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SUOZZI: ON THE GROUND IN ISRAEL

Glen Cove, NY - While most Long Islanders were preparing for the long holiday weekend, Tom Suozzi was on the ground in Israel.

“The reason I came here was to very clearly demonstrate my solidarity with Israel and with the Jewish people and learn first-hand, on the ground, of what exactly is happening in Israel,” **explained Suozzi**.

The former Congressman met with his former constituents, Ronen and Orna Neutra, from Plainview, Long Island, whose son, Omer, an IDF tank commander, is being held hostage by Hamas terrorists.

“I can’t imagine what they are going through, incredible suffering, all the families of the hostages. Coming to Israel was an important way to bring attention to this issue,” **Suozzi said**. Suozzi also met with Lt. Col. (Res.) Jonathan Conricus, the former International Spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces to discuss the geopolitical overview of Israel and was given up-to-the-minute reports on the fighting.

Suozzi then toured Kibbutz Kfar Azza, located a few kilometers from the Gaza border (the “Gaza envelope”), where, on the morning of October 7th, 2023, Hamas terrorists carried out a bloody massacre, killing 60 people, including women, children, and infants.

“It was just devastating to see the carnage, awful, between the bullet holes and the bloodstained ground, the markings on the buildings, dots, indicating where the murders had taken place. I will never forget it as long as I live,” **Suozzi said**. “Barbaric. Words cannot describe the horror of what I heard.”

“I hear sometimes that Hamas is described as a random, loose coalition of desert fighters. They are not. Hamas is a sophisticated, disciplined terrorist army that is intent on killing Jews everywhere and destroying the state of Israel, burning it to the ground,” **Suozzi explained.**

He said he was especially concerned about Hamas using human shields to protect their military assets. Suozzi referred to a bill that he had passed to penalize and sanction the use of these human shields.

“Hamas has amassed billions of dollars, and instead of building bridges for peace, they dug tunnels for terrorists,” **said Suozzi.** “It’s a very common practice here, part of the Hamas playbook, building a network of tunnels leading into hospitals and schools and apartment houses, hiding their weapons and bombs...they are the ones putting their people in harm’s way, they are killing their own people.”

“I’ve been hearing the slogan Free Palestine a lot lately. What we need to do is to ‘Free Palestine from Hamas,’ and figure out a way to bring peace to both sides.”

“This war is not about revenge or retribution; it is about stopping Hamas just like the world did against Osama and Isis and Al Qaeda.”

Suozzi made a point to say that America needs “pro-Israel Democrats” to balance those in the party who are “very loud” opposing Israeli efforts and to work with Republicans who support Israel.

“One of the keys to the future of Israel is that we maintain a strong, bipartisan support for the state. So, we need strong, outspoken pro-Israel Democrats in Congress,” **he added.**

Suozzi traveled to Tel Aviv to visit Hostage Square, outside the Art Museum, where families and others gather to support and promote awareness for returning the hostages.

And he dined with Amos Harel, one of Israel’s leading media experts on military and defense issues to discuss the broader issues of regional strategy, the relationship of Israel with its neighbors and the future of the Middle East.

This was Suozzi’s third visit to Israel in recent years.

In his first term, Suozzi, then a member of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committee, visited in August 2017. Several years earlier, in 2002, during the Second Intifada, Suozzi traveled to Israel with the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).



Photo caption: Former Congressman Tom Suozzi meets with Ronen and Orna Neutra from Plainview. Their 22-year-old son, Omer Neutra, is being held hostage by Hamas.

Paid for by Suozzi for Congress

