



ASSIST's Helping Hand Newsletter

Terrorism Survivors Helping Survivors

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Narcoterrorism: When Drug Trafficking and Terrorism Converge

By Worley (Lee) Reed



ASSIST is dedicated to helping injured survivors of terrorism with legal, medical and financial assistance based on available organizational funds. ASSIST endeavors to fill the gap between government entitlements and real need.

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Narcoterrorism is a term that captures a dangerous fusion: the intersection of drug trafficking and terrorism. While often associated with distant conflicts or headline-grabbing cartels, narcoterrorism is a global phenomenon with real implications for national security, regional stability, and everyday citizens. Understanding what it is—and why it matters—helps clarify why governments, law enforcement, and international partners treat it as a critical threat.

What Is Narcoterrorism? At its core, narcoterrorism refers to the use of drug trafficking to fund terrorist activities or the use of terrorist tactics to advance drug traffick-

ing objectives. The relationship works both ways. Terrorist groups may rely on narcotics production, smuggling, and extortion to finance operations. Conversely, powerful drug organizations may employ terrorism—assassinations, bombings, mass intimidation—to control territory, coerce governments, or silence opposition. The term gained prominence in the late 20th century, particularly in Latin America, where insurgent groups and drug cartels

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We are grateful to the US Department of Justice and the National Organization for Victims Assistance (NOVA) for their support and leadership in the area of victims' rights.

Narcoterrorism: When Drug Trafficking and Terrorism Converge

blurred the lines between political violence and organized crime. Today, the concept applies far beyond one region.

Drug trafficking is attractive to extremist and violent organizations for one simple reason: it generates enormous, relatively reliable revenue. In areas with weak governance, rugged terrain, or ongoing conflict, narcotics can be cultivated, processed, and moved with limited oversight. Profits are then used to purchase weapons, recruit fighters, bribe officials, and sustain propaganda and operations. Terrorist tactics, meanwhile, serve criminal goals. Fear discourages cooperation with authorities, deters rivals, and keeps local populations compliant. In some cases, communities are caught between the violence of armed groups and the absence of effective state protection.

Global Examples

- Latin America: Armed groups in parts of Colombia historically combined ideological insurgency with cocaine production and trafficking, using kidnappings and bombings to pressure the state while financing their campaigns through drugs.
- South and Central Asia: In regions where opium production is prevalent, extremist organizations have taxed, protected, or directly managed narcotics networks to fund insurgent

activities.

- West Africa: Trafficking corridors for cocaine and other drugs have overlapped with areas affected by militant violence, creating mutually reinforcing criminal and extremist ecosystems.

These examples illustrate that narcoterrorism adapts to local conditions, exploiting poverty, corruption, and instability wherever they exist.

Narcoterrorism is more than a law enforcement issue; it is a strategic threat. Drug-funded violence undermines democratic institutions, erodes the rule of law, and destabilizes entire regions. It can overwhelm local police, corrupt political systems, and force civilians to flee their homes.

For countries far from production zones, the effects still resonate. Drugs move across borders into consumer markets, fueling addiction and public health crises. Illicit money is laundered through global financial systems. Violence abroad can translate into migration pressures, transnational crime, and security risks at home.

Combating narcoterrorism is complex because it sits at the crossroads of crime, ideology, economics, and governance. Military force alone is insufficient. Successful strategies typically combine:

- Targeted law enforcement to disrupt trafficking networks and financial flows



When Media Bias Becomes a Democratic Threat

By Joyce Reed

- Intelligence cooperation across borders to track people, money, and materials
 - Judicial and anti-corruption reforms to strengthen institutions
 - Economic and social development to reduce reliance on illicit economies. Public health approaches to reducing demand for narcotics in consumer countries
- When these elements are fragmented or under-resourced, narcoterrorist groups exploit the gaps.

As long as there is high demand for illegal drugs and regions where governance is weak, narcoterrorism will remain a persistent threat. Emerging technologies, cryptocurrencies, encrypted communications, and drones—are already changing how these groups operate, making detection and disruption more challenging.

