



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Commentary...

Dismantle the United Nations By Melanie Phillips

After the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants for the arrest of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Israeli defense minister, Yoav Galant—on the basis of malevolent falsehoods and serial abuses of its own processes—people said in outrage that it was high time the ICC was defunded and dismantled.

After the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) was found to be working hand in glove with Hamas, with UNRWA teachers and other workers moonlighting as Hamas terrorists and with virtually every UNRWA school or hospital doubling up as a weapons dump or terrorist hub, people said it was high time that UNRWA was defunded and dismantled.

After the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July falsely accused Israel of illegally occupying the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria—having previously given serious consideration last February to a grotesque claim that Israel was committing genocide by defending itself against genocide—people said the ICJ was a travesty of a court that systematically misused the law to delegitimize and destroy Israel.

When are people going to join the dots? It's not just these bodies that have been corrupted and need to be dismantled. It's the whole panoply of international law and "human rights" that's become an onslaught against truth and justice and has knocked the entire world off its moral compass.

At the very center of this vortex of moral corruption is the United Nations.

Set up after World War II as the global custodian of peace and justice, it has systematically betrayed that core aim by its obsessional malice against Israel. It has singled out the only democracy in the Middle East for wildly disproportionate and wholly unfounded denunciation as the world's worst abuser of human rights while ignoring or downplaying the terrible and all-too-real abuses by tyrannical member states.

The appalling accusation of genocide hurled at Israel throughout the West ever since the Oct. 7 pogrom in southern Israel has its roots in the United Nations, the parent body of the ICJ. Accusations against Israel of genocide, apartheid and crimes against humanity bounce around it, the ICJ, the ICC and non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch. They feed these claims into each other's reports, and then repeat and recycle them to create an infernal echo chamber of Israel demonization.

The claim of genocide is of course as ludicrous as it is grotesque. Genocide is the intentional annihilation of a people. That's precisely what Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah openly and repeatedly declare is their aim in the planned eradication of Israel and the killing of every Jew.

In defending itself against this mass slaughter, Israel has gone to unprecedented lengths to protect Gazan civilians by repeatedly moving them en masse out of harm's way, allowing in thousands of tons of humanitarian aid and enabling the Gazan population actually to increase over the course of the war by more than 2%.

Despite these demonstrable facts, the United Nations has made feverish attempts to accuse Israel of the crimes being committed against the Jewish state.

On Nov. 8, the U.N. Human Rights Office published a report that accused Israel of grave violations of international law from November 2023 to April 2024—when Israel was being targeted by thousands of attacks committed by Hamas and Hezbollah, every one of them a war crime.

The U.N. report repeated the blood libel that Israeli forces had caused unprecedented levels of killings, death, injury, starvation and disease; and referencing the ICJ's ruling, demanded that Israel fully and immediately

protect against and punish acts of genocide. Which it has clearly never committed.

On Nov. 14, the U.N. Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices (whose very title demonstrates a positively paranoid level of prejudice) announced that it had found "serious concerns of breaches of international humanitarian and human rights laws" and "the possibility of genocide in Gaza and an apartheid system in the West Bank."

The United Nations hammers home the message that Israel's just war of defense against genocide is genocide, thus demonizing Israel while giving true genocidists a free pass.

More than that, it actually elevates and honors them: Iran, the terrorist rogue state that's flouting the nonproliferation treaty in its race to develop nuclear weapons, is preposterously chairing the U.N. Conference on Disarmament.

And as The Wall Street Journal reported this week, the U.N. official who tried to fight the world body's Orwellian hijack of the term "genocide" has now been forced out.

The United Nations has refused to renew the contract of Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the Kenyan special adviser on the prevention of genocide, because she has firmly maintained that Israel's war with Hamas is not genocide. She gave the world body a lesson in what genocide actually is. That was most definitely not what it wanted to hear.

The United Nations is consumed by efforts to delegitimize Israel for no other reason than wanting the Jewish state to disappear because so many member states want it to do so. To service this vast apparatus of demonization, it has employed legions of Israel-bashers and Jew-haters.

Its three-member commission of inquiry into Israel's presumed crimes, which was set up uniquely to exist in perpetuity, is headed by Navi Pillay who had previously called for sanctions against "apartheid Israel." The second commissioner, Miloon Kothari, had ranted about "the Jewish lobby." The third, Chris Sidoti, had sneered that "accusations of antisemitism are thrown around like rice at a wedding."

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, has repeatedly accused Israel of committing crimes of which it is not only innocent but have been committed against Israel by Hamas. These include hostage-taking, using civilians as human shields and sexual assault.

Francesca Albanese, the U.N. Human Rights Council's "Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967," has repeatedly equated Palestinian suffering with the Holocaust, falsely accused Israel of war crimes and genocide, and in 2019 wrote that America was "subjugated by the Jewish lobby." Last year, she told Hamas: "You have a right to resist."

Albanese has been condemned by France and Germany for antisemitism. The U.S. State Department has said it "firmly concludes that she is unfit for her role or any role in the United Nations ... we will continue to stand against antisemitism."

Except, of course, they don't. Standing against antisemitism means dismantling the United Nations. Instead, they carry on funding and dealing with it as if its malice against Israel doesn't exist. The nations of the so-called civilized world behave as if the world body really does what it says on the tin.

The United Nations was created after World War II to bring the world together to promote peace and justice. Yet most countries aren't democracies and don't uphold human rights. It's hardly a surprise, therefore, that the world body does not uphold peace and

justice but promotes the precise opposite.

Its institutionalized malice against Israel has spread evil far more widely than in the Middle East.

The lies and distortions about Israel regurgitated by the United Nations and its satellite institutions and NGOs, along with the courts dispensing international “human rights” law, are treated as unchallengeable truths by the West because this whole “humanitarian” infrastructure is treated as a veritable religion of peace and justice.

In fact, it’s an unstoppable geyser of moral and intellectual corruption. In teaching the West that lies about Israel are truths and truths are lies, it has turned what the West tells itself is morality and conscience into an agenda of evil.

This has ensured that the West can no longer distinguish more generally between victim and oppressor, reality and propaganda, right and wrong.

The United Nations should be dismantled. It’s the pivot of the apparatus that has twisted the Western mind. Treating it and international law as the moral arbiters of the global order is not just a sick joke. It has made the world sick, too. (JNS Nov 27)

Gaza and its Jews, their Past and their Future By Yisrael Medad

During recent remarks to leaders of local Jewish community relations councils, it was reported that Karen Paikin Barall, the vice president of government relations at the Jewish Federations of North America, said: “We should all look forward to the day we can hope to buy townhouses in the West Bank and Gaza.”

It seems that some of those present became distressed, even offended.

One official was quoted saying, “I thought JFNA stood for a democratic state. That’s what was troubling to me.” Most, however, came away with the impression her words were jocular, “a joke that had fallen flat.” Nevertheless, another communal official who was not present received alarmed texts from nearly a dozen people while the session was underway.

Of course, what these “leaders” missed in their liberal progressivism is what would be undemocratic in that supposed situation. After all, more than 2 million Arabs live in Israel, representing 22% of the population. Since 2005, no Jews have resided in the Gaza Strip, making it a Palestine apartheid entity.

The history of Jews and Gaza has been consistent as it has been turbulent, and at times, terrible.

Some 3,000 years ago, Samson carried away the gates of Gaza. In 145 BCE, Yonatan the Hasmonean besieged Gaza, and even after the city surrendered, it remained hostile to the Hasmoneans; in 96 BCE, it was overrun by Alexander Jannaeus. During the revolt against Rome, it was again sacked by Jewish rebels in 66 C.E. One of the pillars in the Great Mosque of Gaza, brought there from Caesarea, was an inscription in both Hebrew and Greek that read: “Hananiah son of Jacob.”

In 637 C.E., the Arabs conquered Gaza, killing Jews who served in the city’s defense, among them descendants of those who during the Byzantine period built a synagogue there in 508 C.E. Subsequently, Jews returned and for three centuries until the Crusader conquest in 1100 C.E., the Jewish community in Gaza restored itself. After the Crusaders’ defeat, centuries passed before Jews managed to re-establish their presence in the 14th century.

In 1481, it was recorded that around 70 Jewish families resided in Gaza City. The 17th century saw Rabbi Yisrael Najara producing his poetry and Natan the Prophet declaring Shabtei Tzvi the Messiah. In 1799, with the Napoleon conquest, the Jews fled again. Under the late Ottoman period, stagnation set in all around, and Jews were unwelcome in Gaza.

However, they returned in 1886, at the initiative of Zev Klonimus Wissotzky, a leader of the Hovevei Zion movement, who invested in commercial ventures in Gaza, Shchem and Lod. Throughout the centuries, Jews resettled the Land of Israel, all of it.

During World War I, Jews in Gaza again were subjected to Ottoman oppression, and many were banished. The Margolin family

was the first to return at the war’s end; later, 54 Jews were registered as residing there in the 1922 British census. In the larger Gaza Sub-District, including the Western Negev, there were 830 Jews. Then came the watershed of 1929.

The Oct. 22, 1929 edition of the Haaretz newspaper reports on the criminal investigation of several Arabs of the Al-Maghar village of Gaza. They were suspected of inciting their fellow villagers to throw rocks at the Jews fleeing Gaza during the previous August traveling in a convoy to escape the riots, a mission organized by the two Jewish wives of British policemen serving in Gaza.

Earlier, on Aug. 26, 1929, Arabs from Gaza—some who were employed in the agricultural fields and orchards of Be’er Tuvia—participated in the attack on the moshav. They killed Dr. Haim Yizraeli, the Mandate-employed doctor for the south of the country, while he was attending to a wounded Arab. Binyamin Tzvi Rosen, who had hidden in the synagogue, was beaten, stabbed to death and disemboweled, and then rolled up into Torah scrolls taken from the ark and set afire.

Gaza Arabs participated in the attacks on the kibbutzim of the Western Negev as well as Kfar Darom, which was founded in 1946 on land purchased by Jews in the early 1930s, today located across the street from the Deir Al-Balah Primary School.

Between 1948 and 1967, no Jewish civilians lived in Gaza, and after 2005, those who had returned to resettle the area (more than 8,000) were expelled in fulfillment of then-Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s disengagement plan. The Palestinian Authority/Fatah Party took control until they were quickly and violently ousted by the Hamas terrorist organization in June 2007, two years after the Israelis had vacated. Then came the invasion of Hamas from Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023. Obviously, the presence of Jews resettling the Jewish national homeland is not necessarily a cause of Arab terror.

Despite Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly expressing opposition to plans for Jews to resettle Gaza or at least become neighbors with the Gazans—terming the idea “not realistic”—there were two significant gatherings to promote the idea. One was during this past Sukkot holiday near Gaza and the other, in Jerusalem, back on Jan. 28. Both were attended by ministers and Knesset members from coalition parties.

In a recent essay in Mosaic, Shany Mor argued, among other points, that what was wrong with the “settler movement”—one that was engaged in “state capture”—is that ultimately, wherever they were, they were a main cause of Arab violence, Fatah or Hamas. Justifying his thesis, he wrote:

“When a settler was murdered [at Homesh], the perverse logic of the entire settlement movement took over ... the threat to their safety remained and was, if anything, more acute, so more soldiers needed to be sent there to protect them, and roadblocks had to be set up, and so forth. The Jenin sector, once the quietest part of the West Bank, quickly became, together with nearby Nablus, not just a focal point of skirmishes among settlers, the army, and Palestinian militants, but also the epicenter of a new wave of terrorism targeting Israelis in central Israel.”

Of course, no Jews present in Gaza for 23 years is a fact that does not alter his thinking. Nor does the lack of Jews anywhere across the former Green Line in Judea and Samaria for 19 years affect it.

I’m not sure that resettling Jews in Gaza at this moment in history is doable or even advisable. And for sure, partisan protest gimmicks like trying to cross over into the Strip during the war are insane. But instead of Jews arguing among themselves, a better discussion would focus on asking Arabs why they can live in Jaffa, Nazareth and Haifa, yet any suggestion of Jews living among Arabs is non-acceptable and non-negotiable.

Liberals and human-rights activists should equally be asked if the banning of Jews from Gaza can be defined as principled apartheid. Diplomats should be pressed to explain why they are supporting a policy of an exclusive uni-ethno state—moreover, one that is autocratic, theocratic and unsustainable economically. (JNS Nov 27)

ICC Kangaroo Court in Session

By Thane Rosenbaum

As if legal systems, and international bodies like the United Nations, needed any assistance in further damaging the public's perception of them, the International Criminal Court has sullied the name of the rule of law even more.

It's really time for the United States to withdraw its funding to kangaroo courts like the ICC and the International Court of Justice. The names of these institutions are laughable misnomers ("justice"?), not unlike the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, which occasionally features humanitarians like Iran and Syria as members in good standing.

The Senate should expedite passage of the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act. It already has bipartisan congressional support. Under this measure, ICC officials, and their outside experts, who abuse their authority by prosecuting leaders from the United States and its democratic allies, would be unwelcome in America.

George Clooney's wife, Amal, for instance, would kindly be asked to leave. More about that later.

Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu learned that the ICC had issued a warrant for his arrest. Yes, the prime minister of Israel, a U.S. ally, and his former defense minister, Yoav Gallant, are now international outlaws. If this legal farce can happen to them, it will most certainly happen to an American leader sometime very soon.

What judicial wisdom was revealed by the anti-Western, antisemitic haters from The Hague? Netanyahu and Gallant are being charged with starvation as a method of warfare; crimes against humanity; and "intentionally directing an attack against the civilian population" of Gaza.

Each of these charges stem from Israel's retaliation against Hamas for the Oct. 7 massacre.

Demonstrating the ICC's balancing of the scales of justice, one of Hamas's former military leaders has also been charged, but, unfortunately, he is already dead.

It doesn't matter. What matters is that the court is drawing a moral equivalence between terrorists who behead Israeli babies, gang rape scores of Israeli teenagers and murder, mutilate and torch 1,200 Israelis, and the undeniably just war Israel is waging in self-defense.

This is the first time in the court's existence, dating back to 2002 with the Rome Statute, signed by 125 nations—the United States and Israel, for obvious reasons, are not signatories—that a leader of a democratic nation has been charged.

Democratic governance is important, because the ICC was supposed to prosecute leaders of nations that do not have functioning, independent legal systems of their own. Israel most certainly does, and several investigations of its wartime conduct are already underway, directed by Israeli legal experts who are not known to cut the Jewish state any breaks.

Because Israel never signed the Rome Statute, the ICC has no jurisdiction or enforcement powers over Netanyahu and Gallant, anyway. In its nearly 25 years of holding court, the ICC doesn't have much to show for itself. Take Omar al-Bashir, the former head of state in Sudan responsible for the genocide in Darfur. He has been at large since 2009, and it took six years for the ICC to even obtain an enforceable arrest warrant.

Of course, as a matter of law and procedure, this case against Netanyahu and Gallant is wholly deficient. Factually, it is groundless. Starvation as warfare requires a proving of intent that Netanyahu is fighting a war specifically to starve Gazans, and that he is "willfully impeding relief." But Israel is fighting terrorists who steal the food that Israel is allowing into the enclave. Under international law, and siege warfare, given that this aid is ultimately feeding terrorists, Israel isn't obligated to allow any humanitarian assistance at all—and yet it has been doing so since the war began.

The factual claim of starvation itself is in dispute. Over the summer, an agency of the United Nations, the Integrated Food Security Classification System, determined that starvation in Gaza has

simply not materialized, despite alarms sounding to the contrary. The ICC knows there is no actual evidence that a single Gazan has died of starvation as a result of Israel's border policies. And there is even less evidence that Israel is fighting this war to intentionally inflict starvation on the Palestinian people.

The same specific intent requirement applies to crimes against humanity. Even dishonest brokers assessing the war in Gaza realize that Hamas started it. Israel is targeting terrorists, not civilians. Casualties of war are not victims of genocide, and the collateral damage in Gaza would be considerably less if civilians were not being used as human shields, and other civilians, of the true believer variety, wouldn't so agreeably volunteer for human-shield duty.

How could the ICC get this so wrong? Aside from antisemitism, which is a default conclusion for many questions involving Jews, the ICC recruited four legal consultants to evaluate the case before proceeding with arrest warrants. The one thing they all shared in common: years of prejudging Israel of war crimes. The selection of the experts made the prosecution a forgone conclusion.

One is on record supporting BDS against Israel. Another falsely accused Israel of shutting off Gaza's water supply. Israel controls less than 10% of Gaza's water, and it has no legal obligation to hydrate Hamas. Another "expert" needs to reread the Law of War Manual, because it is not illegal to impose a siege on a civilian population when they are embedded within a terrorist fighting force. He had also already declared that Israel was committing war crimes before he took on the ICC assignment.

And the last expert, Amal Clooney, has her own long history demonizing the Jewish state.

