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**Miami Herald**

**Echos of the bombing  
30 years ago of a  
Buenos Aires Jewish  
community center**

by Rabbi Abraham Cooper



Emergency workers and others walk over the rubble left after a bomb exploded at the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aire on July 18, 1994. ALI BURAFI Getty Images

BUENOS AIRES – A siren sounded on the street at 9:53 on July 18, at the same moment and place a bomb tore through the Jewish community center here thirty years ago to the day. When it did, I again imagined a different world.

Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorists murdered 85 people and injured more than 300 in the attack on the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) that cloudy day on July 18, 1994, reducing the community center to rubble. The atrocity could have been a clarion call for Western democracies to confront the genocidal agenda of its mastermind, Ayatollah Khomeini.

Instead, an unchecked menace in Tehran gathered strength and resolve. It unleashed itself again on Oct. 7 when Hamas terrorists attacked Israel, the worst mass murder of Jews since the Holocaust. Now, as the Iranian regime races to develop nuclear weapons, I shudder to think what awaits us if we fail to heed history's lessons again.

The years following the bombing of the AMIA tell a story of profound corruption abetted by institutional failures. I witnessed them firsthand representing the Simon Wiesenthal Center in meetings with Argentinian presidents and foreign ministers, trying to focus the nation's leadership on delivering justice to the victims. The wait for that reckoning goes on: Neither the attackers nor their sponsors have faced any consequences.

Survivors once found a champion in Alberto Nisman, a brave prosecutor. When a colleague and I met with him in his Buenos Aires offices, strategically located away from the street, it was clear he was committed to following the truth wherever it led him. But Nisman was found murdered in his apartment hours before he was set to go public. No one has been convicted of this horrible crime.

The bombing and its aftermath remain an open wound for hundreds of still-grieving families. But this tragedy is not Argentina's alone. The plan the Iranian regime followed that day became a blueprint it has since deployed to fulfill its murderous mission in Gaza, Iraq, Lebanon and beyond.

Tehran has learned it can range abroad to kill its enemies with impunity, evading Interpol and Western counter-terrorism authorities. The regime has sent hit teams to eliminate Iranian dissidents across Europe and the U.S. It has threatened senior State Department officials responsible for setting policy toward the country during the Trump administration.

U.S. administrations led by both parties have enabled this scourge. Iran and its proxies are establishing a growing presence in Latin America, bringing the threat to our doorstep.

As leaders from around the world gather here in solemn remembrance, we also need to summon the determination, finally, to curb Tehran's aggression. The barbarity of the AMIA bombing echoed in Hamas' Oct. 7 slaughter.

Such an evil equipped with apocalyptic force would be an unconscionable horror.

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