

# Israeli and Palestinian conflict over holy land worsens

by Neil Lugovoy

National Editor

Religious and cultural tensions have caused a recent spike in violence in Israel. Deadly attacks by Palestinians living in Israel have prompted an increase in the use of deadly force by Israeli police against Palestinians. Since Oct. 1, 58 Palestinians have been shot and killed by Israeli police and 11 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians in more than 30 shootings and stabbings.

A major cause of the tension between the two ethnic groups is a dispute over religious sites in Israel. A holy site called "Temple Mount" by Jews and "Noble Sanctuary" by Muslims is managed by Israel and Jordan. Since the site contains the al-Aqsa mosque, Jews are not allowed to pray on the site. Palestinians have claimed that Israelis are trying to remove that restriction, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu assured them that Israeli officials have no intention of doing so.

On Sept. 12, the day before the Jewish holiday Rosh Hashanah, Palestinian youths barricaded themselves inside the mosque with the intent to prevent Jews from entering the site. Using tear gas and stun grenades, Israeli police raided the compound in order to open the site on the holiday. According to Israeli police, there were no injuries, but there was further violence between civilians outside of the holy site.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that the police raid was



TAKING A STANCE: Protesters wave religious flags outside of holy sites to show support.

an "attack by the occupier's military and police against the al-Aqsa mosque and the aggression against the faithful who were there." In an effort to reduce tensions at the site, US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Netanyahu, Abbas, and Jordanian King Abdullah II to formulate a deal in late October. The deal includes provisions for 24-hour video monitoring of holy sites to prevent abuse by Israeli police.

However, the day the deal was announced Israeli police shot and killed an attacker whom they claimed was armed with a knife. On Oct. 27, Israeli soldier approached two Palestinians who were acting suspiciously, and one of the Palestinians stabbed a soldier before both of them were shot and killed. Amnesty International, a non-government human rights group, has investigated the shootings and claims that Israeli police and military forces have been exercising "extreme and unlawful measures."

Tensions between Israeli forces and Palestinians have been high following an increase in the number of stabbings by Palestinians. On Oct. 13, two Palestinians attacked a bus in Jerusalem and killed three people before one of the assailants was shot and killed and another was captured. In response to the violence, Netanyahu has increased the security in Jerusalem by deploying more than 3,000 police officers and hundreds of soldiers.

(Sources: BBC News, Wall Street Journal, Reuters)

# South African students rally against a raise in tuition fees

by Madeline Hagar

Opinion Editor

Students across South Africa have rallied together to voice their concerns regarding the country's current education system. The student activists gathered at the Union Buildings on Fri., Oct. 23, to protest. There has not been such a large gathering of youth to argue for their right to education since the 1976 Soweto uprising.

More than 10,000 individuals gathered to demand that President Zuma drop his attempt to increase school tuitions. On Oct. 23 Zuma finally addressed the issue head-on, commenting, "We agreed that there will be a zero increase of university fees in 2016." This appeased the students, but their concerns sur-

rounding education remain and go much deeper than many believed. Students want tuition levels to remain the same, but they also want school to become more accessible to lower income families and to change the nature of the universities, for there are currently large disparities in the level of education received.

South Africa is arguably one of the most unequal societies in the world. In 2014 alone, the top 10 percent of wage earners earned more than 90 times those in the bottom 10 percent. This inequality is staggering and has many impacts on the standard of living. For instance, many cannot afford basic necessities, as many fall at or below the poverty line. Even with financial aid programs and state funding, the hopes of attaining a higher-level education are

extremely slim.

Moreover, unemployment rates are high. Approximately one third of 15 to 24-year-olds are unemployed or attending a university. They exhibit an unemployment rate of 50 percent. Many students fail to complete their primary or secondary educations as well. Without an education, it is very difficult for them to find high paying jobs to support themselves and their families. If they could pay the tuition fees, they would have access to education, which could lead to a more prosperous life.

The students also want to change the nature of the education system, for there are currently many fewer black professors teaching than white

ones. If the students can shift the racial balance, they can take a step towards changing the thinking, style, and content of teaching. Therefore, they are calling for the "decolonization" of higher education. Education shapes the way people think and perceive their surroundings, so there is danger in marginalizing the minority groups.

The students stood up and forced those around them to listen. They succeed in securing a zero percent increase in tuition, but the fight for education is still alive. Ngavatshedzo Mpepu, 24, from the University of Pretoria, sums this up, stating, "We want more now, not just a zero percent increase. We want free education."

(Sources: CNN, BBC, The Guardian)

# COM: discover Syria

Cole Potter

Web Editor-in-Chief

Despite the immense media coverage of the ongoing civil war and refugee crisis, one must remember that the country of Syria is one diverse in people, culture, geography, and tradition. It is located between the borders of three continents and is greatly shaped by the disparate societies which surround it. Although the nation was originally established as a French colony, Syria has become a country that is completely unique.

