**Things to Consider While Watching**

**“The Siege”**

The play you are about to see purports to tell the story of a “group of armed men” who sought “sanctuary in one of the world’s holiest sites as the Israeli army closes in with helicopters, tanks and snipers.” The play will not tell you is that these armed men were all members of various terrorist organizations including Hamas, Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, Tanzim and others involved in hundreds of attacks on Israeli civilians. Nor will the play inform you *why* the Israeli army was clashing with these gunmen.

In April, 2002, 150 armed Palestinian terrorists violated the sanctity of Bethlehem’s Church of the Nativity by forcing themselves in and barricading themselves while holding more than 40 priests, nuns, and church personnel and 200 other Palestinians as human shields. Rather than storm the Church and turn it into a war zone, the IDF set up a perimeter and demanded that the gunmen release the hostages and surrender peacefully. The Vatican’s Undersecretary of State, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, condemned the Palestinian gunmen: “Let me begin with the fact that the occupation of the holy places by armed men is a violation of a long tradition of law that dates back to the Ottoman era. Never before have they been occupied - for such a lengthy time - by armed men.”

**Who were these Palestinian “fighters”? They included:**

* Khaled Mohammed Abd el Hamid Abu Najimeh, responsible for dispatching suicide bombers to attack Israeli civilians;
* Mohammed Said Atallah Salem, who on March 2, 2002 dispatched a suicide bomber into the Beit Yisrael neighborhood of Jerusalem that murdered 11 Israelis including 4 children.
* Khalil Mohammed Abdullah Nawareh, who murdered an Israeli civilian in 2001;
* Mamdoukh Akhsan Mohammed Wardiyan, a senior armed member of Hamas who participated in many shooting and bombing attacks against Israeli civilians;
* Rami Kamel Eid Kamel, one of the main terrorists involved in shooting attacks and mortar fire directed against Israeli civilians in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo.

The play also will not tell you about how Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat turned down an Israeli offer to make peace and establish a Palestinian state in 2000, followed by Palestinian terrorist groups launching an all-out war against Israeli civilians. It won’t depict the major surge of Palestinian terrorist attacks in March, 2002, when 120 Israelis, almost all civilians, were murdered in daily strikes on buses, restaurants, hotels, shops and homes. One of the worst of these massacres occurred on March 27, 2002 when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the Park Hotel in Netanya, which killed 30 and wounded 140 at a Passover Seder. Just a few days later, March 31, a suicide bomber blew up a Haifa restaurant, murdering 14 people and wounding 40.

This is why Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield, seeking to root out terrorists from cities in the West Bank, including Bethlehem. The operation became the subject of a major propaganda campaign by Palestinian leaders who claimed, for example, that Israeli forces “massacred” 500 Palestinian civilians in the city of Jenin. Later, investigations and reports by the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Time magazine, and the BBC all concluded there was no massacre, that the number of casualties was ten times lower, and that most of those killed were terrorists. Unfortunately, “The Siege” is a continuation of this tradition of propaganda, which only serves the interests of anti-peace extremists.

As you take in this play, we hope you will consider the context. Had Palestinian leaders chosen peace with Israel and independence, rather than continued conflict and terrorism against Israeli civilians, the standoff in at the Church of the Nativity never would have happened. Instead of bringing Israelis and Palestinians together and building mutual understanding, “The Siege” only serves to push them further apart.

**In Memoriam**

**Victims of Palestinian Terror March 2002**

*This list does not include the names of the 299 Israeli victims, almost entirely civilians, murdered in Palestinian terror attacks between September 27, 2000 to February 28, 2002, nor the over 1,200 other Israeli victims of terrorism since.*

Ya’acov Avni, 20

Moshe Dayan, 46

Shlomo Nehmad, 40

Gafnit Nehmad, 32

Shiraz Nehmad, 7

Liran Nehmad, 3

Shaul Nehmad, 15

Lidor Ilan, 12

Oriah Ilan, 18 months

Tzofia Ya’arit Eliyahu, 23

Ya’akov Avraham Eliyahu, 7 months

Avi Hazan, 37

Ariel Hovav, 25

David Damelin, 29

Rafael Levy, 42

Avraham Ezra, 38

Eran Gad, 24

Yochai Porat, 26

Kfir Weiss, 24

Sergei Butarov, 33

Vadim Balagula, 32

Didi Yitzhak, 66

Steven Koenigsburg, 19

Salim Barakat, 33

Yosef Habi, 52

Eli Dahan, 53

Devorah Friedman, 45

Maharatu Tagana, 85

Arik Krogliak, 18

Tal Kurtzweil, 18

Asher Marcus, 18

Eran Picard, 18

Ariel Zana, 18

Avia Malka, 9 months

Israel Yihye, 27

Limor Ben-Shoham, 27

Nir Borochov, 22

Danit Dagan, 25

Livnat Dvash

Tali Eliyahu, 26

Uri Felix, 25

Dan Imani, 23

Natanel Kochavi

Baruch Lerner, 29

Orit Ozerov, 28

Avraham Haim Rahamim, 28

Eyal Lieberman, 42

Yehudit Cohen, 33

Ofer Kanarick, 44

Alexei Kotman, 29

Lynne Livne, 49

Atara Livne, 15

German Rozhkov, 25

Noa Auerbach, 18

Michael Altfiro, 19

Shimon Edri, 20

Meir Fahima, 40

Aharon Revivo, 19

Alon Goldenberg, 28

Mogus Mahento, 75

Bella Schneider, 53

Gadi Shemesh, 34

Tzipi Shemesh, 29

Yitzhak Cohen, 48

Esther Klieman, 23

Avi Sabag, 24

Major Cengiz Soytunc

*(Turkish member of the TIPH observer force in Hebron)*

Catherine Berruex

*(Swiss member of the TIPH observer force in Hebron)*

Shula Abramovitch, 63

David Anichovitch, 70

Avraham Beckerman, 25

Shimon Ben-Aroya, 42

Andre Fried, 47

Idit Fried, 47

Miriam Gutenzgan, 82

Ami Hamami, 44

Perla Hermele, 79

Dvora Karim, 73

Michael Karim, 78

Yehudit Korman, 70

Marianne Lehmann Zaoui, 77

Lola Levkovitch, 85

Furuk Na’imi, 62

Eliahu Nakash, 85

Irit Rashel, 45

Yulia Talmi, 87

Sivan Vider, 20

Ernest Weiss, 79

Eva Weiss, 75

Meir (George) Yakobovitch, 76

Anna Yakobovitch, 78

Chanah Rogan, 92

Zee’v Vider, 50

Alter Britvich, 88

Frieda Britvich, 86

Sarah Levy-Hoffman, 89

Rachel Gavish, 50

David Gavish, 50

Avraham Gavish, 20

Yitzhak Kanner, 83

Tuvia Wisner, 79

Michael Orlinsky, 70

Rachel Levy, 17

Haim Smadar, 55

Suheil Adawi, 32

Dov Chernevroda, 67

Shimon Koren, 55

Ran Koren, 18

Gal Koren, 15

Moshe Levin, 52

Danielle Manchell, 22

Orly Ofir, 16

Aviel Ron, 54

Ofer Ron, 18

Anat Ron, 21

Ya’akov Shani, 53

Adi Shiran, 17

Daniel Carlos Wegman, 50

Carlos Yerushalmi, 52