

Reading Time: 17 minutes

There's a saying. When around family or friends, there's two topics that generally be avoided. Politics, and Religion. This ramble covers both in quite some detail, so if you've been looking for a reason to unfriend, unfollow, or simply cancel me, here's your chance.

A tiny bit of a preamble here. I've been aware of the Isreal / Palestine situation since I was a young kid, as it was something that was brought up and subsequently discussed at school. I've done quite a bit of research into the topic over the years, and back when I moved to Birmingham in 2008 and into 2009, I attended a number of Pro-Palestine demonstrations. Looking back with 17 years hindsight, whilst I'm glad that I used my voice and presence, I understand that many of these demonstrations was designed to 'brainwash' young people like myself into joining political organisations such as the rape apologist extrodinaires of the Socialist Worker's Party, who seem to have this innate ability to see a campaign, demonstration or cause that is at it's core trying to do good for the world, and completely gatecrash and take over it. If you look back to the left-coalition of 2005 that was loosely connected with the Make Poverty History campaign, it was largely unglued by two groups: George Galloway's Respect Party, and the good ol' Socialist Worker's Party.

The reason why I bring this fascinating group of party crashers up here is because of the fact that one of the things picked up upon most in recent Pro-Palestine demonstrations across the UK in particular are phrases such as:

"From The River To The Sea, Palestine Will Be Free"

I want to be clear. I am in favour of a two state solution, and believe wholeheartedly that Israelis, Palestinians and others have the right to live in harmony. It's clear in my mind that a one state solution is almost impossible as it would essentially be a situation of one group (Most likely Palestinians) being oppressed, and could create a two-tier system of rights similar to Apartheid South Africa / Jim Crow USA. In order for anything to work in my opinion, there needs to be co-operation, mutual acceptance, and self governance on both sides. And this is why I'm offended by the continued use of such chants, as it makes it seem as though those demonstrating want the end of Isreal, and simply a Palestinian state. This is completely against the entire premise behind Isreal in the first place, and in my opinion an insult to the many Israelis who live peacefully and in acceptance of their neighbours.

It's also important to make a clear distinction between Palestinians and Hamas. The two are not the same. Yes, there are some Palestinians who are members of Hamas, but this is not the case for every Palestinian. There's also a much larger topic as to the population within Palestine and how it would have changed over the past 150 years, but I'm not about to enrol myself onto a Political History Masters... Yet (Unless someone fancies funding it for me?). In a similar breath, not every Israeli is a supporter of the war which is now 22 months old, in the same way they don't all support the actions of Benjamin Netanyahu. He just happens to be the Prime Minister, for reasons again I'd need a Political History degree to fully explain, as well as playing a game of political minesweeper. I'll let John

Stewart / John Oliver (The two greatest Johns in the world right now) handle that one!

With that being said... Time to either post something logical, or get cancelled. Here we go.

7th October 2023.

When we get to the end of this Century, and think about important key moments which changed the world, 7th October 2023 will likely be on that list. It was a horrific, heinous terrorist act by Hamas, both in the number of people killed, and the people taken hostage indiscriminately. Hostage situations are not new in the Isreal / Palestine sphere, especially where Hamas is concerned, a group who over the years has tried to actively disrupt the peace process discussions throughout the back half of the 20th Century and into the 21st, and one can not talk about hostage situations without referencing the 1972 Munich Olympics, which is perhaps the darkest situation in the history of the modern Olympic Games.

There are many who say that Isreal's security forces were getting too lax, and that they were in effect exploited by Hamas. Regardless, the ruthless killing and kidnapping of innocent others is something I would, and I hope everyone reading this could agree with. Not only does it go against every principle of 'war', if this is what Hamas wanted to claim, it is fundamentally wrong, from a simple moral, to a religious reason. Whilst there is always someone who will scoff, Islam is a religion founded on the principle of peace and acceptance, and in the same way the Taliban's interpretation of the Quran is in my opinion fundamentally flawed, any religious excuse by Hamas also reeks of desecrating the core Pilars of Islam. To call this anything other than a barbaric act of terrorism would be a disgrace to everyone kidnapped and killed, end of story.

The distinction between Hamas and Palestinians needs to be reaffirmed at this point. There were reports at the time of some in the occupied Gaza Strip & West Bank celebrating the attacks, but this was never large spread. Yes, there are those who support Hamas' actions without directly being a member, either due to previous conflicts in the region, or by in some cases a mis-understanding of the totality and barbaricness of actions. There were and remain many Palestinians who did **not** support the attack, due to their faith, political or other beliefs, and in part because they may have known what was coming next from previous, similar situations.

