

# dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

October 2024 • Vol. 49 No. 5 • [www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com) • Your Israel Connection®

## Red Dragon Rising



# BRIDGES FOR PEACE

Christians supporting Israel and building relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

It is our desire to see Christians and Jews working side by side for better understanding and a more secure Israel. Bridges for Peace seeks to be a ministry of hope and reconciliation. Through programs both in Israel and worldwide, we are giving Christians the opportunity to actively express their biblical responsibility before God to be faithful to Israel and the Jewish community. For too long Christians have been silent. For too long the Jewish community has had to fight its battles alone. It is time Christian individuals and congregations speak up for the people who gave us the Bible.

## We are committed to the following goals:

To encourage meaningful and supportive relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

To educate and equip Christians to identify with Israel, the Jewish people and the biblical/Hebraic foundations of our faith.

To bless Israel and the Jewish people in Israel and worldwide through practical assistance, volunteer service and prayer.

To communicate Christian perspectives to the attention of Israeli leaders and the Jewish community-at-large.

To counter anti-Semitism worldwide and support Israel's divine God-given right to exist in her God-given land.

## Dispatch from Jerusalem

The *Dispatch from Jerusalem* is Bridges for Peace's signature publication presenting positive news and perspectives from Israel to encourage understanding and support for the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

**Editor in Chief** Peter Fast  
**Assistant Editor** Ilse Strauss  
**Graphic Designers** Brenda Groat, Joshua Mott,  
Sarah Flanagan

## Subscription information

Contact your national office at the address listed to the right. For all other locations, a one-year subscription costs US \$25 and is mailed from Israel. Contact our International Headquarters listed below.



### International Headquarters

PO Box 1093  
Jerusalem, Israel 9101001  
Tel: (972) 2-624-5004  
FAX: (972) 2-624-6622  
intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com

[www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com)



Join us in practical expressions to bless Israel by becoming an active bridge-builder and participating in fulfilling biblical prophecy through the following educational and humanitarian programs of Bridges for Peace.

**Publications:** The bimonthly *Dispatch from Jerusalem*, the monthly in-depth study of the Israel Teaching Letter and the weekly e-mailed Israel Current News Update with Prayer Focus. To subscribe, sign up on the front page of our website at [www.bridgesforpeace.com](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com)

**Chai (Life) Night Prayer and Study Groups:** A monthly intercessory prayer program for groups desiring to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6).

**Bridge-building Projects:** Promote better Christian-Jewish understanding and support for Israel at the local and regional levels around the world. Projects offered include Hebrew classes, film series, Israel awareness programs, speakers bureaus and study seminars.

**Bible Study Tours in Israel:** Bridges for Peace provides a variety of travel opportunities and lectures to help you or your tour group gain a deeper understanding of Israel. (See page 28 for current tours).

**Discovery Groups:** Groups have the opportunity to serve with us for a period of one to four days.

**Short-term Service:** A wonderful opportunity for Christians to build sincere relationships by volunteering to serve as short-term staff assisting Israel's poor.

**Operation Ezra Projects:** Through our food bank, food gifts are distributed to help Israel's needy.

**Project Rescue/Project Tikvah (Hope):** These programs help the poorest Jews in the countries of the Diaspora.

**ZEALOUS8:2:** This branch of Bridges for Peace aims at reaching and impacting the young adult generation (18-30) with the message of God's plan and purpose for the nation of Israel ([www.zealous82.com](http://www.zealous82.com)).

**For more information,** contact any of our national offices. We are also available to help you plan activities in your area. When you come to Israel, we would like to meet you or speak to your group. Please contact us in advance to visit our International Headquarters and Outreach Center in Jerusalem.

## Offices

**Australia:** Tel: (61) 7-5479-4229, [bfp.au@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:bfp.au@bridgesforpeace.com)  
**Canada:** Tel: (1) 204-489-3697, Toll free: (1) 855-489-3697, [info@bfpca.org](mailto:info@bfpca.org)  
**Japan:** Tel: (81) 3-5969-9656, [bfp@bfpj.org](mailto:bfp@bfpj.org)  
**New Zealand:** Tel: (64) 7-855-5262, [emather.nz@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:emather.nz@bridgesforpeace.com)  
**South Africa:** Tel: (27) 21-975-1941, [info@bridgesforpeace.co.za](mailto:info@bridgesforpeace.co.za)  
**South Korea:** Tel: (82) 70-8772-2014, [bfp@bfpkorea.com](mailto:bfp@bfpkorea.com)  
**Spanish:** Tel: (52) 646-238-7206, [intl.spanish@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:intl.spanish@bridgesforpeace.com)  
**Russia:** Tel: (7) 903-309-1849, [info.ru@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:info.ru@bridgesforpeace.com)  
**United Kingdom:** Tel: (44) 165-673-9494, [ukoffice@bridgesforpeace.com](mailto:ukoffice@bridgesforpeace.com)  
**United States:** Tel: (1) 321-361-8887, (1) 800-566-1998, [postmaster@bfpusa.org](mailto:postmaster@bfpusa.org)

## 10 War by Proxy

Although Iran is responsible for spearheading the war against Israel, the Islamic Republic is steering conveniently clear of the frontlines. Instead, Tehran fights this war by proxy. And front and center on the battlefield is terror army Hezbollah.

*By Cheryl Hauer*

## 12 Finding Faith in Dangerous Times

As Israel's enemies continue their onslaught, we must remember that the God of Israel is alive. We build our faith by remembering who He is, what He has promised and how He has acted in the past.

*By Rebecca J. Brimmer*

## 14 Guilty as Charged?

Israel's wars always rage on multiple fronts. There's the physical battle and the war for public opinion. But there's a third front that's growing increasingly perilous. And experts warn that Israel might be in for the fight of her life.

*By Ilse Strauss*

## 18 Red Dragon Rising

As we witness a transition from Western dominance to Eastern influence, China is ready to determine the trajectory of international relations and global governance, particularly when it comes to the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

*By Nathan Williams*

## 20 Who's Starving the Gazan People?

No one can deny that the Palestinian people are undergoing tremendous suffering. Their lives are in chaos and necessities like food and potable water may be difficult to find. But the facts simply do not support the accusation that Israel is at fault.

*By Cheryl Hauer*

## 22 Rebirth of the Middle East

"My grandmother is older than Israel." That's a common buzz phrase for the anti-Israel establishment. While it's true that modern Israel celebrated her 76th birthday this year, Israel's neighbors were all born around the same time—and under similar circumstances.

*By Kate Norman*

## 24 Stronger Together

With much of the world hurling baseless accusations at them, Israelis—as well as Jews who live outside of Israel—have been reaching out to one another. One of the many ways they have been encouraging their community is through grassroots initiatives.

*By Janet Aslin*



### REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 BFP In Action
- 6 Signs of the Times
- 8 Archaeology
- 16 Out of Zion
- 26 Quotes
- 28 Volunteer Opportunities
- 29 Recipe
- 30 Good News



PHOTO CREDITS: **Bridgesforpeace:** McCoy Brown p. 2, 28, 35, Michio Nagata p. 4, 5, 12, 27, 31, 35, Peter Fast p. 4, 35, Jenna Solomon p. 28, 35, Sarah Flanagan p. 29, 35, Daniel Kirchhevel p. 35, Hannah Taylor p. 35, Israel Unfiltered p. 36; **Shutterstock.com:** Hai Mai p. 1, 18, Crop Media p. 2, 11, Gizem G p. 2, 22, KREML p. 7, ONYXprj p. 10, 11, Anas Mohammed p. 12, 20, 21, 36, ProStockStudio p. 16, Gorodenkoff p. 17, Hekla p.17, Aleksandra Suzi p. 24, Jose HERNANDEZ Camera 51 p. 26, Shawn Goldberg p. 30, hxdzxy p. 31 Yehuda Bergstein p. 36, MaximPolak p. 36, Shabtay p. 36, Jose HERNANDEZ Room 51 p. 36; **wikimedia.org:** Voice of America (Chinese) p. 1, 18, US Department of State p. 1, 18, Press Information Bureau p. 18, US Department of Defense p. 2, 13, Velvet p. 2, 14, 15, Onionorganizer27 p. 2, 25, USAF/Staff Sgt. Cary Smith p. 6, Wikimedia Foundation p. 6, Fars Media Corporation p. 10, 11, sir kiss p. 13, UN Archive p. 23, Turkish Government p. 23; **Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA):** Eliyahu Yanai City of David p. 8, Dafna Gazit (IAA) p. 9, Emil Eljam (IAA) p. 9; **Flickr.com:** upyerno p. 10; **Freepik.com:** jcomp p. 12; **Facebook:** Yahya Mahamid; **Screenshots:** Hilma Tech p. 24, Our Mishpacha p. 24

# A CITY OF MISSILES



Top: The destruction caused by endless Hezbollah attacks  
Bottom: The city of Kiryat Shmona

**NO SIREN SOUNDED** as Hezbollah, the Iranian proxy terror army entrenched in southern Lebanon, launched a 107mm mortar at the Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona on October 25. The mortar easily found its mark as it cut clean through the cement wall of a quiet suburban home and slammed into the kitchen. It tore a massive crater in the floor and exploded into a fireball, which sparked a secondary detonation with the home's gas supply. Within a split second, the three-bedroom home was a raging inferno, belching clouds of black smoke over the shaking neighborhood.

While the fire engulfed the house, not a single soul emerged from the neighboring homes to investigate the destruction. In the distance, sirens wailed as firetrucks converged on the location of the missile strike to extinguish the blaze and prevent the fire from spreading to the rest of the neighborhood.

Members of the rapid response team and Home Front Command arrived on site next, along with the city mayor, a young man named Avichai. Despite the commotion, the streets and backyards surrounding the inferno remained eerily empty. No concerned neighbors raced over to lend a helping hand. In fact, every front door remained firmly shut.



The reason? The city of Kiryat Shmona, which had once boasted a population of 24,000, had been emptied of its citizens, reduced to a remnant of only 2,000 inhabitants. Five days before the Hezbollah mortar found its mark, the mayor had ordered an evacuation. With that, 22,000 Israelis scattered across more than 500 locations around the country to avoid the constant barrages of Hezbollah's missiles, suicide drones and mortars.

The order to evacuate was a painful, yet practical choice, remembers Avichai. The city did not have enough bomb shelters to keep its residents safe from the barrages and so, the main concern focused on saving lives. However, with such an order, Avichai knew he was giving Hezbollah exactly what they wanted: to terrorize the lives of Israelis, causing them to flee and thus providing the terror army free reign to destroy and invade the Upper Galilee.

Avichai had chosen to stay, along with the security teams and the die-hard Israelis who refused to give up. Yet it came at a cost for Avichai personally, as he had to make the agonizing decision to send his wife and children abroad.

When the Bridges for Peace team visited on August 5, Kiryat Shmona was a battered remnant of its former glory. We arrived to the nearly empty ghost city, narrowly missing a Hezbollah missile barrage 20 minutes earlier. Every restaurant, café and mall was closed. Traffic lights flashed perpetually yellow. Every now and then, a lone car drove by. Instead of the usual, bustling activity beholden to a city, it was eerie and quiet.

The Iron Dome defenses in the north had already intercepted 1,400 missiles destined to wrought untold destruction on Kiryat Shmona, yet 700 projectiles had still managed to get through, reducing homes, industrial centers, football pitches, streets, cars and anything else in their path into sights of apocalyptic devastation. Razor sharp shrapnel from exploded rockets lay everywhere, prompting Avichai to hand me a piece of the disturbing "souvenir" as he said, "Here! Now you can remember what we go through every day."

