

Chicago shares Israelis' grief Speakers compare weekend events to Sept. 11 terror

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While off-duty police officers provided hired security outside, some 300 Chicago-area Jews gathered in Chicago Loop Synagogue on Tuesday to mourn the deaths of 33 Israelis killed in suicide bombings and drive-by shootings over the weekend.

The latest victims, part of a bloody wave of terrorism and retaliation that has killed 231 Israelis and 794 Palestinians since last fall, were eulogized in an hourlong memorial characterized by sadness and resolve. Speakers from Chicago, Jerusalem and the Israeli government condemned the killings, with sometimes-fiery rhetoric about never giving in and punishing those responsible.

"We say enough is enough," said Moshe Ram, consul general of Israel to the Midwest. "We will pursue them until we catch them, and they will pay the price."

The group Hamas has claimed responsibility for the weekend's killings, which cut down teens, retirees and working people on busy pedestrian malls and crowded buses in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Many at the memorial saw the repeated bloodshed over long-disputed territory as senseless and wearying.

"We stand trapped between anger and sorrow," said Steven Nasatir, president of the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago. "We have few tears left. We have cried so many times over the past 15 months. And truth be known, we knew there would be more," Nasatir said.

Glencoe businessman Eddie Fox said he saw little hope for the stalled peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority or for the joint goal of giving the dispossessed Palestinians a home state.

"I honestly believe in my heart that the Palestinians don't want peace," Fox said before the program. "What they want is for there to be no more Israel, and that's not going to happen. It's hard to negotiate with those who seek your demise," Fox said.

Throughout the service, many speakers drew parallels between the violence in Israel and the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States, maintaining that Americans were now and forever blood-linked with their closest Mideast ally.

"Now we know," said U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.). "We understand the courage and

determination it takes to just live your life. We understand better how intolerable that is."

Hirsch Goodman, a guest speaker from Jerusalem, vowed that Israeli resolve would not weaken. Goodman said the roughly 6 million Jews living in Israel had military resources and government protections that a previous 6 million--those killed in the Holocaust--did not.

"This is a different Jewish people," he said, to loud and sustained applause. "We aren't going anywhere."