



## RURAL COMMUNITIES UNDER SIEGE

*"Like a muscle, resilience is built by practicing and strengthening togetherness."*

Kibbutzim and Moshavim are not military camps but rural communities where agriculture is a significant source of livelihood. However, on October 7, 2023, dozens of these peaceful Israeli settlements experienced unimaginable horror.

## THE MASSACRE

We remember, and cannot forget, how babies were put into ovens, women were raped and slaughtered, and children were executed in front of their parents before the parents, too, were murdered and their homes set ablaze.

On Thursday, October 10, 2024, I visited Kibbutz Nir Oz, a small community of 400 people, its members once called heaven on earth, nestled along the border with the Gaza Strip. That paradise was shattered on the morning of October 7, 2023, when hundreds of Hamas terrorists breached the border fence and, within minutes, crossed the 2 km distance to the Kibbutz. They swarmed in from all directions, going house to house, ruthlessly killing anyone they encountered. In the chaos, they burned 80% of the homes and abducted dozens of residents, including babies—one just under a year old.

It was heartbreaking to hear Aryeh Itzik, a long-time Kibbutz member, and ambulance driver for 45 years, describe the horrors of that day—how he survived the massacre by hiding under a blanket in a dark room and later, after the terrorists retreated, what he witnessed as he walked through the scorched ruins of homes, seeing devastation and death on an unimaginable scale. His account vividly portrayed how a peaceful community was transformed into a nightmare in moments.

Since that dark day, Israelis go to sleep haunted by these atrocities and wake up with thoughts of those we've lost, the abductees still trapped in Hamas tunnels, and the soldiers risking their lives on the front lines. These soldiers fight against those who have made terrorizing and killing civilians their mission, seeking to spread grief, sorrow, and destruction.

I have two sons in combat units—one in compulsory military service and the other in the reserves. As a parent, how do you sleep knowing your children are in danger? But that's not all; since October 7, approximately 30,000 missiles, rockets, and drones have been launched at Israel from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Yemen, with most targeting rural settlements.

Take ten seconds and breathe deeply to fully grasp the impact this has on daily life, work, mental health, and society.

This harsh reality has turned Israel, particularly its rural communities—mainly Kibbutzim—into a living laboratory of human behavior, constantly tested under the strain of life-threatening crises.

## **Rural Communities in Crisis**

Sadly, rural communities worldwide often bear the brunt of political and security instability. Vulnerable areas, whether under attack by terrorist organizations or nations—as seen in Russia's invasion of Ukraine—are frequently targeted. While violent assaults are devastating, rural communities also contend with less dramatic but equally destructive threats, such as climate change, heat waves, droughts, floods, and pests like locusts, Fall Armyworms, malaria, and fruit flies, which ravage crops and livelihoods.

The key characteristics of these communities, particularly those far from urban centers, are their small size, limited economic resilience, and reduced political influence. Even after severe crises, governments often overlook their needs, leaving them especially vulnerable. This prolongs their recovery and deepens poverty, suffering, and despair.

To break this cycle, we must find ways to shorten the recovery times following these inevitable crises. By doing so, we can help these communities not only survive but thrive, transforming poverty into prosperity. The question is: Can we build and design rural communities that are more resilient to crises?

## KIBBUTZ RESEARCHERS' CONFERENCE: INSIGHTS

On September 10, 2024, a conference of Kibbutz researchers was held with the theme "The Kibbutz Movement Following October 7." The focus was on the Kibbutzim in southern Israel that suffered the Hamas massacre. The event took place near the Gaza Strip, and by 9 p.m., the sounds of cannon fire from the nearby war zone were a surreal reminder of the ongoing conflict.

The conference was both emotional and intellectually stimulating. It brought together Kibbutz members who survived the massacre, community leaders, and academics studying the Kibbutz model. The atmosphere was electrifying, and we witnessed a pivotal moment for Israel, the region, and perhaps for the world to learn.