It would be a mistake to assume that Palestinians are unaware of the Iron Dome. The close proximity to where missiles from Hamas and Hezbollah are intercepted would make this obviously clear, and whilst it may well be the world's most advanced missile detection and intercept system in the world, one thing it can't do is hide in plain sight. I'm certain most Palestinians are aware of what the Iron Dome is, but perhaps more importantly what happens after missiles have been intercepted. Things come back the other way, with increasing levels of force.

It's always a difficult subject to approach when considering what response a country should send after an attack and hostage situation like this. Many prominent world leaders over the years have had their political careers made or broken by their decision making, which often comprises of two key components. Response time, and level of retaliation. During the Cold War, this would be strategic, often trying to stay away from the point of escalation that would in effect lead to Mutually Assured Destruction. That would never happen in Isreal, as although it's believed that they do have Nuclear

Weapons, you wouldn't be seeing them off in your metaphorical neighbour's garden.

Retaliation Should Be Proportionate? Right?

As dark as the 7th October 2023 was, it presented Benjamin Netanyahu with a golden opportunity to further his own political and personal agenda. It's important to remember that 2023 was not a great year for Netanyahu. The start of the year saw massive protests about his judicial reform, as many saw him becoming more and more of an authoritarian leader. After the attacks of 7th October, there were more protests about his handling of the hostage situation and security services. To quote Queen Elizabeth II's summation of 1992, 2023 could be seen as Netanyahu's 'Annus Horribilis'.

Go back through Netanyahu's time in office, either as Prime Minister or leader of the opposition however, and you'll see why he saw opportunity in the face of the horror experienced by most Israelis. Netanyahu doesn't agree with the Oslo Accords, the attempts at a peace process and two state solution, or the existence of Palestine in the first place. Netanyahu has been all to happy to ignore the 1967 borders that formed the basis for the Oslo Accords, and has been all to happy to allow Israeli settlements to sprout up in the West Bank, in contravention of international law and agreements. [Heck, a new one was approved in the process of me writing this piece!](#) He's constantly called the peace process a waste of time and energy, valuing an 'economic co-operation' approach over a defined two state solution. In other words, Israeli rule, with Palestinians acting as residents as described above.

The thing is you can't just start indiscriminately bombing civilian populations without a reason for doing so. Not only would it make you look bad as a leader, you'll be in breach of international law, which is what South Africa tried to argue in the International Court of Justice between December 2023 and 2025. Even going into that court case requires another entire 10,000 word discussion piece, and perhaps most annoyingly is the fact that the two sides are drawn between those who have suffered at the hands of bombing, segregation and abuses of Government in a post WWII era, and those who have been the aggressors.

So. What was Netanyahu to do? By declaring that Hamas had an entire system of underground tunnels running throughout the Gaza Strip, it was firepower for him to unleash a torrent of.... Firepower across the strip, most notably at hospitals. Why? Because this is where Hamas was reportedly hiding, and were using women and children as shields. For a country that's been able to [take out leaders of organisations with precision](#), and who were able to set off a [targeted attack against Hezbollah using pagers of all things](#), it does seem that this was a little more of a cack-handed approach that was being taken in Gaza.

Along with the way that the IDF were seemingly striking anything that looked that it may be a building not completely destroyed that may contain civilian life, one needs to consider the proportionate response on those not killed or injured in strikes, but who live, hungry, thirsty, and cold. The Red Crescent¹ and other aid organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children were barred from sending aid into Gaza for a variety of reasons, including that the aid would be taken and stockpiled by Hamas, and at points have said that restricting aid would help expedite the release of hostages as people turn their back on Hamas. To put this in the most polite way possible, Netanyahu sees Palestinians in this situation as human beings with human rights, but instead human shields stopping

them from their ultimate aim of destroying Hamas.

One thing that brings me the slightest bit of hope is the fact that many an Israeli citizen refuses to take this abject horror of second hand torture by the refusal of aid lying down. I'm sure that where Palestinians have *any* access to news, be it through the BBC World Service, other radio / television reports in places where there are radios, batteries, televisions and electricity, or even through journalists on the ground, they would have a glimmer of faith in the nation which borders them on both sides, because of the fact that many an Israeli refuses to stay silent. In the same way as they did with the Judicial reform demonstrations, Israeli citizens are demonstrating not just for the release of hostages (And the fact that in their opinion Netanyahu's Government are making it **harder** to have more hostages released), but also an end to this war. There are many across news reports, interviews and the like stating that they simply want peace. Peace / a longer ceasefire isn't too big of a thing to ask for? Surely? Especially if it could lead to either more hostage releases / a dignified return of bodies for burial where the hostages are no longer alive.

