

Human Rights

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A Record Incompatible with the Civilized World



Palestinian children participate in lynching, parading and hanging of a 'brother'

Violence does not and cannot exist by itself; it is invariably intertwined with the lie.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Arab countries attack Israel on trumped-up charges of human rights violations to cover up their own systemic human rights violations. Not only does the Arab world ignore the rule of international human rights law, many of its violations – from sanctioning honor killings of women to cross-amputations for criminals – are enshrined in the legal system of most Muslim countries. Palestinian self-rule is no different.¹

Arab Nations' Actions Fail to Put Human Rights Commitments Into Practice

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was the first document considered to hold universal principles of behavior that was agreed upon by an international body. It recognized the fundamental rights of every person to life, liberty, and security; to freedom of speech, religion, and education; and to the right of freedom from torture and degrading treatment. Forty-five years later at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, 171 countries reiterated the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights.

Most Arab countries have constitutions that champion human rights on paper. They also have signed a number of joint declarations of high principles: The 1981 Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the Islamic Council,² the 1994 draft of the Arab Charter on Human Rights approved by the Arab League,³ the 1999 Casablanca Declaration that purported to establish an Arab Human Rights Movement,⁴ and the 1999 Beirut Declaration touted as the First Arab Conference on Justice.⁵ Yet despite the documents' lofty principles, the record shows the Arab world is one of the worst offenders in the field of human rights.

In its 2001 report, Amnesty International found:

“[g]ross human rights violations took place throughout much of the Middle East and North Africa. They ranged from extra judicial executions to widespread use of torture and unfair trials, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders. Freedom of expression and association continued to be curtailed; the climate of impunity remained and the victims were still awaiting steps to bring those responsible for past human rights violations to justice.”⁶

In Algeria, for instance, the report cites that more than 2,500 people were killed in 2001 in “individual attacks, massacres, bomb explosions and armed confrontations, and hundreds of civilians killed by armed groups.”

In Iraq, dozens of women accused of prostitution were beheaded without any judicial process, as was a woman obstetrician who actually was silenced for being critical of corruption in the health system. Iran reported 75 executions, and Saudi Arabia recorded 34 amputations as punishment.

By contrast, most of Amnesty's report on Israel focused on unwarranted or “excessive use of force” that led to casualties among Palestinians in response to “political violence.” It also criticized Israel for arrest, detention, and trial procedures against Palestinians.

Despite Amnesty's criticism of Israel, what is most revealing is how the Arab world responds not to its own human rights violations, but to Israel's. Arab leaders go out of their way to exaggerate and spread lies about Israel's behavior, not only to demonize Israel, but also to create a smoke screen that covers up Arab nations' own deplorable human rights record.

It is a profound irony that the Arab world, which charges Israel with “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide,” destroyed once-thriving Jewish communities in Arab lands, which today are all but void of Jews. Even in areas of the West Bank and Gaza administered by the Palestinian Authority, Israeli Jews who visit there put their lives in jeopardy.⁷ That picture contrasts sharply from the status of the more than one million Israeli Arabs who enjoy full citizenship and human rights, and can visit and work in Jewish cities unmolested. Nevertheless, Arab and Palestinian charges against Israel persist. Among them are claims that Israeli security procedures such as roadblocks, closures, and searches established to fight terrorism purposely humiliate Palestinians.

The purpose of the smear campaign is not only to criminalize the State of Israel and the Jewish people, but also to attract additional sympathizers from the Western world. Yet those fallacious and often rabidly antisemitic diatribes are also designed to deflect attention away from the deeds of the accusers, and serve to protect genuine abusers of human rights both in the Arab world and elsewhere. Tit-for-tat arrangements among genuinely guilty nations have turned the UN's human rights apparatus into what one critic labeled "an abusers' caucus."⁸

In fact, independent monitoring bodies in the West say that Israel is the only genuine democracy in the Middle East with separation of powers, due process, and respect for minority rights. And it is the only country in the North Africa and West Asia region that was ranked *free* in a survey of religious freedom conducted by the Center for Religious Freedom.⁹

Arab Violations: A Daily Affair

By contrast, human rights violations throughout the Arab world are a daily affair, using any objective yardstick.

The absence of basic human rights is reflected not only in the actions of regimes, but also in their social values and attitudes, which are rife with intolerance for the Other. The Arab Middle East suffers from intolerance toward non-Muslims, suppression of ethnic minorities, gross gender bias, and discrimination and persecution of people who are different in virtually every realm of life – from political views to sexual orientation.

Incredibly, suppression of freedom of expression can extend even to the reporting of public opinion. Two Iranian pollsters were sentenced to eight - and nine - year prison terms after their survey found strong public support for contact with the United States. Authorities accused the two of selling secrets to groups linked to the CIA. Among the groups cited was the Gallup organization, which had paid for the poll to find out opinions of people in the Islamic world toward America after the September 11th attacks.¹⁰

Possibly the greatest threat from outside the Arab world, and perhaps rightly so, is the Internet. That is why many Arab nations have employed methods for restricting the flow of information from the Web.¹¹ Proxy servers filter access to content in Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. Indeed, the Saudi government-controlled server banned at least 400,000 Websites, including sites about religion, politics, women, health, pop culture and more, a Harvard study found.¹² Many Arab governments read their citizens' e-mail, just as they tap phones and restrict free speech. One Bahraini spent over a year in jail for e-mailing allegedly political information to dissidents abroad. In Jordan, taxation and monthly Internet fees are priced so high – \$70 a month for moderate usage – that

only an estimated 20,000 Jordanians out of five million could afford access to the Web in 1999. By comparison, among Israel's 6.4 million residents, 600,000 subscribed to Internet providers in 1999, and moderate usage ran an affordable \$22 a month.¹³ Astoundingly, out of 880,000 subscribers in the *entire* Middle East in May 1999, more than 600,000 were from Israel, where no restrictions on Internet usage exist.¹⁴ Israel's *Business Arena* reported in November 2001 that there were 1.93 million people with Internet access in Israel. The number of active home Internet users totaled 956,000.¹⁵

Other sharp splits over human rights divide Israel from its neighbors. One such realm centers on homosexuality, where the lives of Palestinian gays are so jeopardized that some have fled to Israel,¹⁶ where tolerance is the law of the land, where workplace discrimination is prohibited, where single-sex couples are eligible for spousal benefits and pensions in the civil service, and declared homosexuals serve in the army and participate in all aspects of public life.¹⁷

Endangered Human Rights Groups

Maybe it's not so surprising given the conditions in most Arab nations, but human rights monitoring organizations in the Middle East also face tremendous danger.

If anything, the state of human rights in the Arab world is deteriorating, according to the Arab Commission for Human Rights,¹⁸ an umbrella group established in 1998 to try to unify human rights organizations in the region. The Commission reported that:

“It is a universally acknowledged fact that Arab countries are increasingly witnessing marked drawbacks in human rights and fundamental freedoms since the [1991] Gulf War. ... The relationship between Arab governments and their citizens were becoming increasingly suppressive. ... While legal and operational situations of human rights advocates in at least eight Arab countries have certainly deteriorated during the 1990s, little or no noticeable achievements were made by other human rights advocates in many other Arab countries.”