We had met Avichai earlier, along with the heads of the security team, in a fortified bomb shelter beneath the city's municipal building. Feeling more like a bunker, the Bridges for Peace team felt safe from the daily threat of missile fire. Avichai took his time explaining his city to us. He focused on the



Bridges for Peace with the mayor of Kiryat Shmona, Avichai

Watch Now

4.3-mile (7-km.) north-to-south Lebanon border with a high mountain ridge of forests where the explosive charges of missiles impacted among the trees and brush, sparking large wildfires that threatened to consume the city. The residents of Kiryat Shmona had been forced to become experts in fire-fighting, some using garden hoses or buckets of water to tirelessly support the skeleton fire crews who buckled under the load.

When we left the bunker to tour the city, Avichai took us up to an observation point where we could see Lebanon 1.2 miles (2 km.) away. "Hezbollah simply fires mortars and rockets at us from just over the ridge," he explained. "If the sirens sound, we have 10 seconds to run to shelter. That's if the sirens sound..."

We took in the awful sights of destroyed homes and melted cars, knowing full well that once Israeli residents returned—if they decided to come back at all—many lives would be changed forever as countless properties and businesses had been reduced to charred, hollow remains.

It was an emotional and disturbing day, seeing the pain on the faces of the remnant that remained in Kiryat Shmona. We listened to their stories as they shared their hearts. An entire city devastated. But a powerful and penetrating light had shone through that day. It happened the moment the Bridges for Peace team had stared straight into Avichai's eyes and promised that he and his people were not alone. Christians from around the world are praying for them. Moreover, Christian volunteers from the nations are serving inside Israel, while it remains surrounded by enemies baying for its destruction. And we would not back down! We were here to stay and Kiryat Shmona would experience our practical love and support.

Would you please consider giving to our **Crisis Assistance Fund** today to be a penetrating light of hope into the city of Kiryat Shmona and its mayor, Avichai?

With urgency,  
Rev. Peter Fast  
International CEO



# Israel Pivots to Homegrown Arms

**After a year of conflict**, Israel has drawn a crucial lesson: the need to indigenously produce and develop critical weaponry for the Israel Defense Forces [IDF]. Historically, Israel has sourced some of these armaments from foreign countries, primarily the United States.

*Israel Hayom* has learned of a decision to domestically develop and manufacture heavy bombs for the Israeli Air Force [IAF], including one-ton bombs akin to the American MK-84s, whose delivery has been stalled for months.

The Defense Ministry aims to maintain minimal production lines over time, allowing for rapid scale-up when necessary, while also boosting procurement of armored fighting vehicles for the IDF.

The development and production of the new bombs are projected to take two to three years. While the US administration has yet to greenlight the transfer of heavy bombs to the IAF, security sources tell *Israel Hayom* a resolution is on the horizon.

The Defense Ministry is also broadening the domestic production of additional armaments, including tank ammunition (which is globally scarce) and 155mm shells.

Defense Ministry Director General, Major General (Retired) Eyal Zamir, described this as “a large-scale strategic move designed to ensure the IDF’s war machine continues to advance. We are investing and will continue to invest tens of billions in building infrastructure and capabilities, expanding production lines, establishing new lines and purchasing inventories to solidify production independence.”

The Defense Ministry had already announced another deal with Elbit Systems, purchasing Iron Sting mortar bombs for NIS 815 million (US \$216 million). These bombs combine laser and GPS guidance.

Plans are also in place to increase procurement of armored fighting vehicles for the IDF, including Merkava tanks and armored personal carriers that have proven their worth in combat. Prior to the war, armored vehicles were produced at a rate of about 24 per year.

The independent development will bolster Israel’s strategic independence. However, defense officials caution that this process could be costly and time-consuming.

*Jewish News Syndicate via Israel Hayom*

## Wikipedia Editors: ‘Israel Guilty of Genocide’

**The global editors** of Wikipedia have officially renamed the entry “Allegations of genocide in the 2023 Israeli attack on Gaza” to “Gaza genocide.” This change followed a vote after months of debate.

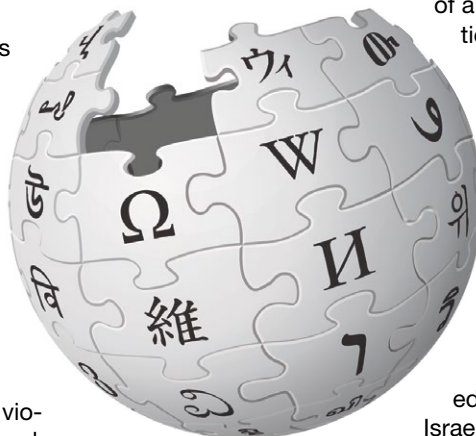
Supporters of the new title argue there is a broad consensus in academia on the matter. Prominent among these experts is Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian Territories, a figure both the US and Israel have requested be removed from her position. International organizations and news sites used as sources, such as Turkey’s *Anadolu Agency*, are known for their anti-Zionist bent. The casualty figures are sourced from Gaza’s Health Ministry.

Editors opposed to the title argued it violates Wikipedia’s policy on neutral titles and reflects a bias against Israel. They pointed out that other

contentious topics on Wikipedia explicitly indicate such disputes and suggested adding terms like “allegations” to better reflect the debate. They accused Wikipedia of a double standard, citing entries like “Allegations of genocide in the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel,” which still use the term “allegations.” They argued that enough scholars oppose the genocide claims to prevent changing the title to “Gaza genocide.” One editor claimed the entry “waves anti-Israel flags” and uses unreliable sources for its statistics.

Wikipedia has become a battleground for information warfare, with power struggles between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli editors. According to Israeli editors, many entries are written from anti-Israel perspectives by editors using the platform to echo Palestinian messages.

Daniel Edelson, *Ynetnews*



# THE HORROR

## of an Iranian Nuclear Weapon

**Israel faces a genocidal** assault by a determined adversary. Iran races ahead with its nuclear weapons program with one aim: the eradication of Israel. “The nuclear situation in Iran is like a car with all the parts ready—now they just need to be assembled,” Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Deputy Chief of Staff, General Amir Baram, said in July.

Israel is in a vulnerable position. “The use of even one nuclear bomb inside Israel,” said former Iranian President Akbar Rafsanjani, “will destroy everything.”

Iran has hardly been shy about articulating its genocidal objectives. Newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed in July “Tehran’s dedication to destroying Israel.” This aim is “rooted in the fundamental policies of the Islamic Republic.”

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was recorded as saying, “It is the mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to erase Israel from the map of the region.”

There is little hope of altering Iran’s agenda. In July, the US, in an exercise of futility, warned Iran against developing nuclear weapons after a March 2024 report indicated “Iranian scientists were engaged in computer modelling and metallurgical research,” actions “relevant to nuclear explosive development.”

An Iranian nuclear weapon is closer to becoming a reality than readily admitted. In July, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken disclosed, “Iran is one or two weeks away from producing deadly nuclear fissile material.”

The question is what to do to prevent a nuclear catastrophe?

The US should have acted years ago to prevent Iran’s nuclear program from upending the balance of power in the region. As Netanyahu reminded the US Congress in August:

“When he founded the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini pledged, ‘We will export our revolution to the entire world.’ Which country stands in the way of Iran’s plans to impose radical Islam on the world? America, the guardian of Western civilization and the world’s greatest power. That’s why Iran sees America as its greatest enemy. Last month, the foreign minister of Iran’s proxy, Hezbollah, said: ‘This isn’t a war with Israel. Israel is merely a tool. The main war, the real war, is with America.’”

Apart from military action, the only way to secure Israel’s safety is severe economic sanctions and an embargo against Iran’s exports and imports. Such a program had been successfully in place. The Biden administration waived the sanctions, allowing Iran and its proxies to hold the world hostage.

In 2020, Russian General Andrei Sterlin commented, “There’s no way to determine if an incoming ballistic missile is fitted with a nuclear or a conventional warhead. The military has to see it as a nuclear attack.”

Israel, the Gulf States, Europe and the US will soon be in no position to gamble whether a ballistic missile launched from Iran is a nuclear attack.

Although Israel’s leaders are aware of Iran’s intentions, the US and other Western allies cannot be relied upon to contain Iran’s progress. Israel, alone in many respects and forced to act unilaterally, might need to find ways to prevent Iran from attacking. The stakes couldn’t be higher.

“The greatest tragedy of the Jewish people,” Nobel Peace Prize laureate Eli Wiesel stated, “is that they listen to the promises of their friends and not the threats of their enemies.”

The leaders of Israel should take seriously the threats of their enemies and act to protect both Israel and the free world from imminent disaster.

Nils A. Haug, *Gatestone Institute*



# Fortifications from Biblical Jerusalem Unearthed

**A MASSIVE FORTIFICATION** dating back 3,800 years that likely protected the kings of Judah has been uncovered just outside the walled Old City of Jerusalem, the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] announced in July.

The moat, which measures at least 9 meters [29.5 ft.] deep and 30 meters [98 ft.] wide, was discovered in the area of the present-day parking lot just outside the Dung Gate to the Old City of Jerusalem.

Created by extensive quarrying, the moat formed a channel separating the City of David from the Temple Mount, dividing the city in two.

The fortifications likely served to separate the upper city, where the Temple and the palace were located, from the lower city, and protect it, the state-run archaeological body said.

“It is not known when the moat was originally cut, but evidence suggests it was used during the centuries when Jerusalem was the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, almost 3,000 years ago, beginning with King Josiah,” said the excavation’s co-directors Tel Aviv University Professor Yuval Gadot and Dr. Yiftah Shalev from the IAA.

“During those years, the moat separated the southern residential part of the city from the ruling acropolis in the north.”

Shalev added, “If the moat was cut during this period, then it was intended to protect the city from the north—the only weak point of the City of David slope. Either way, we are confident that it was used at the time of the First Temple and the Kingdom of Judah (ninth century BC), so it created a clear buffer between the residential city in the south, and the upper city in the north.”

The creation of the moat was a monumental operation, designed to change the natural topography to demonstrate the power of Jerusalem’s rulers to those who entered its gates, the IAA said.

“The excavations in the City of David never cease to amaze. Once again, discoveries are being revealed that shed new and vivid light on the biblical literature,” said Eli Escusido, director of the IAA.

“When you stand at the bottom of this giant excavation, surrounded by enormous hewn walls, it is impossible not to be filled with wonder and appreciation for those ancient people who, about 3,800 years ago, literally moved mountains and hills.”

*Jewish News Syndicate*



## Scraps of Royal Purple Cloth from King David's Time Found in the Desert

**IN A GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERY**, Israeli archaeologists have recovered scraps of fabric dyed in royal purple, also known as true purple, dating back to the era of the biblical King David.

The remnants of woven fabric, a tassel and fibers of wool, were uncovered in a heap of industrial waste at "Slave's Hill," an ancient copper-smelting site in the Timna Valley.

"The color immediately attracted our attention, but we found it hard to believe we had found true purple from such an ancient era," said professor Erez Ben-Yosef of the Jacob M. Alkow Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures at Tel Aviv University.

Direct radiocarbon dating confirms that the finds date from approximately 1,000 BC, corresponding to the biblical monarchies of David and Solomon in Jerusalem.

The dye, which is produced from species of mollusk found in the Mediterranean over 300 kilometers (184 mi.) from Timna, is often mentioned in the Bible and appears in various Jewish and Christian contexts, for example, in the quote from Song of Songs 3:9–10a, which states: "*Of the wood of Lebanon Solomon the King made himself a palanquin: He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold, its seat of purple...*"

This is the first time that purple-dyed Iron Age textiles have been found in the entire southern Levant.

"This is a very exciting and important discovery," said Dr. Naama Sukenik of the Israel Antiquities Authority. "In antiquity, purple attire was associated with the nobility, with priests, and of course with royalty. The gorgeous shade of the purple, the fact that it does not fade, and the difficulty in producing the dye, which is found in minute quantities in the body of mollusks, all made it the most highly valued of the dyes, which often cost more than gold."

"As a result of the region's extremely dry climate, we are also able to recover organic materials such as textile, cords and leather from the Iron Age, from the time of David and Solomon, providing us with a unique glimpse into life in biblical times," Ben-Yosef said.

