



# PERSPECTIVES

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## Israel's Existential Struggle

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The carnage wrought by Israel's Arabs in support of Hamas, at a time when the Islamist terror organization is raining thousands of missiles on Israel's population centers, is nothing short of a nationalist (and Islamist) attempt to subvert the Jewish state.**

The Israeli government and politicians are afraid to characterize the hordes of Arab rioters rampaging across Israel's cities and towns as an enemy. After all, they are fully-fledged Israeli citizens.

The main obstacle to this characterization lies in the asymmetry created over the years between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Succumbing to decades of systematic brainwashing by the "human-rights religion" champions, many Israeli Jews have substituted the aspiration for an egalitarian civil society for their national and patriotic sentiments at a time when their Arab compatriots have become ever more nationalistic and radicalized. Misattributing their own worldview and values to their Arab counterparts, many educated Jews view the current carnage as a corollary of the Arab sector's frustration with its (supposed) discrimination and marginalization. This echoes the conclusions of the Orr commission of enquiry, which investigated the roots of the October 2000 mayhem wrought by Israel's Arab citizens in support of Yasser Arafat's freshly-waged war of terror (euphemized as "*al-Aqsa Intifada*").

This prognosis couldn't be further from the truth, not least since the current explosion of violence comes after a decade of unprecedented government efforts to enhance the Arab community's socioeconomic condition, which culminated in a 15 billion-shekel (\$3.8 billion) five-year comprehensive aid plan. Within this framework, large swathes of state land in the Negev and the Galilee were sold to Arab localities at a fraction of their selling price to Jewish

localities, and substantial resources were invested in the Arab social and education system.

And yet it is difficult for many Israeli Jews to acknowledge the mass Arab violence for what it is and what it portends: a nationalist (and Islamist) rising stemming not from the lack of rights or opportunities but from the rejection of a minority status that is regarded as unlawful domination by an alien invader who must be supplanted. In this respect the current explosion, far more than its October 2000 predecessor, throws Israeli Jews back to November 1947, when they had to fight for their sovereign existence.

Far worse. For many Jews, the sights of burning synagogues and religious seminaries, desecrated Torah scrolls, ransacked shops and plundered homes, not to mention the wanton violence inflicted on peaceful citizens, just because of their being Jews, echo painful memories of dark periods in recent Jewish history: from the 1903 Kishinev pogrom, to the 1938 Nazi Kristallnacht, to the 1941 Baghdad Farhud.

But whereas these past atrocities reflected the perennial weakness attending the millenarian Jewish exilic condition as a permanent minority susceptible to the whimsical brutality and rapacity of the dominant majorities, no such excuse exists in the present situation where Jews constitute the majority in their own reconstituted state in the ancestral homeland.

That Israeli Jews now have to fear for their physical safety, if not for their lives, while moving around their own towns and cities, at a time when their state possesses a formidable security system and one of the world's most respected armies, is not only an unacceptable personal and national humiliation but a total loss of sovereignty that puts the entire Jewish national revival at risk.

One cannot emphasize too strongly the urgency of reasserting the state's authority and governability without delay, first and foremost by clarifying in no uncertain terms the Arab minority's prerogatives and boundaries in the Jewish state. This is nothing short of a war for national existence.

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