Lawful Orders & Common Friends.

It's easy to say that the IDF should ignore orders to continue the almost never ending attack on Gaza. Thing is, in almost all militaries in the world, the rule is simple. You can not disobey a 'lawful order'. What a lawful order means can vary from country to country, for example to take into account local customs and practices, but in all circumstances are tied to a country's constitution and laws. Therefore, whilst the IDF can often be portrayed as being the 'bad guys', it's not as simple as that. First of all, the IDF have what is known as 'Regular Service', which is similar to conscription / national service. This means that *most* men will serve 3 years in the military, and women 2 years, with some exemptions based on faith, physical conditions, or larger mental health conditions. This means that there is a section of the Israeli society whom **are required** to be in the IDF, and follow any orders set by their Commanding Officers. If this means being a part of an offensive on Gaza, that's the order, and disobeying a Lawful Order can lead to being Court Marshalled, imprisoned, and so on.

With a Prime Minister hellbent on destroying Gaza in any way possible, this means that the military doctrine is pretty much to flatten the entire strip, killing or displacing anyone in the way. It sounds cold and heartless, but the IDF are, to put it mildly, following orders. Does everyone in the IDF believe in what they're doing? Likely not; the same way there's many a troop who went to Iraq or Afghanistan who didn't agree fully with the mission or orders that they were given. This is the way militaries work sadly. Democracy stops when you put your beret and boots on.

Benjamin Netanyahu is lucky on the world stage. Not only have many a world leader defended their right to defend themselves, even opposing the South Africa court case, many of their allies have good reason to continue supporting them. Isreal buys a rather large amount of military hardware; from planes and bombs, to components which make up the Iron Dome, and weapons in the hands of their infantry. It has only been in the last month that world leaders have decided to take [a more decisive action on the humanitarian situation in Gaza](#), to which Netanyahu seems to think the best response is going 'all in' and making it impossible to have a humanitarian situation in Gaza if there is no Gaza left to save.

Of course, whilst the US and UK have a special relationship, the US often likes to cheat on the UK, and

have its own special relationship with Isreal. Benjamin Netanyahu, knowing how a Trump presidency could strengthen these ties further, outwardly supported Trump in each of his Presidential campaigns. The rewards? The US moved its embassy from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem to appease Netanyahu, adding additional claim to it being a solely Jewish site, and not one equally as important in Islam. Fast forward to 2025, and Trump's offering to make the Gaza Strip the next Atlantic City, only everyone living there would be displaced. Tie that in with Netanyahu's most recent claims to take full control of the strip, and I wouldn't be surprised to see the White House drawing up potential locations for golf courses and entertainment venues. And that's just sickening to even think about.

The UK, and in particular the Labour Party have a difficult situation every time Isreal, a two-state solution, or any conflict in Gaza or Palestine comes up. To say that Britain was involved in causing this entire mess in the first place is putting it lightly. Even if you remove the ultra-left's interpretation spouted off at every opportunity, the British were involved in drawing up borders, via the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 and, to a lesser extent, the Peel Commission Report of 1937. It's these two events that in essence formed the basis for conflict that is now 100 years old. Even though the UN Partition Plan of 1947 which in effect set in motion the creation of Isreal had much to do with the British Empire, and trying to appease both parties.]

It's always tricky being a Labour Party Leader, because of the Jewish voting block. Not a parliamentary term goes by without calls of antisemitism, and the way it's presented by the media does little to let the casual reader become more informed on the subject, which of course is useful for print media as most are run by right wing owners / funders. Listening to Labour Leaders talk about the conflict in Gaza, and tip-toeing around the right to self defence, whilst almost brushing off (Until more recently) the catastrophic humanitarian crisis tells a lot of the story. Oh, and the UK sells a lot of arms to Isreal. There are some great Substacks that cover this topic better than I ever can, so give them a visit if you want to delve into this aspect of British Politics further:

- [Council Estate Media](#)
- [Normal Island News](#)

When The Rich Rage War, It's The Poor Who Die.

Every so often, I post this lyric from the song Hands Held High by Linkin Park. In terms of this conflict, I don't even think it's the most poignant lyric, which instead is:

It's Ironic, at times like this you pray, but a bomb blew the mosque up yesterday.

Even whilst typing this piece, there's more and more things being shared that detail the horror of what's going on in Gaza, such as [this piece from the Guardian](#), which highlights how in terms of the overall death rate, 83% are civilians. Or to put it another way, unarmed, most likely law abiding, innocent people, killed for simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This verges not only into the highest percentage of civilian casualties in a wartime footing, but is one step away from genocidal wars. And perhaps this is the reason why in Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and many other large population bases in Isreal, there are hundreds of thousands of people joining millions around the world to end this bloodshed.

