

Survivor of Music Festival Massacre Describes Ordeal

Long Island Members of Congress Show Strong Support for Israel

Natalie Sanandaji of Great Neck, a survivor of the Supernova Music Festival in Israel that was attacked by Hamas on October 7th, recounted her harrowing ordeal escaping the massacre at Midway Jewish Center recently. MJC in Syosset happens to be the spiritual home of Omer Neutra, a 22-year-old IDF soldier from Plainview who is also a hostage.

Long Island Congressmen Andrew Garbarino, Anthony D'Esposito and Nick LaLota along with other public officials also spoke at the press conference arranged by the American Jewish Committee.

At the Supernova Music Festival, billed as a "a journey of unity and love", according to police, 364 people were shot, bludgeoned or burned to death and another 40 taken hostages by Hamas.

Natalie Sanandaji in describing the events she lived through said that there were rockets intercepted overhead but the people around her were calm as that is their reality. As the rocket attacks escalated there was a fear of being hit by debris but no understanding of the nature of the sneak attack unfolding.

She headed toward the cars but stopped at the bathrooms just moments before they were

shot up by the terrorists. Hearing gunshots, split second decisions had to be made which she described as "choiceless choices". It is a phrase coined during the Holocaust signifying a no-win situation. She ran into friends hiding in a ditch but decided to keep running. Those friends did not survive. After four hours they saw a truck driver but they thought he was a terrorist and were ready to accept their fate. In fact, it was an Israeli man driving to help. After he dropped them off he headed back to help others. Natalie never learned his identity. Natalie concluded by saying, "I don't feel safe as a Jew here since I'm back in New

York.

Friends are hiding their Star of David jewelry and taking down mezuzahs. We have to fight for our land and fight for our right to be Jewish."

Congressman Garbarino remarked that he had been to Israel twice and many of the people he met with were now dead. He added, "Over 1200 Israelis and other citizens were killed that day (October 7th), more than any day since the Holocaust. We can not blame Israel for what it is doing now. Those who committed these atrocities should be held accountable and we should be standing there with Israel to make sure they can accomplish

this (eliminating Hamas) and be safe again."

Congressman Nick LaLota said, "What happened in Israel October 7th was wrong. Hamas was wrong. Israel was right. Israel has the right to exist, to defend itself and to pursue those who committed these atrocities against her without any conditions whatsoever. We are here today to join and pray that those who are held hostage do come home."

Congressman Anthony D'Esposito said that while there are many that are critical of the United States and Israel this is not the time to sit back, to wait or to falter. Rather it is

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Top: (from left) Natalie Sanandaji; Congressman Nick LaLota; State Senator Kevin Parker. Bottom: Congressman Andrew Garbarino speaking. Left to right are Eric Post; Sen. Kevin Parker; Supervisor Jennifer DeSena; Natalie Sanandaji; Nassau Legislator, Mazi Melesa Pilip; Mindy Perlmutter; Rep. Nick LaLota; Rep. Anthony D'Esposito; Rabbi Joel Levenson; Assemblyman Steve Stern; Avi Posnick; Rick Lewis; Jon Kaiman. Photos: Henry J. Levy.

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continued from previous page
the time to continue on the mission to eradicate Hamas from this earth which will bring legitimacy to the phrase “Never Again”. And he added that the US must provide Israel every opportunity and every resource to do just that.

North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena sent her prayers to the kidnapped IDF soldier, Omar, and his parents and said they were not forgotten in recent gathering in Great Neck, Port Washington and now Syosset.

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than she does in New York as a Jew is a warning. We must do better. We must stop this now. We must stand against hate and call it hate.”

State Senator Kevin Parker told us that Hamas is not only holding Israelis hostage but they are holding the Palestinian people hostage. He said, “This is personal to me because I had family in Jerusalem doing a Bible & Holyland tour at the time and I worked with Senator Schumer to get them through Jordan and bring them home. We live in a free country. Our motto is “E Pluribus Unum” - out of many one. We may be Jewish, we may be Muslim we may be Christian but we are

one.”

Eric Post, AJC Long Island’s Regional Director introduced excellent speakers including Rabbi Joel Levenson, Jon Kaiman, Deputy Suffolk County Executive, Assemblyman Steve Stern and important colleagues, Avi Posnick, StandWithUs, Mindy Perlmutter, JCRC-LI and Rick Lewis Mid-Island & Suffolk JCCs.

The support for the victims of the attacks and of Israel, especially by Long Island’s well represented Congressional Delegation showed the great focus, character, backbone and resolve needed during these difficult times.



Top: (from left) Congressman Anthony D’Esposito; North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena; Bottom: (from left) Rabbi Joel Levenson, Midway Jewish Center; Eric Post, AJC Long Island Regional Director. Photos: Henry J. Levy.