Awareness is a crucial first step. By understanding narcoterrorism not as a distant or abstract concept, but as a real-world convergence of crime and violence, policymakers and citizens alike can better support comprehensive responses. Addressing narcoterrorism ultimately means confronting both sides of the equation: the terror that destabilizes societies and the illicit drug economies that finance it. □

A functioning democracy depends on something deceptively simple: an informed public. Citizens don't need to agree on everything—far from it—but they do need access to reliable information, shared facts, and a press corps committed to truth over tribalism. Increasingly, that foundation is cracking. Biased news media, once a fringe concern, has become a central threat to democratic stability.

This isn't about one network, one newspaper, or one ideology. It's about a structural shift in how information is produced, packaged, and consumed. And unless we confront it, the consequences will continue to ripple through every election, every institution, and every civic conversation.

The Business Model That Rewards Outrage

Modern media doesn't simply report the news—it competes for attention in an economy where attention is currency. Outrage, fear, and emotional intensity keep people watching, clicking, and sharing. Balanced reporting rarely goes viral. Nuance doesn't trend.

So outlets lean into what works:

- Stories framed to provoke anger



When Media Bias Becomes a Democratic Threat



- Headlines engineered for emotional reaction
- Panels designed to generate conflict rather than clarity

This isn't journalism—it's performance. And when news becomes entertainment, the public becomes an audience rather than a participant in democracy.

Echo Chambers and the Death of Dialogue

One of the most corrosive effects of biased media is the creation of ideological echo chambers. People gravitate toward outlets that affirm their worldview, and algorithms reinforce that preference until dissenting information all but disappears.

Inside these bubbles, two dangerous things happen:

1. Misinformation spreads unchecked.

When everyone around you agrees, falsehoods feel like facts.

2. Opponents become enemies.

When you never hear the other side's reasoning, you assume they have none.

A democracy cannot survive when citizens stop seeing each other as

legitimate participants in the political process. Biased media accelerates that breakdown by feeding division and rewarding tribal loyalty over civic responsibility.

The Fragmentation of Shared Reality

Democracy requires a common baseline of truth. Not uniform opinions—just agreement on what is real. But biased media fractures that shared reality by presenting different versions of the same events.

One outlet emphasizes one set of facts. Another highlights a different set. A third omits context entirely. Before long, citizens aren't debating solutions; they're debating the existence of the problem itself.

When people cannot agree on what happened, they cannot agree on what should happen next. Policy becomes impossible. Compromise becomes unthinkable. And democratic institutions become targets rather than tools.

The Trust Crisis

As media bias becomes more visible, trust in journalism collapses. But distrust doesn't lead people to seek better information—it often pushes them toward even more partisan sources, conspiracy-driven platforms, or influencers with no editorial standards at all.

This creates a vicious cycle:



When Media Bias Becomes a Democratic Threat

- Biased media erodes trust
- Low trust drives people to unreliable sources
- Unreliable sources deepen polarization
- Polarization increases demand for biased media

Democracy cannot function in an environment where citizens believe that every institution is lying to them. Trust is not a luxury—it is the oxygen of self-government.

Why This Matters Now

The stakes are higher than ever. Elections are increasingly shaped by narratives rather than facts. Public debates are shaped by emotion rather than evidence. And political identity has become so intertwined with media consumption that challenging a false claim can feel like a personal attack.

When media bias becomes normalized, democratic norms become optional. And once those norms erode, rebuilding them is far harder than preserving them.

A Path Back to Democratic Health

The solution isn't censorship or forced neutrality. It's a recommitment—to journalism, to civic responsibility, and to critical thinking.

Media organizations must:

- Prioritize transparency in sourcing and editorial decisions
- Separate news reporting from commentary
- Resist the financial incentives of sensationalism

Citizens must:

- Diversify their news sources
- Question framing, not just facts
- Recognize when emotion is being used as a tool

Educators and civic leaders must:

- Teach media literacy as a core democratic skill
- Encourage healthy skepticism without sliding into cynicism

Democracy is not self-sustaining. It requires informed citizens who can distinguish between information and manipulation. Biased news media blurs that line, and the cost is measured not in ratings or clicks, but in the health of the republic itself.

