

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

# OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

## Statistics Confront Morality

By Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

The images coming out of Gaza have been jarring.

We're seeing families bereaved, houses destroyed and cities that will never look the same way again, and an unprecedented evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from a warzone.

Tragically, these events are not unique in a time of war. But what is interesting here is the role of the supposed aggressors and victims in this conflict, and what they're each doing to make an already difficult situation better or worse.

From the moment Israel was heinously attacked on October 7th – a Jewish holiday – and experienced the largest single day loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust, Hamas – the nominal government of Gaza – knew what response they were bringing upon themselves and their communities.

One of the many secrets to Israel's continued existence in an unfriendly neighborhood is its perceived military might. That is the only reason the surrounding enemy states have not launched a joint campaign to wipe Israel off the map; because they've tried and lost at least three times in 75 years and have made the wise decision to stay away from direct conflict with Israel.

However, Hamas is a terror organization, not a rational government who cares for its citizens. And so, when they were planning the October 7th Massacre, they accounted for what Israel's response might be and took steps to insulate themselves – the terrorists and leaders living large in Qatar – at the expense of their supposed constituency. Hamas employed its modus operandi of hiding and entrenching themselves in urban areas surrounded by civilians, and took hostages to use as a negotiating chip, which they thought would force Israel to back off from an all-out war amid internal and international pressure.

But for Israel to ensure its safety and long-term viability as the only country for Jewish people and liberal democracy in the region of 22 illiberal Arab states, there was one acceptable response to the barbaric atrocities the horrified world witnessed thanks to Hamas' livestreamed butchery: the complete eradication of Hamas' existence and Gaza's ability to serve as a launch for terror operations in Israel.

For two weeks, amid impatient waiting, Israel didn't respond with the all-out invasion of Gaza that the world was expecting. They targeted terror bases by air, while sending texts, flyers, and calls to the residents of northern Gaza, begging them to leave what would soon become an active warzone. The leadership of Hamas brutally forced their own people to stay in harm's way acting as human shields, because they need pictures of the dead to create the precise tragic images and stats we're seeing now to wield as tools to force Israel off its mission of eliminating the terrorist threat.

No other country in history has done what Israel does to ensure their enemy's civilian populations' safety: two weeks of warnings from multiple platforms, setting up and guarding humanitarian corridors while under heavy fire from Hamas itself, and publicizing the location of specific engagement plans at the risk of their own soldiers. And yet many across the world and in our media are falling for Hamas's ruse of ensuring a high death count, in order to hold Israel to an impossibly high standard as it takes on a barbaric enemy with one hand tied behind their back.

Taking the numbers of Hamas' propagandist Ministry of Health with a grain of salt (as President Joe Biden did, because they have been proven to make up numbers and include terrorists in death counts), it is clear many thousands have died during this war. But lopsided death counts in war don't negate morality or the righteousness of the cause of defeating evil when it stares us in the face.

During WWII, there were about 4.2 million German deaths and about 1.972 million Japanese deaths, of which many victims were certainly innocent. Imagine if the world called for the war to end on Hitler's terms, just because 298,000 Americans died, much less than their enemy. Would the world be a better place? Only people who are calling for the eradication of Israel from the (Jordan) river to the (Mediterranean) sea would think so, and no sane people would agree. Lopsided statistics don't negate morality or the importance of good to defeat evil.

War is tough and brutal and tragic. But Hamas cannot be rewarded for its practice of taking hostages and human shields and be spared from the consequences of its heinous actions just because the world is squeamish and seeing the battle in real time on TikTok and Instagram.

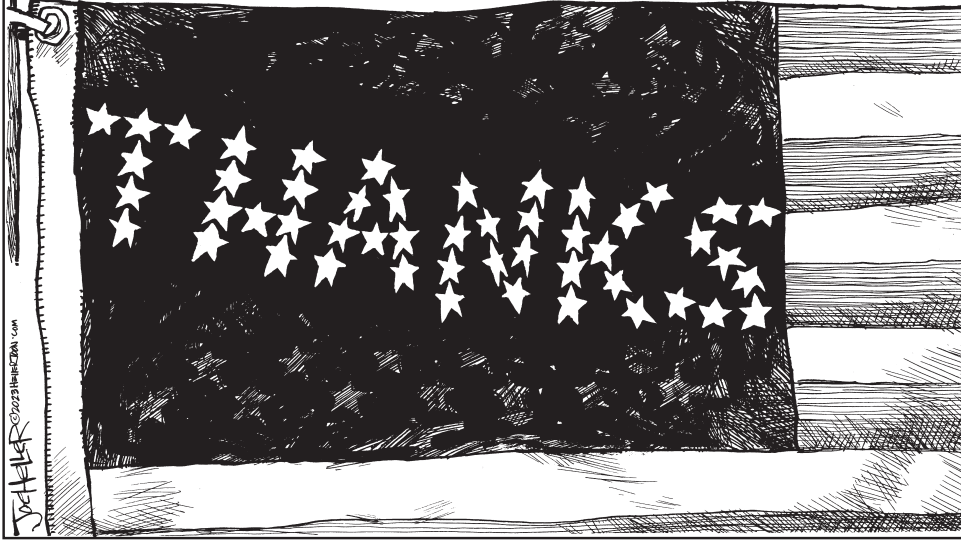
Absolute evil must be destroyed absolutely, and Israel must be encouraged to finish the job with recognition from the United States of the morality of their cause.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this week's column. Please email me at [yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com](mailto:yonatan@chabadruralgeorgia.com).  
Wishing you G-d's abundant blessings,  
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger

**Echos from Sinai**  
"Torah for Everyone"  
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



## ON VETERANS DAY, THE STATES ARE UNANIMOUS.



## Tree Dormancy

The leaves changing color and falling is a sign that colder weather is getting closer and closer. Trees are entering into dormancy. Dormancy is an important process to allow the tree to survive through the winter. Let's talk a bit about how dormancy works in trees and why they need to do it.

Dormant trees will stop growing above the ground. Dormancy is partly brought on by temperature change, but even more so by the change in day length. The college word for this phenomenon is 'photosensitive', meaning the trees change in response to day length. Leaves will begin to change color and fall off. Leaves begin to change color because chlorophyll begins to break down. Chlorophyll is a green pigment that plants use to turn light energy to chemical energy. There are other pigments in the leaves too. As the chlorophyll breaks down the other pigments are left, resulting in the wide array of leaf color that we see. Evergreen trees like pine trees or hollies will have a needle drop in the fall and again in the spring.

As we move into winter trees will stop growing and dormancy requirement will keep plants from waking back up. Different plants have a different number of chill hours, or hours spent below 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Chill hours are supposed to keep plants from waking back up too soon. It seems that every year in February we have a couple of day are over 70 degrees. While my pale legs might like to see some sun, February is not time for plants to begin waking up, as we have more freezes that are coming. Hopefully, those plants haven't met their chill hour requirement, so even though I'm wearing shorts, the trees are still dormant.

Endo-dormancy also makes trees cold hardy. Trees will behave in a couple of different ways to make themselves cold hardy. One strategy that trees use is to keep all their water inside their cells. Frozen water expands. If all that water froze and expanded the cells would burst. To combat this trees move minerals and hormones in to mix with the water. Mixing water drops the freezing point, so that plants' cells don't freeze and burst. Another strategy is to move the water out of the cells so that it can freeze safely in the intracellular space.

When spring rolls around temperatures start to rise and trees will start to bud out because they have satisfied their chill hours requirement. However, if plants start to bud out and then we have another freeze, that can kill off the buds and cause damage to the trees.

Evergreens will continue to need water throughout the winter. If the soil freezes for long periods, the roots can't take up the water. Deciduous trees, trees that lose their leaves, will not need as much water. Roots in trees will continue to grow as long as soil temperatures are over 40 degrees. Soil temperatures are warmer than air temperatures in the winter because they are insulated.

If you have questions about trees and dormancy contact your County Extension Office or email me at [Jacob.Williams@uga.edu](mailto:Jacob.Williams@uga.edu).

UGA extension  
Watching and Working  
Jacob Williams



## Weavers

I'm thinking about my Aunt Eleanor today. She passed away peacefully last week, the last of her family and one of the last last links to my mother's world that my brother and I grew up in. We were blessed with a rich tapestry of aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins, and like most children we thought would last forever.

Sometimes the world can tear gaping holes in that tapestry. Like many times in history, right now the fabric of thousands of lives is being consumed by the fires of war. But for most people it unravels slowly, gradually. It frays around the edges like an "Irish pennant," or disappears stealthily like lint in the dryer. Sometimes you don't even notice how threadbare the blanket has become until years later when you try to pull it close for comfort and it just doesn't keep out the cold.

The grandparents are usually the first threads to go, and then one by one each strand surrenders to time until your own thread is at the edge of the cloth. If you are so blessed, by the time you feel your own thread has begun to weaken, some artistic weaving has been accomplished and that fabric of family and extended family has been renewed or patched. There are children, grandchildren and kin, lifelong companions and new friends to help keep out the cold. A patchwork quilt will keep you just as warm as whole cloth.

Eleanor was a weaver, a quilter, like my father and like that generation in general, and she was as welcoming of strangers as her own kindred. She visited family and friends, made phone calls, wrote cards and letters, shared the news of the family and reminded us we were all part of a clan. She and Uncle Lamar would stop by sometimes unannounced, always bearing gifts, a basket of tomatoes from the farmers market or a tub of world famous Sprayberry's barbecue.

