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Fair play needed in Israeli conflict

MS THOKOZILE Xasa would like to give her support to the Palestinian people (Star, March 27, 2018). The goal is a worthy one.

However, one of the best ways of finding a solution to any given situation is to first properly identify the problem. Notwithstanding her emotive ramble, and her evocation of a range of admirable people whom she quotes, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be resolved by sensationalising the issues. Nor can it be resolved by such overtly partisan interpretations of what it is all about.

Falsely accusing Israel of being an apartheid state, a scurrilous propagandist tool, undermines the ANC's ability to play a meaningful role in finding a solution to the conflict.

To see the Palestinians as innocent victims with absolutely no control over their own destiny is not only patronising but further undermines our role in finding a solution.

Ms Xasa's presentation of the situation is analogous to a doctor killing the patient to cure her of a toe injury (Israel, of course, being the patient, Ms Xasa being the doctor).

It is a pity, because sport, the ministry she heads, is a wonderful way of unifying people.

Organisations within our own Jewish community have previously held successful interactions between Israelis, Palestinians and South Africans on the soccer field.

Israel has just held an inter-

national martial arts congress, bringing together practitioners from around the world who put politics aside and engaged in the ancient art of respect.

In spite of Ms Xasa's protestation, Tennis SA recently (held) a Davis Cup tie between South Africa and Israel in Irene. The players participated and the tennis community supported it, for the simple reason that sport brings people together.

Israel, like every other country, has its problems, and is naturally not blameless in the way it chooses to deal with them.

That being said, to depict it as being worse than any other country (especially when considering the awful human rights violations taking place elsewhere in the region) suggests that unreflecting prejudice rather than any considered analysis of the objective facts of the situation is behind

it all.

South Africa can and should play a meaningful role in helping the Palestinians to achieve statehood. Peace is indeed possible in the Middle East.

But it needs to be negotiated by the opposing parties, the Israelis and Palestinians.

This country's focus should therefore be on encouraging both Israel and Palestinians to come together in dialogue.

What we need from our minister of sport and recreation is an urgent sense of fair play. If this was the case, the SAJBD would proudly support our government in its endeavours.

Shaun Zagnoev
National Chairperson, SA Jewish Board of Deputies

WRITE TO US

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Box 61682
Marshalltown 2107
Fax: 011-838-2212
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