Moreover, the report cited the “unbalanced growth of the human rights movement” in the Arab world. Some countries have a large number of organizations, some none. In fact, only two-thirds of the 15 human rights advocates on the commission's board can afford to live in the country they represent, as many on-site organizations face harassment. In Egypt, for instance, a new law allowing the government to dissolve associations and non-governmental organizations (or NGOs) by administrative decree was used to harass the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights, and its director was subjected to legal harassment after he released a report on a massacre of 21 Copt Christians in January 2000.¹⁹

In the Palestinian Authority, the independent Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group has been harassed, and its head, Bassam Eid, arrested and threatened numerous times.²⁰ Even the official Palestinian Commission for Human Rights, which the Palestinian Authority established, has been hounded by the very governmental body that established it. That should come as no surprise, given the status of human rights within the areas governed by the PA. Hearings in “‘moonlight courts’, as they function mostly in the night and hearings before them rarely last for more than a few minutes, while complaints of torture, [people] ‘disappearings’ for days or weeks before the families were told of the ‘disappeared’s’ whereabouts, abound and remain ignored” wrote Eugene Cotran, a member of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights and a British circuit judge, in 1996 in the Beirut-based *Daily Star*. Cotran described how the PA first simply ignored the findings of the human rights commission, then under the leadership of Hanan Ashrawi. When the commission’s criticism of the PA’s human rights violations continued, the PA arrested and jailed Ashrawi’s successor, Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj, in May 1996 following “highly critical remarks [about the PA] ... in an interview.” El-Sarraj was tortured and kept in solitary confinement for 17 days, despite international pleas for his release. Finally, he was then brought before a court on false charges which were later dismissed for lack of evidence.²¹ Average Palestinians in the street, lacking a chorus of protesters, fare far worse.

Nearly 60 Years After Its Establishment, Israel Remains the Only Nation in the Middle East Whose Laws and Mainstream Social Values are Committed to Upholding Human Rights.

Israel is not perfect. Its Supreme Court has reprimanded the government and security services for overstepping their prerogatives. Even when controversial, the Court’s rulings are honored, such as when the Bench ordered the government to free Lebanese nationals being held as hostages as a *quid pro quo* for the release of Israelis held in Lebanon.²²

As in the rest of the free world, numerous Israeli human rights organizations operate freely and criticize their own government without fear of punishment. Among them are the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, established in 1972; B’Tselem (from the Biblical phrase “in the image [of God]”), established in 1989 to monitor Israeli human rights on the West Bank and Gaza; and Kav La-Oved (“Lifeline to the Worker”), dedicated to protecting the rights of foreign workers in Israel. A host of groups organized by Israeli Arabs are dedicated to minority rights issues, as well as specialty groups such as the Israeli chapter of Physicians for Human Rights and Rabbis for Human Rights, both of whom focus on

Palestinian human rights. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other international organizations also operate freely in Israel.

Of all the human rights violations, none threaten the Middle East, and particularly Israelis, more than suicide bombings. Ironically, many Arab human rights organizations invest time and energy defending or mitigating such acts, despite numerous abuses on their own turf that deserve their attention. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, for example, took pains to issue a special rebuttal to the 2002 report of Human Rights Watch, which labeled suicide bombings against Israelis as a “crime against humanity.” The Egyptian group instead criticized the report for what it said was a failure to put the suicide bombings into proper context (i.e., ‘the occupation’), saying that the UN had ruled on “the fundamental rights of colonized people to struggle against their occupiers, by all means at their disposal.” In the wake of a series of horrific bombings, including the Park Hotel Passover Seder massacre in 2002 and other attacks that left 60 persons dead, the head of the Palestinian Human Rights Commission, psychiatrist Dr. Eyad El Sarraj, attempted to justify such acts rather than denounce them, suggesting Israel triggered these responses by “a long history of humiliation.”²³

Palestinian Breaches of Human Rights Affect Almost all Institutions and All Levels of Their Community

Ironically, under Israeli rule, Palestinians enjoyed more respect for their human rights than after the establishment of Palestinian self-government.²⁴

Under Palestinian rule, for example, those who ran newspapers – once the freest in the Arab world while under Israeli administration – began to face intimidation, arrest, closure, and confiscation of editions critical of the Palestinian government. Bookstores, too, were ordered to remove critical volumes. Judges were fired for decisions that Palestinian leadership did not like, and citizens were detained for months and often tortured, without charge or the benefit of counsel. Thirty Palestinians died in custody between Arafat’s arrival in July 1994 and May 2002.²⁵

In addition, Palestinian business owners have been subject to extortion, literally plucked off the streets, held against their will, and tortured by PA security personnel on trumped-up charges of owing back taxes, according to the *Jerusalem Post* in a September 1998 investigation. Thirty-six Palestinians who spoke to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG) said they had paid as much as 250,000 NIS (\$65,155) to win their release, the *Post* reported; others had been jailed for as long as two years. Yet not one cent of an estimated 7 million NIS (\$1.8 million) collected under the guise of taxes was transferred to the PA Finance

Ministry. Meanwhile, a network of Mafia-style ‘protection’ groups operates freely in every major Palestinian city, extorting huge fees from innocent victims. Such lawlessness should not come as a surprise, given the Palestinian Authority’s prevalent misuse of power at all levels of society, from firing, intimidating and/or arresting professionals who criticize the regime to banning a women’s protest march that called for improved safety standards following a Hebron factory fire in which 14 female employees died.²⁶

The Abuse of Arab Women’s Rights

Arab abrogation of women’s rights goes further than violating their freedom to organize and protest. It is endemic not only in Palestinian society, but also in the Arab world in general, where Arab women are legally treated unequally, both in personal matters and in the workplace.

Unequal status stems from two factors: the hegemony of Islamic law and the impact of Arab paternalism.²⁷ But regardless of the reasons, the fact remains that Arab women suffer far greater than women nearly anywhere else in the world, lagging behind other women not only in North America, Oceania, and Europe, but also in Latin America, and South and East Asia, the Arab Human Development report²⁸ shows. The only place women are slightly worse off is sub-Saharan Africa, according to the UN’s Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). In 2000, half of all Arab women still could not read and write, and the maternal mortality rate was double that of Latin America and the Caribbean, and four times that of East Asia.

Few women work outside their homes, even in modern-leaning countries such as Jordan, where 78 percent of Jordanian women are housewives, a 1988 survey found.²⁹ Saudi Arabian law limits the jobs available to women to medicine, education, and banking.³⁰ Iranian women are forbidden to study veterinary medicine and engineering – deemed to be male occupations.³¹ Under the Palestinian Authority, the small number of working women stems not only from a lack of employment, but from a lethal form of harassment: Women working outside the home have been murdered after being accused of collaborating with Israel or defaming their family honor. Who are the so-called collaborators? One was a seamstress, another a cleaning woman; Others included five nurses, according to the Hebrew daily *Haaretz*.³² One of the nurses, Aisha Abu Shawish, the head nurse and department head at Nasr Hospital, was axed to death in her home, leading many female nurses to resign.

Marginalization and disempowerment of women in Arab countries is significant.

The UN's Human Development Project placed the onus for the region's backwardness largely on its treatment of women, noting "the Arab world is largely depriving itself of the creativity and productivity of half its citizens."³³

And, if anything, their status is not about to improve soon, given a conservative backlash in recent decades against gains made under colonial rule or under previous regimes that sought to Westernize their countries.³⁴ After the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, for instance, veiling became mandatory, on risk of public flogging with 76 lashes or jail; the minimum age women could marry was reduced from 15 to 9; female judges were thrown off the bench; and separate spheres of justice for men and women were established. In Algeria since 1984, women (no matter what their age) have lost the right to marry without consent of a male family member; polygamy and oral divorce (where men need only say 'I divorce you' three times and avoid due process) was reinstated; and in 1989 women's right to vote was compromised by allowing male family heads to vote for their entire families.