The ICC's Code of Conduct states that the prosecutor's office should not "negatively affect confidence in [its] independence," and should "refrain from expressing an opinion" that could taint its impartiality.

So much for that.

This case sets a dangerous precedent. Urban warfare against terrorists where collateral damage is a natural occurrence is being characterized as a crime against humanity. Donald Trump could easily have been charged following the Battle of Mosul, which eliminated Islamic State, but resulted in thousands of civilian deaths.

For those dissatisfied that Trump largely escaped all those prosecutions against him in the United States, the ICC has just given you something new to root for. (Jewish Journal Nov 26)

A Necessary Though Imperfect Deal Caps Netanyahu's Finest Hour

By Jonathan S. Tobin

There are a good many reasons to worry that the impending ceasefire with Hezbollah terrorists that Israel has chosen to accept is a bad bargain. A lot can go wrong, and there are no assurances that the quiet it promises will last. And yet, the deal that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has agreed to is probably the best Israel can get under the circumstances. Even critics of the decision must acknowledge that the Jewish state has not come away from the negotiations empty-handed but has achieved some real gains.

After a year of suffering incessant attacks on its northern communities that began on Oct. 8—just one day after the Hamas-led massacres in the south—Israel has finally forced Hezbollah and Iran to retreat from their determination to keep firing as long as Hamas is fighting in Gaza. This isolation of Hamas, which renders their continued efforts to sustain the war on Israel it began on Oct. 7, 2023, far more precarious, is a victory for the Jewish state.

So, too, is the fact that the last two months of Israeli attacks on Hezbollah have significantly degraded their capacity to inflict harm on the region. That's a defeat for Iran, which had hoped that the seven-front war on Israel it had incited could go on indefinitely, weakening the country and its citizens' resolve. Instead, they are the ones who have been diminished by military setbacks and vast losses inflicted on a group whose main purpose is to serve as a deterrent to attacks on Iran.

Equally important, this is a moment to consider that the setbacks dealt Hezbollah and Iran, coupled with the destruction of Hamas's military capabilities, were only made possible by the determination and the ability of one man to stand up to U.S. pressure to abandon the fight for Israel's security many months ago. It's difficult to imagine anyone other than Netanyahu could have stood his ground against Washington's pleadings and threats, and have gone on to achieve an outcome that leaves Israel's enemies far weaker than they were when the current conflict began almost 14 months ago.

For all of his faults and his stubborn refusal to cede power after so many years in office, as well as the fact that he bears some of the responsibility for the Oct. 7 catastrophe that happened on his watch, what Netanyahu has done in the year since then is truly remarkable.

Only someone with his steely determination and savvy understanding of the tricky dynamics of the U.S.-Israel relationship could have navigated the long months of war so skillfully. No possible successor in his own Likud Party or among his opponents in the Knesset could have stuck to his goals—and do so much harm to Hamas and Hezbollah in the face of the desire of his country's sole superpower ally to force Jerusalem to accept the continued rule of Hamas in Gaza and avoid direct conflict with Iran's Lebanese auxiliaries.

Whatever comes next—whether it is a renewed war with Hezbollah caused by their refusal to keep the ceasefire or to abide by its terms that demand they withdraw their terrorist cadres and weapons north of the Litani River, or the bloody continuation of the mopping up of what's left of Hamas's terrorists in Gaza—Netanyahu's leadership has been indispensable.

He may ultimately be judged by Israel's voters as being too tainted by his association with the worst day in their country's history to serve another term. But his service as prime minister during the last terrible year of intense battle will still deserve to be remembered with honor. It was a period during which it was only his insistence on sticking to a goal of eliminating Hamas and dealing deadly blows to Hezbollah and Iran—while cabinet colleagues, political foes and military advisers were willing to give in to the Americans and accept far more disastrous deals—that prevented a diplomatic and military defeat for Israel.

Those who are outraged at the deal with Hezbollah have reason to be concerned.

The Iranian proxy group has never kept its word about anything, let alone agreements to stop attacking Israel or to withdraw from the southern part of Lebanon over which it has largely ruled for a generation. For those who hoped the Israeli offensive that began in September would only end in the complete defeat of Hezbollah, the announcement of the agreement is a disappointment. That is especially true when one thinks of the sacrifices that the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces have made to achieve what may only be a temporary respite to the fighting.