*Jewish News Syndicate*



## Huge Second Temple-era Quarry Unearthed in Jerusalem

**A MASSIVE QUARRY** dating to the Second Temple period has been uncovered in Jerusalem, offering a new glimpse into the capital's ancient past, the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] announced in July.

The quarry, which was unearthed in the city's present-day Har Hotzvim industrial park, is one of the largest ever found in Jerusalem, the state-run archaeological body said.

Two stone vessels, impervious to ritual defilement according to Jewish law, were uncovered at the site. According to the IAA, such vessels always signal the presence of a Jewish population.

During the excavation, the archaeologists also uncovered scores of various-sized building stones, as well as quarrying and cutting trenches whose outlines indicate the size of the blocks being produced.

"Most of the building stones extracted were huge rock slabs, whose length reached about 2.5 meters [8 ft.]. Their width was 1.2 meters [3.9 ft.] and they were 40 centimeters [15 in.] thick," said Michael Chernin and Lara Shilov, excavation co-directors on behalf of the IAA. "Each such quarried block weighed two and a half tons."

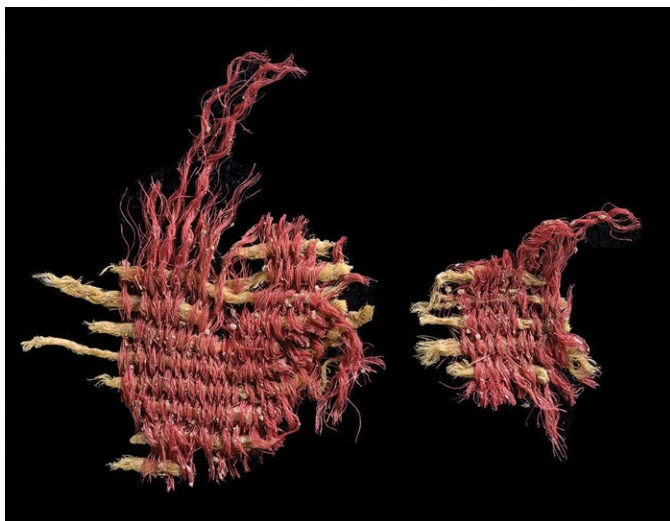
They noted that the impressive size of the stones produced at the site likely attests to their intended use in one of Jerusalem's many royal construction projects in the late Second Temple period, beginning under King Herod the Great's reign between 37–4 BC.

"It is reasonable to assume, with due caution, that at least some of the building stones extracted here were intended to be used as pavement slabs for Jerusalem's streets in that period," they said.

Herod's construction projects in Jerusalem included, first and foremost, the expansion of the Temple Mount area and the Temple itself.

In addition, during his reign, a series of impressive public buildings—palaces and fortifications—were built throughout the city, requiring a huge supply of high-quality construction stones. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

*Jewish News Syndicate*





**As I write this article** on the 310th day of Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, the nations are holding their collective breath, waiting to see if Iran or her proxies will make good on the threat of devastating direct missile attacks against the Jewish state. The United States, United Kingdom and France have all upgraded their military presence in the region even as intense international diplomatic efforts are being carried out.

The message from inside Iran is one of disunity. Newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian continues to express his opposition to military action, warning that a war with Israel will devastate the Iranian economy and further damage Iran's international standing. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is holding his cards pretty close to his chest, although his hatred for Israel and the West is renowned. Meanwhile, leaders of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) are demanding a severe response that "will teach Israel a lesson." They have publicly stated they no longer care if their actions trigger an all-out Middle East war. And amid this tug-of-war between those who anticipate catastrophic damage from direct conflict with Israel and those who are too embarrassed to back down, word has it that the man on the street in Tehran is enraged at the actions of the Iranian government and terrified that an unwinnable war with Israel will destroy their lives and their nation.

## Israel's Enemy on the Rise

Since Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, the country has remained loyal to the original priorities of the fanatic Islamic regime, including exporting revolution throughout the globe. According to the US State Department, Iran holds the dubious distinction of being the world's "foremost state sponsor of terrorism," providing "a range of support, including financial, training and equipment to terrorist groups around the world, particularly Hezbollah."

In the 45 years since the revolution, Iran has built a formidable army to protect the state's sovereignty. That is in addition to the IRGC, which the US Council on Foreign Relations calls the "ideological custodian of Iran's 1979 revolution," and whose role it is to defend the Islamic Republic from internal and external threats.

More impressive, however, is Iran's army of proxies, which includes more than a dozen militias and terror groups across the Middle East with outposts around the world. Their role is to foment instability and expand the scope of the Islamic Revolution. These groups are directly accountable to the IRGC.

## Courtesy of Tehran

It has become increasingly apparent that Hamas's horrific assault on Israel on October 7 was made possible by Iran. According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Iranian military leaders helped plot the attack and the IRGC approved the plan. Prior to the invasion, hundreds of Hamas operatives also received specialized training in Iran. Though they deny any knowledge of the incursion, it is a well-known fact that Tehran has armed, trained, provided intel to and funded Hamas for decades to the tune of US \$350 million a year.

But center stage in today's global arena is another Iranian proxy and Hamas partner in the aftermath of October 7: Hezbollah, a Shiite militant group based in Lebanon. Hezbollah has the distinction of being the world's most heavily armed non-state actor. It has often been called "a militia trained like an army and equipped like a state." It is known for its extensive security apparatus, political organization and social service network. In areas of Lebanon where it is in control, it functions as a government, a state within a state—to the chagrin of its detractors. And much like other states, it has an army, this one made up of at least 20,000 active fighters and some 20,000 to 30,000 reserves. It is the highest funded Iranian proxy, receiving in excess of US \$700 million per year, in addition to arms, intel, military support and training.

## The "Party of God" Is Born

Under an agreement signed in 1943, political power in Lebanon was divided among the country's predominant religious groups: a Sunni Muslim prime minister; a Maronite Christian president; and a Shiite Muslim speaker of parliament. Yet as Sunni Muslim Palestinian refugees arrived in the country and under political rule by a Christian minority, Shiites felt increasingly marginalized. Meanwhile, Palestinian fighters used southern Lebanon as a base to attack Israel, forcing the Jewish State to invade the area in 1978 and again in 1982. Most historians agree that the Lebanese Civil War, which raged from 1975 to

WAR

right around  
the corner?

1990 and resulted in 150,000 fatalities, was the result of animosity between those who supported the right of Palestinians to stage operations against Israel on Lebanese soil and those who didn't.

Hezbollah was born in the midst of that civil war. Seeing an opportunity to extend its reach in the region, Iran influenced a group of Shiites to take up arms against the "Israeli occupation" and throw their support behind the "Palestinian cause." With Iranian funding and training, the budding militia adopted the name Hezbollah, which means "Party of God," and earned a reputation for extreme militancy. Hezbollah quickly became a vital asset to Iran and has retained its predominance as Tehran has built its proxy army.

Today, Israel sees Hezbollah as its most direct threat. Since October 8, the terror group has repeatedly shelled northern Israel, necessitating the evacuation of tens of thousands of Israelis. Despite insisting that they do not want war and will cease shelling when a cease-fire is reached in Gaza, Israel is anticipating an escalation at any moment.

And Hezbollah is a formidable enemy. Israel estimates their arsenal to contain in excess of 150,000 missiles and rockets. Among them are sophisticated precision-guided ballistic missiles and guided anti-tank, ship and air missiles. They also have a large stockpile of unguided artillery and surface-to-surface rockets, drones and other Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles with sophisticated double-guidance systems.

In a recent televised speech, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah told Israel to expect to witness the destruction of its forces in attacks from air, land and sea. Prime Minister Netanyahu responded that Israel is not cowering to Nasrallah's threats, pointing out that the Hezbollah leader is rarely seen in public and does all of his broadcasting "from the depths of his bunker." Despite the banter, the jury is out on what scenario will actually materialize. But it seems clear at this time that without a diplomatic miracle, war is right around the corner.



Cheryl Hauer, *BFP Writer*





# FINDING FAITH

## IN DANGEROUS TIMES

**TOM AND I LIVED IN ISRAEL** for 33 years. We lived through wars, terror attacks, suicide bombings and terror arson. We ran to bomb shelters with our Israeli neighbors and donned gas masks during the Saddam Hussein era. At one period, suicide bombings in Jerusalem were a common occurrence.

Many international workers left in times of tension, their companies sending them to safer places, but we never left because of the danger. We felt that it was the best time to show our support for Israel when times were tough. Although there were times when we felt the adrenaline flowing through our bodies in response to the wailing sirens, we also had peace in our hearts. Many Israelis expressed amazement that we

had stayed, and that we had a peaceful heart in the midst of trouble. How is that possible?

I think one answer is that we find faith by remembering what God has done in the past and believing that He can and will act on our behalf in the future. In the Scriptures, the Lord tells us to remember His acts, and I believe it is for exactly this reason. He wants to build faith in His people. He told the Children of Israel to tell His faithful deeds to their children. Each year during the biblical cycle of feasts, the stories of God's acts on behalf of the Israel are retold. In a similar fashion, we learn from our parents and grandparents from their own experiences, and faith builds from generation to generation.

## Miracles Experienced

I have witnessed many miracles. One day, I was in Jerusalem walking near the *shuk* (open-air market) on my way to meet Tom. We had agreed on a specific time, and I didn't have time to stop and shop. So, when I had a sudden desire to stop in a bookstore, I immediately dismissed the idea, telling myself, "Becky, you don't have time or money. There is no point in stopping at the Book Maven!" I dismissed the thought three times, yet to my surprise, I suddenly found myself standing in the store, asking myself why I was there. That's when a bomb went off, right where I would have been walking had I not taken the detour into the store. I am convinced the Lord protected me.

## Miracles Witnessed

During the Gulf War in 1991, Saddam Hussein bombed civilian areas of Israel with 39 scud missiles. I saw buildings demolished entirely. Every day, we would read miracle accounts of protection in the paper. One stands out in my memory.

An Orthodox Jewish man arrived home on Friday afternoon, expecting a normal *Shabbat* (Sabbath) meal. Yet his wife met him, insisted that they not stay in their home for *Shabbat*. Where were they to go, he wondered, perplexed. He tried to reason with her, but she would not be calmed down. Finally, they took the whole family to another location.

That night, their home took a direct hit from a scud missile. It was completely destroyed. Yet their entire family was saved because the mother "knew" they had to be somewhere else. The papers showed this man wrapped in his prayer shawl walking up and down in front of his destroyed home, praying and thanking God for a righteous wife.

I remember another picture in the paper of a young man buried in rubble, with only his head protruding from the rocks. The first responders carefully cleared away the debris, only to find he wasn't injured in any way.

The Second *Intifada* (Palestinian uprising) raged from 2000–2005, and suicide bombings were common. Several Bridges for Peace volunteers were close when one of these bombers detonated, but were saved from harm. Two of our female volunteers were out walking down a particular street, when one told the other out of the blue, "We need to go in the other direction." They did so, and when they reached the top of the street, a bomb detonated at the bottom of the street—

right where they would have been had they not turned around. The lady told us afterward that the Lord spoke to her heart.

Another one of our volunteers was waiting for a bus when it blew up right in front of him. He felt like he was in a bubble, as a blast blew over and around him, without harming him physically.

When we volunteered on a *kibbutz* (collective community), Tom worked with a man who had been an officer in the First Lebanon War in 1982. He told of a time when he was directed to take his ten men and make sure a *wadi* (dry river canyon) was clear of enemy combatants. As they rounded a corner, a terrorist jumped from behind a rock, aiming a Kalashnikov automatic gun at them and emptying the clip at point blank range. The terrorist then managed to get a second clip in his gun and fired half of it before he was felled.

Yuval told Tom, "Nobody misses with an automatic weapon at that close range, but I wasn't hit. I turned around slowly, expecting to see all my men dead on the ground around me. But none of us had been hit."

