

1. ONE YEAR AFTER OCTOBER 7

Μέσο: INTERNATIONAL NEW YORK TIMES_KATHIMERINI

Ημ. Έκδοσης: . . .07/10/2024 Ημ. Αποδελτίωσης: . . .07/10/2024

Σελίδα: 3

Innews AE - Αποδελτίωση Τύπου - <http://www.innews.gr>



One year after October 7

COMMENTARY

BY GEORGE N. TZOGPOULOS *

One year has passed since October 7, 2023, when Hamas orchestrated its heinous terrorist attack against Israel. The return of the hostages remains the top priority of the Israeli government **and** society. Obviously, the Middle East no longer looks the same. Israel's deep military engagement in the Gaza Strip **and** Lebanon **and** its airstrikes against Syria as well as the double Iranian attack against the Jewish state generate uncertainty. Some even predict tectonic changes of the Middle East map.

Israel understands its security needs from its own prism, which is not always the same as that of its partners. It is expected that it will continue on the same path irrespective of some American objections. Critics of the Israeli government emphasize the humanitarian dimension of ongoing wars. They tend to have second thoughts when they realize that Iranian threats are real, however. This is what happened this week when 180 ballistic missiles were unleashed against Israeli targets.

To no one's surprise, the EU monitors the Middle East crisis as a distant observer. EU member-states vote differently in several UN votes, whereas vague statements about the necessity of peace do not solve the problem. Within this context, the stance of Greece **and** Cyprus has been nuanced. Both countries had been fully supportive of Israel at the beginning, but voted against Israel in the UN General Assembly from December 2023 onward. A few weeks ago, **for** instance, Greece **and** Cyprus supported a resolution demanding Israel "end its unlawful presence in Occupied Palestinian Territory."

One year after October 7, 2023,



CONZALO FUENTES/REUTERS

A man walks past images of people taken hostage during the deadly October 7 attack, amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza between Israel **and** Hamas, in Tel Aviv, on Thursday.

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memory **and** remembrance matter. **And** they can go together with serious thinking about the future of the Middle East. Old cliches **and** wishful thinking have no resonance today. Greece **and** Cyprus ought to brace themselves **for** the new reality.

* Dr George N. Tzogopoulos is a lecturer at the **European** Institute in Nice **and** a senior fellow at the **Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)**.