

## Reflection by Judge Wendell Griffen

Mark Wingfield of *Baptist News Global* has written an analysis of the current war between Israel and Hamas that I hope you will read. I am quoted in it along with others who hold shared and different perspectives.

<https://baptistnews.com/article/in-this-war-there-are-no-good-guys/>

I think the analogy Ashlee Wiest-Laird shared is especially appropriate. Nobody should expect people whose land has been stolen, who've been locked in a room of their house, denied basic protections and civil rights, attacked at will by a stronger, US-financed, stocked, and cheered military that is the fourth largest in the world, and whose 75-year plea for justice has been belittled to finally decide that fighting their way out of the hellish place they have been forced into is unreasonable.

I wrote a long piece for *Baptist News Global* in May of this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba (meaning "catastrophe"). I encourage you to read it also.

<https://baptistnews.com/article/this-week-we-must-remember-the-palestinian-nakba/>

Deplore war all we may, sooner or later people who've suffered oppression without satisfactory recourse through peaceful means will embrace violent means to determine their own destiny rather than continue suffering oppression. As President John F. Kennedy said in 1962, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Mark Wingfield is correct. Most US media outlets will not cover the Israeli-Hamas war with this historical context in view, if they even mention it at all. The Biden administration, like every other US administration since the Truman administration, is following US policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian dispute that has been skewed in favor of Israel and against Palestinians for 75 years.

As someone who has visited the region, who studied political science, served in the US military, and knows how the US defense and intelligence establishment has operated to provide a security guarantee for what amounts to Israeli land theft, mineral theft, human rights and international law violations, apartheid, and genocide against Palestinians, I know that the Israeli-Hamas war was inevitable. Palestinians have the moral, legal, and political right to not be invaded and terrorized by Israeli settlers. They have the right to conduct their affairs free from Israeli military

occupation. And they have the right to take up armed resistance to defend themselves from US subsidized and Israeli perpetrated apartheid and genocide. Only moral, ethical, cultural, and political incompetence prevents people from saying so.

The Hamas offensive also shows that the US-Israeli intelligence and defense community can be out-smarted in 2023 much as the US intelligence and defense establishment was outsmarted and out-maneuvered in 2001. Instead of 19 deadly combatants armed with box cutters, US and Israeli defense and intelligence experts are now clamoring to play catch up to Hamas militants who used paragliders to initiate coordinated air (missile), ground, and naval operations with striking effectiveness against the fourth largest military force in the world. Even as we deplore the casualties that have occurred and will continue in Gaza, Israel, and across Palestine, we should also acknowledge that Hamas exposed the utter folly of the pre-existing US-led diplomatic, military, intelligence, cultural strategy concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The bitter truth is that we lack the discernment to do so, the moral and ethical courage to admit it, and the political will to change our ways.