Women's rights are so ignored that small changes often are perceived as progress. In Egypt, men who wanted to escape punishment for rape or kidnapping women were allowed to marry their victims until a new law adopted in 1999 banned that option.³⁵ Another law, adopted in 2000, ended Egyptian men's unilateral right to divorce their wives. It was considered a human rights breakthrough when the Egyptian Supreme Court upheld the new law, which was challenged as a conflict with Islamic *Sharia* law. And although Egyptian women now have the right to end marriages by seeking court orders, the *El Khole* amendment has one condition: a woman must return all money her husband has given her before a divorce is granted.³⁶

Such conditions may explain why 8 of 21 Arab nations have neither signed nor ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,³⁷ with most of those who signed the document appending reservations. Nations who do not sign the Convention can continue to keep Arab girls from receiving an elementary education. They can prevent women from choosing professional careers. And they can dictate their behavior in public.

Taken to an extreme, such policies can lead to horrific consequences, as they did in Saudi Arabia on Monday, March 11 2002. A fire at a girls' middle school in Mecca killed 15 students because the religious police, called the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice or the *mutawwa'in* in Arabic, blocked rescue efforts. Why? Because the fleeing students were not wearing their obligatory long black cloaks and head coverings required in public.³⁸

As offenders of human rights go, Saudi Arabia is considered one of the worst in the Arab world, not allowing women to obtain drivers' licenses and requiring consent of one's father, brother or uncle before getting married. Moreover, Saudi women have no legal redress for sexual harassment or abuse.³⁹

In 1990, when a group of 47 highly educated Saudi women took to the roads in a one-time protest drive to challenge the law forbidding women to drive, the religious police branded them as "whores." They received death threats, were fired from their jobs and had their passports revoked, and their husbands' jobs were put in jeopardy.⁴⁰

Human rights violations stem not only from the absence of rule of law in the Arab world; many violations result from laws themselves that call for cruel forms of corporal punishment and tolerance for those who murder women.

The most widespread breach of human rights anchored in Arabic law are so-called honor killings. It is a practice endemic to both liberal and conservative societies in the Middle East, where murderers, motivated by desire to protect their families' honor, enjoy special legal status in all Arab countries. In most – Syria, Kuwait, Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, Oman, Lebanon, Jordan, and in the territories administered by the Palestinian Authority – the laws that exempt perpetrators and/or mitigate punishment for honor crimes are part of each government's civil code. In Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the laws are based directly on *Sharia*, or Islamic law.⁴¹

Critics charge that honor killings "are sanctioned by the educated elite, who pass laws that enable murderers to get off with little or no punishment."⁴²

How widespread are honor killings? At least several thousand Arab women a year are victims of honor killings, according to estimates. Countless cases of honor killings are reported as suicides or accidents. "Women are executed in their homes, in open fields, and occasionally in public, sometimes before crowds of cheering onlookers," writes anthropologist and investigative journalist James Emery in the May 2003 edition of *The World & I* magazine, in an article devoted to honor killings among Palestinians on the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan.⁴³ Sparked not only by the discovery of extramarital relations or out-of-wedlock pregnancies, honor killings are committed for even minor infringements of modesty such as flirting.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most tragic case concerned a four-year-old Palestinian girl raped by a man in his mid-twenties; the preschooler's family abandoned her, hoping she would bleed to death because they believed she had sullied their honor.⁴⁵

Even when male relatives kill their sisters, nieces, wives, mothers, or daughters to protect their family honor, *the laws protect the perpetrators*.⁴⁶ Jordan, for instance, records at least 25 such murders a year, although those numbers are believed to be only the tip of the iceberg.⁴⁷

Arab leaders who have attempted to end such legal sanctions have met with staunch opposition. After King Hussein spoke out against the practice in 1997 – the first Arab leader to do so – his successor, King Abdullah II, followed through with a proposal in 1999 that would have officially abolished honor killings. In response, 5,000 Islamic activists took to the streets in protest, including the King’s own brother, Ali. Claiming the King’s plan was tantamount to “legalizing obscenity and encouraging women to act immorally,”⁴⁸ the Jordanian parliament rejected the legislation in 2000 after three minutes of debate.⁴⁹ A year later the Jordanian law was amended to treat honor killings as other murders, yet a loophole remains.⁵⁰ The Jordanian penal code – which perpetrators of such crimes really rely on⁵¹ – guarantees lighter sentences of no more than a year in jail for male killers of close female relatives who have committed “an act which is illicit in the eyes of the perpetrator.” Jordanian judges of such cases also remain sympathetic to those found guilty, especially since 75 percent of the cases involve brothers, often teenagers, who are treated as minors.⁵² In Egypt, honor killings committed by husbands whose wives commit adultery are deemed misdemeanors; however, when the reverse takes place, women are severely punished.⁵³

The Palestinian Authority, like Jordan, also treats honor killings leniently, and the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group reports widespread incidents throughout Palestinian society.⁵⁴ Although Palestinian police recorded only 38 cases between 1996 and 1999, anthropologist Emery’s informants told him “a woman beaten, burned, strangled, shot or stabbed to death is often ruled a suicide even when there are multiple wounds,” and officials are often bribed to go along. One UN-funded study (by the Palestinian-based Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling) found that 75 percent of female deaths from 1996-1998 were suspiciously ascribed to ‘fate.’⁵⁵ “As a whole, the [Palestinian] judicial system conspires against victims,” including indications that families pressure forensic experts to alter their findings, the group charged.

Beyond the laws which recognize honor killings as part of Arab culture, Arab women accused of staining their families’ honor are frequently jailed to protect them from their families. At least 50 women a year are imprisoned in Jordan on honor-related cases, detention ranging from several months to several years. Arab laws that ignore human rights, however, are not limited to women. Legally sanctioned forms of cruel and unusual punishment under the aegis of extreme Islamic *Sharia* law include stoning individuals to death for adultery, beheading criminals with a sword, and amputation for theft, including cross-amputations of a right arm and a left leg that leave offenders horribly disabled for life.⁵⁶ Saudi

Arabia has one of the highest execution rates in the world at two a week, according to Amnesty International. In 1999, half the executions were of foreign nationals from developing countries,⁵⁷ whose governments, unlike Western nations, rarely possess the interest or clout to intervene with Saudi authorities.

Regimes in the Middle East Not Only Intimidate Their Citizenry; They Use Terror Tactics Against Dissidents and Rivals.

After American and British troops in April 2003 removed Iraq's Ba'ath regime by force, 3,000 skeletons were uncovered in a mass grave in central Iraq, believed to be the victims of a 1991 Shi'ite revolt against Saddam Hussein's regime. An estimated 200,000 Iraqis disappeared in the course of Hussein's 24-year rule, according to Human Rights Watch.⁵⁸ In 1988, during the Iran-Iraq war, 5,000 men, women, and children were killed when Iraq bombed its own Kurdish citizens with mustard gas and nerve agents in the village of Halabja. The attack was just "one event in a deliberate large-scale campaign to kill and displace the predominantly Kurdish inhabitants of northern Iraq ... resulting in the deaths of between 50,000-100,000 persons, many of them women and children," according to the U.S. State Department.⁵⁹

In Lebanon's 16-year civil war (1975-1991), more than 100,000 Lebanese, many of them civilians, lost their lives.⁶⁰ The late Syrian leader Hafez Assad dealt swiftly to quell his opponents following several assassination attempts, some of which originated in the town of Hama. Consequently, Assad and his brother Rifat surrounded the town, leveled it with artillery and tank fire, and to ensure no survivors remained, employed poison gas leaving an estimated 20,000 Syrians dead.⁶¹

The first use of chemical weapons in the Middle East came between 1963 and 1967 when Egypt used phosgene and mustard aerial bombs in a civil war in Yemen, killing an estimated 1,400 persons.⁶²

The Palestinian Authority uses the machinery of government to oppress its people.

