



# P A G E O N E

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## THE WAY OF THE KNIFE

# Two decades after the murder of Yitzhak Rabin, the olive branch of peace has been replaced by a dagger

**ALMOST** 20 years ago, a Jewish extremist named Yigal Amir fired two hollow-point bullets into the back of Yitzhak Rabin as he left a peace rally in Tel Aviv, leaving him fatally wounded. Political assassinations don't always alter the future of a country, but the murder of the Israeli prime minister delivered exactly what his assassin had prayed for: a fatal blow to a fragile peace process, which many hoped might end a century of communal warfare between Jews and Palestinians.

Since Rabin's death, the two peoples—living as neighbors and enemies on a land they both claim—have been caught in a seemingly endless cycle of deepening hatred, failed negotiations and growing violence. The most troubling legacy of Rabin's assassination is how easily animosity can burst into bloodletting. The latest paroxysm occurred in October, as more than three dozen Jews and Arabs died in a series of Palestinian stabbings and Israeli gunfire across the country, in the West Bank and along the border fence with Gaza.

This conflict's front lines are now anywhere

Jews and Palestinians routinely encounter one another—riding a bus, shopping in a market or walking down the street. Rattled Israeli officials are urging Jews to carry licensed firearms wherever they go. Other Israelis are stocking up on pepper spray and stun guns, suspicious of every Arab who lives or works among them. “How can I trust the Arab guy who is working in the supermarket?” retired Major General Amnon Reshef, leader of a group of former senior officers calling for stronger security measures, tells *Newsweek*. “I consider him my friend, but who knows what will be in a couple of minutes?”

Palestinians are calling the current round of violence the third intifada, the Arabic word for “shaking off” or rising up against Israel's military occupation, now in its 48th year. But the first insurrection, which began in December 1987, never really ended. That initial round of Palestinian stone-throwing and mass demonstrations subsided in 1993, after Rabin signed the Oslo peace accords, which supposedly ended the

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