, he knew that he wanted to live in Israel and contribute to it. He made aliya in 1998 to Beit Shemesh after completing medical school at the University of the Witwatersrand and specialising in the field of psychiatry in the United States at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Harvard.

He recalled being a boy of 10 when he met former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who was visiting South Africa. Strous said he told him he wanted to move to a kibbutz in Israel and help drain the swamps. Peres urged him rather to get a profession so that he could make aliya and contribute to Israel the best way he could.

"Meeting Peres was a big motivator along my professional career to come to Israel and contribute and do the best I could in my little area of psychiatry," said Strous. "You can judge the greatness of a society and a country by how well they look after the weak, and the weak in medicine in Israel and all around the world are the mentally ill, so I found it something important to invest in."



Professor Rael Strous and Israeli President Isaac Herzog

## Early childhood centre named after Lily Goldblatt

LEE TANKLE

Lily Goldblatt may be 91 years old, but this humanitarian hasn't let up in helping those less fortunate. On Thursday, 28 November, Goldblatt, whose late husband was acclaimed photographer David Goldblatt, will be recognised by having an early childhood development (ECD) centre in Soweto named in her honour.

Sibongile Mkwanzani, the founder of ECD centre Nanga Vhutshilo, will rename the new centre after Goldblatt at a ceremony.

"We have built this organisation together and kept it going for so long, and many people in various levels have kept it going in the face of immense difficulty. So, to be honoured in such a way is remarkable," Goldblatt told the *SA Jewish Report*.

Mkwanzani said she felt it important to honour Goldblatt in such a way while she was still alive to allow her to feel the appreciation the organisation has for the work she has put in all these years. "I want her to witness the appreciation that the Nanga Vhutshilo beneficiaries and their families have," she said, "and to show her that we love and honour her for the hero she is to us."

Goldblatt said she was honoured to have the centre named after her, not out of vanity but to serve as a testament to the amazing impact she and Mkwanzani have made through their friendship of nearly 25 years.

Brenda Goldblatt, Lily's daughter, said it meant so much to their family because it acknowledges the dedication her mother has to others. "It's nice that someone is acknowledged, and that Sibongile wants to honour their relationship in this way. It says something about their history together and the journey they've travelled," she said.

Mkwanzani and Goldblatt met through Parents



Lily Goldblatt

Nanga Vhutshilo ECD centre

for Aids Actions in 2000, and immediately hit it off, realising that the work they could do together could last the test of time.

Goldblatt was always involved in child palliative care, so when Mkwanzani approached her about 20 years ago about Nanga Vhutshilo and asked if she could assist, she jumped at the chance.

Said Mkwanzani, "From the start, Lily was on board and helped in every way she could. Lily would collect bread from Spar in town and deliver it to Nanga Vhutshilo daily. She also started buying food for our orphans and vulnerable children."

Goldblatt was at Mkwanzani's side throughout the life of Nanga Vhutshilo, and has done many different tasks over the years. She was a member of the centre's board, and served as an ear to anything Mkwanzani had to say and tried to help in any way, whether it be by running around Johannesburg getting food to feed the children, or just making sure that whatever needed to be paid was paid.

Nanga Vhutshilo offers a high-quality ECD curriculum and accompanying programmes in one of Soweto's most vulnerable communities of Moroka. At the centre, children receive language

exposure, well-designed cognitive education, and stimulating human interaction, all of which are essential to ensure that a child develops all the necessary skills for life.

Said Goldblatt, "Very often, the government subsidy just stops, and then there's no money for food and they can't feed their people, and we're trying to see her over a patch, and I help in any way I can."

There are many different centres like Nanga Vhutshilo, but what sets it apart, according to Goldblatt and her daughter, is that it flourishes because of the work of Mkwanzani.

Said Brenda, "Community organisations like this are vital to the health of communities. Sibongile is particularly gifted in working with vulnerable families and with young people."

Goldblatt hopes that the ECD centre continues to grow from strength to strength in the years to come as "life is hard for nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). The government has reneged on a lot of its promises to support registered NGOs. Just surviving would be wonderful."

## SA Christians' emergency vehicle donation a rapid response

LEE TANKLE

When an anonymous donor approached the South African branch of Bridges for Peace, a Christian organisation, to see how he could help Israelis during this tumultuous time, the organisation had no idea that he would be donating two emergency vehicles to Magen David Adom on 24 October.

Chris Eden, South African Bridges for Peace national director said, "There's a lot of distress among South African Christians, as there is among the Jewish community, at the treatment that Israel is getting in South Africa, especially around the accusation of genocide at the International Court of Justice. We just felt that we wanted to do something as a South African office to show something tangible in support of Israel with a message on it."

