

Facing Reality: Jewish Terrorism is No Longer Limited to Just a Few Bad Seeds

By [Karin Attia](#)

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Image: Artwork inside the burned-out Dawabshe home blames the Israeli government for the firebombing. (Photo: Dan Cohen)

Stabbing at the [Gay Pride Parade](#) in Jerusalem. Death of 16-year-old [Shira Banki](#). [Arson](#) attack on a family home in the West Bank. Deaths of 18-month old [Ali Saad Dawabsheh](#), his father [Saad Dawabsheh's](#), and mother [Reham Dawabsheh](#).

It is time to look inwards at a rising culture of violence rather than facile [explanations](#) about individual bad seeds. Something is growing insidiously among us: [racism](#), [intolerance](#) and [hate](#). With attacks occurring more frequently, these seeds are no longer limited to one crazy individual, one extremist; instead they are indicative of widespread cultural seeds of racism, intolerance, and hate. These seeds have been cultivating for some time.

These brazen hate crimes immediately sparked responses and outrage from Israel's religious leaders and government officials such as Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem [Aryeh Stern](#), Knesset Member [Yair Lapid](#), former President and Prime Minister [Shimon Peres](#), current President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#). A [series of marches](#) condemning these attacks occurred throughout Israel, the largest was in Tel Aviv that drew a crowd of nearly 2,000 people.

The reaction is all a farce, an illusion at best. Israelis, including agents of the government, pretend to be morally outraged that these acts occur; however, everything in Israel has simply been a direct build up to this moment. When are we as Israelis, Jewish Americans, and Jews throughout the world going to accept that this is all part of the same cyclical violence and rampant hate speech that has been taking place for years? When will we start taking [ownership](#) that something has been eating away at us for years? These attacks finally brought about some speech admonishing it, but their outrage in the public rhetoric is disingenuous. Only acceptance that this is cultural and widespread and therefore religious and government institutions alike are complicit will bring about lasting change.

The hypocrisy is overwhelming. Israel condemns violence and hate speech, but allows settlers to continue to reign [terror](#) virtually [unchecked](#) against Palestinians in the West Bank. Israel condemns hate speech but allows [Ayelet Shaked](#), who openly called for the genocide of Palestinians, to be the Minister of Justice.

A recent act exemplifying the difference between a few bad seeds and widespread cultural

seeds is the death of 16-year old [Mohammed Abu Khdeir](#). Rather than wait to hear the true cause of death, the Israeli media was quick to jump and claim that it was [an honor killing](#)—so quick to [deflect](#), defend, and, ultimately, rationalize. Once it was revealed that the perpetrators were in fact three Jewish terrorists, they were not labeled as such. Instead, they were regarded as fanatics, extremists, a few bad seeds, and a gag order was issued. To this day, only one of the three names of the assailants has been released. Instead of focusing on the horror of this crime and reacting with outrage that something like this could be committed by members of the Jewish community, instead of turning inwards for processing and introspective analysis, the narrative of this story focused on the bravery of these terrorists to turn themselves in, how truly apologetic they felt and how they [regret](#) their actions.

The attention and treatment Jewish terrorists receive compared to their Palestinian counterparts is befuddling. Palestinian terrorists have their names released to the public, no fair or open trial, and their family homes bulldozed and demolished. Why is there such a discrepancy between Jewish terrorists and Palestinian terrorists?

How can the Jewish people, stand for this when we are supposedly [morally](#) superior, God's chosen people? One option is to start listening to Defense Minister [Moshe Yaalon](#)'s idea that Israeli authorities should treat and detain Israeli terrorists in the same manner as the Palestinian ones. However, I argue that though that would be the fairer route to take, it is still not the most just. While there are many issues at hand, first and foremost, we must stop labeling Jewish terrorists as 'extremists.' To label them as such diminishes how widespread this phenomenon is and ultimately reduces their impact and culpability. It's not individual bad seeds but rather it is sanctioned and legitimated ideologies.

We as a nation, as a tribe, as a people, better check ourselves, before we wreck ourselves. Refuse to accept that these are but a few bad seeds. Start treating Jewish terror as just terror. Stop letting these terrorists reign over the country. Start bearing more responsibility and culpability.

Organizing marches and preparing public statements is easy, but it is only one part of the solution. Israel needs to start creating mechanisms and platforms where these crimes go punished and treated. Anyone can pay lip service to the issues at hand, but until mechanisms are put in place to appropriately bring about justice, the words of Lapid, Peres, Stern, Rivlin, and Netanyahu remain empty and hollow.

There is much to do in the long journey of resolving the issues between Israel and Palestine, but one step is to realize that Jewish terrorism is no longer limited to a select few seeds, but is in fact a growing problem and deserves to be labeled as what it truly is: terrorism.

***Karin Attia** was born in Haifa, Israel raised in Los Angeles, California and is currently living in New York City studying as a Master's student at New York University (NYU). Her studies are focused on peacebuilding, gender and the Middle East.*

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Articles by: **Karin Attia**

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