Yes. It's right to call Hamas a terrorist organisation. But that doesn't make every Palestinian a terrorist. Yes, the IDF should be using proportionate force to secure the release of hostages, but this doesn't mean indiscriminately bombing hospitals and shelters, regardless of the so-called underground network and bases in such facilities. It's slightly ironic that the press are not allowed to freely report in Gaza. It's even more ironic [when journalists are killed reporting in Gaza](#), often with a gentle shrug of the shoulders from the IDF's top brass of people in Isreal's government.

Perhaps most saddening is the way that UNWRA have been treated as a part of Hamas in all of this. UNWRA were key in terms of getting aid into the country, and as soon as that aid avenue was shut off, it was always inevitable that famine, starvation and more unnecessary deaths would occur. The fact that it was Isreal who wanted to be in charge of what goes in and how, coupled with air drops becoming necessary to get aid into the region shows just how desperate the situation is, and although free reporting is limited, you can't claim that all the malnourished children shown on camera is a set-up or fake. There's a reason why many news-anchors preface reports from the situation in Gaza with 'Some viewers may find this report disturbing', because frankly, it is.

Isreal's most recent actions seem to be that in order to irradiate Hamas, they have to completely occupy the territory. Every time Isreal has tried this approach, the debris is removed to create more Jewish settlements, something which has been condemned by the UN. Yet more and more are springing up, whilst people who used to live in these areas, districts, roads and buildings are left with nothing. Can someone please explain to me how this is fair? In any form of religious / political sense? I know that religious wars have gone on for millennia, but this doesn't have the full blueprint of a 'holy war'. Instead, frankly, a horrific situation has been exploited into an unrelenting, brutal land grab, with the disguise of removing a terrorist organisation.

Final Thoughts.

When it comes to protesting, I think that democracy lives and dies on the right of free speech, so long as other people retain the right to their own free speech, with some exceptions where racist, xenophobic, or language and actions used to incite hatred towards others are used. Palestine Action in the UK is the group who broke into RAF Brize Norton, and caused millions of pounds of damage. It's right that those directly involved should be prosecuted, as it goes beyond the boundary of 'polite civil disobedience'. Arresting over 500 people for holding up signs in Parliament Square for supporting the broader aims of the group to highlight the trauma in Gaza & Palestine? A bit much in my opinion; especially whilst the police presence meant that other crimes couldn't be tackled head on that day.

What do I want to see? Peace. Negotiations in good faith. A recognition that 90% of religious texts are pretty much the same, and that people of different faiths (or none) can live side by side in harmony. A recognition that this will forever be a complex and difficult situation, that can implode at any moment, but by having open communication and co-operation, the terrorist organisations and ultra radical groups who try to seize control of the situation will be weakened to the point of almost non-existence. For people to be able to speak freely about this issue, without fear of being branded by others, and listening to people living in these places. Heck, I never thought I could tie in Marlyn Manson to a topic about the Isreal / Palestine situation, but the last point he made in his interview for Bowling for Columbine stands true here:

I wouldn't say a single word to them, I would listen to what they have to say, and that's what no one did.

And if that's too big of an ask, then consider me cancelled.

UPDATE: 22nd August 2025

Literally within 24 hours of posting this, the following has come through in world media:

- A UN backed report by The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) [has confirmed a famine in Gaza](#). The Israeli Foreign Ministry, surprisingly enough, denies this. Benjamin Netanyahu says that Isreal does not cause starvation, it prevents starvation, despite the constant newsreels about aid not getting through borders into Gaza.
- Unless hostages are released and Hamas disarms, [Gaza will be razed to the ground](#), according to the Defence Minister of Isreal. Although Hamas has agreed to a 60 day ceasefire, and release of half of remaining hostages, Isreal is saying any negotiations need to be on their terms, with the complete release of hostages and full disarmament.
- The [Media Freedom Coalition, along with 28 signatories](#) are calling for unrestricted press access into Gaza. As it stands, foreign journalists [cannot report freely from Gaza](#), something made clear on many a news piece / live page by outlets around the world.
- Oh. And the IDF are giving already displaced families in tent camps 30 minutes to evacuate before [landing air strikes in the area](#).

Peace, Rage And Love xx

Image Credit: ASHAR TALEB, AFP via Getty Images

¹ (For those wondering, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has a number of other logos used in parts of the world to make it relatable to people and their cultures, such as the Red Crescent in Muslim countries, and the Red Crystal in other countries. There is the Red Shield of David used in Isreal, and inside the Red Crystal for Isreal's aid missions abroad within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement).