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Trends. Palestinian Mothers and the Death of Terrorism

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Most definitions of terrorism include at least two components: (1) violence or the threat of violence to achieve a political objective and (2) human victims that are innocent. Although terrorism may have been a viable concept in some previous eras with strict prescriptions and proscriptions of warfare that rendered the latter more like a deadly game, it is a vacuous concept at present.

The problem is with the notion of innocent victims. There are none. Off-duty military and police officers will be a threat as soon as they are back on duty. Women and children--even if not operational cadre themselves--may provide social support for adversaries. And children may grow up to be combatants, while women may give birth to them. Others who become victims may pay taxes or otherwise support the infrastructure of an adversary. One is part of the problem or part of the solution. In fact so-called rules of war--developed and effected by the powers that be--serve as the ultimate in subjugated discourse. Be constrained by them and remain subjugated.

And so the mothers of Palestinians who are constructed as terrorists are right to engage in hunger strikes and any other means to pressure for the release of their sons by Israeli authorities. Their children are as much soldiers as any soldiers in history. Their war as much a war as any other. Rational combatants fight with what is believed to work--from nonviolence that provokes the violence of adversaries to violence that provokes adversaries' nonviolence through the deterrence of their violence. Ultimately, allegations of terrorism are but variants of information warfare. (See Kogan, S.M. (1998). The politics of making meaning: Discourse analysis of a "postmodern" interview. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 20, 229-251; Maggi, A. (1997). The discourse of Sodom in a seventeenth-century Venetian text. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33, 25-43; Soal, J., & Kottler, A. (1996). Damaged, deficient, or determined? Deconstructing narratives in family therapy. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 26, 123-134; Sontag, D. (December 9, 1998). Families of Palestinian prisoners force release Issue into spotlight. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>.) (Keywords: Hunger Strike, Israel, Mothers, Nonviolence, Palestinians, Terrorism, Violence.)