

# Spare Us the Selective Outrage

By Victor Davis Hanson

Since October 7, we have been lectured nonstop about the supposedly singular sins of Israel.



The campuses, the left-wing media, and the new Democratic Socialist officials, both federal and state, following the cue of student activists and professors from the Middle East, have painted Israel and their Jewish supporters as Nazis, fascists, and among the worst murderers in today's bloody world.

This is nonsensical. The medieval-style massacre of 1,200 Jews in their homes on October 7, during a time of peace, should have increased awareness of the existential dangers Israel faced. Instead, it spawned a gathering storm of antisemitism.

## What Was Israel Supposed to Do?

Note that leftists and pro-Hamas students and faculty were shouting the eliminationist slogan "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" in euphoria almost immediately in response to the news of the slaughter. Hundreds of dead Jews set off a Pavlovian spasm of glee from the Middle East to

American campuses.

Indeed, during the three-week hiatus following the mass killings—well before the IDF entered Gaza on October 27—Israel and its supporters were damned in ways we have not seen for years. Even as Israel sought to negotiate a release of the 251 hostages and a surrender of all those in Hamas responsible for the massacres, the international furor at Israel only mounted. Or was it instead an ebullition of anticipation that still more slaughter of Israelis would follow?

Yet Israel's demands were met with more defiance. Hamas, and its delusional supporters, both in the Middle East and in the West, saw October 7 not as the end of bloodletting but as the beginning of far more slaughter—and of the hoped-for end of Israel altogether.

Again, that dream explains the giddiness among the Democrat Socialist/pro-Hamas leftists. In their unhinged hatred, they assumed that Iran's vaunted "ring of fire" (the terrorists of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis and scattered contingents in Syria and Iraq) would now ignite Israel from all sides.

The master planner of the attacks, Iran, had concluded that Israel would eventually be overwhelmed by hundreds of thousands of incoming drones, missiles, and rockets—the very reason why Iran had spent years arming its Arab terrorist clients.

Yet when Israel finally invaded Gaza on October 27, it was almost immediately damned for conducting "genocide." None of its libelers offered alternate pathways for how Israel might stop the Hamas slaughterers or get the hostages back.

So how exactly was Israel supposed to restore deterrence, punish the guilty, and prevent such future mass butchery?

Go to the UN Security Council and beg China (one million Uighurs in Chinese camps) and Russia (engaged in a Verdun-like

invasion of Ukraine) to examine the facts empirically.

Ask Hamas to shed their civilian shields and fight Israelis head-to-head?

Fly to Geneva to have European premiers and presidents like Pedro Sánchez, Emmanuel Macron, and Keir Starmer oversee “negotiations”?

### **What Would America Have Done?**

Alternatively, consider this hypothetical: the United States is roughly 34 times larger than Israel, with roughly 340 million to Israel’s 10 million citizens. Apply that asymmetrical magnitude to a thought experiment about how Americans would react to a proportional slaughter of their own.

Suppose that some 200,000 Sinaloa cartel killers (34 times the size of Hamas’s 6,000) swarmed across the southern border. They then began massacring 40,000 American civilians (34 times the Israeli number of 1,200 dead)—as well as torturing, dismembering, raping, and beheading. And then they were followed by thousands of tag-along civilians eager for loot and torture themselves.

Further imagine that the killers returned south across the border with 8,500 American hostages (34 times the 251 Israeli hostages). Once there, they then descended into a vast multibillion-dollar labyrinth of cartel tunnels beneath the cities of Sinaloa, protected by supportive and sympathetic citizens. Their tunnel entries and exits would be built beneath hospitals, schools, and churches.

So what exactly would the U.S. do if neither the Mexican government nor the cartel planners agreed to hand over the hostages and surrender the killers?

Take our case to the UN?

Ask NATO member Spain to chair talks?

Go to Geneva to negotiate with El Chapo and his henchmen?

Further, imagine that after three weeks of American inaction, the cartels grew even more defiant, as their crimes won applause among the anti-Western media and throughout the hemisphere.

Indeed, the intelligentsia and the hate-Yanqui crowd would likely then claim that Americans, as “settler-colonialists” from Europe, had earned such an overdue slaughter slap, given their supposed historical maltreatment of the indigenous peoples of “Aztlán” on both sides of the border.

Knee-jerk joy at killing Americans is not just a Mexican hypothetical.

In 2024, former Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador bragged that Pancho Villa’s brief invasion of the U.S., some 108 years earlier—which targeted Columbus, New Mexico, and killed 18 Americans, including 10 civilians—was “a symbol of resistance against imperialism—and we should thank Villa . . .”

(Note that the progressive President Wilson, in response, sent 100,000 soldiers to the border and not long after ordered General Pershing with 12,000 troops to invade Mexico and find the perpetrators.)

Of course, in such an imaginary scenario, America’s critics would add the usual boilerplate about the Mexican War and the theft of Mexico’s former North American holdings.

Nonetheless, the U.S. would no doubt issue ultimata to the terrorists to surrender the guilty and the hostages. And if stonewalled, it would then start with an air campaign to hit some 200,000 cartel members, while exercising caution not to harm tens of thousands of the cartels’ civilian shields—a

near-impossible task.

### **Who Are the Real Ethnic Cleansers and Settler-Colonialists?**

Moreover, do we ever hear to what degree these libels of genocide and ethnic cleansing apply far more accurately to a host of other nations, some of which are also recipients of U.S. aid?