Bridges for Peace is an international Christian organisation based in Jerusalem active for more than 50 years. Its two main functions are working in the church to help its followers understand how to relate to Israel; and to inform the church of happenings in Israel and around the globe.

For the South African branch, the organisation helps educate priests about the geopolitics of Israel and the Middle East.

Since Hamas attacked Israel on 7 October 2023, the organisation has sprung to action to help those affected. Said Eden, "Projects started two days after the attack. We were taking food and other supplies down into the area, and those sorts of activities have changed as the needs have changed on the ground."

So, when a single, anonymous donor approached the organisation looking to donate something, the organisation thought of donating a medicycle – a motorbike or bicycle used for emergency calls – to Magen David Adom. However, after Magen David Adom let the donor know that there was no need for a medicycle, but it would need a vehicle, which it calls a rapid response car, costing twice that of a medicycle, the group sprang to action. It eventually donated two vehicles to the emergency service.

The vehicles are already being used, with one up north in Kiryat Shmona, while the second will be based in Modi'in. They ensure that emergency medical technicians can reach victims quickly and efficiently.

From the minute Bridges for Peace put out word that it was planning to

donate vehicles to Magen David Adom, the response was overwhelming. "The money flooded in," said Eden, "People were looking for a way to express their support for Israel and address the perception created in Israel that the whole of South Africa stood against Israel, which isn't true. It's the government and the African National Congress that is, certainly within the South African context, firmly against Israel. There's a large body of support for Israel in South Africa."

Eden felt it was important to make this donation to Magen David Adom because, "Magen David Adom is an organisation that deals with healing, and we realised that one of the greatest needs in Israel is healing for what the country has gone through. This is our way to contribute towards it."

The day before handing over the vehicles on 24 October, the South African Christian group involved went to the Gaza envelope with Magen David Adom and saw the devastation Hamas caused that day.

Said Eden, "We saw the pain, the suffering, the devastation, and there's a resurrection that will be happening in Israel as people find their feet again, and communities get rebuilt. Central to that is medical needs, but also a message of healing and love."

Eden said he got emotional when seeing the vehicle with the South African flag proudly displayed because he felt pride for the South African Christian community.

Anne Ayalon, the president of Christian Friends of Magen David Adom, said, "We know that in South Africa, the government is quite anti-Israel. We see this in the news every day. It makes it even more significant that you Christians are standing with us and giving a strong voice of support for Israel. When Israelis see that there is Christian support for Israel, it's a surprise and a delight to us. It lifts us."

"It's been a gratifying project, and a message to the South African Jewish community that we value it," Eden said. "We also know that for South African Jewry, the attitude of the government is hard to stomach and discouraging, and this is also a way of getting the message to our South African community that we care about them and we care about Israel."



The ambulances donated to Magen David Adom by South African Bridges for Peace through an anonymous donor

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# Documenting a massacre: photojournalist's book speaks volumes

Photojournalist **Ilan Ossendryver** is launching his book, *Israel After 7th Oct* this week. The *SA Jewish Report* speaks to him.

## What inspired you to create this book?

I wanted to create awareness about what happened on 7 October. There are so many people who are denying what happened on that day in Israel and are blaming the attacks on Israelis and Jews rather than on Hamas and/or the Palestinians of Gaza. This book is a testimony to what I saw, the brutality of what Hamas carried out on the kibbutzim and many other little towns in the south of Israel on 7 October. I document through photographs the horror of what happened to the Israelis who were murdered, taken hostage into Gaza, and brutalised by Hamas.

## Why is it important to document this period of time?

It's essential so that future generations know what happened on 7 October, and to ensure that it doesn't happen again. I also made an effort to capture the artwork in and around the streets of Israel that illustrated the feelings and shock of Israeli artists. As with all street art that I have photographed in Tel Aviv and around the country, it's unlikely to last long as it will be removed. Much like documenting the artwork, it's vital to capture what houses on the kibbutzim looked like after the Hamas attacks because eventually they, too, will be fixed, rebuilt, or demolished to make room for a better future in the south.

## Why was it so important for you to document what happened on 7 October 2023?

As a Jew, as an Israeli, as a South African, and as a photojournalist, it was important for me to document it. It was important to be there to show support for Israel as many weren't going to the country at the time. It was emotional for me to arrive in Israel shortly after 7 October, and people were happy that I went to Israel then. I knew even then that it was an important mission to document the atrocities of Hamas.

