

“Oct. 7 Documentary Tells Stories of Heroes and Victims”

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By Gadi Zaig

JERUSALEM—A new documentary about the Hamas massacre titled *October 7th: Voices of Pain, Hope, and Heroism* brings individual stories of some of the many heroes and victims of the tragic day and the ongoing war since had its premiere on Wednesday night.

It includes unseen footage of the Hamas attacks from that dark Saturday morning, some of which was taken from personal family archives.

The documentary, set to be released next Monday on Tisha B’Av, was produced by the Aish Jewish organization. Its vision is to create a culture of Jewish learning and inspire people to live more spiritual and thoughtful lives through sharing Jewish wisdom, according to its website, where you can also preregister to watch the documentary.

Split into five separate stories, the film features the parents of those who were victims or taken hostage on that day, some of whom were in attendance at the premiere.

One was retired IDF Maj.-Gen. Noam Tibon, who saved his son, Amir, and his family while they were in Kibbutz Nahal Oz when the terrorists attacked. As soon as he was notified that his son was in danger, he rushed to the Gaza border communities from Tel Aviv, armed only with a handgun. Tibon goes further into detail about his experiences that day in the documentary, including fighting Hamas terrorists in the kibbutzim.

What should audiences take away from this film?

“You don’t leave anyone behind,” Tibon told *The Jerusalem Post* when asked what the most important lesson to learn about the film was. “When I was on my journey that day, I didn’t leave anyone behind. Everyone that I met—people from the Nova festival, wounded soldiers, and members of Kibbutz Nahal Oz—I took care of all of them,” he stressed.

The story he told in the documentary garnered a round of applause from viewers at the film’s premiere.

Another person featured in the documentary is Julie Kuperstein, Bar Kuperstein's mother. He is still being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. Julie told the *Post* that she hopes audiences will "hold onto hope and faith" and know that "the Creator is the one who runs the world, not us, and that everyone is in His hands."

The other three families included Jen Airley, whose son Binyamin was killed while fighting Hamas terrorists early in the war and was shown to have a strong passion for Israel in the documentary.

Another parent in the film was Iris Haim, whose son Yotam was taken hostage by Hamas and was mistakenly killed by the IDF after he and two other hostages were misidentified as Hamas terrorists. Haim said that it was not the IDF's fault, and put the blame entirely on Hamas for kidnapping her son.

The last parents featured in the documentary were Alon and Sheerie Mesika, whose son Adir was murdered at the Nova music festival. Adir followed his father in his passion for jewelry design, and, after his death, his father gave away diamond rings in his memory to soldiers who wanted to propose to their partners and build a Jewish household.

The resilience of the Jewish people

While highlighting the stories of some who were impacted by the Oct. 7 massacre, the film also explores the topic of Jewish resilience, relating this aspect to the viewership.

The documentary also followed Jamie Geller, Aish's chief media and marketing officer and the documentary's producer, as she interviewed the five families.

■ "The five families that I've met, that people will meet when they watch this film, are true heroes of the Jewish people and have taught me what true faith is."

■ "Their resilience has taught me that it is not enough to survive our collective or personal tragedies and traumas . . . we have to thrive even in the face of this. And to see what they have done has made me, just being in their presence and hearing their stories, feel like a better person."

■ "I know what my purpose and my responsibility are to the world to make it a better place, even in the face of living through something such as Oct. 7."

Geller also remarked on the significance of releasing the film on Tisha B'Av, as it is a day noted in the Jewish calendar when disasters in Jewish history occurred with the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

She explained: "It's a day when people are in prayer, they're fasting, and what has become common in the last few years in the digital age is to watch programming on that day that will help you get in touch with this very emotional mourning period. "How do we connect with the loss of a temple that we never saw? So different organizations and companies have created programming so that people can watch from the comfort of their homes."

Geller mentioned that Aish this year has made the Oct. 7 film free of charge on its website, as opposed to other programs that may charge for viewership.

Senior Aish educator Rabbi Dov Ber Cohen, who is also featured in the film, told the *Post* that the film informs audiences of the “resilience of the Jewish people.”

■ We’ve been through more persecution than any other nation—through the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms, being twice exiled from our own land, the Holocaust, and now Oct. 7. Although we feel our pain, we never play a victim role, and we always get up.”

■ “Not only do we carry on surviving, we become greater, and we impact other people in a positive way. We bring culture into the world, morality, spirituality, technology and civilization. We say, ‘We know you might want to kill us, but not only are we not going to die, we’re going to bring light to the world and touch everyone else’s lives.’ ”