

There is still no magic solution to terrorism, including killing Sinwar
Herb Keinon - The Jerusalem Post



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“Day after day the papers were filled with the names of the dead in black-bordered notices and descriptions of mass funerals turned demonstrations. But there was no sense of panic or despair in the Jewish community. On the contrary. Day by day people seemed to grow more resolute. Rather than weakening their resolve, the acknowledgment of a tragic reality emboldened them.”

So wrote Ari Shavit in his 2013 book, My Promised Land.

Shavit wasn't referring to the Second Intifada a decade earlier, or the post-Oslo suicide bombing attacks of 1994-1997, or the First Intifada of 1987-1993, or the Kiryat Shmona and Ma'alot massacres of April-May 1974, or the 1972 Munich massacre.

Shavit was writing about the summer of 1936 – before Israel had ultimate sovereignty over the Temple Mount, before Israel controlled [Judea and Samaria](#), before there even was an Israel. In that summer, the beginning of the Arab riots that lasted until 1939, some 80 Jews were killed and 400 were wounded.

Chillingly, Shavit's words could have been written not about the Yishuv 86 years ago, but about the situation and the mood in the modern, strong State of Israel today.



The Jerusalem Post Israel Police chief Kobi Shabtai congratulating the forces that caught the two Elad terrorists, May 8, 2022. (credit: ISRAEL POLICE)

What does that say? It says there are no magic solutions, and that perspective is important these days amid calls to assassinate Hamas head Yahya Sinwar – as if that will be the determining blow that will finally put an end to Arab terror.

It won't.

What it will do is satisfy a very understandable desire for revenge. Less than a week before two Palestinians – filled with a blood-lust that is difficult for the civilized mind to fathom – went on their ax-killing rampage in Elad, Sinwar called on Palestinians and Israeli Arabs to do exactly what they did. It is quite understandable, therefore, why there are those calling for him to be assassinated.

*BUT **KILLING Sinwar** will not solve the problem. As the paragraph from Shavit's book eerily showed, this is a scourge that has been part of the Jewish return to Zion for nearly a century, even longer. And no one has found the recipe to blot it out.*

What Israel has done, however, is figure out how to live with it, how to minimize it, and how to prosper despite it. It has not, however, figured out a way to eradicate terrorism – and killing Sinwar is not that silver bullet.

Play the scenario through for a minute.

Let's say Israel does kill Sinwar – by no means a simple task since all the chatter about resuming targeted assassinations has definitely driven him underground – then what happens?

The Palestinian terrorist organizations have threatened to respond to such a move by going on murderous sprees inside Israeli cities and launching rockets on Tel Aviv, and they should be taken at their word.

Israel will not be deterred by that terror, and would – in retaliation – pound Gaza. And if Palestinians in the West Bank joined the fray, or if Israeli Arabs did so as well,

Israel would forcefully put that down as well. There would be Israeli casualties, but the Palestinians would suffer many more.

And at the end of the day, some new Hamas leader would replace Sinwar and again fulminate against Israel, issue various threats, thereby confusing the centuries, and believing that his threats of attacks would frighten the Jews into submission or lessen the resolve of those who live in the Jewish state. But it would not.

As Shavit wrote, at the end of the day this only stiffens the people's resolve.

Since the end of the Second Intifada, a terror war launched partly out of a mistaken belief that Israelis had lost their resolve, and that – as Hezbollah's Hassan Nasrallah infamously put it – Israel was like a spider web that would disintegrate if just blown upon hard enough – the country has grown in numbers, wealth, strength and international sway and influence. Decades of terror have not slowed the country down.

SOMETHING, of course, must be done in the wake of the most recent atrocity. And it will. But it must be done with eyes wide open to the understanding that no single step – such as the killing of Sinwar – will end the terror.

At the same time, Israel need not reveal its hand regarding what it intends to do about Sinwar: whether it will hunt him down, or whether it has concluded that the price – another round of intense fighting in Gaza, and possibly inside Judea and Samaria itself – is not worth the benefit.

Since when does Israel have to tell the enemy what it will do? Let Sinwar run scared – not knowing whether, if, or how Israel will strike.

Secondly, Israel must use levers that do exist to fight against the rampant anti-Jew incitement among the Palestinians. Fighting the incitement in the Palestinian textbooks needs to go from a debating point to policy. Israel needs to work with the Europeans and the Americans to get the indictment out of the textbooks.

The vicious murderers in Elad that left 16 children orphaned are 19 and 20 years old. They were taught this sick hatred, some of it from the mosque, and some of it from the schools. The Palestinians must know that they will lose both financial and diplomatic support if that type of hatred is not expunged from what is being taught to their young minds.

The Palestinian Authority's policy of paying stipends to terrorists in Israeli jails and their families – as well as those families of terrorists killed – also must end. The policy is obscene, and incentivizes terrorism.

The PA is not going to end these payments on its own, so the world must apply pressure to force it to do so. If financial pressure doesn't work, then diplomatic pressure should be used. The Palestinian Authority is accustomed to a diplomatic security blanket. Israel should embark on a diplomatic campaign to deprive them of that blanket unless this policy ends.

Likewise, countries supporting Hamas, such as Qatar and – at least up until lately – Turkey, need to pay a price in their international relations for the continued support of an organization calling for the murder of Jews. It is inconceivable that the head of Hamas calls on people to bludgeon innocent Israelis, and various countries give the organization financial support and a home base from which to operate without having to pay a price.

SERIOUS EFFORTS must be made to change the culture that breeds this terror. Arab countries with whom Israel has peace agreements should be pressed to issue sharp statements against this terrorism, and Islamic leaders in those countries should be encouraged to do the same – all to change the atmosphere.

Where are the grassroots marches among Israeli Arabs, and even among forward-looking Palestinians, saying that this type of murder blackens their cause and should not be done in their name? Where are the NGOs trying to organize those types of marches, trying to encourage a climate where cold-blooded murder is not applauded, but rather is vomited out?

Israel must continue its Sisyphean efforts to track down the terrorists – day after day, night after night. It must continue to develop tools to scour social media to search for clues of potential attackers and continue to use all the technological weapons in its arsenal to preempt attacks.

It also should not be shy about using the issuance of work permits as leverage, also as part of that effort to create a climate that rejects the kind of murder in Elad – if not because they are immoral, then at least because they hit Palestinian society in the pocketbook.

And Israel must implement its own policies. Since the end of March, there has been abundant talk about the need to close the breaches in the security fence that allow undocumented workers into the country by the tens of thousands. The two terrorists who attacked in Elad came into the country via just such a breach. And those who transport, house or employ these Palestinians without valid permits need to be sanctioned by the state.

This was one step that Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said at Sunday's cabinet meeting would be enhanced in the coming weeks. He also spoke of forming a National Guard.

Neither of those steps is overly dramatic or likely to yield immediate results. But they are additional bricks in the wall against terror that Israel has been constructing – not without considerable success, but unfortunately never impenetrable – even before the Arab riots of the summer of 1936.

Targeting Sinwar, a terrorist who continuously incites toward the murder of Jews, would be dramatic and would satisfy an urge for vengeance – and, some argue, even an urge for justice. But it is questionable what such targeting would permanently add to that wall against terror.