

On the Myth of 'Settler Violence'

- Eitan Levy

To: me · Sun, Jul 13 at 4:33 AM

Thank you for being a *paid subscriber*. I'm so happy you're here. -Eitan

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The international press tracks 'settler violence' like it's a war crime dossier, and exaggerates it unapologetically—but ignores routine terror against Jews.

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I don't know the truth of any particular claim. I don't know what happened on Friday in a certain village. Did angry 'settlers' initiate violence against innocent protesters? Did armed Arabs attempt to attack a Jewish outpost which defended itself? I don't know who to believe. I don't believe the press, including the generally left leaning Israeli press, to cover the issue honestly. In fact much of the worst reporting is done by Haaretz which gleefully spreads every accusation as a fact before any investigation could possibly have been done. But on the other hand there are certainly plenty of unhinged or just violent people who, in this pressure cooker, could go off and do something terrible. So I don't have any response to the latest outrage.

I don't know if the story being fed us and accepted uncritically by news sources is true, or the version I hear through my fellow settlers. But I know that in general, statistically, it's bulls--t. In the minds of our enemies this would just be one more incident to add to a giant pile of thousands of such incidents. But in truth, almost all of those incidents reported broadly are things such as, for example, every Jew who goes up to the Temple mount no matter how peaceful. The NGO trusted by the worldwide media also includes incidents where a terrorist is killed while in the act of attacking, by official security forces. They include acts of self defense, in other words, 'violence including settlers' regardless of who is the victim and who the perpetrator. In the end these are very rare events, and when criminal activity can be proven it often ends in jail sentences.

So I am not on the, 'blame the settlers' and 'self introspection' bandwagon about this. If Jews committed crimes, they should be prosecuted. If Jews defended themselves, they should be applauded and the Arabs who attacked them should be arrested. But don't let confusion over a few individual cases shape your overall view of what is happening here. There is conflict over land. We try to claim it. They try to claim it. They try to build close enough to us to threaten us and prevent our growth, our 'hilltop youth' try to claim the area first to prevent that. There is conflict.

Usually, overwhelmingly, when violence occurs it is in one direction. Nobody reported on an international database each time I personally have been attacked with rocks in an attempt to kill me (3x). Thank God only my car was damaged, so it didn't even make the news. The police took a report and the state paid to fix my car each time. But you never hear the total number of terrorist attacks against Jews because they are so common they are just part of life in 'the territories,' and the numbers are so astronomical they feel meaningless.

I'm not saying to pity us. Nobody made us live here, and it is only thanks to the army and our exceptional security forces that we are able to live here (the fear and vulnerability we all felt on October 8 reminded us of that). But if the front line were not here it would be in Jerusalem. If not Jerusalem then Tel Aviv. If not Tel Aviv then a deep watery grave in the Mediterranean.

Below is a link to an excellent report by Gadi Taub in Tablet Magazine detailing precisely, not that violence by settlers doesn't happen, but that the phenomenon as understood abroad and in the media is a scandalous libel.

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