




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HILL

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MOTION

Middle East

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.40 pm): I will be opposing the motion moved by the Greens. I want to put on the record that, the way I have seen it, the Jews are probably the most persecuted race on the face of the earth. If we look back at history, they went into slavery for over 400 years in Egypt, they were in captivity in Babylon for over 70 years and they were trampled by the Romans for over 400 years. In 70 AD the Romans destroyed the temple and Israel was scattered across the four corners of the globe. Over six million Jews were slaughtered during World War II. It is a tragedy that we see innocent people killed during war. All war is a tragedy; there is no doubt about it.

The Jews were scattered for 2,000 years and the Holy Land was in the hands of the Roman Empire which occupied it, and the Byzantine Empire and the powerful Ottoman Empire. I believe Napoleon tried to conquer the Holy Land but he failed. It was 800 horsemen who charged and took the Holy Land in the Battle of Beersheba, and then the Holy Land was back at the hands of the British. The League of Nations agreed to give the Holy Land back to the Jews after they were scattered for almost 2,000 years.

The nation of Israel was formed again in 1948. There was a league of Arab nations that declared war against them, but they ended up defeating them. In 1967 another league of nations rose up against Israel and Israel defeated them in six days. In 1973 a league of Middle East nations rose up against Israel as well and Israel also defeated them within a month. Israel is probably one of the most democratic countries in the Middle East. The women have rights, and tourists go there every year to visit the Sea of Galilee and all of those precious sites where Jesus, Abraham and Isaac had walked. Twenty per cent of the parliament in Israel, the Knesset, is made up of Arabs so they give them the opportunity to participate over there in Israel.

There is one particular moment I can recall about three years ago when the LGBTQ+ were protesting about the right-wing government in Israel and there was condemnation about that right-wing government. At the same time, over in Iran they were hanging two homosexuals upside down on a crane. No-one was condemning Iran at that time—nobody—but they were condemning Israel about their right-wing government.

It was an atrocity when we saw Hamas invade Israel in October last year and 1,500 innocent civilians were mutilated and slaughtered in the most barbaric atrocity in history known to man. They did not even do that in the barbaric days thousands of years ago. War is an atrocity and everyone wants to see peace, but when it comes to peace there are still more than 100 hostages who are trapped in the terror tunnels in the Gaza Strip. We call on Hamas to surrender and release all the hostages.