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Response to Prof. Aodi letter related to the Israel-Hamas conflict

As it occurred with Prof. Foad Aodi's Letter to the editors, published in the *Journal of Sex- and Gender-Specific Medicine* (vol 9, n 3, pp 105-106), we are pleased to have received and now publish the letter from Prof. Marek Glezerman from Israel. This letter describes the horrific terrorist attack carried out by Hamas in the southern part of the country, leading the state of Israel to intervene against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The responsibility for the content of the letter is solely that of the author.

Our aim is to provide food for thought to our readers.

Giovannella Baggio and Walter Malorni
Scientific editors, J Sex Gender Specific Med

To the Editors, *December 26th, 2023*

In a Letter to the editors, published in the September-December issue of the *Journal of Sex- and Gender-Specific Medicine*, Prof. Foad Aodi described the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza strip. The terrible suffering of its civilian population and the huge number of deaths among them, resulting from Israel's military campaign, has reached catastrophic dimensions and is indeed heartbreaking. Yet, with only a vague contextual reference by the editors, readers are likely to ignore a core aspect, namely the sequence of events since October 7th, and thus misconstrue how the terrible reality has unfolded. In fact, what happened in this tormented place was not a sudden unprovoked onslaught by the Israeli military, but rather a severe military response to the sudden and brutal attack by approximately 1.500 fundamentalist Hamas members. Extremely well organized and within only a few hours, Hamas systematically tortured, raped, maimed, beheaded, burned alive and killed over 1,200 individuals, the vast majority of them civilians of all ages and injured over three thousand. For Jews, this 'Black Saturday' was the worst slaughtering since the Holocaust. In addition, some 250 hostages including women, small children, babies, and elderly people were abducted into the Gaza strip. As for this writing 137 hostages between the ages of eight months and 84 years are still in captivity under horrendous conditions. One cannot speak of one without providing more details of the other. Nature-made disasters are hard to predict, to cope with and to prevent but man-made disasters, like wars are different and need to be understood in order to try and prevent recurrence. Since Prof. Aodi restricted his letter to a snapshot of the terrible medical situation in the Gaza Strip, it was upon the editorial board to provide the reader with an appropriate introduction.

However, the editorial introduction included only a feeble statement about "*the awful situation created by the Hamas terroristic attack, with numerous civilians killed and injured and taken in hostage, and the subsequent terrible massive Israeli attack to Gaza*". 'Awful' is woefully inadequate when considering the cruel carnage perpetrated by Hamas. The butchering of 1.200 elderly, children, women and men is also very poorly described by "numerous civilians killed". Incidentally, among those murdered was also my 88 years old sister-in-law, who was shot point blank in her wheelchair.

I fully agree with Prof. Aodi that there is no military solution to the bleeding long-lasting Israel-Palestine conflict and that only a two-state concept may eventually put an end to this vicious cycle of bloodshed. It is now upon both sides to stop this war, for Hamas to immediately release all hostages and for Palestinians and Israelis to embark without delay on earnest negotiations towards a peaceful solution on the two-state track.

For the past half century, I have been active in promoting a peace agenda politically, by demonstrations, petitions and civil activities. Ironically, very many Israeli advocates of a peaceful solution between Palestinians and Israelis come precisely from the kibbutzim (communal villages) that were attacked and destroyed by the Hamas and many lost their lives during the attack on October 7th.

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