

**AL-DURA, ON-LINE ISLAMISM: THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH IN AN
AGE OF MEDIA ANTI-ISRAELISM AND INTERNET TERRORISM**
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Isranet Daily Briefing, May 24, 2013
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/al-dura-line-islamism-battle-truth-age-media-anti-israelism-and-internet-terrorism/>

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Contents:

Thanks to Kuperwasser Al-Dura Report, Truth Is on its Way: Philippe Karsenty, Jerusalem Post, May 22, 2013—For over 10 years, I've been fighting, along with many friends, to get out the truth about the al-Dura blood libel. For many years, the strongest argument of our opponents has been the silence of the State of Israel when my efforts were sometimes undermined by Israeli diplomats.

A Lonely Battle for the Truth: Nadav Shragai, Israel Hayom, May 24, 2013—The first to try to stem the flow of lies and bloodshed that followed the Muhammad al-Dura affair — much like the Dutch boy who put his finger in the dike to stop the trickle that threatened to become a flood — was physicist Nahum Shahaf.

Biggest Battlefield In Terror War Is On The Internet: Rabbi Abraham Cooper, Fox News, May 23, 2013—There is one war that the terrorists are winning and if we don't act, more Boston-style massacres, more horrific atrocities on the streets of democratic nations, like the unspeakable beheading Wednesday in London- and worse— are inevitable.

On Topic Links

The New, Improved Axis of Jihad: Clare M. Lopez, Gatestone Institute, May 24, 2013

U.S.: Israel's Prosperity a Problem: Shoshana Bryen, Gatestone Institute, May 24, 2013



THANKS TO KUPERWASSER AL-DURA REPORT, TRUTH IS ON ITS WAY

Philippe Karsenty

[Jerusalem Post](#), May 22, 2013

For over 10 years, I've been fighting, along with many friends, to get out the truth about the al-Dura blood libel. For many years, the strongest argument of our opponents has been the silence of the State of Israel when my efforts were sometimes undermined by Israeli diplomats. So getting the support of Israeli public diplomacy was an important objective.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu received Moshe Ya'alon's and Yossi Kuperwasser's report, which confirms my accusation against French public TV. It's a milestone on the way to the truth. Yesterday, a French court of appeals was expected to release its verdict on another episode of my defamation trial against France 2, but the verdict was postponed, for the second time. It is now due to be given on June 26. My victory in that case could be an important step forward, but nothing is certain.

Five years ago, after I won the appellate court trial, France 2 denied the report was a hoax and appealed to the French Supreme Court on technicalities. Last year, they won and the verdict was annulled. The highest French court said we didn't have the right to look at France 2's raw footage to decide if I was right or wrong to accuse them of having staged their news report. Kafka was back! If I lose, you can be sure Israel demonizers and France 2 will use the verdict to slander Israel, and me, even if I lose on technicalities.

Almost 13 years after the broadcasting of the Dura hoax, Israel is still trying to recover its good name, and this should be a reason to worry for the State of Israel and its citizens. Thirteen years and so many lives lost because of Israel's silence, because of Israel's incapacity to understand global anti-Semitism is fed by Israel's reluctance to defend its point of view.

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During all these years, I've been undermined by Israelis, ambassadors, politicians, journalists and by a prominent American Jewish organization which preferred to keep access to the French politicians over fighting for the truth. Nevertheless, I was confident because the truth has always been on my side.

Now that the State of Israel has taken the official decision to fight for its good name, it is important to encourage it to continue and to analyze how this huge PR failure has been allowed to go on for so long. This Kuperwasser investigation committee has been important and productive. I strongly recommend that the State of Israel establish another investigative committee to determine the problems which led to this situation.

One day or another, Israel will face another lie, another blood libel or other false accusations during military operations. Israel was not prepared for this war, and Israel lost. Since the creation of the State of Israel, Arabs, with the complicity of some Western countries, have tried to destroy this tiny nation by open warfare. They failed.