Palestinians are plagued by a special brand of terrorism and fratricide: vigilante rule. Such has been the pattern over a dozen security organizations established by the PA. Vigilantism characterized the *Intifada* in 1987-93 and before that, the 1936-39 Arab revolt.⁶³

When a Palestinian police force was first envisioned, Israeli officials expected the force would number 3,000-4,000. At Oslo, a force of 12,000 was agreed upon. Then, believing a larger force would fight terrorism, it

increased to 30,000 after the September 1995 interim agreement (“Oslo II”) was signed. In the end, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, the PA has built a police state with over 40,000 armed security personnel for a population of 2.5 million inhabitants. That is a ratio of 16 police to 1,000 civilians inside the Palestinian Authority, compared to the ratio in Europe of 4-6 police to 1,000 civilians and a ratio of 2.4 to 1,000 in the United States.⁶⁴

In terms of human rights, however, the PA’s security wings have not just turned into a small army with weapons poised against Israelis, but have become a menace to their own people. Rather than taking advantage of self-rule to establish and maintain law and order, the PA simply used the machinery of self-government to terrorize Palestinians, and at times, literally, get away with highway robbery, aggravated assault, and even murder.

As a result, honor killings of Palestinian women have risen under the PA, paralleling other forms of vigilante justice carried out against a backdrop of general lawlessness.

The three-year Arab Revolt (1936-39) directed against British rule and Zionist aspirations, marked the first time Arabs in Palestine were largely free of the control of a central Western-style administration and able to organize on their own. Local rebel bands formed along family, clan, and village lines, yet coordination never rose to a regional or national scope. Instead, the revolt was “spontaneous ... unsystematic, undisciplined, and [an] unstable insurgency, often prone to anarchic lapses,”⁶⁵ writes Kenneth Stein, a scholar of the Mandate period. Marked by guerrilla warfare directed at British and Jewish interests, the revolt was also rife with abductions and killings of village heads who had sold land to Jews, and other so-called collaborators who refused to honor an economic boycott against Jews and the British. Ultimately, the Arab Revolt turned into a series of retributions against Arabs considered to be traitors. In other cases, collaboration charges served as a cover for settling old personal vendettas,⁶⁶ says Arizona University Historian Professor Charles Smith. In all, fellow Arabs killed 494 Arabs, making up approximately 16 percent of all Palestinians killed during the Arab Revolt.⁶⁷ They included mayors, affiliated officials, sheikhs, village heads (*mukhtars*), rival notables, and even prominent Muslim religious figures.⁶⁸

“... As in Ireland in the worse days after the War or in Bengal, intimidation at the point of a revolver has become a not infrequent feature of Arab politics. Attacks by Arabs on Jews unhappily, are no new thing. The novelty in the present situation is attacks by Arabs on Arabs. For an Arab

to be suspected of a lukewarm adherence to the nationalist cause is to invite a visit from a body of ‘gunmen.’”

From the Palestine Royal Commission report presented by the [British] Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty in July, 1937.

The revolt which began in 1936 included demonstrations, a general strike, and a boycott which decimated the local Arab economy, with scores of Arab businesses shut down and 40,000 middle and upper-class Palestinians fleeing to neighboring countries.⁶⁹ Some 50 years later, a similar pattern of fratricide repeated itself, notwithstanding quantum leaps forward in terms of urbanization and social organization, improvements in standard of living, health, education and development of a collective sense of peoplehood or political awareness that embraced all levels of Palestinian society. Despite the tightly organized nature of the 1987 *Intifada*, whose local and national leadership enjoyed a modern communications network, Palestinians again failed the test of statesmanship. They had built a network of local committees that managed local affairs and local resistance that transcended deep cleavages of class, clan, and geography. Yet a shared Palestinian identity based on a common enemy did not last. Self-government again regressed to a state of street-gang rule and fratricide.

“With the beginning of the Uprising, the whole system of law and order collapsed ... and much of Palestinian society experienced vigilante justice,” wrote Bassam Eid of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group.⁷⁰ Palestinian street gangs of masked men punished women suspected of immodest behavior, drug dealers, informers who collaborated with Israel, and property owners who sold land to Jews, Eid wrote.

The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group reported:

“In the course of pursuing collaborators, suspects caught by masked men were invariably tortured and killed. In the midst of this vigilantism, many innocent people – both women and men – were mutilated or killed as well, merely upon the suspicion or rumor of collaboration or as a result of a personal grudge or vendetta. This was a time of terror in the occupied territories, where the most basic guarantees of the rule of law were completely ignored.”

Palestinian radicals killed at least 800 of their own brethren suspect of providing Israel with intelligence,⁷¹ according to Professor Bard O’Neill of the National War College and an expert on terrorism. The Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group says that the number of Palestinians killed by Palestinians was equal to the number killed by Israelis.⁷²

Motivations were mixed. ‘Palestinian collaborators’ killed included those who dared to work in Israel or maintain commercial or social ties with Israelis, not just intelligence gatherers. In 1992 alone, intra-Palestinian violence resulted in 200 deaths, most tied to rivalry between Fatah and Hamas; such killings waned in 1993 after the Oslo Accords were signed

and a tacit truce, or *hudna*, was reached between the sides. That year, intra-Palestinian killings dropped to 83. Like the Arab Revolt that preceded it, the 1987 *Intifada* also devastated the local Arab economy, wiping out most standard-of-living gains Palestinians had enjoyed in the first decade of Israeli rule. From 1988-1991, the standard of living dropped 10 percent per year, according to Tel Aviv University economist Assaf Razin. The economy took another hit when 400,000 Palestinian guest workers in Kuwait were expelled after the 1991 Gulf War for siding with Saddam Hussein. That brought a sharp drop in money being sent home to families in the West Bank and Gaza, and it also cut funding to the PLO.⁷³ In the end, the pattern remains the same, despite differences in conditions among the Arab Revolt, the 1987 *Intifada* and Palestinian violence today.⁷⁴ Instead of fighting with chains, iron bars, clubs, and Molotov cocktails,⁷⁵ today's fratricide among Palestinians is being played out with the machinery of government, firearms, and sending children into battle, which began in the 1987 *Intifada*. The local bands of the 1930s and gangs of the late 1980s have been replaced by municipal and regional warlords, and organized terror and guerrilla tactics.⁷⁶

As in the past revolts, the number of intra-Palestinian killings has again risen sharply, mostly due to executions in the streets. Those include assassinations of political rivals, extra judicial killings by security forces and unidentified or masked assailants, and blood feuds. In 1995, only two such killings were reported. The next year, ten were killed in such executions; 18 in 1999, 26 in 2000 and 36 in 2001. In the first seven months of 2002, 36 Palestinians were killed by fellow Palestinians, almost all in gang war-style executions, felled by a rain of bullets in the back, or a single bullet to the head by masked gunmen or members of PA security services,⁷⁷ according to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group. The list of such murders does not include countless other Palestinians killed with knives, short hoses, and clubs.

The arrival of Arafat and his wing of the PLO from Tunis only worsened tribal blood feuds, with thousands of members of the security forces newly armed and prepared to use their weapons in private vendettas tied to tribal loyalty.

In one landmark case, members of the Abu Sultan clan murdered two members of the Khalidi clan. That led the Palestinian Authority to hastily execute two brothers from the Abu Sultan clan after a quick trial intended to restore law and order and prevent a blood feud. All four fatalities were members of the PA security forces.⁷⁸

“There is always someone killing someone else, in the process of taking revenge for a previous killing, seemingly without end,” wrote Gaza psychiatrist and human rights activist Eyad El Sarraj in the *Jerusalem Report* in 1998.⁷⁹ “Even more troubling is the fact that since the

establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, the number of killings has multiplied.” Among the cases cited: a teacher shot in the head as a suspected spy in front of his pupils.