If we want a democracy capable of solving real problems, we must first rebuild a culture capable of recognizing real truth. □



TRUTHFUL REPORTING:
even when it hurts

The Growing Threat of Antisemitism in the United States

By Bret Reed



Antisemitism in the United States has entered a dangerous new chapter. Once considered a fringe undercurrent, anti-Jewish hatred has surged into mainstream visibility, leaving Jewish communities increasingly anxious about their safety and the nation's democratic health. Recent surveys, legislative debates, and community responses all point to the same conclusion: antisemitism is rising sharply, and its impact is being felt across generations, geographies, and political lines.

A Climate of Fear and Vulnerability

Nearly two-thirds of Jewish Americans say they feel less safe than they did a year ago, according to the American Jewish Committee's latest annual survey. Even more alarming, about one-third report having been personally targeted—whether in person or online. Almost one-fifth say they have considered leaving the country due to antisemitism, a number that has climbed dramatically in recent years.

Young Jews are particularly vulnerable: nearly half of those aged 18–29 say they've been targets of antisemitism. This generational exposure is reshaping how younger Jewish Americans navigate public spaces, social media, and even their educational environments.

A Post–October 7 Spike

The October 7, 2023 Hamas attack

on Israel marked a turning point. In the months that followed, antisemitic incidents in the U.S. surged to unprecedented levels. Hate crimes, harassment, and online hate speech all spiked, with social media platforms amplifying antisemitic narratives at a scale never seen before.

This rise has not been confined to any single region. High-profile attacks have occurred in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and Colorado, underscoring the national scope of the threat.

Communities on the Move

The climate has become so fraught that some Jewish families are relocating in search of safer, more welcoming environments. In Dallas, for example, Jewish day schools are seeing significant growth as families from states like California seek communities where they feel more secure and supported. Many cite rising antisemitism as a major factor in their decision to move.

Government and Local Responses

The rise in antisemitism has prompted a wave of legislative and policy responses—some welcomed, others controversial.

New York City has launched a dedicated task force to combat antisemitism, signaling a more assertive approach from city leaders.

Florida lawmakers have debated the creation of a state task force to track antisemitic incidents, though the proposal has faced criticism over concerns about reli-

**85 Years Since
Kristallnacht,
Holocaust Survivors
Say They Once Again
Feel Unsafe As Jews**

The Growing Threat of Antisemitism in the United States

gious favoritism.

Parkland, Florida is considering adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism into city law, citing a “persistent, pervasive, and disturbing” rise in anti-Jewish hatred.

These efforts reflect a growing recognition that antisemitism is not merely a cultural problem but a public-safety and civil-rights issue.

Why Antisemitism Is Rising

Experts point to several overlapping drivers:

Geopolitical flashpoints, especially the Israel– Hamas conflict, which often spill into domestic discourse.

Social media amplification, where antisemitic tropes spread rapidly among younger users.

Political polarization, which has normalized extremist rhetoric and emboldened hate groups.

Historical illiteracy, as fewer Americans receive education on the Holocaust, Jewish history, or the roots of antisemitism. Scholars argue that reversing this trend will require renewed investment in civics, history, and religious literacy.

A Warning for American Democracy

Antisemitism is often described as a “canary in the coal mine” for democratic

societies. When anti-Jewish hatred rises, it signals deeper fractures—erosion of shared truth, weakening of social cohesion, and emboldening of extremist ideologies.

The AJC’s State of Antisemitism in America report warns that the nation has reached a “tipping point.” One-third of American Jews being targeted in a single year is not just a statistic—it is a national alarm bell.

