

The World Signals to Jews: Identifying with Israel Is Dangerous/ Ayelet Nahmias Verbin

The recent violent attack on members of the Jewish community in Boulder, Colorado, during a demonstration advocating for the return of hostages, adds to the horrific murder of Yaron Lishinsky and Sarah Milgrom outside the Jewish Museum in Washington. These incidents underscore a harsh reality regarding the safety of Jews worldwide.

Even before the October 7 massacre, antisemitism—and in its modern form, anti-Israel sentiment—was on the rise. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many communities faced contemporary versions of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”

For the past 4.5 years, I have led JReady and the Jewish Agency’s Fund for Victims of Terror. JReady was established during the pandemic as a platform to train Jewish communities on crisis management and maintaining Jewish life under challenging circumstances.

In the first week of the war, we at the Jewish Agency and JReady recognized that Jewish communities were entering a war of their own—albeit not a physical one. This realization emphasized the profound connection between the State of Israel and Jewish communities globally.

While communities showed solidarity through visits and significant donations, they quickly became targets of personal and group attacks due to their Jewish identity and support for Israel.

Public support for Israel after the massacre quickly waned in many places. For instance, the Sydney Opera House was illuminated in blue and white on that tragic Saturday but was lit in green, associated with Hamas, the following day.

In conversations with individuals and community leaders, I learn weekly about severe antisemitic incidents that receive little attention. While we heard about mezuzahs being removed from homes in London, we didn’t hear about a Jewish child in a public school being labeled with a yellow sticker reading “no pork,” evoking painful historical connotations.

This is the daily reality for many Jews worldwide. Some may dismiss these concerns as exaggerations, but ignoring this imposed reality is perilous.

Despite efforts by the U.S. administration to combat antisemitism, few governments effectively counter the influence of social media platforms. Israeli public diplomacy relies heavily on individuals like Noa Tishby, Ella Kinan, and Yoseph Haddad. While their dedication is commendable, it’s unreasonable for them to be the sole defenders in this challenging arena.

Our commitment as a nation and society to Jewish communities must be tangible and actionable.

In recent years, through JReady and in collaboration with the Emergency and Disaster Management program at Tel Aviv University's School of Public Health, as well as other partners, we have trained over a thousand professionals and volunteers in Jewish communities worldwide for emergency situations. From Australia through South America, Canada, and Europe — even before October 7, it was clear to us from the data indicating a rise in antisemitism that the activity required from the communities would be entirely different from what we had known. It's not just physical security anymore, but an enormous challenge in something we are very familiar with here at home — personal and communal resilience. The fact that in difficult situations, like in Colorado today or in Kansas where Sarah Milgrom z"l came from, there are people in Israel who immediately check how they can help and support — a kind of echoing voice that says, 'We're with you, you are not alone in the world' — has tremendous power for these communities. We will continue to offer innovative tools to help them face the difficult challenges ahead.

According to a study by the American Jewish Committee, 77% of Jews in the U.S. fear for their safety, and one in six has changed their behavior. But it's important to understand that data from the Anti-Defamation League shows that the rise in antisemitism has been ongoing for four years—meaning it began before the war. In any case, we are dealing with numbers we haven't seen in 80 years. The world is hypocritical, the UN is biased, and anti-Israel activists are simply ignorant fools. But the bottom line is that we are witnessing an unprecedented erosion in the sense of security among Jews worldwide.

It's hard to predict the practical outcome of these attacks, or whether some of them will translate into immigration to Israel, but what is absolutely clear is that Jewish communities need Israeli care and involvement now more than ever.

Read the full article in Hebrew, available on Ynet: <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/rkehhcsmxlx>