## How long did the process take and, living in South Africa, how did you find yourself in Israel at the time?

I arrived in Israel a few weeks after 7 October, and began documenting the atrocities. I've been back to Israel four times since then to carry on documenting life in Israel after 7 October. Many of the images I took which are in my new book show Israel and society after 7 October.

## How did you choose the photographs?

This was quite a lengthy process. I sifted through thousands of photographs, and I've put them into categories, for example, kibbutzim, the Nova festival, the car graveyard, street art images of text, of textures, and faces. I then narrowed it down to the pictures I felt were necessary to show the feelings and emotions of the day. I took care not to use explicit images, but those powerful enough to represent the brutality of the day.



photos: Ilan Ossendryver



## Which photographs are the most meaningful to you and why?

It's hard to decide which image is the most meaningful to me. There were so many. But if I had to choose, it would probably be the

window of a sealed room smashed through by rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons. It shows the will of Hamas to carry out its Jew hatred in an extremely violent onslaught.

## How would you describe your relationship with Israel?

I have a deep love for Israel, and I love the people who make up an amazing democracy. Most people who speak out against Israel have no idea about the country.

## When you were photographing people in the aftermath of the massacre, what was their reaction? Did it change as time went on?

People's reactions haven't changed much towards me or other photographers. Family members who still have loved ones in captivity know the immense role we journalists and photojournalists have to play in order to get the world to hear about the situation. They want to show the world their story. They know it's important in a world so lopsided and out of touch with the reality of what's happening in Israel.

## How has this past year been for you and why?

It has been a nightmare of a year. Lots of sleepless nights, lots of worry, lots of praying, and lots of crying.

## You have documented important times in Israel and South Africa. Which have been the most important and poignant?

The most outstanding event in South Africa was when I was with



Nelson Mandela in Soweto on his first day of freedom after 27 years of incarceration. I took the first family photo of Madiba outside of prison.

## What has the reaction been like to your book so far?

It has been described as an important book for the Jewish world. It has been so well received, we're going into the second run of printing.

## Who is the audience you visualised, and what do you want them to take home from it?

This book isn't just for Jews, but for everyone in the world who needs to see what happened on that day and ensure that it never happens again. It's a book for all people who live on our planet.

• The book is available from [www.october7thimages.com](http://www.october7thimages.com); *Kollel Bookshop*; and on Amazon.

# Jewish boxers take opponents down in Booyens

SAUL KAMIONSKY

It was a great night for Jewish boxing on 23 November, when 20-year-olds Joshua Feldman and Doron Zinman both won their much-anticipated fights at the Box Camp in Booyens, Johannesburg.

Feldman quickly beat 32-year-old Brian Shakoane by knocking him out in the first round, while Zinman won against his fellow 20-year-old professional boxing debutant, Masibulele "The Hurricane" Mjoli, by scoring a knockdown to win by unanimous decision.

Junior-middleweight Feldman, nicknamed "The Maccabee", says, "I felt great. I had an amazing camp, and I felt ready to go in the changing room. I'm happy with my performance. I felt a lot more relaxed and calm in the ring. I'm excited to get back and do it again."

Featherweight Zinman, nicknamed "Buzzsaw", says his fight went well, but he thinks he could have done better. "It wasn't that I wasn't confident or anything, the fight was just very

different. I tensed up a little bit too much. That's what caused me to use up a lot more energy than I should have. I could have been more composed and picked my shots a lot better. But it was a really great fight against a solid opponent. I'm happy that I won."

Zinman, who fought wearing shorts sporting a Magen David, had an inkling that he had won before the result was announced. "But only once they announced the winner did the feeling become real. It's surreal because now I'm a professional fighter, and I'm living my dream, so I'm really happy about that."

Feldman and Zinman are taking a small break, hiking in the Drakensberg. Both expect their next fights to be early next year. "I'm going to be watching my boxing fight over



Photos: Howard Sackstein

Doron Zinman fighting Masibulele Mjoli



Joshua Feldman up against Brian Shakoane

and over again so that I can pinpoint all the mistakes and see what I need to work on," Zinman says.

According to *The Jewish Boxing Blog*, the southpaw Feldman made Shakoane backpedal to the ropes, and he delivered several clean blows before the referee intervened a minute and 23 seconds into the opening round.

After winning what was his fifth win from as many professional boxing fights, Feldman confidently declared, "Whoever they put in front of me, I'll take out."

Zinman recorded wins against the taller Mjoli in all three rounds on the judges' scores.

He displayed "an exciting attacking style as he lived up to his 'Buzzsaw' moniker to score an entertaining four-round points win," noted *TimesLive*.

