

## CONTINUED...

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Reuters/CNS

Jewish religious workers carry the body of Amos Magluf, who was found bound, stabbed and dumped in a riverbed near the Jewish settlement of Gillo Oct. 30. Gillo sits at the edge of Arab East Jerusalem, an area of ongoing clashes between Israelis and Palestinians.

## Holy Land

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has lived in San Francisco for six years where he serves 750 Arab-American Catholic families at the behest of his patriarch in Jerusalem. In a phone interview, Father Kobti noted that he oversees the maintenance of a Web site devoted to Arab and Arab-American Catholic issues.

As he sees it, Palestinians are simply standing up for their rights against an occupying army. Palestinians living in the portions of the territories controlled either by Israel and even the autonomous Palestinian Authority suffer from unemployment, travel restrictions and water shortages, all of which are related to Israeli rule or interference, he said.

He added that he believed Israelis fear the Palestinians in the same manner that white South Africans feared black South Africans prior to the dismantling of apartheid. Yet, as happened in South Africa, Father Kobti believes that both sides can get what they want without massive bloodshed. With emotion in his voice, he strongly rejected any suggestion that the Israelis have something genuine to fear from an independent Palestinian state. However, he stressed that the violence will continue until Israel removes all impediments to the peace process, including its settlements in Palestinian territory.

"The children will always throw the stones and the stones will cry 'Justice, justice, justice for this land!'" he said.

But it's precisely because those children are throwing stones that the peace process has ground to a halt, according to Jeremy D. Schnittman. The 23-year-old Orthodox Jew is the son of Suzanne Schnittman, the diocese's former consistent life ethic coordinator, who is Catholic, and her husband, Michael, who is Jewish. A doctoral student in physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Jeremy Schnittman e-mailed his thoughts on the current turmoil.

Schnittman lived in Israel during the 1999-2000 academic year, studying at a yeshiva, or Jewish theological school, south of Jerusalem. Schnittman expressed sympathy for the Palestinians, noting they did not enjoy full rights under Israeli rule.

But he added that Israelis are suspicious of Palestinian intent in the peace process. It's not clear from some incendiary Palestinian rhetoric whether all Palestinians have given up their desire to completely destroy the state of Israel, he noted. He also said he was displeased by press accounts making the conflict out to be one of aggressive Israeli forces attacking "children."

"The so-called 'protesters' are violent, rioting mobs bent on the injuring and killing of security soldiers, most of whom are as young as the 'innocent' Palestinian teenagers," he wrote.

Basem Ashkar, 52, is a Palestinian-American who lives in Gates, and has been a U.S. citizen since 1978. A Muslim, Ashkar was

born and raised in East Jerusalem. Like other Palestinians, he believes that Israel wants peace but doesn't want to give up enough land to get it, and he expressed anger at Israel's settlement policy. Israel, he said, has given Palestinians full control of less than a quarter of the territories' land, and only in communities where large numbers of Palestinians are concentrated. Meanwhile, Palestinians chafe at the fact Israel still controls the territories' main roads, he said.

"They can block roads anytime they want," he said.

He added that he wants the United States to put more pressure on Israel to dismantle its settlements. He also said that he wants the United Nations to send peacekeepers to protect Palestinians, and he argued that most Palestinians simply want East Jerusalem, all the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, and not all of Israel.

"We Palestinian people do not fear peace," he said. "We fear the violence from the Israeli military."

But Israelis thought peace was beginning to blossom, which is why the current uprising is all the more befuddling to many Israelis, according to Larry Fine, executive director of the Jewish Community Federation in Rochester. Fine, who recently returned from a trip to Israel with other U.S. Jews, said many Israeli doves feel they have "wasted" the last decade trying to make peace with the Palestinians.

Like many Israelis, Fine, a U.S. citizen, said he believed the Palestinians had not held up their end of the peace process, recruiting thousands more armed police than the 10,000 called for by the 1993 accord, for example. He added that he thought the current uprising was not spontaneous, but planned. Nonetheless, Israelis have no choice but to eventually return to the bargaining table with the Palestinians, he said. Till then, regrettable as it may seem to the outside world, Israel will use force to quell the uprising, he noted.

"I don't think there's anything that Israel can do but what any sovereign state can do but protect (itself) till this goes away."

### Who is David, Goliath?

When he looks at a map, Katzen said he sees tiny Israel surrounded by hostile Arab nations that he believes would love to get rid of it once and for all, and maybe do so using biological weapons.

"I think Israel is doomed," he said. "There's 120 million Arabs and 4 million Jews. How do you survive that kind of imbalance?"

But Kaidy dismisses Katzen's contention that Israel is in mortal danger, noting that Israel is solidly backed by the United States. Israel has a sophisticated army and nuclear weapons, he added, and can no longer be surprised by an Arab attack because spy satellites can give warning.

"Israel, I think, is unnecessarily paranoid in thinking that any Arab army or combination of Arab armies is going to move against Israel," he said.