Then they tried terrorism. In the end, that also failed. So, they turned to media war - and here, unfortunately, they succeeded. The result is that now, the wars Israel wins on the ground, while respecting international laws and treaties, are lost on the media battlefield, and then in the diplomatic arena.

The official Israeli report, which was issued on Sunday, shows a turning point in the Israeli authorities' state of mind: they decided to fight for their good name. This is good news, and will be effective only if they are able to analyze their mistakes and draw conclusions in order not to repeat past mistakes. As in every previous war, Israel has no choice but to win. It's a question of survival, and I'm sure Israel will succeed.

[Top of Page](#)



A LONELY BATTLE FOR THE TRUTH

Nadav Shragai

[Israel Hayom](#), May 24, 2013

The first to try to stem the flow of lies and bloodshed that followed the Muhammad al-Dura affair — much like the Dutch boy who put his finger in the dike to stop the trickle that threatened to become a flood — was physicist Nahum Shahaf.

On September 30, 2000, France 2, a French public television station, broadcast the images and the reporter's accompanying statements for the first time. Later on they were broadcast thousands of times by television stations the world over, including in Arab countries. This week it became clear, this time officially, that the story was a modern blood libel. Jamal al-Dura and his son Muhammad could be seen in those images, kneeling in fear behind a barrel at Netzarim Junction. Shots were supposedly fired at them from the nearby Israeli position, and Charles Enderlin, the station's main reporter in Jerusalem, stated against the backdrop of photographs taken by Talal Abu Rahmah (the Gaza station's local photographer): "Muhammad is dead, and his father is seriously wounded..."

That was the beginning of the al-Dura affair, which swelled to monstrous proportions and gave the Palestinians a smoking-gun "proof" that Israelis are child-killers. These photographs became a symbol of the Second Intifada.

It turns out that Muhammad did not die, at least not in that incident. It also turns out that some of the wounds and scars on his father, who was said to have been seriously wounded in the incident, resulted from a 1992 attack by Palestinians and the surgery he later underwent in an Israeli hospital. But the committee appointed by Minister Moshe Ya'alon, whose findings were published this week, did not discover much that was new. It only gave an official state imprimatur to the findings of many others who untiringly tilted at windmills, claiming that the story

was a lie that the Palestinian propaganda machine had adopted for its own purposes.

The first to try to stem the flow of lies and ensuing bloodshed — much like the Dutch boy who put his finger in the dike to stop the trickle that threatened to become a flood — was physicist Nahum Shahaf of Ramat Gan. Almost everything Shahaf said at the time, when Yom-Tov Samia, then the head of the IDF Southern Command, appointed him as head of the IDF committee to investigate the incident, ultimately received the government's approval after a 13-year delay.

Shahaf, seen as odd and eccentric a decade ago, was right about almost everything. The government committee's examination of the raw footage showed that at the end of the film, in a segment that was never broadcast, the boy is seen alive and it is not certain that he was wounded at all. France 2's raw outtakes show no blood on the wall, the ground or the barrel. While Jamal claimed that he had been struck by 10 to 12 bullets, the film shows no bullet striking his body or any drops of blood on it, and there is a great deal of doubt as to whether any shots at all were fired from the Israeli position.

This week, 67-year-old Shahaf, who said years ago that the film showing the supposed death of Muhammad al-Dura had been staged, recalled everyone who had helped him in the struggle and believed him. He also recalled the officials in the Foreign Ministry, the IDF and the police who tripped him up and refused to help him.

When the al-Dura affair began, Shahaf was a brilliant physicist with a broad record of accomplishments. He played a role in developing unmanned aerial vehicles, technology that would enable people to see through walls and a system for compressed digital-video transmission that won him an award from the Science Ministry. He watched the report about Muhammad al-Dura on television and left a message for Yom-Tov Samia, the head of the Southern Command at the time.

