

October 2024

Dear Friend of Israel,

As I sat down to write my monthly letter to you for October, I realized that we in Israel are about to conclude another year on the Jewish calendar with the upcoming celebration of Rosh Hashana. **A few days after Rosh Hashana, we will be marking one year since the most recent large-scale attempt at genocide** against the Jewish people in Israel was launched on October 7th 2023.

The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University is still providing us with constant updates on the grim statistics of our ongoing existential war. **As of September 18th, the numbers are staggering: 1,674 Israelis** have been murdered. More than **17,970 have been wounded**, including **713 IDF soldiers**. **101 hostages** are still being held in Gaza. **143,000 Israelis** have been evacuated from their homes. Over **300,000 Israeli reservists** are still actively serving. **19,000 rockets** have been launched into Israel, forcing citizens to seek shelter **15,211 times**. At the same time, **935 communities and towns** remain under constant rocket fire. And while **the country remains united in seeking the destruction of Hamas**, the citizenry is strongly divided over how much we should compromise in order to secure the release of all the hostages.

The current existential war is not confined to Gaza alone. **Last month, due to a significant spike in the number and scale of terror attacks in Judea and Samaria, the IDF was forced to designate both regions a "combat zone."** We are also battling Hezbollah, arguably Iran's most dangerous proxy terrorist organization, on our northern front. Tensions in that arena have only escalated since a most daring operation in which Israel reportedly targeted hundreds of Hezbollah operatives through beepers and walkie-talkies.

Meanwhile, the international community's response to the attacks on October 7th has predictably been very disheartening. Most recently, in the UN General Assembly, **124 countries voted in favor of a resolution demanding that we, the People of Israel, withdraw from ALL of Judea and Samaria**. Only 14 countries stood with us, —and 43 abstained.

In times like these, it is so easy to lose hope. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the late and former Chief Rabbi of the UK, once shared profound insight that speaks directly to the current moment: ***"There is a difference between optimism and hope. Optimism is the belief that things will get better, while hope is the belief that, together, we can make things better. Optimism is passive; hope is active. It takes no courage to be an optimist, but it takes immense courage to have hope. Given the weight of our history, no Jew can afford to be an optimist. But despite centuries of unimaginable suffering, Jews have never given up hope."***

During such challenging times, we must surely hold onto the advice given to us by Rabbi Sacks. Israel has risen to defend itself once again, and in this shared fight for survival, you, our Christian friends stand alongside us in working to restore the Biblical Heartland. **Together, with God's help, we will continue rebuilding and bringing hope back to the Land of Israel!**

Shalom,

Shmuel Junger
Director
Christian Friends of Israeli Communities

P.S. «salutation», the festival of Sukkot is rapidly approaching, we need your help to feed families in need. Due to the ongoing war, the need is greater than ever before. Anything you can donate to help purchase food vouchers will bring hope to a family in need. Thank you for standing with Israel. I hope you enjoy reading the enclosed Nahala newsletter for inspiring stories from the Biblical Heartland!