Nor can Israel rely on the United States or France to take action to guarantee that Hezbollah will not simply move its terrorist forces and missiles back to Israel's border as soon as the IDF withdraws. No matter the provocation, only Israeli action (which will likely again be demonized and subjected to lawfare attacks by the international community) can defend the security of the Jewish state.

What's more, the tens of thousands of Israelis who were forced to flee their homes after the Iranian proxy group began firing on northern Israel last October have no reliable guarantee that they will be safe if they go back.

On top of all that, it must also be acknowledged that pressure from the Biden administration, which has always been more interested in appeasing Iran and forcing Israel to accept ceasefires with both Hezbollah and Hamas, was part of the equation that led to this decision.

Will that encourage whoever is in charge of U.S. foreign policy in the next two months—whether it is a visibly diminished Biden or someone else—to push for a binding U.N. Security Council resolution that would impose a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip that will help what's

left of Hamas to survive and ultimately take back power there?

Yet despite all of that, those inclined to view the cessation of war in the north as a defeat for Israel need to consider how much it has gained in the last several months.

Iran and its Lebanese henchmen had counted on Israel being too intimidated by the prospect of another round of fighting with a Hezbollah force that had more than 120,000 rockets and missiles pointed at it. The evisceration of the leadership of the terrorist group and sustained damage done to its forces and arms caches confounded those who thought the Jewish state was too weak to achieve such a result. While Hezbollah and Iran will over time reorganize, rearm and recoup their losses, they also now know that their hubristic confidence that they were invincible has been exposed as a myth.

The fact that Hezbollah was forced by its losses to accept a ceasefire without it being tied to an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza is also an enormous setback for Iran's multifront war strategy.

Though the next two months will remain a period of extreme danger for Israel, Netanyahu's decision should also solidify his relationship with the incoming Trump administration. The president-elect has been open about his hope that Israel will conclude its wars in Gaza and Lebanon before he is sworn in on Jan. 20.

A deal that would disarm Hamas, guarantee it could not come back to power in Gaza and gain the release of the remaining 101 Israeli hostages still being held by the terrorists may be unlikely, given the fanaticism of the Islamists even after their abandonment by their Lebanese allies. Yet by concluding a deal with Hezbollah, Netanyahu can say he's done as much as he can to give Trump a clean slate and be able to further strengthen the U.S. obligation to back the Jewish state to the hilt if the terrorists violate the accord.

The ceasefire in the north will also enable the IDF to concentrate on the tough task of mopping up Hamas guerrillas in Gaza after Netanyahu's staunch refusal to accept Biden's ultimatums to stand down made the destruction of their formal military forces possible.

Oct. 7 was an enormous blow to Israel's ability to deter its enemies and undermined confidence in its reputation as the "strong horse" in the region that could inspire Arab states to resist Iran. But the victories that the IDF achieved, albeit at the terrible price of approximately 900 soldiers and police officers slain fighting their nation's genocidal foes, have restored its strategic position. With Hezbollah weakened and Hamas on the run, as well as with much of its own air defenses being taken out by Israeli military action, Tehran is far weaker than it was on Oct. 6, 2023.

None of that will convince those who hate Netanyahu—and falsely accuse him of undermining democracy and being a corrupt authoritarian—to admire him. Nor will they stop their incessant resistance to his government, whereby he is not only blamed for Oct. 7 (a guilt he shares with the entire leadership of the IDF and Israel's intelligence establishment) but for Hamas's refusal to release the hostages.

The lion's share of the credit for the victories the IDF has achieved belongs to the soldiers who paid for them in blood. But honest observers must also acknowledge that it's not likely that any other conceivable Israeli leader would have had the guts and the stiff spine to fend off a year of American pressure that made them possible. Certainly not Netanyahu's political opponents Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid. During his brief time as temporary prime minister in 2022, Lapid folded in the face of far less American pressure to give up Israeli natural-gas fields to Hezbollah in a failed attempt at appeasement. Nor can one imagine anyone else in the Likud-led coalition government having the knowledge or the resolve that Netanyahu showed time and again.

The prime minister has been around too long, behaved too arrogantly and made too many enemies to ever be given universal praise, no matter what he's done. But while opinion about him will always be mixed at best, his post-Oct. 7 stand has been his finest hour. One can only hope future historians will give him his due for what he's accomplished in the last year. (JNS Nov. 26)