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Shahaf asked him not to destroy the wall next to which al-Dura had been filmed so that a ballistics investigation could be performed. But Samia was out in the field. By the time he heard Shahaf's message, the IDF had already finished clearing the area around the Netzarim Junction and the wall had been demolished. Still, Shahaf, whom Samia appointed to head the IDF's investigative team, had already reached the conclusion, even without the wall, that there was no angle of fire from the IDF position to Muhammad al-Dura and his father.

"That wasn't all," Shahaf recalls. "There's a concept known as a sun clock. Shadow projection length varies with every hour of the day. One of the things I checked, from the direction of the shadows, was when the incident occurred. I was amazed to find that according to the shadow projection, the incident took place after the boy had arrived at the hospital as a corpse. In other words, according to the direction of the shadow, the boy who was buried under the name al-Dura was buried before the incident took place, before he was supposedly 'shot to death.'"

Although Shahaf's findings aroused interest in the local and worldwide media, they encountered a great deal of skepticism. Shahaf finds it hard to forget the article that was published in Haaretz. "The newspaper ran an article criticizing me, portraying me as insufficiently skilled. Unfortunately, it had an impact. Shaul Mofaz, who was chief of staff at the time, distanced himself. Some of the upper military echelon distanced themselves from me."

"Those were very hard times for me. Some people with whom I worked closely dropped hints, while others said openly that they had been ordered not to work with me."

Q. Who received such orders? Who gave them?

"Official personnel who deal with measurements and mapping stopped working

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with me, for example. There was also a building contractor, who was Jamal al-Dura's boss. When I asked him for information about Jamal, he promised to help me only if he got permission from the Southern Command. But according to him, officials from the IDF Spokesperson's Office in the command told him they weren't working with me anymore, so I found myself more or less on my own.

"In that near-impossible situation I contacted Ariel Sharon's adviser, Raanan Gissin, and Danny Seaman, who was the director of the Government Press Office at the time. Both of them listened to me. They watched the footage and saw the potential right away. Their behaviour was professional and straightforward. I got endless support and help from them. Sharon, for his part, supported them, but other people put heavy pressure on them not to work with me. I don't understand that to this day."

Danny Seaman said this week that Foreign Ministry officials "were not at all enthusiastic, to put it mildly, about my work on the al-Dura affair, during Olmert's time too. The Prime Minister's Office put me under a lot of pressure, which included threats of dismissal, if I didn't leave the subject alone." Foreign Ministry officials commented on Shahaf's statements: "The approach to the al-Dura affair was completely professional. The assessment was that as long as there was no solid material that could show the lies for what they were, such work could do more harm than good, and even cause the images to be broadcast all over the world yet again."

But the threats did not deter Shahaf. His big breakthrough came in the form of an article by a supporter, James Fallows, a consultant to President Clinton, in the June 2003 issue of *The Atlantic*. The *Wall Street Journal* ran another article supporting Shahaf's research and hinting that the incident had been staged.

In February 2005, Shahaf gave a lecture in front of 750 criminologists at the American Society of Criminology in New Orleans, the world's highest-ranking

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isranet-publications

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professional forum of jurisprudence. Afterward, he was invited to lecture at other universities and met with Robert Morgenthau, the district attorney of New York. The support he received abroad reopened the doors in Israel that had been slammed shut. Maj. Gen. Giora Eiland, who at first tended toward supporting the assertion that IDF troops had shot al-Dura by mistake, met with Shahaf and Danny Seaman and watched a 20-minute presentation. The presentation impressed him and he made it public.

In 2007, Shahaf screened a film he had produced in which Muhammad al-Dura is seen changing position after his "death." He had the help of an expert, a pediatrician from the Sheba Medical Center, Tel Hashomer, whom he had asked to view the film. The government investigative committee also published those images this week. On Channel 10's current-affairs television program London & Kirschenbaum, Shahaf confronted Charles Enderlin, who told him to his face that he was talking nonsense. When London asked Shahaf whether he did not fear a libel suit, Shahaf invited Enderlin, on live television, to sue him.