Yuval admitted, "My men and I have talked about it many times, and we think that God sent angels and they blocked the bullets so we weren't hit."

Yuval admitted, "My men and I have talked about it many times, and we think that God sent angels and they blocked the bullets so we weren't hit."



The shuk in Jerusalem



A downed scud missile during the Gulf War



The BFP team praying together

## The Miracles Continue

Israel is once again facing a trying time, and once again, the Bridges for Peace team has chosen to stay put.

In April, Iran fired over 300 rockets and armed drones at the Jewish state. Israel and her allies were able to overcome the onslaught. All over Israel, people talked about the miracle that they had experienced.

The enemies of Israel will continue to try to annihilate the Jewish State, but we must remember that the God of Israel is alive. The way He acted in miraculous ways in the past, He will do in the future. We build our faith by remembering who He is, what He has promised and how He has acted in

the past. "Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved" (Ps. 62:1–2).



Rebecca J. Brimmer,  
International President

# Guilty as Charged?

Israel is in the unique position that its wars always rage on multiple fronts. While the army fights the physical battle on the ground, the anti-Israel lobby takes to the trenches to launch anti-Israel assaults in the battle for public opinion.

But there's a third front that's growing increasingly perilous. In the hallowed halls of international justice where the world's legal luminaries converge as custodians of justice and peace, Israel faces a calculated onslaught on her legitimacy. In fact, experts warn that Israel might be in for the fight of her life.

## But Where's the Peace?

In May 1899, international delegates gathered in The Hague to deliberate a future filled with peace and justice for all. The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and the vision for a "Temple of Peace" was born from the "First Hague Peace Conference."

The "Second Hague Peace Conference" followed in 1907, featuring the foundation stone laying for the "Temple of Peace," named the Peace Palace. Six years later, the keys to the Peace

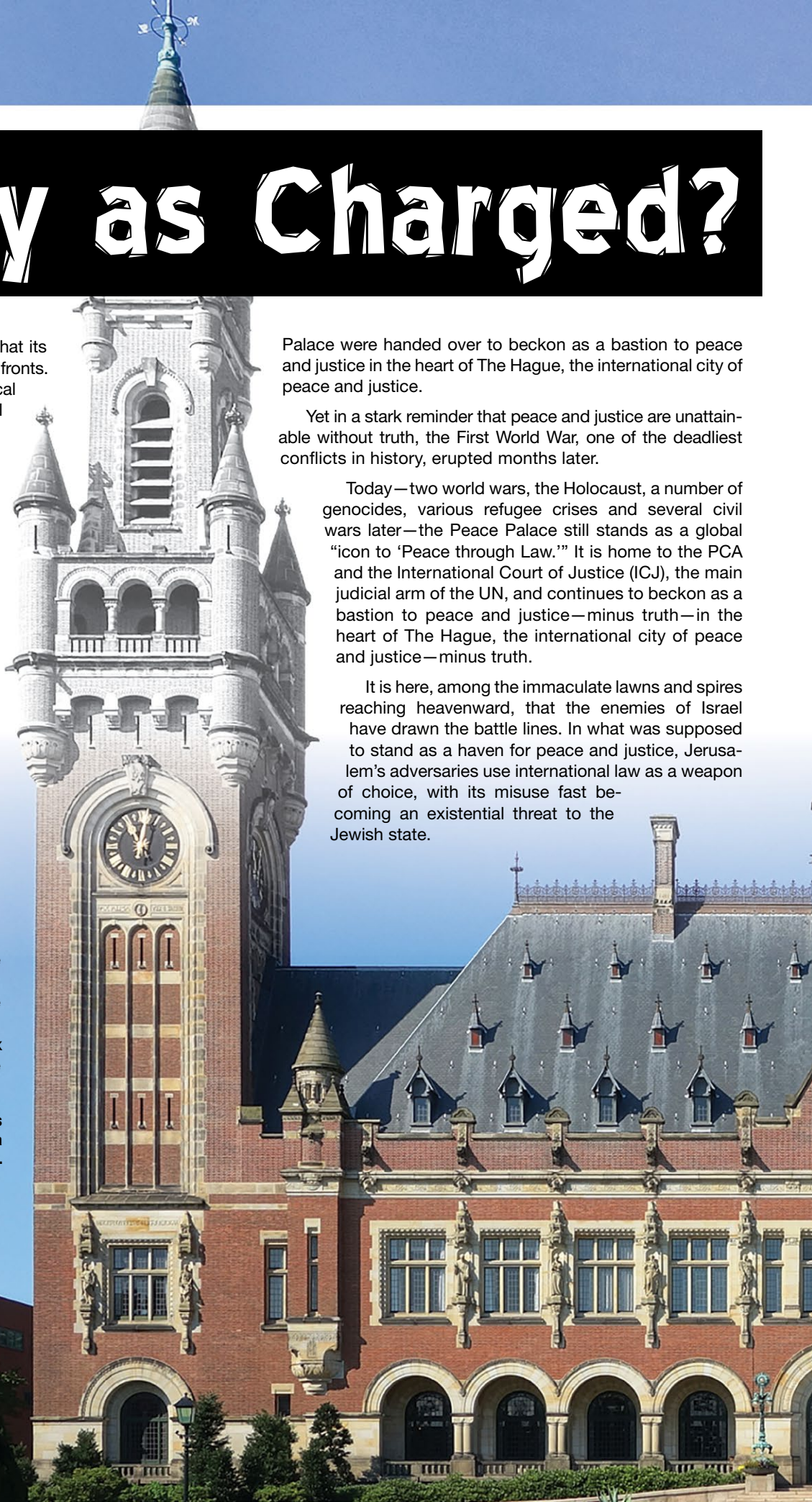
Palace were handed over to beckon as a bastion to peace and justice in the heart of The Hague, the international city of peace and justice.

Yet in a stark reminder that peace and justice are unattainable without truth, the First World War, one of the deadliest conflicts in history, erupted months later.

Today—two world wars, the Holocaust, a number of genocides, various refugee crises and several civil wars later—the Peace Palace still stands as a global "icon to 'Peace through Law.'" It is home to the PCA and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the main judicial arm of the UN, and continues to beckon as a bastion to peace and justice—minus truth—in the heart of The Hague, the international city of peace and justice—minus truth.

It is here, among the immaculate lawns and spires reaching heavenward, that the enemies of Israel have drawn the battle lines. In what was supposed to stand as a haven for peace and justice, Jerusalem's adversaries use international law as a weapon of choice, with its misuse fast becoming an existential threat to the Jewish state.

The Peace Palace in The Hague stands as a "Temple of Peace" in a world without peace.



## Lawfare

The Hague Initiative for International Cooperation (thinc.) works to provide a counter narrative. This global network of international law academics, practitioners and experts challenges the misuse of international law to delegitimize Israel, while advocating international law for peace and security between Israel and her neighbors.

Andrew Tucker, who heads up thinc., describes the assault against Israel as the essence of lawfare, where the law is employed as a weapon of warfare to achieve military objectives against an opponent. And 2024 has been a year filled with what seem like spectacular conquests for Israel's enemies.

First came South Africa's highly publicized genocide case against Israel at the ICJ, with the court issuing a highly ambiguous interim order determining South Africa has legal standing and ordering Israel to "take all measures within its power" to prevent a genocide. While the verdict left many scratching their heads as to exactly what such an order meant, both the media and South Africa interpreted it as a resounding victory.

Perhaps the pinnacle of abuse came in July, when an ICJ advisory opinion declared Israel's presence in eastern Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria—also known as the biblical heartland, where the lion's share of the Bible was either written or occurred—to be illegal. The court then called on Israel to dismantle all Jewish communities in what it termed "occupied Palestinian territories" and withdraw its people "as rapidly as possible."

The verdict constitutes a non-binding advisory opinion, Tucker concedes. Regardless, the impact is devastating. It could trigger a wave of sanctions and prompt governments to cut ties with the Jewish state. It will also fuel the fires of anti-Semitism, lend

a sense of legitimacy to the widespread anti-Israel sentiment sweeping the globe, serve as the proverbial rubber stamp for crowds chanting "From the River to the Sea" and incentivize violence against Jewish people. Moreover, the ruling can prompt the International Criminal Court to initiate criminal proceedings against individual Israeli officials administering Judea and Samaria. And then there's the possibility of the Security Council passing a resolution declaring the occupation illegal.

All this based on a hearing Tucker dismisses as an Israel-bashing crusade, with "no word about Hamas. No word about the Palestinians breaching the Oslo Accords and only one mention of October 7. It was like the proceedings took place in a parallel, Orwellian universe where they'd created this myth of a Palestinian state that has nothing to do with the reality on the ground."

## Worse—and Better—to Come

Lawfare against Israel is nothing new, Tucker grants. The accusations of occupation and genocide have resounded for years. "But now they've gotten the highest court to put a rubber stamp on it. This is a new level and we can expect to see the war being ramped up."

This might take the form of more countries following in South Africa's footsteps to accuse Israel of genocide, occupation or some other evil. All this to tie up a small state in various multi-billion dollar law suits that drain its manpower and talent, while at the same time turning it into a pariah across the globe.

Yet in the end, Tucker concedes, this is a spiritual battle. From a human perspective, in the court's eyes, it seems cut and dried. Divide the Land, give each party a share and be done with it. Yet this is a land unlike any other. Ultimately, it is the God of Israel who commands the unity of the Land of Israel.

No. There is simply no way to understand this Land and her people—and the forces that come against them—unless you look at it from a biblical point of view. Then it all makes sense.



Ilse Strauss,  
News Bureau Chief

# Israeli AI Technology SPREADS TRUTH AMID THE LIES

**AI technology is one of the more controversial** topics today. A powerful tool, it can aid or destroy us. Israeli start-up Revealense finds new ways to use this tool for our benefit. Through its platform Illuminator, Revealense works to help us make informed decisions about human interactions—and determine whether online footage is real or fake.

Illuminator is an AI neural network that recognizes cognitive dissonance or discomfort. It measures physiological characteristics like voice, blinking, facial expressions, blood flow and pulse through a live or recorded video. It then cross-references these measurements with each other to gauge the subject's emotional and mental state.

A large chunk of communication comprises non-verbal body language. Yet we might interpret this language differently depending on background, experience or mindset. Revealense's technology is unbiased, and gives an accurate summary of a person's feelings, revealing if they are hiding something and whether they are truthful. Moreover, the algorithm needs a mere 20 seconds of video to make a calculation.

What makes Revealense stand out is that it uses more than one information source. Like the polygraph, Illumination

monitors a person's breathing, blood pressure, pulse and perspiration, but then cross-references these measurements with each other to provide a 92% accurate reading.

Home Land Security uses Illumination to help identify potential criminals, insurance companies rely on it to see whether someone is truthful and human resources employ it to make hiring decisions.

Yet Illumination also spreads truth in the world of deepfakes. Every year, the amount of deepfakes increase by 245%, *Israel21c* warned. As technology gets better, it's becoming harder to differentiate between real and fake. Revealense's technology uses the same tools that measure truth in people to look for truth in AI videos. When it can't find any of the normal indicators that it uses to measure humans, it dubs the video a deepfake.

The possibilities with this technology are endless, helping us better understand ourselves and others. Revealense is pioneering a bright future for human interactions—and a dim one for online fraudsters.

Joshua Mott, *BFP Writer*



# Israel's "Superhero" Cocoa Plants Offers Sweet Hope for Chocolate Lovers

In recent years, the earth has experienced a continuous streak of extreme weather. In bad news for chocolate lovers, this has had a profound impact on the cocoa industry. Heavy rains, severe flooding and deadly fungal infections have taken a heavy toll in west Africa, the seedbed for three-quarters of the world's cocoa production. Over the last season alone, cocoa exports from this area have dropped 29% from the same season the year before, the *Times of Israel* warned.