Where We Go From Here

Confronting antisemitism requires more than reactive measures. It demands:

Stronger education on Jewish history and the Holocaust

Clear, consistent condemnation of antisemitism across political lines

Better monitoring and enforcement against hate crimes

Responsible content moderation on social media platforms

Community-level engagement to rebuild trust and solidarity

The rise of antisemitism is not solely a Jewish issue—it is an American one. How the nation responds will shape not only the safety of Jewish communities but the health of American democracy itself. □

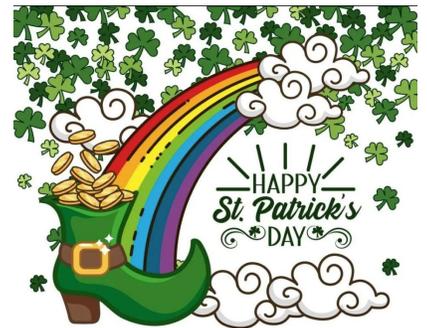
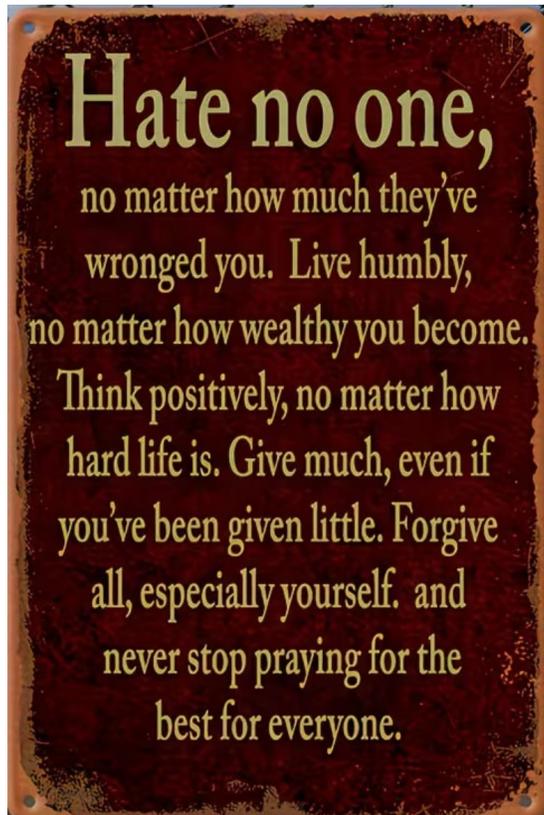
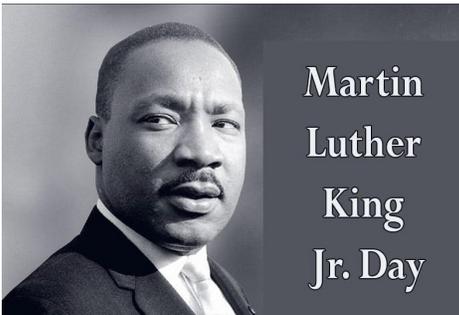




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Book Your Room: Attendees **MUST** use the passkey link provided in their registration confirmation to book in the NOVA room block with the government rate (\$126 plus tax). Note: NOVA is not affiliated with third party booking sites. More details see www.trynova.org

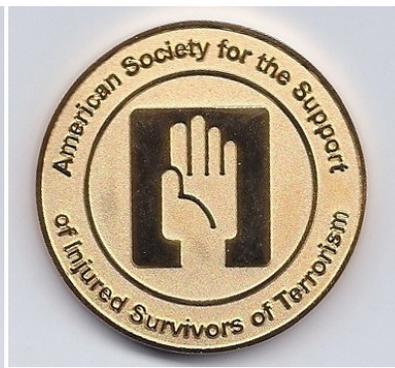
The Good Life Section



ASSIST

Memorabilia

The ASSIST memorabilia below are available from ASSIST, 4371 Dinner Lake Blvd, Lake Wales, Florida 33859. Please add \$4.50 to your total order for shipping and handling. All profits from the sales of items goes to support terrorism survivors.