El Sarraj’s observation points to the belief that Palestinian peoplehood lacks true substance, and that it only surfaces when non-Muslim administrations are in charge. Yet left to self-rule, Palestinian peoplehood quickly dissipates, digressing into deep cleavages and violent tribal rivalries). Writes El Sarraj:

“In Palestinian society today, tribal identity seems to be reemerging, as opposed to the latter years of the occupation when we defined ourselves first and foremost as Palestinians. As the internal political map is redrawn, people are regrouping into their tribal affiliations. And even political groups like Fatah are behaving today like tribes.”

With a sense of despair, he notes:

“... our tradition of revenge and our culture of violence are deep-rooted.”

The same pattern of economic self-destruction is repeating itself in the wake of self-rule under the Palestinian Authority, only it is coupled by corruption and misuse of public funds along with unemployment. And again, as during the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 (and 1948 when Arabs responded with violence after the State of Israel was declared), educated and well-to-do Palestinians are quietly packing their bags and emigrating to escape renewed political violence and economic stagnation.

With combatants using residential neighborhoods as a haven to attack Israelis and build bombs, many fear becoming victims of collateral damage during Israeli incursions. Moreover, Muslim parents fear that their children will be tempted or enticed to become suicide bombers.

Despite self-rule, Palestinians also fear the damaging effects of a PA-controlled economy.

After two years of self-rule in 1996, Palestinians in PA-run areas suffered a 30 percent decline in their standard of living, Israeli experts estimate. By early 2002, after Palestinian leaders opted for more violence, the Palestinians’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) plummeted by 70 percent, and the PA’s collective net worth dropped by an estimated 60 percent due to corruption, loss of productivity, and a loss of foreign aid.

Before the 1987 *Intifada*, 200,000 Palestinians worked in Israel; in 1992, after four years of disturbances, that number dropped to 120,000.⁸⁰ “The [1987] *Intifada* ... had a depressing effect on the Palestinian economy,” Eliyahu Kanovsky, an economist at Bar-Ilan University testified at a 1997 joint U.S. Congressional Economic Committee hearing on the lack of a peace dividend.

“The frequent closures following terrorist attacks disrupted trade and other economic relations between Israelis and Palestinians and accelerated Israel’s

replacement of Palestinians by laborers from a number of Eastern European, Asian and African countries.”⁸¹

The chilling effect was not only due to disruptions in Palestinian work attendance, but also because employers grew concerned for their personal safety: 105 Israelis and 11 foreign nationals⁸² were killed between 1987-1993 during the *Intifada*, with many Jewish employers being killed by their Palestinian employees. Other Jewish employers spotted their workers in TV footage among celebrants of terrorist attacks. One employer identified his former Palestinian employee as one of the prime perpetrators of the Ramallah lynching of two Israeli reservists who merely took a wrong turn.⁸³ By September 2000 before the outbreak of Arafat’s war, 60,000 Palestinians worked in Israel.⁸⁴ By December 2001, only 39,000 still worked there.⁸⁵ That drop stemmed from growing terrorist attacks on both sides of the Green Line. In response, the Israeli government invalidated all work permits for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and the issuance of new permits were weighed on an individual basis and by demand. One of the most unforgettable cases⁸⁶ that soured Israelis on hiring Palestinians came when a 34-year old Palestinian from Gaza, employed by an Israeli bus company, plowed the bus he was driving into a crowd on a main thoroughfare leading into Tel Aviv, killing eight Israelis and injuring 23 in February 2001. He did so after dropping off a busload of Gaza workers on their way to their day jobs in Israel. Today only about 20,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza have permits to enter Israel to hold day jobs.⁸⁷

Palestinians blame Israel for their economic shambles. They see nothing illogical in their demands to work in Israel while attacks on Israelis continue, attacks which enjoy broad Palestinian support.⁸⁸ Instead, they consider the fact that few Israelis will hire them as another form of oppression and what they term “Zionist racism.”

Emigration

One of the least discussed results of Palestinian human rights violations is the growing exodus of Palestinians themselves from the territories, fed up with the violence and corruption. Although no Palestinian statisticians published data on this subject, and the Palestinian media has imposed a voluntary blackout on the phenomenon, more than a quarter of Palestinians say they are considering permanent emigration, according to the Hebrew daily *Haaretz*.⁸⁹ Even six years into Palestinian self-rule, and a year before the Terror War (‘al-Aqsa *Intifada*,’) a 1999 public opinion survey revealed deep dissatisfaction: 60 percent of Palestinians criticized the lack of freedom of expression; 62 percent believed that Arafat’s administration was corrupt; and 27 percent said they were considering emigration. The number of young, educated people considering emigrating

was double the average, said Dr. Khalil Shikaki, adding: “People wanted a democratic society, they wanted work and they didn’t get what they wanted.” A 2001 survey of Palestinian Christians from Beir Sahour, a Christian village just outside Jerusalem (which has been used by terrorists as a base for attacking Jewish Jerusalemites), indicated that more than half of them were also considering emigration. The survey was conducted by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Visa requests also have increased at numerous Western embassies, although obtaining such visas has become more difficult since September 11th. The Australian embassy – an untraditional destination for Arabs – was inundated by 2,004 immigrant visa requests between July 2000 and July 2001, compared to an average of 130 in previous years. Those leaving, according to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, are young and educated, and unwilling to put up with human rights violations under Palestinians self-rule. Similarly, 90 percent of the Palestinians applying for visas to Canada are engineers and pharmacists. As in times past, Palestinian society’s penchant for self-destructive behavior is boomeranging, motivating the best and the brightest to leave, while Palestinians as a whole blame Israel (again) for the collapse of their society and their economy.

Jonathan Schanzer wrote in the *Middle East Quarterly*, about the lesson of three Palestinian uprisings:

“Like the Arab Revolt and the first *Intifada* ... the current *Intifada* also has the odor of a defeat... The violence has again destroyed the Palestinian economy, while radicalism, fratricide and internal squabbles continue to erode society at an alarming rate.... As a direct result of the intra-Palestinian violence that accompanies these uprisings, the Palestinians are arguably no more prepared for statehood today than they were in 1936. They are simply more destitute, more fragmented, and more radical.”⁹⁰

The PA Cynically and Consciously Violates the Most Basic Human Right – the ‘Right to Life and Security of Person’ in Regard to Its Own Children – in Violation of a May 2000 Amendment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

During the 1987 *Intifada*, Palestinians “sent mere children to fight grown-up struggles ... in a ‘small-arms war.’”⁹¹ It may have proved a successful tactic as military strategies go, but on a human scale, it left Palestinian children as victims by their elders for political gain. Such victimization has escalated in the PA’s guerrilla war with Israel that was launched in September 2000. Children are purposefully and strategically positioned between Palestinian combatants and their Israeli targets, used as human shields at the front of violent clashes, exploited as couriers for explosives, and openly encouraged to forfeit their lives as direct combatants and

suicide bombers. Political pedophiles literally entice children to kill themselves,⁹² a tactic the Palestinians have opted for despite the UN's specific ban on such measures as a clear human rights violation.

The UN General Assembly added that ban to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in May 2000 which went into effect in 2002.⁹³ The protocol absolutely and unconditionally prohibits the involvement of children in armed conflict. It specifically forbids the recruitment of children into regular armed forces – an all-too-widespread global phenomenon⁹⁴ – but also extends the prohibition in Article 4 of the protocol, stating unequivocally that “*armed groups ... should not, under any circumstances, recruit or use in hostilities persons under the age of eighteen years.*” Moreover, the preamble defines as a war crime the use of children under the age of 18 who “*participate actively in hostilities.*”⁹⁵

It also “condemns the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict and direct attacks on objects protected under international law ... *including places that generally have a significant presence of children, including schools and hospitals.*” Although the protocol does not specifically cite cafes, discos, and fast-food eateries, such establishments, frequented by Israeli youth and targeted by Palestinian suicide bombers, clearly fall under the prohibition as a violation of Israeli children's human rights, even by UN standards.