Six years ago, Ellen Graber, an Israeli scientist and soil chemist expert, read about these problems. As a lover of chocolate, she decided to do something about it. In the past, Israel has successfully cultivated many tropical fruits, and were thus forced to solve problems with water, soil, climate, pests and diseases—the same problems facing the cocoa industry now.

As a result, "I believe we have something to offer," Graber was quoted in the *Times of Israel* as saying. "We know how to grow stuff when the climate isn't ideal."

On October 4, 2023, Graber sent 140 plants to a research facility in southern Israel near the Gaza border. Three days later, the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust occurred, and the research facility was cordoned off in a closed military zone. For months, no

one fertilized the cocoa plants, and they received only a little rain water.

Yet in January, Graber returned to find that 20 of the plants had survived. Not only that, they were even producing new leaves. The plants that survived showed considerable resistance to drought and cold temperatures. "I call them superheroes," she told the *Times of Israel*.

Graber has since returned the plants to her research center in central Israel, now dubbed the 'Cocoa Cure Center.' There, she will analyze the plants' genetic profile, test its resistance to fungal pathogens and solve the mystery of which creatures pollinate it.

While Israel is too small to become a chocolate superpower, the country could pave the way to providing quality cocoa plants and farming expertise to the rest of the world. As Graber told the *Times of Israel*, "I see this as a kernel, not only of a new crop for Israel, but actually for helping to populate the cocoa-growing regions of the world with plants that can withstand the challenges we are facing."

Joshua Mott, *BFP Writer*



# Israel Introduces "Speech" via the Power of Thought

A scientific breakthrough has demonstrated the potential for speech using the power of thought. In an experiment, a silent participant imagined saying two syllables. Depth electrodes implanted in his brain transmitted the electrical signals to a computer, which then vocalized the syllables.

These findings offer hope for people who are completely paralyzed to regain the ability to speak.

"The patient in the study is an epilepsy patient who was hospitalized to undergo resection of the epileptic focus in his brain," explained Dr. Ariel Tankus of Tel Aviv University's School of Medical and Health Sciences and Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center (Ichilov Hospital), who co-led the study.

"To do this, you need to locate the focal point," he said. "To identify the exact location, electrodes are implanted into deep structures of their brains. They are then hospitalized, awaiting the next seizure. When it occurs, the electrodes show where the focus is."

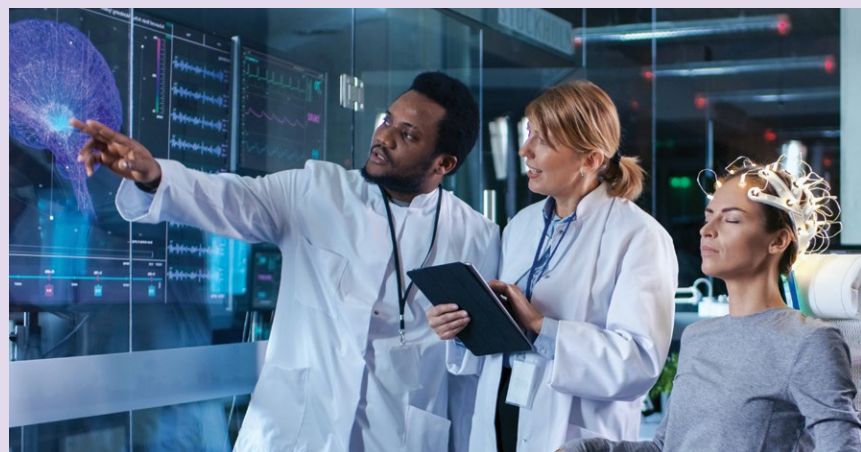
"The epilepsy patient agreed to participate in the experiment, which may help completely paralyzed individuals express themselves again through artificial speech."

In the first stage of the experiment, with the depth electrodes already implanted in the patient's brain, the

researchers asked him to say two syllables: /a/ and /e/. They recorded the brain activity as he articulated these sounds. The researchers then trained artificial intelligence models to identify the specific brain cells whose electrical activity indicated the desire to say /a/ or /e/. Once the computer learned to recognize the pattern, he was asked to imagine saying /a/ and /e/. The computer then translated the electrical signals and played the pre-recorded sounds of /a/ or /e/.

"For the first time in history, we connected the parts of speech to the activity of individual cells from the regions of the brain from which we recorded," Dr. Tankus explained. "At the moment, our research involves two building blocks of speech, two syllables. Our ambition is to get to complete speech, but even two syllables can enable a fully paralyzed person to signal 'yes' and 'no.'"

Tel Aviv University





# Red Dragon Rising

**FOR CENTURIES**, the West—anchored by Europe and the United States—has shaped the world’s political, economic and cultural landscape. However, we are living in times where the global balance of power is undergoing a seismic shift. The rapid rise of China, coupled with its significant financial influence globally, is redefining that global order. And as the world witnesses a transition from Western dominance to the rise of Eastern impact, China increasingly desires to play a pivotal role in determining the future trajectory of international relations and global governance, particularly when it comes to the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## The Times They Are A-Changin’

In the past, Beijing’s foreign policy was centered around economic growth, trade partnerships and securing resources to fuel its rapid development. Yet China has increasingly engaged in multilateral organizations and proposed new diplomatic frameworks, such as the Belt and Road Initiative and BRICS, which carry significant geopolitical implications.

BRICS is an economic cooperation bloc originally made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In January, the bloc expanded to include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Ethiopia. The group was established to unite the world’s leading developing economies in a bid to counterbalance the political and economic dominance of the wealthier nations in North America and Western Europe.

As the BRICS economic power grows, so does their ambition to influence global governance and resolve regional conflicts—driven by founding members China and Russia. Concerningly, Russian President Vladimir Putin



China’s President Xi Jinping and the PA President Mahmoud Abbas



invited Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas to attend the BRICS summit in Kazan in October 2024. Palestinian ambassador to Moscow Abdel Hafiz Nofal then announced via Russian state news agency TASS that “Palestine” will lodge its application to join BRICS after attending the summit.

As China and Russia continue to expand their influence through the BRICS bloc, Israel must contend with a shifting geopolitical landscape where its traditional allies may no longer hold the same sway, resulting in further isolation on the international stage.

### As Thick as Thieves

Beijing’s expanding influence in the Middle East adds significant complexity to Israel’s security challenges. China’s relationship with Iran extends beyond mere diplomacy and securing a seat at the BRICS table; it has become a lifeline for the Iranian regime, particularly as Tehran faces crippling global sanctions.

Global sanctions, primarily led by the United States and its allies, have aimed to cripple Iran’s economy in response to its nuclear ambitions and support for terrorism. However, China has consistently undermined these sanctions, providing Iran with the economic support it needs to sustain its regime. In a recent *Gatestone Institute* article, author and political commentator Gordon G. Chang explains that China’s purchase of Iranian crude oil accounted for about 90% of the Islamic Republic’s exports last year, which makes it a crucial source of revenue that has kept the Iranian economy afloat.

Following the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi made a public endorsement of Iran’s sovereignty and security, signaling Beijing’s tacit support for the Iranian-backed terrorist group.

According to Chang, China has been encouraging Iran to assert its influence through its proxies, including Hamas. Moreover, China’s provision of weapons and military technology to Iran further fuels the fire in the Middle East. These arms, often channeled through Iran to its proxies, have been used against Israeli targets.

As long as China continues to provide economic and military support to Iran, Tehran’s ability to challenge Israel through both direct and proxy means will persist. The implications for Israel of Chinese support for Iran are dire and deeply troubling.

### Peace, Peace but there is No Peace

To add insult to injury, on July 23, Beijing facilitated the signing of the Beijing Declaration, a unity agreement between 14 Palestinian factions, including the long-standing rivals Hamas and Fatah.



BRICS leaders from Brazil, China, South Africa, India and Russia

The split between Fatah and Hamas occurred in 2007 due to ideological differences and a power struggle following the last Palestinian elections in 2006. Fatah, a secular nationalist party, and Hamas, an Islamist militant group, clashed over governance, leading to Hamas taking control of Gaza and Fatah maintaining authority in the so-called West Bank as the PA.

China’s success to mediate between Israel’s enemies has raised alarm bells. A reconciled Palestinian front, especially one that includes Hamas—a recognized terrorist organization committed to Israel’s destruction—poses an immense threat to the Jewish state’s security.

With a birds-eye view of the changing global geopolitical landscape, Beijing’s involvement in Palestinian politics cannot be viewed as merely a diplomatic initiative. China’s ambitions of challenging Western dominance in the Middle East could destabilize Israel’s position in an already volatile region. By positioning itself as a mediator, China seeks to build soft power and secure its interests, including access to vital energy resources. Yet in the long term, these moves threaten to destabilize the region further by empowering factions hostile to Israel with weapons and finances. Unfortunately, it appears that Beijing’s motives go beyond a simple desire for peace. China’s role in reconciling Hamas and the PA, coupled with its sustained support for Iran despite global sanctions, presents a significant and growing threat to Jerusalem.

Israel faces the daunting challenge of navigating a geopolitical environment where its enemies are growing stronger and more coordinated, all while China’s economic influence through the BRICS bloc and its strategic alliances with countries like Iran threaten to shift the regional power dynamics. China’s future vision of a more balanced global order is one in which the Jewish state may regrettably find herself increasingly marginalized.



Nathan Williams,  
Director of Marketing  
and Communications

# Who's Starving the Gazan People?



**As voices all over the globe** shout that Israel violates international law by impeding humanitarian assistance into Gaza, and more specifically, committing genocide by starvation, there are two areas that need close examination. The first is understanding what international law requires of Israel in the current situation, which helps separate propaganda from truth. The second is reviewing the latest statistics on what Israel is actually doing, which brings facts to bear on these very contentious issues.

In this article, I frequently reference a document called the Law of War Manual. The United States Department of Defense (DoD) compiled this manual to assist DoD personnel—including legal practitioners and other military and civilian personnel as well as commanders in the field—to understand and apply international laws of armed conflict and humanitarian aid in conflict situations. It was put together with input from other nations in an effort to correctly interpret international law while maintaining consistent compliance with legitimate efforts to weaken an enemy while protecting non-combatants. Although the manual does not actually apply to Israeli military operations, its provisions shed significant light on how international laws of armed conflict apply to the situation in Gaza. A copy is available on the DoD website.

It is also necessary to examine the various accusations that are being leveled against Israel. There are many that seemingly apply to various actions or non-actions taken by the Jewish

state, but in the final analysis, they are all part of one vile propaganda campaign to convince the world that Israel's goal is the elimination of the Palestinian people...all of them.

## *The Epitome of Human Evil*

Commonly known as genocide, the world has seen it before. Often called the “epitome of human evil,” Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined the term in 1944 as he attempted to describe Nazi policies of systematic mass murder during the Holocaust, including the destruction of European Jews.

Today, the United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” The majority of genocide scholars generally regard this and other definitions to have an “intent to destroy.”

Since 1956, there have been several dozen genocides, some of which continue to this day, resulting in the deaths of nearly 60 million people. Anti-government forces, militias, religious groups and others have waged war in Africa, Asia, Europe and South

# "The food is there."

America, all with one thing in common: an intent to destroy. But today, Israel has a reputation as having the most moral army on earth. The Israel Defense Forces goes to extreme lengths to protect the lives of non-combatants, including sending texts and making phone calls, even in the midst of war, to warn civilians when an action is going to occur. Should it become apparent that civilians are in danger, even when a mission is in process, it is immediately aborted.

## But What About the Civilian Deaths?

Since its rebirth in 1948, the modern State of Israel has been known for its humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people, building field hospitals and providing medical care for their "enemies." No matter how deep you dig, an honest look at Israel's actions will never reveal an intent to destroy. Israel is not interested in annihilating the Palestinian people. It is attempting to rid the region of a common enemy, in this case, Hamas, thereby bringing peace and prosperity to Jews and Arabs alike.

