

An Open Air Music Festival and Understanding the Nature of Hamas

I am a member of my community's Settlement Emergency Crew, Tzevet Herum Yishuvi or Tzachi for short. During war times my job is to translate security and safety instructions into English so that English speakers in our area will have no trouble understanding what is going on. Sunday morning I had to send out a death notice for a young man of 25, Dudi Turgeman, the grandson of a founding member, who had grown up on our moshav. He had attended an open air music festival in the fields near Kibbutz Reim. At about 6:30 AM rockets were fired at the area of the festival and most people took cover and then the gun fire started. Many people rushed to their cars and drove out heading north only to be ambushed along the highway by Hamas terrorists. Others fled across open ground, some being shot down and others sprinting to safety in nearby settlements. So far it is estimated that about 250 people were murdered. Dudi and his friends went south because that is where our community is located. They almost made it home but were ambushed by some Hamas terrorists who had been repelled by Moshav Mivtahim's civil defense unit. The terrorists murdered Dudi and his friends as they passed the entrance to Moshav Mivtahim about five minutes away from home and safety.

Today, Wednesday, the estimated dead in the Hamas assault on our area and elsewhere is about about 900 and the dead are still being counted. My moshav had just one killed, Dudi. Our neighboring community, Moshav Mivtahim, had four killed when fighting off the terrorist attack. Moshav Yesha, the next in line, had three killed. Down the road Ein Habesor had one killed while preventing the terrorists from entering their community. Where the terrorists managed to gain entrance, the butcher's bill was much higher. At Kibbutz Beerli (Named after Berl Katzenelson) they have counted 106 bodies so far plus a number of missing. Nir Oz has a similar number and other settlements as well. Whether or not the terrorists gained entrance was a question of distance from the border, luck and the skill of the civil defense unit which in most communities numbered about a dozen individuals. At Kibbutz Magen one member of the civil defense unit took up a position, which by chance overlooked the point where the terrorists gathered to penetrate the fence. He opened fire hitting several and the noise of his firing brought other members of the unit to his position. For the next seven hours they fought off repeated attempts to break in. As time passed they were joined by other members of the kibbutz who had military experience but they continued to fight off larger numbers than themselves. The cost was one member of the unit killed and two others wounded. However, where the terrorists gained entrance their aim was to kill as many Jews as possible.

One thing has become crystal clear for most Israelis. Not since the Nazis of World War Two have the Jews faced an enemy more intent on killing Jews than seeking the welfare of their own citizenry. Like Pearl Harbor was for the Japanese, tactically this was a victory for Hamas. But strategically it will come to be seen as a disaster. The human cost to the Palestinians in Gaza will be very high. The Hamas leadership has used the people of Gaza as human shields for a long time. In this they have been aided and abetted by "human rights" organizations whose one sided criticism of Israel has only encouraged Hamas leaders to create more human shields for themselves. Just as an aside, about two weeks ago the family members of the Hamas leadership left Gaza through Egypt. One must conclude that as long as it is not their own blood

spilled, they find the human cost in Palestinian blood acceptable. That human cost, this time, will be very high and just between us, the common people of Gaza by and large, are not murderers but people mostly concerned with feeding, clothing and keeping a roof over their families' heads. They really don't deserve what is about to happen to them just as Dudi didn't deserve what happened to him and hundreds of others.