Further, the 2002 Human Rights Watch World Report charges that the Palestinian Authority has done “little to exercise its responsibility to take all possible measures to prevent and punish armed attacks by Palestinian Arabs against Israeli civilians, including suicide bombings.”⁹⁶

Despite the strongly worded UN ban, the world body has failed to condemn Palestinians for victimizing children – their own or Israeli children.

The opposite has actually been the case, as the UN has served as the platform of choice for Israel bashing. One of the most blatant cases was the 2001 UN-sponsored conference on racism held in Durban, South Africa. The gathering was devoted solely to painting Israel as a human rights violator by means of a parade of fliers, bumper stickers, and posters declaring Israel racist, criminal, illegal, and an “apartheid state.”⁹⁷ In many ways Durban stood as a recap of a 1975 UN General Assembly resolution, which defined Zionism as “a form of racism and racial discrimination.” That resolution was repealed in 1991, but the terminology continues to reverberate throughout the UN halls and other UN resolutions.

Lastly, within the Arab world, those whose human rights are violated include more than Arabs who belong to the ‘wrong’ ethnic group, religion, or political association, who engage in forbidden activities, who dare to speak out or show too much personal or institutional autonomy. By

focusing on staying in power, many Arab regimes by definition simply impoverish the lives of their citizens, shortchanging them of their most basic human rights – to life and the realization of one’s full potential through decent health and education.

Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family.” It stresses that “[m]otherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.” Article 26 states: “Everyone has the right to education ... and that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality, and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”⁹⁸

Despite Arab and European accusations that Israel oppresses and discriminates against its Arab minority and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, objective yardsticks show a different reality. In fact, Arab children in Israel have a much better chance of staying alive and getting a good education than Muslim children in countries in Europe.⁹⁹ The infant mortality rate (a key component of the UN’s Human Development Index) for Arabs in Israel ranks equal or better than the rate of members of the *majority* in Europe and the United States. The rate among Arabs in Israel is 7.8 deaths per 1,000, the same as for native British citizens; but the infant mortality rate among native French citizens is 8 deaths per 1,000; for native Swiss 8.2, and for white Americans 8.5.

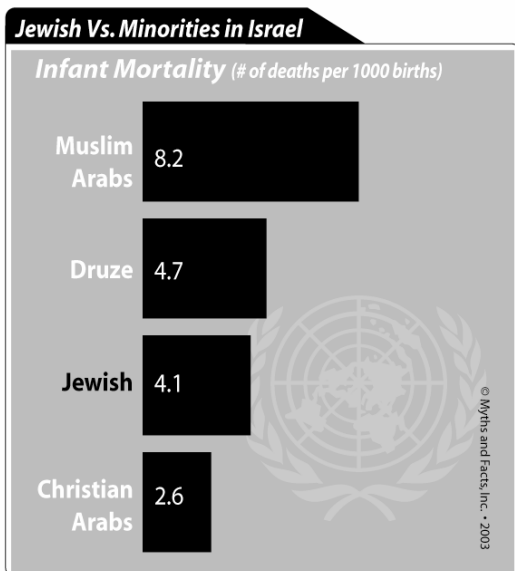
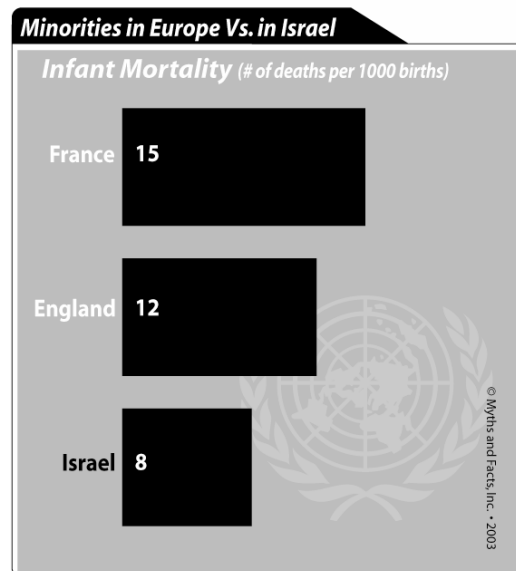
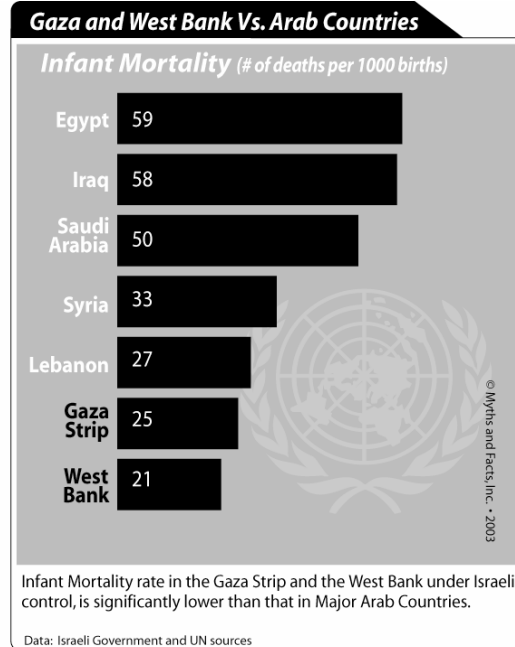
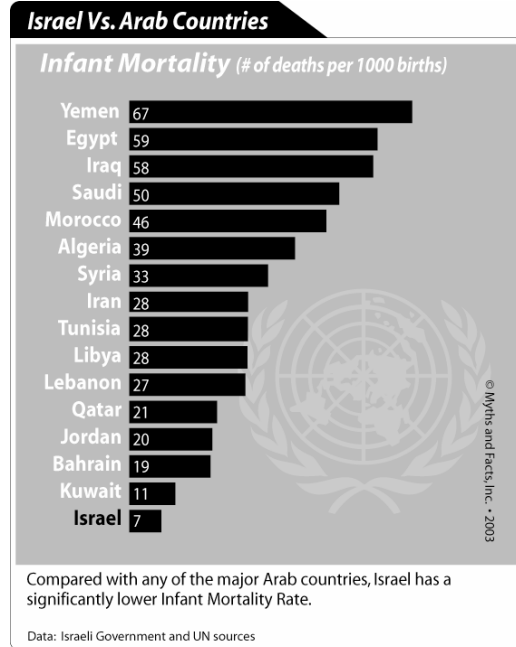
Comparison of the infant mortality rates of Israel’s Arab minority with the minorities in the above nations also proves the fallacy of Arab and European accusations about Israel’s treatment of minorities. The infant mortality rate of minority Turks in Switzerland, for example, is 12.3 deaths per 1,000; 12 per 1,000 for minority Arabs in France; and in England 11.4 death per 1,000 for babies of mothers born in Pakistan.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, Israel’s overall infant mortality ratio of 7.5 deaths per 1,000 births stands in sharp contrast to the infant mortality rates in the Arab world: Kuwait (10.9), Jordan (19.6), Lebanon (27.4), Egypt (58.6), Saudi Arabia (49.6), and Yemen (66.8). Ironically, Arab newborns in the West Bank (with infant mortality of 21 per 1,000 birth) and Gaza (with infant mortality of 24 per 1,000 birth) have a better chance of surviving the first year of life than Arab infants in Lebanon, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia.¹⁰¹ A August 2000 report of the World Bank cited 15 deaths per 1,000 births in the West Bank and Gaza,¹⁰² data that would rank Palestinians second only to Kuwait in the entire Arab world. That data was released just before the outbreak of the Terror War (second ‘*Intifada*,’) which has led to disintegration of public infrastructure, including public health standards that seven years ago were the highest in the Arab world.¹⁰³ “The disastrous self-destructive terrorist war against Israel ... has reduced Palestinians to the most desperate conditions they have seen since the creation of Israel in 1948,” wrote Tom Rose, publisher of *the Jerusalem Post*.¹⁰⁴

Beside health, the other basic human right is education. But intellectual empowerment through literacy and education pose one of the greatest threats to autocratic regimes.