One of the things Tracey misses most about living in our beautiful but remote valley is people dropping by for a visit. It was a common occurrence as a child at the homes of all my grandparents. Granny Cordie always had sweetbread and something cold to drink, and visitors were not allowed to leave without accepting some kind of nourishment. Granny Nora always had sweet tea in the refrigerator and the shade of the giant oak on a hot summer day. Drop-ins were encouraged, never intrusions. There was no need for preparations or panic. What you saw was what you got.

I miss that time of front porch rocking chairs, neighbors and family members who would stop by for a bit. We've hardly a relative left within an hour's drive, and more recent generations weave a different type of fabric, more like a tarp, really, or an emergency blanket. Call before you come. Text before you call.

## U.S. Stands with Israel

As Israel continues battling Iran-backed Hamas terrorists, House Republicans stand firm in our commitment to support our ally during its greatest time of need.



Recently, we considered H.R. 6126, the Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act – a \$14.3 billion aid bill that strengthens both the U.S. and Israel's defense capabilities. As you may know, this legislation passed the House with bipartisan support.

I proudly voted for this necessary and fiscally responsible supplemental aid bill, and I remain committed to fortifying both the U.S. and Israel's national security amidst increasing threats from our adversaries across the globe.

In case you missed it, H.R. 6126 would:

**Strengthen U.S. Military Readiness**  
• \$4.4 billion to replenish depleted domestic defense stockpiles

**Bolster Israel's Defense Capabilities**  
• \$4 billion to replenish Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems

• \$3.5 billion in Foreign Military Financing for the procurement of advanced weapons systems and defense articles and services

• \$1.2 billion for the continued development of the Iron Beam system to counter short-range threats

• \$1 billion to support artillery and munitions production

**Support U.S. Personnel & Citizens**  
• \$150 million for an enhanced security presence at the U.S. Embassy

• \$50 million for the evacuation of U.S. citizens

Thankfully, under Speaker Mike Johnson's leadership, this legislation is also fully offset by rescissions from bloated IRS funding in President Biden's severely misguided Inflation "Expansion" Act – providing a commonsense solution to support our ally in its time of need without placing an additional financial burden on American taxpayers.

The Senate now faces a simple choice: Will they support funding Joe Biden's army of IRS agents targeting the American people – or will they support funding Israel's army fighting Hamas terrorists?

I strongly urge the Senate to follow House Republicans' lead by choosing to support Israel and swiftly passing our critical legislation. Failure to do so will dangerously delay both American and Israeli troops from receiving essential support amidst flaring tensions in the Middle East.

*Soli Deo Gloria,*  
Andrew S. Clyde

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor  
P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546  
Our email address: [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto:tcherald@windstream.net)

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*Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.*

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## Letters To The Editor

### On Speaker Mike Johnson

Dear Editor,

Our representative Andrew Clyde recently bragged about him and the Freedom Caucus getting their man as Speaker of the House. Clyde really wanted Jim Jordan but his fellow Republicans overwhelmingly rejected him. With their fourth choice they got a Jim Jordan lite. Mike Johnson is as extreme as Jordan but presents his views with a smile.

Johnson of course voted against the 2020 election and actively worked to overturn it.

Johnson also seems to be obsessed with the personal lives of his fellow Americans. Particularly their sex lives. He stated that legalizing same sex marriage would lead to legalizing pedophiles or people marrying their pets and could be the downfall of the democratic system.

He authored a national version of Florida's so-called "don't say gay law" and worked to advance conversion therapy, which has been banned in many states.

He has sponsored legislation that would ban abortion nationwide at all stages of pregnancy, establishing "right to life" for fertilized eggs that supersedes women's rights to dignity and self-determination. His sweeping antagonism to abortion has extended to several kinds of birth control including birth control pills.

He has also condemned no-fault divorce and says that women's freedom to leave marriages, along with their freedom to elect out of motherhood, is responsible for mass shootings.

Clyde also bragged about getting a bill out of Congress supporting Israel. What he didn't say is that they tied it to taking funding away from the IRS, which will raise the deficit by well over \$20 billion.

So Congressman Clyde and the Freedom Caucus got their guy. Stay tuned.  
Dick Freeman

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## Towns County Community Calendar

<b>First Monday of each month:</b> School Board... HS/MS Media Center	6:45 pm
<b>Every Tuesday:</b> Storytime for Children... TC Library	10:30 am
<b>First Tuesday of each month:</b> Hiaw. City Council... City Hall YH City Council... YH City Hall	6 pm 6:30 pm
<b>Second Tuesday of each month:</b> Conventions & Visitors Board... Civic Center	8:30 am
<b>Second Wednesday of each month:</b> Board of Elections... Elections Office	4 pm
<b>Third Monday of each month:</b> Planning Commission... Temporary Courthouse	6 pm
<b>Third Tuesday of each month:</b> Commissioner's Mtg... Courthouse City of Young Harris Planning Commission... Meeting Room in City Hall TC Water Authority Board Meeting	5:30 pm 5 pm 6 pm

## Towns County Herald

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