As the various events unfolded, France 2 brought a libel suit against Dr. Yehuda David, who claimed that the scars Jamal al-Dura said were bullet wounds were actually from an operation that he, David, had performed on him in 1994 after Hamas operatives, who suspected al-Dura of collaborating with Israel, attacked him with knives and axes.

This week, Dr. David said, "Jamal al-Dura showed those wounds and claimed that they had been caused in the incident at Netzarim Junction. That was a lie." When David lost in the first round, he appealed, and in February 2012 the court of appeals in Paris acquitted him, ruling that some of Jamal al-Dura's wounds had been inflicted before the incident at Netzarim Junction.

A close look at the influence of the al-Dura case and its role in encouraging terrorism and violence shows how far things have gone. In Syria and in Darfur,

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isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, May 24, 2013

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more Muslim children are killed by Muslims in one month than in all the years of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But a single fiction about a Gazan child was inflated to monstrous proportions and provided inspiration for terror attacks and an ongoing delegitimization campaign against the state of Israel.

Ya'alon's committee, which was headed by Yossi Kuperwasser, the director-general of the Strategic Affairs Ministry, wrote in its report published this week, "Many leaders in the Arab sector who appeared before [the committee] held the opinion that the images of Muhammad al-Dura, which were broadcast by the media, were among the factors that led people of the Arab sector to go out into the streets during the events of October 2000."

But the al-Dura affair's influence was many times more tangible and concrete than that general statement. The crowds that lynched the two Israeli reserve soldiers who entered Ramallah by mistake in 2000 shouted for vengeance for the blood of Muhammad al-Dura. Nabil Faraj al-Areir, the first suicide terrorist of the Second Intifada, concluded the will he wrote before blowing himself up as follows: "To conclude, I say that I dedicate this act of martyrdom to the shahid Muhammad al-Dura and to all the shahids of Islam."

The Palestinian Authority itself used the al-Dura story to encourage children to take part in violent acts and sacrifice their lives. An excerpt from a video that was broadcast hundreds of times on official Palestinian television begins as follows: "I wave to you, not in farewell, but to say 'Follow Muhammad al-Dura.'" In the video, Muhammad al-Dura-played by a boy actor-runs joyfully in heaven, fying a kite and visiting an amusement park.

The committee appointed by Ya'alon and headed by Kuperwasser said this week that the report on France 2 served as an inspiration and justification for terror attacks, not only for Palestinian groups, but for global ones as well. The most significant use of the affair was made by Osama bin Laden, whose spokesperson

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AGE OF MEDIA ANTI-ISRAELISM AND INTERNET TERRORISM**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, May 24, 2013
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/al-dura-line-islamism-battle-truth-age-media-anti-israelism-and-internet-terrorism/>

mentioned the image of Muhammad al-Dura in a statement broadcast in October 2001.

Bin Laden himself alluded to the incident in an audio recording broadcast on Al-Jazeera, saying, "Pharaoh, the leader of oppression and unbelief, was known as a child-killer. But the sons of Israel do the same thing to our children in Palestine. The whole world saw how Israeli soldiers killed Muhammad al-Dura and many others like him..." The video showing the beheading of Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal's South Asian bureau chief, by members of a Pakistani terrorist group, also included a brief excerpt of the report on France 2.

The Kuperwasser committee noted this week that the images of al-Dura were not only used as a justification for acts of terror. In Arab and Muslim societies, they also served as a symbol of the cruelty of Israelis and Jews and of the splendour of martyrdom in the struggle against them. "Muhammad al-Dura is celebrated in hundreds of Arabic songs, poems, movies, websites and Facebook pages in which Abu Rahma's and Enderlin's original accusation, that the child was murdered by Israel in cold blood, is taken as a given."....

[Top of Page](#)



BIGGEST BATTLEFIELD IN TERROR WAR IS ON THE INTERNET

Rabbi Abraham Cooper

[Fox News](#), May 23, 2013

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isranet-publications

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<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/al-dura-line-islamism-battle-truth-age-media-anti-israelism-and-internet-terrorism/>

There is one war that the terrorists are winning and if we don't act, more Boston-style massacres, more horrific atrocities on the streets of democratic nations, like the unspeakable beheading Wednesday in London- and worse— are inevitable. The battlefield is the Internet's dynamic world of social networking where the most popular technologies have been leveraged to provide unprecedented access to vast libraries of how-to- tutorials on terrorism.