Throughout the day, the word "crisis" (משבר, *mashber*) surfaced repeatedly. In Hebrew, *mashber* originally referred to a woman's birthing chair—a place of immense pain, as it is the start of new life, continuity, and happiness. This dual meaning perfectly captures where we stand today: a historical crisis that could lead to either growth and renewal or decline and death. How we respond will shape the future.

### Three Key Insights from the Conference

Before delving into these insights, it's important to note that Kibbutzim has undergone significant transformations over the last few decades, shifting from collective responsibility toward greater individualism. The October 7th massacre affected Kibbutzim at different stages of this shift, and many studies presented at the conference explored how a community's level of cooperation and togetherness influenced its resilience. Here's what stood out:

1. **The Spirit of Rebirth:** Despite the immense challenges ahead, the conference left participants with a strong feeling of social resilience and rebirth. We face a historic opportunity to correct long-ignored issues, and while the pain is undeniable, there's a shared belief that we will emerge stronger.
2. **Community Strength Matters:** The more cooperative and integrated a Kibbutz was before the massacre, the more resilient its members have been in facing the October 7 crisis. Communities with a strong sense of belonging and togetherness coop with the challenges faced as a turning point for recovery and growth despite their profound losses. The key takeaway: togetherness is crucial for community resilience.
3. **Social Over Economic Focus:** Interestingly, none of the studies presented at the conference examined the business or economic aspects of the Kibbutz concerning its social resilience. This stands in contrast to research on rural communities in developing countries, where the focus is often on agriculture and economics as the foundation of prosperity. This gap underscores the importance of recognizing the role of social cohesion in building prosperous, resilient communities.

# THE CURRENT STATE AND THE PATH FORWARD

Israel is now in the midst of its most severe existential crisis—one that began with a collapse of trust in the government and leadership, followed by the October 7 massacre and the longest war in its history. And still, the end is unknown.

Yet, even in these painful times, the importance of social cohesion, shared values and mission, and a sense of belonging has never been more evident. When dozens of rural communities, mostly Kibbutzim, were attacked, Israelis—Kibbutz members and non-members alike—rallied to support and strengthen these social structures. This newfound "togetherness" is unlike anything seen in Israel since its founding in 1948.

Ultimately, a prosperous society, organization, or community begins with a strong foundation of belonging and unity. The communities recovering the fastest are not necessarily those with the least appeared damage but those with the greatest sense of togetherness. In times of crisis, this shared sense of purpose, belonging, and unity drives resilience and growth.

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## TAKEAWAY MESSAGES

- **Rural communities** are vulnerable to both violent attacks and environmental threats.
- **Togetherness and Social cohesion** are critical to resilience in times of crisis and to prompt recovery.
- **Resilience and unity** can transform tragedy into opportunities for growth and renewal.

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More on the October 7th genocide in South Israel:

[Humanity is one organism](#)

[Videos - The October 7 genocide](#)

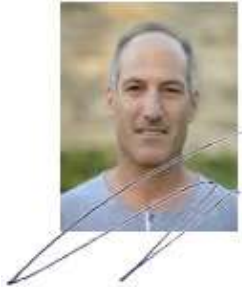
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If you got to here, read this column, and enjoyed it, please be nice to your friends, share it with them, or help them [Subscribe](#).

*"Mental and Economic Freedom Are Interconnected."*

See you soon,

Nimrod



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**P.S.**

If you missed it, here is a link to last week's blog, "[A Universal Framework For Prosperity](#)"

**P.P.S.**

**OPEN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:**

- 1) Exporting fresh fruits from Africa to the EU under the Dream Valley regenerative protocol brand for the 2024 season.
- 2) Joining the Nova-Kibbutz concept project or establishing a similar initiative in your region.

Kindly provide your background and credentials to receive tailored next-step instructions.

**P.P.P.S.**

[Dream Valley](#) is a field-proven disruptive business model based on the successful Israeli Model.

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\*This article addresses general phenomena. The mention of a country/continent is used for illustration purposes only.