Consider the 95 percent literacy rate in democratic Israel, which absorbed one million immigrants from more than 100 countries. Yet in the Arab world, where the overwhelming majority speaks a common language – Arabic – illiteracy remains high. Although Jordan (with a 93.4 percent literacy rate), Bahrain (88.5), Lebanon (86.4 percent), and Syria (85.7 percent) lead the Arab world in literacy, one of every two Egyptians does not know how to read, and at least one of every five in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, and Iraq cannot read either, according to the CIA's World Fact book 2002.¹⁰⁵ Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, under Israeli rule for more than three decades, have one of the highest levels of literacy among Arabs; 85 percent.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the Arab world as a whole illiteracy has dropped from 60 percent in 1980 to 43 percent in the mid-1990s, but even with this impressive decline, 60 million illiterate adults - mostly women, remain - according to the UN's 2002 Arab Human Development Report.

Mortality Infant - Charts



From the very day it became an independent state on May 14, 1948, Israel has stood as a beacon of liberty.

Israel has always perceived itself as responsible for providing a safe haven for any Jew in distress, regardless of the circumstances – displaced European Jews who survived the Holocaust, Jews from Arab countries whose communities became a target for discrimination and attacked, Jews from behind the Iron Curtain and black Jews from Ethiopia, and more recently, immigrants from Argentina and France – this is what Israel has stood for. In addition to serving as a haven for Jews, Israel has undertaken number of humanitarian gestures over the years. In the late 1970s, Israel took in 250 Vietnamese boat people, giving them asylum after an Israeli Zim Line vessel saved their lives while ships from Panama, Japan, Norway, and then-East Germany passed them by. Similar sentiments prompted Israel to give refuge to 84 Muslims from Bosnia in 1993 and 110 Albanians from Kosovo in 1999.¹⁰⁷

Yet despite those humanitarian acts, Israel remains a victim of crimes against humanity, as Palestinian terrorist attacks specifically target Jews. In an ironic twist, Palestinians who accuse Israel of being racist and an apartheid state choose their victims solely by ethnic and racial origin, attacking places frequented by Israeli Jews. Handlers disguise their terrorist protégés to look like Jews (donning skullcaps, army uniforms, dyed hair or ‘cool’ haircuts, choosing candidates who specifically do not look Arabic). By the same token, peaceful Arabs will take steps to ensure they do not look like Jews when in predominantly Arab areas, leaving a kafiya on the dashboard or worry beads hung from the rearview mirror. When possible, terrorists avoid harming Arabs, killing only Jews. In one case, a suicide bomber whispered a warning to a young female passenger talking in Arabic with a friend – “Something terrible is going to happen – get off the bus.” The passenger – a nursing student studying at a Jewish college in Safed – grabbed the arm of the other Arab student and quickly got off the bus at the next stop, not bothering to call police on her cell phone after the bus drove away.¹⁰⁸ Twenty minutes later, the suicide bomber blew himself up in the packed bus, killing nine and injuring 50. In another case, a woman student who blew herself up in a Jerusalem supermarket told two women in traditional Arab dress to get out before approaching a group of other female shoppers with children whom she killed and maimed after detonating a suicide belt she was hiding under her clothes.¹⁰⁹

Israel is accused of gross violations of Palestinian human rights based on simple ‘body counts’ – Israeli fatalities vs. Palestinian fatalities. This is misleading. An examination of circumstances surrounding many Palestinian deaths shows most were combatants, and there were countless, needless casualties among Palestinians that stemmed from reckless death-defying behavior.

The asymmetrical number of casualties among Israelis and Palestinians has incensed many observers, raising charges that Israel uses excessive

force. In fact, Palestinians misread the results of a decade of self-restraint on the part of the Israeli army, whose rules of engagement permitted soldiers to fire only if their lives were clearly in danger.¹¹⁰ In retrospect, that policy – coupled with a similar misreading of Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon – bolstered a false sense of invincibility among Palestinians in the face of armed IDF soldiers.

Many of the initial Israeli casualties resulted from a failure to fully grasp that the rules of battle had changed and soldiers should be allowed to fire back. Thus, Palestinians were killed attempting to dismantle a border fence near Kibbutz Nirim adjacent to the Gaza strip, having expected to simply walk into Israel proper. Others were injured and killed in the early months of the Terror War (‘al-Aqsa *Intifada*’) when mobs stormed isolated positions manned by Israeli soldiers and police in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem. Some literally climbing up onto the walls of army compounds, shimmying up flagpoles and climbing chain link parameter fences in an attempt to overrun such positions, assuming Israelis would pull back rather than shoot back. The often-fatal consequences of such irrational behavior, a complete disregard for one’s own personal safety, emanated from a lethal naiveté – the assumption that under no circumstances would Israelis use their weapons, coupled with a growing cultural chasm where Palestinians began to encourage such behavior as long as the fatalities could be pinned on Israel. The most bizarre use of the body count is that Palestinians blame the IDF for causing the deaths of homicide bombers and Palestinians killed while preparing bombs to be used against Israelis. Under such conditions, looking for symmetry in body counts becomes irrelevant.

A statistical analysis which examined the age, gender, and combatant status of all fatalities since the beginning of the September 2000 Terror War found 54 percent of Palestinian fatalities were among combatants while 80% of Israeli fatalities were among non-combatants, thus painting an entirely different picture of whose human rights are under attack.

The study¹¹¹ by the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism also revealed that straightforward body counts – 1,900 Palestinians vs. 700 Israelis – create a warped picture because they lump together all Palestinian fatalities, including suicide bombers, those killed preparing bombs, and innocent bystanders. When fatalities were analyzed (based on open source material in Arabic and Hebrew) by age, gender, and combatant status (full combatants, probable combatants, uniformed non-combatants, suspected collaborators, violent protesters, unknown protestors, non-combatants, health-related, and unknown), an entirely different picture emerged: 54% of Palestinian losses were *actively* involved in fighting (not including stone throwers or unknowns); 80% of the Israelis killed were non-combatants with women and girls accounting for 31% of the Israeli casualties, compared to 5% of Palestinian females. Palestinian fatalities are concentrated among teens and young adult males,

while Israeli casualties range from infants to senior citizens caught in crowded civilian targets, including 174 fatalities of people over age 45. Lastly, among Palestinians, at least 253 of their own 800 fatalities were deaths in which Palestinians were *directly* responsible for Palestinian deaths such as the murder of collaborators and bomb preparation accidents.

In fact, Palestinians have killed Israelis simply for the “crime of being Israeli,” the report charged. It also contradicts accusations that Israel has indiscriminately targeted women and children, as Palestinians often claim. Instead, the statistics show that the vast majority of Palestinians killed were Palestinian men and boys engaged in behavior that they knew placed them in danger. Their reckless, death-defying behavior reflected a culture of death purposefully and cynically championed by Palestinian political and religious leaders for political gain.