Let's look at a practical example. The Law of War Manual clearly states that it is the responsibility of military combatants to clearly distinguish themselves from the civilian population. When they don't, they are responsible for the deaths of civilians, not the enemy who is unable to distinguish between the two. In such a case, the failure of soldiers to clearly identify themselves, by, for instance, opting against wearing uniforms, is a breach of international law. Hamas repeatedly uses Palestinians as human shields, hides in hospitals, school and mosques and takes pains to **not** be identified as combatants. That means Hamas is guilty in the deaths of Palestinian civilians, not Israel.

## When Food Becomes a Weapon of War

Today's news reports are rife with statements like "the Israeli army is using starvation as a weapon of war" and "Israel is destroying food supplies and severely restricting the flow of food, medicines and other humanitarian supplies." No one can deny that the Palestinian people are undergoing tremendous suffering. Their lives are in chaos and necessities like food and potable water may be difficult to find. But the facts simply do not support the accusation that Israel is at fault.

Only a few short days after the October 7 incursion, Israel began allowing humanitarian aid trucks into Gaza. Israel did this despite the fact that the Law of War Manual makes it clear that international law does not required them to do so if such

**"It's just that Hamas has it and refuses to distribute it."**

supplies are strengthening the enemy. Since then, millions of tons of food have been delivered to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East or UNWRA and other groups for distribution. During evacuations, Israel created humanitarian corridors to ensure the safety of evacuees and also established daily scheduled pauses in the fighting to allow

civilians to move about and receive the aid they required, all while fighting an enemy whose stated aim is the annihilation of the Jewish people.

Hamas, however, has stolen or otherwise appropriated the majority of the humanitarian supplies that have arrived in Gaza and has stockpiled food, medicine and other necessities for their own use.

In a recent interview with Bridges for Peace, Israeli Arab Yahya Mahamid brought reports of the situation. Yahya was raised in an Arab family in central Israel. Some of his family members are high-ranking officials in the Palestinian Authority and he has friends living in Gaza. From an early age, he was indoctrinated with anti-Israeli propaganda and taught to hate Israelis. However, as a young adult, he came to recognize the truth, that the enemy is not Israel but rather radical Islamists who care only about their ideology and not about what is best for the Palestinian people. Mahamid later joined the IDF, served as a combat soldier and was called up after October 7.



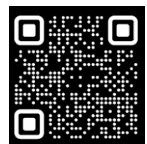
He explained that there is no food shortage in Gaza. "The food is there. It's just that Hamas has it and refuses to distribute it."

Tons of food, experts believe, are being used as a weapon of war. But not by Israel. The only player in this war whose actions fit the UN definition of genocide is Hamas. It is time that the international community recognizes who is who in this war and supports Israel as they fight for the survival of the region. If not, we may have a much larger genocide on our hands.



Cheryl Hauer, *BFP Writer*

Yahya Mahamid's interview forms part of a groundbreaking investigative series, *Israel Unfiltered*. Follow along with Christian, Jewish and Arab historical, military, religious and political experts for an insiders view of Israel, the Palestinians, Hamas and the Middle East in the shadow of war by scanning the QR code or visiting [israelunfiltered.tv](http://israelunfiltered.tv)



# REBIRTH OF THE MIDDLE EAST

**“MY GRANDMOTHER** is older than Israel.”

That’s a common buzz phrase for the anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian establishment, who point to the 1948 rebirth of the modern State of Israel as if the country had spawned out of nowhere. While it’s true that Israel as we know her today celebrated her 76th birthday this year, her rather recent official formation is actually not an anomaly in the region. Israel’s neighbors like Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq were all born around the same time as the Jewish State. Moreover, all these nations owe their formal formation to a similar set of circumstances.

But to understand the modern Middle East, we need to trace history back to antiquity.

## Rise and Fall of an Empire

The Ottoman Empire was birthed around 1299 by Turkish chief Osman I in Anatolia or Asia Minor, a large swatch of land in what is now Turkey. Osman’s name in Arabic was “Uthman,” from which the term “Ottoman” is derived.

From the 1300s to the 1700s, the Ottoman Empire spread across multiple continents, as the sultans expanded from Anatolia to a large portion of Eastern Europe, North Africa and part of the Middle East.

In 1453, Mehmed II, known as “Mehmed the Conqueror,” overthrew Constantinople, then the capital of the Byzantine Empire. He renamed the city Istanbul and established it as the new Ottoman capital, ending the 1,100-year Byzantine Empire’s reign.

The Ottoman Empire continued growing. The land that comprises the modern-day states of Syria, parts of the Arabian Peninsula, Israel and Egypt came under Ottoman control in the 1500s under Sultan Selim I.

By the 1600s, however, the Ottomans fell into the fate of all great empires, and their power began to wane. The Turks’ attempt to capture Vienna failed and the amount of land under their control began to shrink instead of grow. By the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, the Ottoman hold in Europe was all but gone. However, a stronghold remained in what is today the Middle East.

World War I put the nail in the Ottoman coffin when their army entered the fighting on the side of the Germans. When the war ended in 1918, what remained of the Ottoman Empire was divided up between Britain, France, Russia and Greece.

The rule of the sultans came to an end in October, 1923, and the modern-day republic of Turkey was born.



## The Dismantling of the Ottoman Empire

Under the Ottoman Empire, there was no Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or Israel. The Middle East was comprised of Anatolia, Syria, Arabia and the Hashemite kingdom of Hejaz (today Jordan and a western strip of modern-day Saudi Arabia). The land that now comprises Israel, Lebanon and even parts of Jordan were simply southern Syria, with loosely defined borders based on clan affiliation.

Following the Ottoman defeat in World War I, the victorious British and French set about dividing the land into smaller nation-states, according to previous agreements they had set forth during the war.

The British and French had both sent troops to fight against the Ottomans during World War I. Anticipating victory, they agreed during the Sykes–Picot Agreement in 1916 on how they would later carve up the land of the Ottoman Empire. Imperial Russia had been part of the agreement, but when the tsar was overthrown and Moscow withdrew from the agreement, it forfeited its potential acquisition.

Under the Sykes–Picot Agreement, the geographic area of Palestine was set to fall under international jurisdiction as the home of so many holy sites. However, the landmark 1917 Balfour Declaration changed the course. In a letter to Lionel Walter Rothschild, British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour expressed support for “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”

This declaration is credited as a major catalyst for the re-birth of the modern State of Israel, though it didn’t happen until much later in 1948—after World War II and the death of six million Jewish people in the Holocaust.

## Mandates and New States

The League of Nations was formed in 1920, following World War I. This international body, headquartered in Geneva and a forerunner of the United Nations, gave Britain and France mandates to transform the post-Ottoman Middle East into modern states.

Competition and cooperation between Britain and France led to the way they went about ruling their new charges and ended up shaping the borders of the Middle East as we know it today.

France took control of Syria beginning in 1919—and Syrian nationalists began rebelling almost immediately. The French government tried to divide and conquer by splitting Syria into mini states, including what would become the modern state of Lebanon.

The Syrian National Congress rejected the French mandate and proclaimed a Syrian king, Faisal I bin al-Hussein bin Ali al-Hashemi. Faisal and Chaim Weizmann, then the president of the Zionist Organization, famously penned the Faisal–Weizmann Agreement for Arab–Jewish Cooperation, in which Faisal accepted the Balfour Declaration and thus the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Israel.

Yet the French stamped out Faisal’s brief, unofficial reign in Damascus and expelled him from Syria. Meanwhile, in their



Top: The League of Nations. Middle: The Ottoman Empire during World War I

own mandate, Britain took the exiled Faisal and placed him in charge of Iraq, and then opted to place Faisal’s brother, Abdallah, in charge of the newly created Emirate of Transjordan.

But Arab demands for sovereignty only increased over the next decade. Britain acquiesced and granted Iraq independence in 1930 and Egypt in 1936. The kingdom retained its grip on the mandate of Palestine, however, insisting that it mediate the rising tensions between the Arabs and Jews.

World War II all but ended the mandates, as France and Britain had their hands full closer to home.

## The Ripple Effects

Following World War II, France tried to reestablish its rule in Syria, sending troops to quash the Syrian nationalists. International bodies and leaders demanded a ceasefire and a sovereign Syrian state. In 1946, the last of the French troops withdrew from Syria and Lebanon, leaving them free, independent states.

A mere two years later, on May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, head of the World Zionist Organization, declared the establishment of the State of Israel. The British mandate came to an end at midnight following the declaration of independence.

This brings us back to the common buzz phrase for the anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian establishment, boasting, “My grandmother is older than Israel” in an attempt to delegitimize the Jewish state. Yes, grandma might be older than the modern State of Israel, but she is also older than Israel’s Arab neighbors.

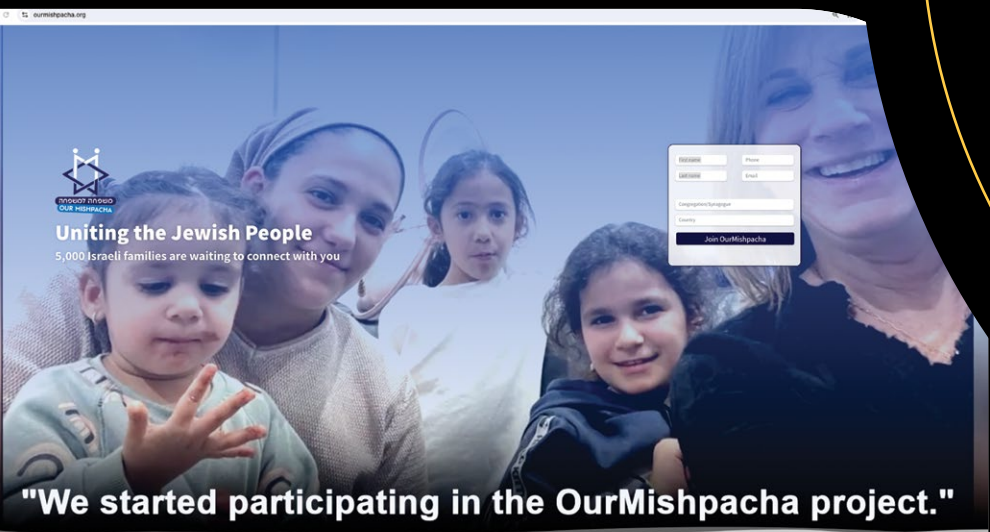


Kate Norman,  
BFP Writer

# STRONGER Together



**In 2023**, the core global Jewish population—the number of people worldwide identifying as Jews above all else—was approximately 15.7 million. That’s a pretty tiny number when you consider there are about 8.2 billion people alive today. Since October 7, 2023, that miniscule Jewish population has garnered a disproportionate share of the world’s hatred. It would be safe to say that the intensity with which Jews have been called to defend the actions of the State of Israel during the past year has been unprecedented.



On October 14th, 2023, OurMishpacha embarked on a mission to facilitate meaningful and enduring connections with families abroad and in Israel. Thousands have embraced our vision of unity. We invite you to join OurMishpacha and the hundreds of participants. We aim to bring together 20,000 families in 2024!

#### OurPartners





Israel has long struggled with public perception. Is she a democracy or an apartheid state? What about the Israel Defense Forces? Is it the world's most moral army determined to defend its citizens or an aggressive occupying force? With much of the world hurling baseless accusations at them, Israelis—as well as Jews who live in the Diaspora (outside of Israel)—have been reaching out to one another. One of the many ways they have been encouraging their community is through grassroots initiatives.

## INTER-CONNECTEDNESS

I have been an interested observer of the Jewish community since my first trip to Israel in 2002. I was raised in Alaska, where there is a Western attitude of rugged independence and self-sufficiency—and an almost non-existent Jewish population. So, that first trip to Israel was eye-opening on many levels. At first, the Jewish inter-connectedness baffled me with its primary focus on the community as a whole, rather than the individual. Yet, I have come to see the inter-connectedness of the Jewish people is an integral part of who they are. It therefore stands to reason that when one part of the community was injured, as in the horrific events of October 7, no matter where in the world they were, the rest of the community suffered as well. I'd like to look at just a few of the community-building responses borne out of the tragedy of October 7.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

The internet has enabled community-building on a scale that could not have been imagined even a mere 30 or 40 years ago. While we may, at times, grumble about our loss of privacy, social media does have many positive benefits. Here are just two internet initiatives that were birthed in those painful days one year ago.

“Heroes Live On” is an internet learning site developed by the Israeli non-profit organization Hilma-Tech for Impact. Its purpose is to help connect Jewish students around the world to the events of October 7 in a positive way. Working with the Jewish Federations of Canada UAI, the platform contains profiles of soldiers and civilians who died on that day. Students read life stories and learn about the character traits of the fallen, such as courage, leadership, giving and friendship. As they do, the legacy of that person lives on. Furthermore, students are encouraged to choose a fallen hero, pick one of their character traits and show how they can emulate it in their own lives.

While Hilma is busy connecting young Jewish students with Israel, “Our Mishpacha” (Our Family) is working to connect Israeli families with those in the Diaspora (the Jewish population outside Israel). Founder Abi Bitton was a successful real estate developer in New York City when his life took a dramatic turn. He was engaged to be married and had mapped out their life as a couple in the Big Apple when he happened to be visiting Israel last October and the Jewish world was turned upside down. In an interview with *JNS*, he relayed what he had said to his fiancée, “We can't leave Israel. This is a defining moment for our nation, and we need to do something about it.”

Bitton's idea was to create an online platform where Jewish families from around the world are matched with Israeli families in order to build relationships. Since its beginning, Israeli

applicants have outnumbered those from the Diaspora by a factor of five to one. This shows tangible evidence that Jewish families living in Israel need to know they are not alone. Bitton's goal for “Our Mishpacha” is to enable Jewish people the world over “to become better, stronger and more united than ever before.”

## FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE

Over the past year, Jewish college students in North America and Europe have found themselves on the frontlines of an ugly, often violent battle that portrays Israel as an occupier and worse. Perhaps more than any other segment of the Jewish community, they need the strengthening of relationship with the Land of Israel itself.

For the past 25 years, Taglit Birthright Israel has brought young Jewish men and women between the ages of 18 and 26 for a free and educational 10-day tour of the Land. The program's aim is to cement their bond with the State of Israel. Over 800,000 young adults have taken part in the program and are equipped to speak with first-hand knowledge about this nation and the challenges it faces. The tours did not stop when war broke out. Since January 2024, over 15,000 young adults have visited Israel on a Birthright tour.



A Taglit Birthright tour

The tours have been coming with a new emphasis on the Jewish identity and inter-connectedness of the participants. In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, Birthright's International CEO, Gidi Mark, said: “In light of recent events...we must come together to ensure that we are providing the support, knowledge and perspectives that our participants need, now more than ever, to continue to thrive and develop their Jewish identity.”

## TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Millennia ago, King Solomon said this: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov. 17:17). I want to be more than simply an observer of the wonderful resilience and inter-connectedness of the Jewish community. I want to be one who stands with them in these difficult times of adversity. Then we can truly be stronger together.



Janet Aslin, *BFP* Writer



# Together, We Will Win

**THIS MONTH, WE ARE** at the one-year anniversary since the Hamas invasion on October 7. One year. How does one capture a year of trauma, loss, agony, miracles, triumphs, tragedies, anger, sorrow and just about every other emotion you can think of?

On October 7, Hamas invaded our country. Make no mistake, this wasn't just a mere terror attack. This was a full-scale invasion. We are all familiar with the horror stories of that day: the murders in their grotesque and depraved magnitude; the mutilation; the rapes and gender-based violence; the torture; and the kidnapping. And as we still have young women and girls held captive a year later, we fear the worst. I don't need to explain in detail what our fears are.

It has been a year of profound devastation, but also of exceptional resilience and heroism. Over the past year, we have lived Naomi Shemer's iconic song, *Al Kol Eleh*, which highlights the profound polar opposites we often experience simultaneously in life, like the bitter side-by-side with the sweet, the honey or *dvash* alongside the sting or *oketz*. That is what we are living every single day in Israel.

I know many outside Israel look at us and see a nation so resilient, a nation that puts one foot in front of the other and simply carries on. You see us on the beaches and going to the mall, carrying on with our day-to-day business. But the truth is, if we were to stop moving, we'd fall apart.

The truth is that for every Israeli, it is still October 7. It does not matter how many days have passed since that Black Shabbat, for Israelis, every day is October 7. The trauma is still very real. It is impossible to speak about something post-traumatic, because we are still dealing with the magnitude of the trauma of October 7. So if you scratch under the surface of this incredibly resilient looking country, you will find a nation deep in grief. All you have to do is look in our eyes and you will see that deep sorrow.

Many of us have husbands, colleagues, sons or brothers fighting in Gaza or fighting in the north, fighting for our very survival. Many of us are taking on the workloads of multiple colleagues because we've lost them to the front. Every single one of us have felt the hands of death, whether it is losing people who were murdered on October 7 or who fell in defense of the State of Israel. Each and every one of us know at least one person who is held hostage in the Gaza Strip. That makes it a very personal war.

The alarming rise of antisemitism is strikingly evident in the international media, city streets, university campuses and social media. October 7 seemed to have triggered a tsunami of hatred. We thought the world understood and empathized with us, but we weren't even given 24 hours grace to mourn. We weren't even given 24 hours grace for empathy or sympathy before the celebrations and the denial began. I believe it takes a special kind of personality that is completely enslaved by hatred to witness the most well-documented massacre in human history and to respond to the atrocities with celebration or denial—or a combination of both.

The world's reaction has woken Israelis up to a new reality. We received the message loud and clear from the international community that despite our trauma and despite everything we've gone through, they still are not on our side. It has made us extremely strong and resilient, because to be strong and resilient is to be victorious. However, it has also been a massive punch to our gut and a smack to our souls. We came to the realization that we are very much alone.

That being said, I want to thank you, our Christian brothers and sisters, for your support. As we've moved through this year, you've literally held us up on your shoulders with your love and support. Yes, we are strong and resilient, but we can't be strong and resilient all the time. Like a vase, Israel and the Jewish people have been thrown to the floor. We were broken, but the broken pieces were picked up and put back together. We might appear to be fixed, but we will never be the same again. Like the magnificent Iron Dome defense array protecting the skies over Israel, your prayers and support provide the spiritual Iron Dome resting over our nation.

A year of betrayal, a year of our loved ones fighting and our loved ones dying and a year of our brothers and sisters being held hostage in unbearable conditions has birthed a new Israeli. It is an Israel that is fiercely patriotic, regardless of



**“I want to thank you, our Christian brothers and sisters, for your support.”**

where you sit on the political spectrum. It is an Israel that could not be more proud of its younger generation. Our young people have known pain and heartbreak. Many of them have lost friends and peers fighting for their country or during the massacre. But while so many others around the world are looking for their safe space or addicted to TikTok, young Israelis have risen to the challenge. They did not wait to be called up. They heeded the call the moment the rockets and the bullets started flying. They came from all around the world and they understood the mission without being told. This generation of young Israelis are like their grandparents before them who fought the War of Independence. Now they are fighting our second War of Independence. They have shown up magnificently. They run toward the danger and they do that with pride. They do that with their blue and white flag waving proudly.

It's not only our youth though. Every person in this country knows what our mission is, whether it's me speaking in the media, somebody visiting the sick, raising money, comforting the widows or doing whatever they need to do, every single one of us in Israel has a mission. The Israeli, the Jew that has been born one year after October 7 has a stronger sense of identity. We know how to deal with the honey and the sting, the *dvash* and the *oketz*. We've flexed our resilience muscles like it's never been flexed before. One year on, we know, despite the trauma and the sorrow that is still part of every day, despite the antisemitism and the accusations coming against us, *yachad nenatzeach*. Together, we will win.

*Rolene Marks is a freelance journalist and broadcaster, who features frequently on international radio and television. Her articles appear in numerous global publications and she is a sought-after key note speaker. Marks is the owner of Rolene Marks Consulting, specializing in media, public relations, consulting on Jewish and Israel-related issues as well as media training with both local and international clients.*



# TOURS

## AUSTRALIA

**ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR October 27–November 9, 2024**

**Hosted by: Matthew Chivers**

Join us for a life-changing experience as we take you on a journey through the Land of the Bible and stand with Israel “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14b). The tour includes many biblical sites, including Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, Nazareth, the Galilee and the Dead Sea. We will also participate in the anniversary of the Battle of Beersheva and the heroic charge of the Australian Light Horse Brigade as well as a special *Shabbat* (Sabbath) of a Lifetime dinner. Contact the office for a booking form.

## CANADA

**ISRAEL, THE LAND OF PROMISE, BOTH THEN AND TODAY July 20–31, 2025 Hosted by: Réal Bois**

Explore the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants. We travel from the Galilee in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. No tour would be complete without exploring Jerusalem, the City of the Great King!  
rbois@bfpcan.org 204-470-1029

## NEW ZEALAND

**ISRAEL PILGRIMAGE TOUR TBA Hosted by: Beth Mather**

Please contact the office for more information.

## UNITED KINGDOM

**ISRAEL TOURS Dates available throughout 2024/2025**

**Hosted by: Michael and Sian Treharne**

Throughout 2025, we will host eight-day tours for small groups in Israel. We will also host a special walking tour in Israel and a visit to Poland. Contact the office for more information.

## UNITED STATES

**LAND OF THE BIBLE STUDY TOUR 2025**

**March 16–29, 2025 Hosted by: Dr. Bill and Lizzie Adams**

Travel the Land of the Bible with your seasoned hosts Dr. Bill and Lizzie Adams and expert guide Allen Rabinowitz. Track the footsteps of Jesus (Yeshua), Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the prophets and the apostles. This life-changing experience includes connecting with modern heroes of Israel, including a service opportunity in an Israeli community. Join us!



# Volunteer with Us

**Don't just read about biblical prophecy, join our team of volunteers in Israel to live it out.**

Grow in your relationship with God while making a difference in the lives of the people of Israel.

- Administrative Assistant
- Graphic Designer
- Home Repair Team
- Journalist
- Proofreader
- Social Media Team
- Videographer

**Apply NOW**



**FAQ**



# Katarina's Sukkot Chocolate Delight

This decadent chocolate tart is the perfect treat to enjoy with loved ones under the *sukkah* (booth). The pomegranates adds a bit of zest—and a fresh, seasonal twist.

## Ingredients

### Crust

- 1 ¼ cup powdered/icing sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 3 ¼ flour
- 7/8 cup butter, cold
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 Tbsp. cold water

### Ganache Filling

- 1 ¼ cup double cream
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla essence
- 2 ¾ cup dark chocolate chips (between 50% to 70%)
- ½ cup butter, room temperature
- ½ cup full fat milk
- Pomegranate seeds, syrup and chopped pistachios for garnishing

## Directions

1. Prepare the crust first, as it needs time to chill in the fridge before baking.
2. Combine the powdered/icing sugar, flour and salt, then add the butter and combine until the mixture is dry and crumbly.
3. Add the egg yolks and water and combine just until a dough forms, taking care not to over mix.
4. Leave in the fridge to chill for at least an hour.
5. Preheat the oven to 356°F (180°C) while the crust chills.
6. Cover a 10–11-inch (26–28-cm.) pie form with a loose base with the chilled dough and then return to the fridge for an additional 5 minutes.
7. Using a fork, prick the bottom part of the crust, then cover with a layer of baking paper and baking beans.
8. Bake for 10 minutes in the preheated oven.
9. Remove the baking beans and paper, and bake for another 10–12 minutes until light brown.
10. Set aside to cool before adding the filling.
11. In a saucepan, heat the cream, sugar, salt and vanilla until nearly boiling.
12. In a large mixing bowl, pour the hot cream mixture over the chocolate chips. Allow to sit for half a minute, then stir until smooth and glossy.
13. Allow the mixture to cool for 5 minutes, then stir in the butter.
14. Add the milk and combine well.
15. Pour the ganache into the crust and allow to cool in the fridge until the filling is set.
16. Decorate with chopped pistachios and serve with pomegranate syrup and fresh seeds.

serves  
**10**





## Iranians Side with Israel, EVEN AGAINST THEIR OWN REGIME

**For 45 years**, the Iranian people have been subjected to a dictatorial Islamic government that prioritizes support for terrorism and enables rampant levels of corruption over the wellbeing of the people, the Iranian economy and the future of the state.

