

Peace In The Middle East

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

Readers of my blog will know that I do not hold back from criticizing Israeli politicians and policies and that I think that occupation, or however one describes the situation on the West Bank or in Judea and Samaria, is neither healthy nor morally sustainable. Why, even the Scots cannot bear to be under the English.

But for the love all I hold dear, I cannot understand how anyone other than a thoroughly biased, prejudiced, or blind theorist (or someone ideologically or religiously opposed to Israel's existence) could possibly ask of Israel to relax its insistence on controlling points of access to its population under current circumstances in the Middle East.

Civil war rages in Syria, where different Muslim sects mutilate, torture, and rape each other. The regime poison gasses its enemies. The only thing they have in common is hatred of Jews.

In Iraq, Sunnis and Shia are beheading, hanging, and torturing each other. The jihadi "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" is sweeping the corrupt Shia Maliki government before it like chaff, and just as they did under Saddam, even their American-trained soldiers are dropping their pants and rifles and fleeing.

In Lebanon Sunni and Shia attack each other, bomb each other, and live within their own secure armed enclaves.

In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood is regarded as a danger to be imprisoned and killed.

In Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, perceived enemies are imprisoned, tortured, and killed without due process. And we know that when the Americans leave Afghanistan the Taliban will take over again.

Christians of all denominations everywhere in the Middle East are under threat, their churches are attacked, their clergy killed, and they are leaving in vast numbers.

Altogether the number of Muslims killed by Muslims is exponentially vaster than all Palestinians killed and imprisoned by Israel since 1948. Regimes are shaky and on the point of collapse, and one cannot predict who will be in charge tomorrow. The Palestinians are themselves divided into various rival factions who think nothing of killing each other.

So please tell me why Israel, unless it is suicidal, has one good reason for reaching a deal at this moment in this situation? And why should anyone think it makes sense to pressurize or boycott Israel under these circumstances?

I do believe Israel should voluntarily withdraw from areas of Palestinian

population, minimize checkpoints within, and maximize investment and cooperation with willing and interested parties. But to sign a peace treaty under such inflammable circumstances cannot make objective sense.