ASSIST Coin (front and back) \$10.00

ASSIST Lapel Pin \$4.00



ASSIST Hat Adjustable \$10.00



ASSIST T-Shirt \$10.00 L and XL Based on Availability of Size

ASSIST Calendar

Jan 1—New Year's Day

Jan 17—Pipe Bomb discovered in Spokane, Washington 2011. Bomb would have exploded in a crowd at a Martin Luther King rally

Jan 19—Martin Luther King Day

Jan 24—Fraunces Tavern Bombing New York City 1975

Feb—Black History Month

Feb 2—Ground Hog Day

Feb 14—Valentines Day

Feb 16—President's Day

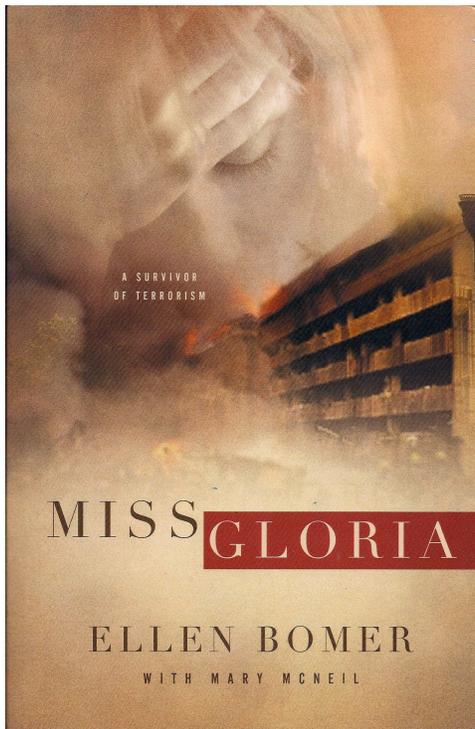
Feb 22—Washington's Birthday

Mar —Women's History Month

Mar 8—Daylight Savings Time (maybe the last time)

Mar 17—St Patrick's Day

Note: If we inadvertently omit an important date, please contact us and we will correct it.



Miss Gloria details the struggles and triumphs of a wonderful lady blinded by the Al Qaeda attack on the United States Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya on August 7, 1998. We highly recommend this book as a must-read.