Over the decades, we have sold arms and given billions of dollars in military aid to Turkey. Yet between 1915 and 1920, the Turkish government conducted a genocidal policy of ethnic cleansing against their Armenian population, for which it has never apologized and which it continues to deny. And that was not just ancient history.

None of our current critics of Israel seems worried that Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974 and ethnically cleansed Northern Cyprus of its Greek inhabitants. The Turks then sent thousands of their own “settler colonialists” to help the Turkish minority population occupy the north to this day and alter Cypriot demography. There are no demonstrations anywhere in America on behalf of the far more recent “Nakba” of the Cypriot Greeks.

For that matter, did any of the loud campus Left demand distance from American ally Turkey when its president, Recep Erdoğan, recently cheered on Azerbaijan’s 2023 ethnic cleansing of some 120,000 Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh—oddly, at almost the same time as the October 7 massacre.

Did Columbia University activist Mahmoud Khalil rally his armies of idealists to damn the Islamic-driven ethnic cleansing of this ancient population of Christian Armenians, or to call for the U.S. to sever joint arms deals with Turkey?

Before the 1967 war, there were nearly one million Jews whose ancestors had been living for centuries in the Arab and Muslim

Middle East.

But during the serial Arab–Israeli wars of the last century, they were almost entirely ethnically cleansed from Arab countries. Today, almost none remain in the Arab Middle East. None appear today before television cameras, shaking the keys of their confiscated homes in Algiers, Amman, Baghdad, or Cairo.

By contrast, when Israel was founded in 1948, some 800,000 Arabs lived within its borders. That number shrank to 150,000 during the violent wars that immediately followed. Yet today, the size of the Arab population has rebounded to 14 times its original post-1948 numbers, to include roughly 2.1 million Arab citizens of Israel.

Note that the current Arab population of Israel is close to 77 times larger than the remnant of 27,000 Jews who remain in Muslim-majority Middle Eastern nations.

So, who are the real ethnic cleansers, and who are the displaced persons and refugees?

Of course, no one dares to say Arabs “ethnically cleansed” almost all their Jewish citizens. Instead, that charge is reserved only for Israel, where its Arab population has swelled to 21 percent of the current Israeli total.

### **Who Shall Cast the First Stone?**

Between 1987 and 1989, the Somali Marxist dictator Mohamed Siad Barre—a member of the powerful Darood clan and a former American ally during the Cold War, when the Soviets backed Somalia’s traditional rival, Marxist Ethiopia—began slaughtering entire rival Somali clans. The eventual death toll may have reached nearly 200,000. When Barre’s murderous regime finally imploded, many Somali refugees had either supported Barre or belonged to the Darood clan and its several affiliate tribes. Fearing retribution from the regime’s

victims, thousands fled to the once-despised West, especially the United States and Europe.

Among those pro-Barre refugees—many of whom belonged to either Barre's Darood clan or to subordinate clans—were apparently members of Representative Ilhan Omar's family. Her father was a colonel and regimental commander in Barre's army, which had fought both Ethiopians and fellow Somalis for over a decade. It is a bitter irony that Omar is now such a sharp critic of Israel and the United States, given that America granted refuge to many of the former regime's supporters and associates after Barre's collapse.

Yet we are not aware that any Somalis today are now being accosted by strangers—as are Jews—and lectured about what their former leader's regime did to the thousands of innocent civilians.

After October 7, we were also lectured that Israel was not just guilty of various war crimes but illegitimate in its very existence. Indeed, it became chic to condemn Israeli Jews as “settler colonialists”—despite residing in the 3,500-year homeland of the Jewish people.

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, an immigrant from Uganda, is not just a fierce critic of so-called “white neighborhoods” and one-percenter billionaires and millionaires. He also seems to loathe Israel. In that context, his supporters and would-be appointees have damned the Jewish state as an illegitimate settler-colonial enterprise.

But under those very reductionist left-wing definitions, should not the Indian community in Uganda—which made up at most a wealthy 1 percent of the population—be defined as settler-colonialists (in addition to suspect rich one-percenters)?

The wealthiest man in Uganda is an Indian-Ugandan billionaire. And the minuscule Indian population today in Uganda continues

to exercise power and influence, disproportionate to their numbers—in stark contrast to the impoverished indigenous population. The Mamdani family certainly was not representative, in terms of money and status, of the average Ugandan.

Is such privilege also a mortal sin in Mamdani's eyes?

Should Mamdani himself, born in Uganda among “settler colonial” exploiters, then have to defend himself as a son of “interlopers,” as is often said of the Jews in Israel?

Certainly, Indians had no historical claim to Uganda analogous to that of the Jews in Israel. (Was there ever a four-millennium-long history of Indians living in Central Africa?)

The list of these absurd asymmetries could be expanded endlessly:

The furor over Gaza is accompanied by the silence over the recent 30,000 unarmed Iranians murdered by a theocratic dictatorship, one often cheered on by the Left for its resistance to the US.

Or the disgraceful and mostly covered-up history of France in Chad, where French repressive measures over the course of their 20th-century colonial occupation led to as many as 300,000 deaths. The cruelty was emblemized by the Coupe-Coupe (“cut-cut”) Massacre of 1917, when French soldiers beheaded some 150 local nobles and Islamic scholars. Does Macron ever recall this massacre amid his lectures on Israel's supposed sinful past and present?

In short, the tell-tale sign of antisemites is not necessarily opposition to Israel.

It is instead an endless fixation on the supposed “crimes” of Israel, when far greater documented horrors elsewhere never merit a word from them.

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