IN A NUTSHELL:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1948 champions the right to “life, liberty and security of person”; “freedom of thought, conscience and religion”; “freedom of opinion and expression”; “equal protection of the law”; freedom from “arbitrary arrest”; and “inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment.”
- Despite rhetoric which paints Israel as a human rights oppressor, the facts and even the testimony of Palestinian human rights activists demonstrate that the Arab world flagrantly and systematically violates the human rights of its own people.
- For Arabs and Jews in the Middle East, genuine respect for one’s person, privacy, property, gender, beliefs, right of expression; protection from arbitrary arrest, and from cruel and unusual punishment exist only in Israel. Many regimes in the Arab world have no qualms about terrorizing their own citizenry, using cruel and unusual punishments and engaging in murderous attacks on opponents to keep their citizenry in line.
- Discrimination against women in the Arab world is widespread. It ranges from restrictions on their autonomy to laws that legitimize honor killings for breaching modesty customs.
- The Palestinian Authority has not only turned the machinery of government into a police state in two opportunities for self-rule – the 1987 *Intifada*, and a decade of self-rule under the Palestinian Authority – but is responsible for the disintegration of Palestinian society into a lawless reign of terror which threatens Palestinians as well as Israelis.
- Palestinian leaders think nothing about victimizing both their own children and Jewish Israeli children for political gain.

¹ See Sharia – Islamic Law at: http://americanthinker.com/articles.php?article_id=4726&search=arlandson. (11559)

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- 2 For the text of the document, see:
<http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/international/hr1981.htm#Foreword>. (11582)
- 3 "Re-drafting the Arab Charter on Human Rights: Building for a better future" See:
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE010022004?open&of=ENG-375>.
(11561)
- 4 The Casablanca Declaration of the Arab Human Rights Movement See:
<http://www.hri.ca/doccentre/docs/casa-dec.shtml>. (11562)
- 5 For the texts of these documents, see: <http://www.undp-pogar.org/activities/justice/beirut.pdf>. (11563)
- 6 "Middle East and North Africa," Amnesty International, April 2001. See:
<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2001.nsf/regMDE/regMDE?OpenDocument>. (10462)
- 7 For two examples, see the case of two Israeli restaurateurs invited by an Arab colleague to an eatery in Tul Karm <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0j7n0>. (10463) and a 16-year-old boy who went to visit a girl he met on the Internet who lured the youth to his death near Ramallah <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0j1n0>. (10464)
- 8 See David Matas' critique of the behavior of the UN Commission on Human Rights See: <http://www.bnaibrith.ca/briefs/unchr/unchr-14b.html>. (11180)
- 9 "Figure 1: Religious Freedom by Area" in Freedom House – Center for Religious Freedom. See: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/religion/publications/rfiw/fig1.htm>. (11181)
- 10 Jim Muir, "Iran tries pollsters on spying charges," *BBC*, December 3, 2002. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2539605.stm. (11179)
- 11 "The Internet in the Middle East and North Africa: Free Expression and Censorship," Human Rights Watch, June 1999. See:
<http://www.hrw.org/advocacy/internet/mena/summary.htm>. (11182) On Jordan, see:
<http://www.hrw.org/advocacy/internet/mena/jordan.htm>. (11183)
- 12 "Saudi Arabia Blocks Religious Websites," *Christianity Today*, August 7, 2002. See: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/130/31.0.html>. (11184) Also see: "Internet Filtering in Saudi Arabia in 2004" at: <http://www.opennetinitiative.net/studies/saudi/>. (11564)
- 13 "Israeli Internet penetration rate on the rise," *e-Marketer*, November 2002. See: http://www.nua.ie/surveys/index.cgi?f=VS&art_id=905358572&rel=true. (11185)
- 14 For a comparison of usage in Israel and its Arab neighbors in 1999. See chart at: <http://www.hrw.org/advocacy/internet/mena/appendix-a.htm>. (11186)
- 15 See *Israel's Business Arena*: Almost 2 million online in Israel at: http://www.nua.ie/surveys/index.cgi?f=VS&art_id=905357429&rel=true. (11187)
- 16 Yossi Klein Halevi, "Refugee Status," *New Republic*, August 19, 2002, at: <http://www.jpief.net/sep02/Refugee%20status.pdf>. (10465) "Death threat to Palestinian gays," *BBC*, March 6, 2003 at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2826963.stm. (11565)
- 17 Chris McGreal, "Gay Israeli MP faces new battle in Knesset," *Guardian*, November 5, 2002, at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/gayrights/story/0,12592,836330,00.html>. (10467)
- 18 Arab Commission for Human Rights at: <http://home.swipnet.se/~w-79939/wiae.htm>. (11566)
- 19 Cited in The Egyptian Organization for Human Right's (EOHR) annual report at: <http://www.eohr.org/annual/2000/s4.htm>. (10468) In the pogrom on Christians (there are virtually no Jews left in Egypt) in the southern Egyptian village of Al Kosheh in January 2000, 100 Christian-owned businesses and homes were destroyed by a mob of 3,000 Muslims. Many of the 21 Copts murdered were told to renounce their faith, and when they refused they were executed on the spot. The Egyptian government wanted to hush up the embarrassing affair. For details, see the Center for Religious

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- Freedom report at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/religion/news/bn2000/bn-2000-01-03.htm>. (10469)
- 20 Kenneth C. W. Leiter, "Life under the Palestinian Authority," *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1998) at: <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php?id=406>. (11190)
- 21 Eugene Cotran, "The Evolution of the Rule of Law in Palestine," *Daily Star*, December 19, 1996, at: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/Centres/IslamicLaw/DS19-12-96RoLPalestine.html>. (11191)
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- 23 See "Comments On The Human Rights Watch Report," EOHR, November 2002, at: <http://www.eohr.org/press/2002/11-7.htm>. (11642) Eyad El Sarraj, "Why We've Become Suicide Bombers," *Peace Work* (May 2002) at: <http://www.afsc.org/pwork/0205/020506a.htm>. (11194)
- 24 For an overview of human rights abridgements, see section on human rights by sociologist Kenneth Leiter, "Life under the Palestinian Authority," *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1998) at: <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php/?id=406>. (11190)
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- 26 For a look inside the Palestinian Authority and for case studies of its misuse of power against critical journalists, protesting workers, and others – from false arrest to use of torture in order to silence criticism and prevention of peaceful assembly, see the Palestinian Center for Human Rights report: "The Right to Free Expression and the Right to Peaceful Assembly – The Case of the West Bank and Gaza, January 1, 1999 - April 30, 2000" at: <http://www.pchrgaza.org/files/S&r/English/pdf/Series Study 23.pdf>. (11647)
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- 31 For an overview of progress and regression in the status of women, see Homa Hoodfar, "Muslim Women on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century" at: [http://wluml.org/english/pubsfulltxt.shtml?cmd\[87\]=i-87-f226d81549de18253f9cce3ff4045df2&cmd\[190\]=i-190-f226d81549de18253f9cce3ff4045df2](http://wluml.org/english/pubsfulltxt.shtml?cmd[87]=i-87-f226d81549de18253f9cce3ff4045df2&cmd[190]=i-190-f226d81549de18253f9cce3ff4045df2). (11648)
- 32 "Abuse of Women Under Arafat's Palestinian Authority Regime," December 27, 2001, quoting *Haaretz*, June 16, 1994, at: <http://www.zoa.org/pressrel/20011227a.htm>. (11202)

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- 33 “Arab Women Moving Fast, but Still Far to Go,” *UN Development Program*, at: http://www.rbas.undp.org/ahdr/press_kits2002/PR4.pdf. (11677)
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