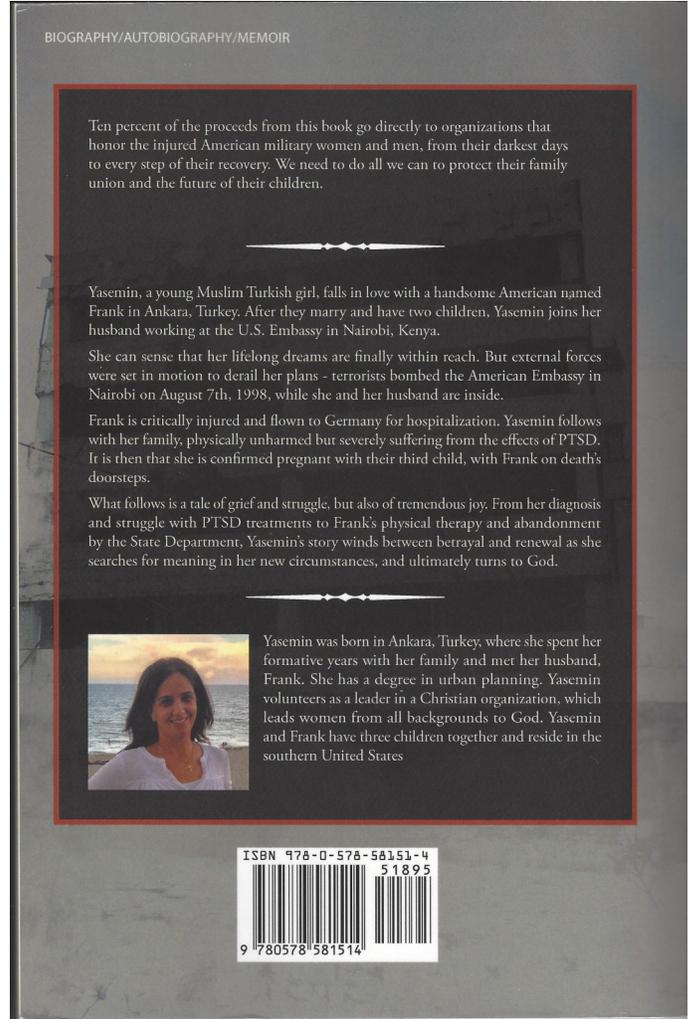
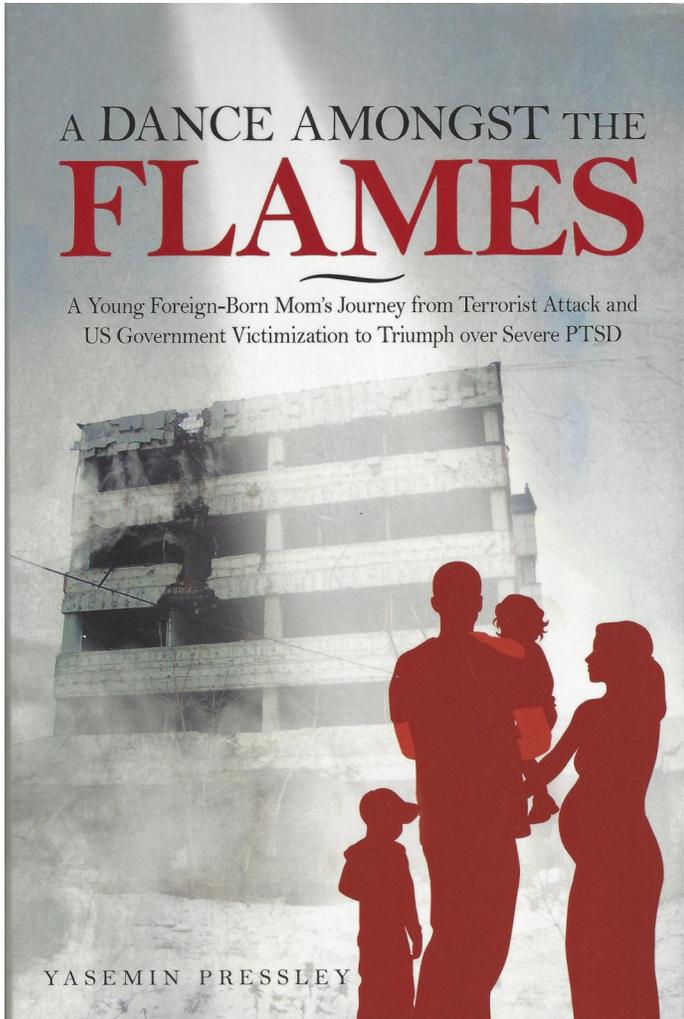
The book is available from the publisher: Redemption Press, 1730 Railroad St, Enumclaw, WA 98022 www.redemption-press.com as well as on Amazon Dot Com. http://www.amazon.com/Miss-Gloria-Terrorism-Ellen-Bomer/dp/1414113668/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1431978093&sr=8-3&keywords=Miss+Gloria



If you are seeking someone to help you manage your terrorism compensation or other funds, UBS has helped us find creative and safe investments. Our contact is Ms. Holidae Hayes, telephone: (202) 585-5372.

This is an unpaid endorsement by the ASSIST Staff, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ASSIST Board or ASSIST membership.

ASSIST has a new website: <http://www.assist-survivors.org> .



A Dance Amongst the Flames is a highly recommended new book about the unique experiences of a terrorism survivor. The book is available at your local bookstore or through Amazon® at https://www.amazon.com/Dance-Amongst-Flames-Foreign-Born-Victimization/dp/0578581515/ref=sr_1_1?crid=20YC01N2RX455&keywords=a+dance+amongst+the+flames+by+yasemin+pressley&qid=1576686264&sprefix=A+Dance+Am%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-1 . A preview of the book can be found on Youtube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikt9Hk01818> .

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