This was the key finding of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Digital Terrorism and Hate Project which was recently presented at a Capitol Hill briefing co-sponsored with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.) and ranking minority member Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.).

Before the carnage at the Boston Marathon in April shocked the world, our 2013 report had highlighted *Inspire*, Al Qaeda's magazine and other online publications that provided the recipes for the pressure cooker bombs and radio signals the Tsarnaev brothers used to murder and maim so many innocent people.

Our researchers work only from open sources and are currently monitoring some 20,000 problematic hate and terror-related sites. But you don't need to be the CIA or MI5 to see the clear trends:

Today, Islamists have created an online culture that spawns 'lone wolf' terrorists on steroids. With a special emphasis on online forums and social networking, online gurus of hate like the late Anwar al Awlaki validate and supercharge violent theological dogma targeting the United States, other western democracies, Israel and Russia.

Increasingly the "true believer" is being told they don't have to travel to the Afghanistan/Pakistan region for training and indoctrination, they can get it all online. Let's be clear. We are not talking about hate speech—there's plenty of KKK and neo-Nazi type hate online—but about the growing existential threat from highly motivated and organized terrorists that must be dealt with.

In the past few months, I have met with intelligence and police officials on three continents, all of whom have the impossible task of keeping their citizens safe from terrorist attacks and finding the virtual (lone wolf) needle in the haystack.

So what can we do to degrade the terrorists' virtual bases? For starters we need the collective attention of the Internet community itself. We have begun to grade the Internet giants on how they deal with digital terror and hate.

The Wiesenthal Center has given Facebook an A- because of their no-nonsense terms of usage, their transparency and the fact that they have two teams — one in Silicon Valley and the other in Ireland — who are generally responsive to our concerns and who are forging their own technological firewalls against online bigotry.

YouTube has barely earned a C-, for while they seem to have a good written policy, far too many do-it-yourself, how-to-terror videos still populate the giant online video provider.

Twitter has earned an F for its failure to provide transparency and a quick response to the proliferation of hate hashtags and links to terrorism libraries.

If we are to have any hope that we can degrade and thwart future lone-wolf style terror attacks, we will need to create a new voluntary coalition that brings law enforcement, homeland security, Internet giants and human rights groups to the table. Will such deliberations work? I am not sure. But one thing is certain: maintaining the status quo is an invitation for the next unspeakable terrorist outrage.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper is associate Dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles.

[Top of Page](#)

On Topic

The New, Improved Axis of Jihad: Clare M. Lopez, Gatestone Institute, May 24, 2013—Indicators and warnings continue to grow concerning the resurgence of an "Axis of Jihad" comprised of Iran, Hizballah, and al-Qa'eda. This axis is not new: its three actors, both national and sub-national, have been working together in an operational terror alliance for over two decades.

U.S.: Israel's Prosperity a Problem: Shoshana Bryen, Gatestone Institute, May 24, 2013—At first blush, it might have sounded like praise, but it wasn't. Before meeting with Israeli President Shimon Peres, Secretary of State John Kerry pronounced Israel's prosperity an impediment to "peace" with the Palestinians. "I think there is an opportunity [for peace], but for many reasons it's not on the tips of everyone's tongue. People in Israel aren't waking up every day and wondering if tomorrow there will be peace because there is a sense of security and a sense of accomplishment and of prosperity."

[Top of Page](#)

**AL-DURA, ON-LINE ISLAMISM: THE BATTLE FOR TRUTH IN AN
AGE OF MEDIA ANTI-ISRAELISM AND INTERNET TERRORISM**
isranet-publications
Isranet Daily Briefing, May 24, 2013
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/al-dura-line-islamism-battle-truth-age-media-anti-israelism-and-internet-terrorism/>



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