The regime has faced several attempted popular uprisings but has repeatedly squashed them with appalling barbarity and violence against their own people. Now, instead of fixing problems at home, the Islamic regime in Iran is making every effort to launch a war against Israel.

*Ynetnews* spoke with Iranians in the aftermath of the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on Iranian soil to see their feelings and reactions regarding a potential war against Israel.

Overall, the Iranian people are extremely pro-Israel and reject the regime's warmongering, but multiple Iranians expressed concern about operating on Iranian soil. F. stated, "I was worryingly happy as he [Haniyeh] got what he deserved, but I'd rather he was dealt with someplace else." He added, "I also had a good feeling that potentially some Iranians were involved."

When asked about the possibility of an all-out war between Israel and the Islamic Republic, most of the Iranians expressed more fear of the Islamic Republic than of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]. "I am not scared of Israeli retaliation because I know that IDF and Israeli officials see us Iranian people on their side and would do whatever they deem necessary to minimize the collateral damage."

"However, what I'm definitely scared and worried about is the extent and nature of the regime's avenging effort! I'm more worried about the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] than the IDF for sure," said F.

A., who has previously been imprisoned for his activism against the regime, told *Ynetnews* "all Iranians" were delighted by the assassination. "We are really against the regime of the Islamic Republic and Hamas, Hezbollah and the Taliban, who are all connected with the murderous regime of the Islamic Republic."

A. also detailed how the Islamic Republic responds after major events such as the assassination of Haniyeh. "The regime is scared because every time one of the heads of the government like Qassem Soleimani and the rest of the IRGC members are killed, the regime is closer to its defeat, which fuels fear in the security forces."

In the initial hours after news broke of the assassination of Haniyeh, Persian social media was flooded with celebratory messages, with some even thanking the IDF. While the regime held memorial services inside Iran, videos surfaced online showing Iranians celebrating with a sign in Arabic and Persian in public next to a platter of sweets, calling Haniyeh a terrorist.

While the Iranian people continue to face brutal repression at the hands of the regime, there's no question that the majority not only have no problem with the Jewish state but have a deep love and desire for friendship in the future.

Excerpt from an article by Emily Schrader, *Ynetnews*

# Volunteers Saved US \$50 Million in Israeli Produce during War

**Volunteers in Israel** have saved agricultural produce valued at US \$50 million since the start of the war against Hamas in Gaza, even amid major damage to the country's agricultural sector.

Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from Israel and around the world have helped rescue over 35,000 tons of produce, according to Leket Israel, the National Food Bank, a registered Israel-based charity.

Nearly one in two Israelis volunteered in the first months of the war, while both Jewish and Christian volunteers from around the globe came to Israel to help hard-hit farmers harvest their crops.

The price of fresh produce in Israel still increased by as much as 18% during the first six months of the war, while fruit prices rose by as much as 12%.



Bridges for Peace volunteers help pick avocados at Kibbutz Be'eri, next to the Gaza border.

Nearly a third of Israel's agricultural land lies in frontline areas, with about 22% in the Gaza border area and 10% on the northern border with Lebanon.

Excerpt from an article by Etgar Lefkovits, *JNS*

## Israeli Diplomacy Doing Well Despite War

**Israeli diplomatic relations** are in good shape after months of war, although some envoys called home have not returned to their posts.

Columbia remains the only country to downgrade its relationship with Israel from embassy to a consular level, and Jerusalem's diplomatic relations continue behind the scenes.

In fact, compared to previous wars, Israel's diplomatic situation is better. Several countries are standing by Israel, including the US, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Argentina.

Spain, Norway and Ireland recognized a Palestinian state in May. The following day, Foreign Minister Israel Katz ordered the recall of the three ambassadors for consultations as a diplomatic protest and to send a sharp message. Although no ambassadors have been present there in the past months, diplomacy continued. The ties with the three nations were tense before the war. The Foreign Ministry said Israel had no intention of severing relations and closing embassies and is waiting for better days to send its diplomats back.

Israel's ambassador to Turkey was recalled after October 7 due to security reasons. Since then, only a diplomatic team has been sent to Turkey. The Turks recalled their ambassador to Israel for consultations, and he has been stationed in Ankara since. Both ambassadors continue to manage relations behind the scenes and maintain contact.

Colombia has taken the harshest action against Israel. President Gustavo Petro, a former terrorist and extremist, severed relations with Israel. The ban isn't complete, as Colombia maintains consular relations with Jerusalem.

Bolivia severed relations with Israel, but no ambassadors had been appointed.

Chile's president recalled his country's ambassador to Israel. The Israeli ambassador remained in Chile and continues to work as usual.

Brazilian President Lula da Silva decided to recall his country's ambassador to Israel. The move took place hours after Katz reprimanded the ambassador, following Lula's comparison of Israel's actions to those of Hitler and the Nazis. Israel's ambassador to Brazil remained in Brasilia. The embassy and consulate continue to work with state governors and parliament, but their contact with Lula's administration has been blocked.

Honduras recalled its ambassador. Israel has an ambassador in Honduras, and the embassy is operational.

Israel recalled its ambassador to South Africa for consultations following statements supporting Hamas and severe condemnations, as well as a lawsuit against the country at the UN's International Court of Justice for alleged "genocide." South Africa, which didn't have an ambassador in Israel previously, recalled its diplomats. Relations between the countries are very cold.

Since the outbreak of the war, Israel has recalled its ambassadors and diplomats from embassies in Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Bahrain for security reasons. Israel's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates continued working as usual. Since October 7, most embassies in Arab countries have returned to normal operation under strict security guidelines.

Excerpt from an article by Itamar Eichner, *Ynetnews*



# PARTNER WITH US TO BLESS ISRAEL

## VICTIMS OF TERROR

We deliver special cheer baskets to anyone touched by terrorism. Special needs, such as wheelchairs, food vouchers and financial assistance for medical bills are provided for those in long-term rehabilitation.



## WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

God invites us in Isaiah 1:17 to partner with Him to “defend the fatherless” and “plead for the widow.” We assist those in need by providing food parcels to help make ends meet and put food on empty tables.



## ADOPT AN ISRAELI TOWN

Show compassion to needy families by supporting one of 23 Israeli towns that are experiencing severe economic hardship. We work with community officials across Israel to ensure those in need are fed.



## FOOD PROJECT

You can help feed over 24,000 needy Israelis in 40 communities every month by supporting our Food Bank in Jerusalem.



### CHECK OUT OUR OTHER PROJECTS

Visit [www.bridgesforpeace.com/learn/bridges-for-peace-in-action/](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/learn/bridges-for-peace-in-action/) or scan the QR Code

### PRINTABLE COUPON

If you require a printable donation coupon, please visit [www.bridgesforpeace.com/coupon](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/coupon)



After the destruction... After the heartbreak... After the unthinkable... Israel is rebuilding.

# WILL YOU JOIN THE EFFORT TO REBUILD WHAT THE ENEMY TRIED TO DESTROY?



Scan to give to our Crisis Assistance Fund today  
or visit <https://www.bridgesforpeace.com/projects/21-crisis-assistance-fund/>



**NEW**

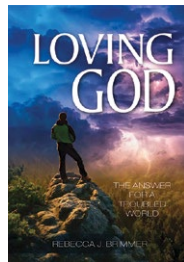
**ISRAEL TOUR JOURNAL REVISED EDITION  
BFP & MIUD Leadership**

Your must-have travel companion through Israel. Each page describes an important biblical site, offers spiritual application and modern life lessons and provides Scripture verses.

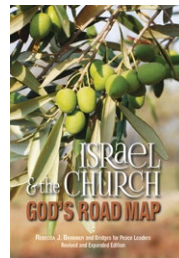


**ORDER ONLINE**  
Scan the QR code or go to [shop.bridgesforpeace.com](http://shop.bridgesforpeace.com)

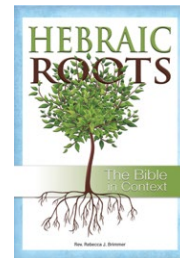
**PRINTABLE FORM**  
If you require a printable order form, please visit [www.bridgesforpeace.com/coupon](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/coupon)



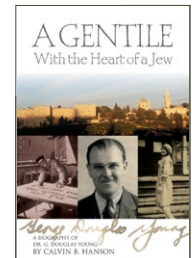
**LOVING GOD: THE ANSWER FOR A TROUBLED WORLD**  
Rebecca J. Brimmer  
This book explores how Jesus' truth provides the answers our troubled world needs.



**ISRAEL & THE CHURCH: GOD'S ROAD MAP**  
Rebecca J. Brimmer & BFP Leaders  
Excellent for small group or personal study. This book includes study questions.



**HEBRAIC ROOTS: THE BIBLE IN CONTEXT**  
Rebecca J. Brimmer  
Concepts that are sometimes complex and foreign to our Western worldview are explained from a Hebraic perspective.



**A GENTILE WITH THE HEART OF A JEW**  
Calvin B. Hanson  
The life of Dr. G. Douglas Young, founder of Bridges for Peace, will inspire you to stand with Israel.



**SCRIBES & SCHOLARS**  
Cheryl Hauer  
Learn about the Hebrew language: write it, speak it, mix your own ink and make a biblical scroll. Includes fun activities and 40 Hebrew flash cards. (Ages 11-14)



**ISRAEL: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE**  
Cheryl Hauer  
Through puzzles, games, crafts and other activities, children will learn about Israel's land, people, food and language...and have fun doing it! (Ages 7-12)



**THE BLESSING**  
Carolin Sadler  
Join a Jewish family as they joyfully share their *Shabbat* (Sabbath) traditions. The fourth commandment will become personal as your family learns to experience God's rest. (Ages 7-12)



**CELEBRATE WITH ISRAEL HOLIDAY COLORING BOOK**  
Children will experience the joy and excitement of Israel's festival cycle through our holiday coloring book, a great introduction to life in Israel.



**TRIBES OF ISRAEL**  
Cheryl Hauer  
Well-known Bible stories come alive as your children read about the tribal lifestyle of the patriarchs. The book includes activities that will enrich their understanding. (Ages 11-14)



Join our

# MEDIA TEAM

- ✦ **Graphic Designer**
- ✦ **Proofreader**
- ✦ **Journalist**
- ✦ **Social Media Team**
- ✦ **Videographer**



Scan or visit [bridgesforpeace.com/get-involved/volunteer](https://bridgesforpeace.com/get-involved/volunteer)

# Dispatch From Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace • October 2024 • Vol. 49 No. 5  
www.bridgesforpeace.com • Your Israel Connection®



## ISRAEL UNFILTERED

*Confronting the Realities of War*



Bridges for Peace is proud to announce the launch of *Israel Unfiltered: Confronting the Realities of War*, a hard-hitting investigative series providing an insider's view of October 7 and the ensuing war.

Featuring interviews with world-renowned experts like Col. (Ret.) Richard Kemp, Dr. Jonathan Spyer, Itamar Marcus, Neil Lazarus and others.

Visit

**ISRAELUNFILTERED.TV**

or scan the QR code