After the fight, Zinman enthused, "This is the beginning of the rest of my life. I'm so grateful."

Colin Nathan, the head trainer of Zinman and Feldman, also celebrated a technical knockout win by another of his fighters, Ishmael Kadri.

# Jag rebranding leaves customers in the dust

**INNER VOICE**  
Howard Feldman



It was yellow. And it cost R11 000. It came after the Valiant Regal, with a missing "g" on the left, which meant it read "Re-al". My parents claimed that the reason that it was never repaired was because it would provide a foolproof way to identify the car if it were to be stolen. Which it was. It was also never recovered, which taught me at a young age that smart planning doesn't always ensure outcome.

Yellow was an unusual colour for a Jaguar. Matched with suspiciously brown seats, it might not have been the most stylish car of the 70s, but for us, that hardly mattered. Because it wasn't about the details but more about the brand.

For as long as I can remember, my late grandfather drove a Jaguar. He had come to South Africa before the war as he fled an already smouldering Germany. He arrived penniless, alone, and unable to speak the language. Soon after arriving, he met my grandmother, she, too, a German refugee, got married, and they forged a life together.

His financial success wasn't purely about money but about belonging, recognition that they had endured, and about security. His home, lined wall to wall with Persian carpets, his ability to buy Chivas Regal on the weekend, and his Jag were his reminders that he no longer was the scared teenager who boarded a vessel in Marseilles headed for anywhere that wasn't Europe.

Many of these factors were true of their son-in-law, my father, who grew up in poverty. He worked hard, funded his own education, and slowly built a life that could provide security for his family. He remained one of the least materialistic people I have ever known, aside from his love for cars. A love that began with a yellow Jag with brown leather seats.

There were a series of strange coloured Jags that followed. Some of them designed to look as much like the one before so that people wouldn't notice. Proving that for my father, it was about proving every day as

he opened the door to his car, that he was safe, that his family were being looked after, and that he was no longer that shoeless little boy who arrived from Pilgrim's Rest with only himself to rely on.

The rebranding of Jaguar to look like a product available on Temu has had a massive and negative response. So much so that Managing Director Rawdon Glover has had to defend the relaunch, saying he was disappointed by the "level of vile hatred and intolerance" shown in social media towards the models in the video.

By accusing his customers of "intolerance", Glover proves the very point he tries to deny. After all, whereas tolerance, inclusion, and acceptance might be aspirational, to demand that response to an advertising campaign indicates that Jag has forgotten that it doesn't exist but for those who choose to align with its brand.

Jaguar will hardly be the first or the last company to make this error. Kodak famously invented the digital camera, conducted research that indicated that it had 10 years to transition, but chose to focus on paper and chemicals, and forgot that the reason it existed was to provide a mechanism to store memories.

It's tempting to roll our eyes at these obvious errors. But before we do so, it's worth considering if there are areas in our own lives where we might have forgotten about the customer. That we might have turned inward to such an extent that we have lost the essence of the brand.

The failure of the Jag rebrand should serve as a crucial lesson. It reminds us to connect with the lonely immigrant and scared young man who once stood barefoot. It's a call to reaffirm the reason for our existence, and a reminder that there's way more to a car than yellow paint and brown leather seats.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Murdered rabbi's legacy of light and leadership

**ABOVE BOARD**  
Karen Milner



Over the weekend, we were shocked to learn of the horrific murder of the Chabad emissary in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Rabbi Zvi Kogan. Chabad emissaries are universally admired for their tireless work in spreading kindness, Jewish values, and community support. Rabbi Kogan's dedication to fostering Jewish life in the UAE exemplified these ideals. His senseless murder is a stark reminder of the ongoing threat posed by antisemitism and terrorism worldwide.

We were heartened to witness UAE Ambassador in Pretoria, His Excellency Mahash Saeed Alhameli, send a letter and pay a visit to Rabbi David Masinter, the representative of Chabad in South Africa. In the letter, the ambassador commits his country to continuing to "promote kindness and goodness, as is the true way to honour the memory of Rabbi Kogan".

We call on authorities to act decisively in combating these dangers and to ensure the safety of Chabad emissaries and Jewish communities globally. While this tragedy is heartbreaking, Rabbi Kogan's legacy of light and leadership will continue to inspire us.

Over the past weeks, the Board has been involved in a number of interfaith initiatives, reminding us that even in challenging times, alliances can flourish. The past year has tested our resilience as a community, with moments of profound isolation. As the slogan on so many minibus taxis states, "When times are tough, friends are few." Indeed, we have seen longstanding relationships falter when we most needed solidarity.