Long before the French touched its lands, Syria was the location of some of the world's first organized societies. Archaeological digs in the country have unearthed ancient farming tools and sculpture. Throughout history, many different civilizations have occupied the region that makes up modern-day Syria, including the Egyptians and Arameans. It was not until Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire conquered the area that it was named Syria and began to take shape as a distinct sovereignty. Through the conquests of Muhammad, Islam entered the region, and the multifarious religious tradition of Syria began to emerge. In 1941, Syrian nationalists ousted the ruling French government and established the independent Syrian Arab Republic.

The varied geography of Syria has led the modern Syrian economy to be based on different industries depending on region. In the Northwestern region bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the fertile soils and coastline lend themselves to agriculture

and shipping. Additionally, the Syrian people mirror the farming practices of their ancient predecessors in the areas surrounding the Euphrates River. In the Central and Southern regions of the country, immense oil wealth is found under the arid earth. Lastly, in larger cities, such as the capital city Damascus, a robust banking and finance industry exists. Tourism has also increased since the end of the twentieth century, as people visit from across the world to experience what the country has to offer.

Syria provides a huge collection of the world's peoples, traditions, and cultures. Though the majority of Syria's population of 18 million identifies as Sunni Muslim, nearly every religious group is represented, especially in more metropolitan areas. Similarly, although Arabic is the nation's official language, many other tongues and dialects are spoken, namely Kurdish in the northeast and English and French in urban areas. Certain values, such as the importance of family, education, and mutual respect are held over all, but individuals may vary greatly in the cultural practices they adhere to. However, Syria is famous for some particular aspects of its national culture, such as the booming music industry in Damascus and its traditional folk dances. In many ways, Syria is a reflection of its surrounding countries, but it is also a leader and trendsetter. Its location, history, and people have made it a melting pot for the Arab World. (Sources: CIA Factbook)



BIRD'S EYE: The ancient city of Apollonia is the largest city in Syria, as well as the largest city in the Levant.

# Students killed in sword attack

by Cole van Miltenburg

Wed Editor

On the morning of Oct 22., a race-motivated school attack in Sweden resulted in the death of one student, and one teacher and injury to two others. The attack took place in the industrial city Trollhattan at the Kronan Primary and Middle School, which serves a large number of immigrants.

The perpetrator of the attack was identified by Swedish media as a 21-year-old Swedish native named Anton Lundin Pettersson. He arrived at the school around 10 a.m., and entered wearing dark clothing, a mask, and a



TRAGEDY STRIKES: The swordsman targeted suspects based on ethnicity.

sword. Some students thought that he was wearing a Halloween costume and playing a prank and posed for pictures with him. His intentions later proved otherwise when he began to attack students based on their ethnicity, singling out people with dark skin. He used multiple knives to kill one male teaching assistant at the school as well as a 17-year-old male student from Somalia who later died at the hospital. A 15-year-old student from Syria, as well as a 41-year-old teacher, were also injured in the attack and sent to the hospital in critical condition. When police arrived at the school, they fired two shots at the suspect, one of which hit him. He later died in the hospital. The attacker did not have a criminal record, but after searching his apartment, investigators discovered



REMEMBERING THE LOST: Mourners gather outside of the school.



CROWDS GATHER: People gather at the crime scene to get a glimpse.

evidence suggesting that the attack was likely racially motivated and that he might be a member of right-wing groups linked to hate crimes.

The Swedish public reacted with shock and sadness following the attack. The extremity of the attack is considered especially shocking in a country like Sweden, where violent crime is relatively unheard of in schools; the last time someone died due to school violence was in 1961. The Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said, "This is a dark day for Sweden. My thoughts go out to the victims and their families, pupils and staff, and the entire community that has been affected. There are no words to describe what they are going through right now."

Many attribute this act of violence to the recent growth of right-wing hate groups in Sweden due to the influx of immigrants that have entered the country in the past several years. Trollhattan in particular has a history of anti-immigrant violence. In 1993, the town's mosque was destroyed by arson, and in 1996 hundreds of Neo-Nazis gathered in the town to commemorate Hitler in a march. Sweden has the largest per capita number of asylum seekers, only second in number to Germany in Europe. The country's small population of 10 million took in 80,000 asylum seekers last year and is expected to take in 190,000 more in 2015. Although the majority of the Swedish population has been accepting of new immigrants, resentment towards the immigrants has escalated as well.

Last year, the Swedish Democrats, an anti-immigration political party, received nearly 13 percent of the vote in a general election. Also, there were over 4,000 attacks based on race last year in Sweden. A quarter of these attacks were directed towards Africans, although only two percent of Swedes identify as having African descent. Within the past seven months, 20 asylum centers and refugee buildings in Sweden have been damaged through arson. It seems more than likely that attacks directed towards immigrants will become a more prevalent issue for Sweden in the near future. (Sources: CNN, Yahoo News, NY Times, The Guardian)