

OPINION

Sharoni: Building our tomorrows — 3 years after Oct. 7



People visit the site of the Nova music festival near Kibbutz Reim, southern Israel, Monday. AP Photo/Ohad Zwigenberg



By **BENJAMIN SHARONI**

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Three years have passed since that October morning. It began as a quiet dawn, full of the soft golden light and earthy autumn colors that mark the turn of the season. Within minutes, that peace was shattered. A wave of hatred entered our towns, our quiet villages, and a peaceful music gathering in the open fields. They came with one clear mission: to murder, destroy, burn, rape, and kidnap.

When you think back to the morning of Oct. 7, what do you feel in your heart? I do not share these details to provoke or alienate. I share them because this is the reality we faced, and it is the trauma that continues to shape our daily lives three years later. We must remember how this war started. Hamas terrorists invaded our country, entering towns and villages on a murderous rampage aimed at every Israeli: women and men, young and old, Jews and Arabs, festival-goers celebrating life and children sleeping in their beds. Their goal was not only to destroy Israeli lives, but also to derail the momentous progress toward regional peace and normalization that Israel and our Arab partners pursued through the Abraham Accords.

In a single morning, all Israelis found ourselves thrown into a struggle for our very survival. We were forced to fight for our basic right to live, to secure our homes, and to protect our children. These are the non-negotiable building blocks any nation requires to function and thrive. We simply refuse to let fanatics hell-bent on our destruction determine our future.

The effects of that day reached New England's shores as well. Jewish communities across this region have spent three years facing a hostility many never expected to meet in their own cities and towns. Students have been taunted with chants inciting violence against them on their way to class. At the same time, many New Englanders did what they do best: they stood beside their neighbors.

Against this backdrop, it is deeply painful to witness the cynical attempts, loud and subtle alike, to use this immense tragedy to advance a hostile narrative. There are those who seek to delegitimize Israel, to deny our right to exist as the sovereign state of the Jewish nation, and to sever the vital relationships we have built with partners across the globe.

My answer to critics, commentators, and anyone curious about the truth is simple: come and spend one week with us. Do not rely solely on demagogic messaging, attention-grabbing headlines, or misleading social media posts. Come and see the reality of our daily life. Sit in a kibbutz dining room near the border, walk the memorial at the Nova festival site, talk to the people who live there, and judge for yourself.

If you come, you will see a society carrying heavy grief, yet moving forward with hopeful conviction. We do not pretend that healing is easy or complete. Pain does not disappear just because three years have passed. The empty chairs remain at our family tables, and the weight of that day stays with us every single morning. We honor those whom we lost, and we carry an enduring gratitude for those who ran forward to protect us.

Yet, you will also see a deep vitality. You will see people who choose to rebuild every day. We understand that we cannot take our security or our peace for granted. We know the hard work required to protect our home, and we do not shy away from doing it. True victory is found in this spirit of renewal and in our refusal to bend or break, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Israel stands today, bound by the same shared commitment that sustained us through generations, back in 1948 and the years that followed. The lesson of our history remains clear. It takes hard work, collective effort, and quiet resolve to get up each morning and forge ahead. Under clear skies or through raging storms, we continue to do the necessary work: building and creating our place under the sun.

We have endured unimaginable loss, and we know difficult days still lie ahead. But we also know that better days are coming. Through the grief and the long road ahead, one truth remains certain: we are here, determined and steadfast in our purpose, building our tomorrows. That is our story.

Benjamin Sharoni is Consul General of Israel to New England

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