That said, recent months have brought a heartening shift. We have begun the process of rebuilding and strengthening interfaith bonds, which are the cornerstone of tolerance in a democracy. Notably, our relationship with the Hindu community has grown significantly. Multiple meetings with its religious and cultural leaders have solidified this alliance, and

we're proud to count them as steadfast partners. This renewed friendship paves the way for collaborative interfaith events next year aimed at showcasing our shared values and unity.

Last week, the Board participated in a multifaceted conference hosted by the Institute for Global Engagement, headed by United States Pastor Bob Roberts Jr alongside the South African Community of Faith-Based Fraternal, under the guidance of South African Pastor Bert Pretorius of the 3C Church. The conference brought together a number of high-ranking political and faith leaders, and has led to our re-engagement with important faith-based groups in the country.

Lastly, as the City of Johannesburg municipality prepares to decide on the proposed renaming of Sandton Drive, we stand firm in our opposition to this proposal. The South African Zionist Federation has highlighted the powerful testimony of Juan Antonio Larroy Rodriguez, a survivor of the 1972 Lod Airport Massacre masterminded by Leila Khaled and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In an emotional letter, Rodriguez recounts witnessing the murder of his girlfriend, Carmen, and 16 other Christian pilgrims during the attack.

The letter serves as a reminder of who Leila Khaled really is, and why it would be so abhorrent to name a street in Johannesburg after a woman who epitomises terror. We hope the City of Johannesburg pays attention to the countless submissions made by concerned city residents, businesses in the street, and other key stakeholders in rejecting this offensive proposal.

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

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

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1939 = R10 000 Up to R30 000

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1923 to 1964 = R5  
1931 = R10 000 Up to R50 000

### JWBS book sale for December readers

The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society (JWBS) held its last R30 book sale for 2024 on Sunday, 24 November, to the delight of book lovers, who came to stock up for the December holidays. "Every purchase helps to fund tertiary education grants for young adults in our community, opening doors to opportunities that might otherwise have been out of reach," say the organisers.



The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society's R30 book sale at Genesis Shopping Centre

### School reunion at Saxonwold



Dr Jonathan Moch and Carole Bome in their old classroom at Saxonwold Primary School

Psychiatrist Dr Jonathan Moch and his Grade 5 (Standard 3) teacher from Saxonwold Primary School, Carole Bome (née Benatar), took a tour down memory lane by visiting their old school and classroom at Saxonwold Primary School on 19 November.

Bome taught Moch in 1968, and had not seen her former student in more than 50 years. Moch said that his former teacher left a lasting impact on him. "To teach a child is to touch a soul forever," Bome said.

## Not sacrificing art in battle

An exhibition of David Schmidt's artwork portraying the self-sacrifice of Israeli soldiers was held on Sunday afternoon at a home in Illovo, Johannesburg. Made up of large-scale digital prints that include collages of torn photographs, Schmidt's *Mesirus Nefesh* (Self-Sacrifice) collection is hard hitting and highly emotive.

Schmidt's own appearance as a white-haired, long-bearded, devout man is incongruous with this work, reminiscent of Vivienne Westwood's punk style. However, much like punk-era work, which is typically about being non-conformist and anti-establishment, Schmidt's work stands out as a critique of what our young men and women have to endure.

Schmidt, who lives in and has a gallery in Jerusalem, spoke to those in attendance via Zoom.



Geff Geffroy at the David Schmidt exhibition

### Young Ambassadors quiz gives food for thought

YA Young Ambassadors, a division of Jewish food fund Yad Aharon & Michael, hosted a lively event to "Quiz up & Give back" on Sunday, 24 November. Around 280 young Jewish professionals got together for an evening of community spirit, energy, fun, and giving back to a worthy cause.



The winning team at the YA Young Ambassadors quiz night

### Gqeberha Jewish organisations join forces for upliftment

The Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha) branches of the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) and Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) met on 19 November to discuss upliftment projects and supporting one another.

"Although we are small in number, we keep our flag flying," said Elaine Racussen



Members of the UJW and WIZO in Gqeberha

of the UJW. "Our branch has projects in the townships alleviating hardships where

and when we can." UJW projects include supplying soup kitchens in poorer areas; forming a knitting group which creates baby goods for newborns; and supporting organisations

that help the homeless. Other projects include supplying books for libraries that come from Australia; and giving sanitary towels to more than 900 high school girls. WIZO has been selling second hand clothes and goods to raise funds, and works to keep the love for and connection to Israel alive in the region.

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