

**“PALESTINIAN” LEADERS SABOTAGE PEACE PROCESS BY  
PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

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---

**[Time to Tell the Truth About the Palestinian Issue: Alan Dershowitz, \*The Hill\*, Jan. 22, 2019](#)** — The front page of the *New York Times Sunday Review* featured one of the most biased, poorly informed, and historically inaccurate columns about the conflict between Israel and Palestine ever published by a mainstream newspaper.

**[Preparing for Peace - The Palestinian Way: Khaled Abu Toameh, \*Gatestone Institute\*, Jan. 29, 2019](#)**— While the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to arrest and intimidate Palestinian journalists in the West Bank, its loyalists are also waging a campaign against Arab journalists who dare to visit Israel.

**[Palestinian Authority Still Pays Millions to Terrorists and Uses Foreign Aid to Do So: Steven Emerson, \*Algemeiner\*, Jan. 27, 2019](#)** — The Palestinian Authority (PA) transferred over \$135 million to imprisoned terrorists in 2018, Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reports.

**[Peace: The Missing Israeli Election Issue: Evelyn Gordon, \*Commentary\*, Jan. 10, 2019](#)** — Israel’s election campaign has only just begun, but one key issue is already notable by its absence: peace with the Palestinians.

**[On Topic Links](#)**

**[The Palestinian Civil War: T Dr. Mordechai Kedar, \*Arutz Sheva\*, Jan. 24, 2019](#)**

**[Most Palestinians Killed in Gaza Protests Have Terrorist Ties: \*IPT News\*, Jan. 22, 2019](#)**

**[Israel Blocks Palestinian Bid to Get Observer Status at UN Disarmament Panel: Raphael Ahren, \*Times of Israel\*, Jan. 22, 2019](#)**

**[The Palestinian Jihad Against Peace: Bassam Tawil, \*Gatestone Institute\*, Jan. 28, 2019](#)**

**TIME TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE**

***Alan Dershowitz***

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isranet-publications

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---

[\*The Hill\*](#), Jan. 22, 2019

The front page of the *New York Times Sunday Review* featured one of the most biased, poorly informed, and historically inaccurate columns about the conflict between Israel and Palestine ever published by a mainstream newspaper. Written by Michelle Alexander, it is entitled, “Time to break the silence on Palestine,” as if the Palestinian issue has not been the most overhyped cause on campuses, at the United Nations, and in the media.

There is no silence to break. What must be broken is the double standard of those who elevate the Palestinian claims over those of the Kurds, the Syrians, the Iranians, the Chechens, the Tibetans, the Ukrainians, and many other more deserving groups who truly suffer from the silence of the academia, the media, and the international community. The United Nations devotes more of its time, money, and votes to the Palestinian issue than to the claims of all of these other oppressed groups combined.

The suffering of Palestinians, which does not compare to the suffering of many other groups, has been largely inflicted by themselves. They could have had a state, with no occupation, if they had accepted the Peel Commission Report of 1938, the United Nations Partition of 1947, the Camp David Summit deal of 2000, or the Ehud Olmert offer of 2008. They rejected all these offers, responding with violence and terrorism, because doing so would have required them to accept Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, something they are unwilling to do even today.

I know because I asked Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that question directly and he said no. The Palestinian leadership indeed has always wanted there not to be a Jewish state more than it has wanted there to be a Palestinian state. The Palestinian issue is not “one of the great moral challenges of our time,” as Alexander insists in her column. It is a complex, nuanced, pragmatic problem, with fault on all sides. The issue could be solved if Palestinian leaders were prepared to accept the “painful compromises” that Israeli leaders have already agreed to accept.

Had the early Palestinian leadership, with the surrounding Arab states, not attacked Israel the moment it declared statehood, it would have a viable state with no refugees. Had Hamas used the resources it received when Israel ended its occupation of the Gaza Strip in 2005 to build schools and hospitals instead of using

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isranet-publications

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<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

these resources to construct rocket launchers and terror tunnels, it could have become a “Singapore on the Sea” instead of the poverty stricken enclave the Palestinian leadership turned it into.

The leaders of Hamas as well as the Palestinian Authority bear at least as much responsibility for the plight of the Palestinians as do the Israelis. Israel is certainly not without some fault, but the “blame it all on Israel” approach taken by Alexander is counterproductive because it encourages Palestinian recalcitrance. As Israeli diplomat Abba Eban once observed, “The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.”

One striking illustration of the bias is the absurd claim by Alexander that “many students are fearful of expressing support for Palestinian rights” because of “McCarthyite tactics” employed by pro-Israel groups. I have taught on many campuses, and I can attest that no international cause is given more attention, far more than it deserves in comparison with other more compelling causes, than the Palestinians. It is pro-Israel students who are silenced out of fear of being denied recommendations, graded down, or shunned by peers. Some have even been threatened with violence. Efforts have been made to prevent from speaking on several campuses, despite my advocacy of a two state solution to the conflict.

Alexander claims that there is legal discrimination against Israeli Arabs. The reality is that Israeli Arabs have more rights than Arabs anywhere in the Muslim world. They vote freely, have their own political parties, speak openly against the Israeli government, and are beneficiaries of affirmative action in Israeli universities. The only legal right they lack is to turn Israel into another Muslim state governed by Sharia law, instead of the nation state of Jewish people governed by freedom and secular democratic law. That is what the new Jewish nation state law, which I personally oppose, does when it denies Arabs the “right of self determination in Israel.”

Alexander condemns “Palestinian homes being bulldozed,” without mentioning that these are the homes of terrorists who murder Jewish children, women, and men. She bemoans casualties in Gaza, which she calls “occupied” even though every Israeli soldier and settler left in 2005, without mentioning that many of these casualties were human shields from behind whom Hamas terrorists fire rockets at Israeli civilians. She says there are “streets for Jews only,” which is a categorical falsehood. There are roads in the disputed territories that are limited to cars with Israeli licenses for security. But these roads are in fact open to all

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PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

Israelis, including Druze, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, and people of no faith.

The most outrageous aspect of the column is the claim by Alexander that Martin Luther King Jr. inspired her to write it. But he was a staunch Zionist, who said, “When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You are talking anti-Semitism.” It is certainly possible that he would have been critical of certain Israeli policies today, but I am confident that he would have been appalled at her unfair attack on the nation state of the Jewish people and especially on her misuse of his good name to support anti-Israel bigotry.

[Contents](#)

**PREPARING FOR PEACE - THE PALESTINIAN WAY**

*Khaled Abu Toameh*

[Gatestone Institute](#), Jan. 29, 2019

While the Palestinian Authority (PA) continues to arrest and intimidate Palestinian journalists in the West Bank, its loyalists are also waging a campaign against Arab journalists who dare to visit Israel. This month alone, the PA security forces have arrested nine Palestinian journalists, according to the Palestinian Committee for Supporting Journalists.

One of the journalists, Yousef al-Faqeeh, 33, a reporter for the London-based Quds Press News Agency, was taken into custody on January 16. On January 27, a PA court ordered al-Faqeeh remanded into custody for 14 days. His family said that they still do not know why he was arrested. Al-Faqeeh’s wife, Suhad, said that PA security officers raided their house; when Yousef asked whether they had a search warrant, they proceeded to arrest him. “They took him to an unknown destination and did not provide a reason for his arrest,” she said. “They also confiscated his computer and mobile phone.”

The Committee to Protect Journalists condemned the arrest of al-Faqeeh and called on the PA to release him immediately. The other journalists targeted by the PA in the past few weeks are: Mu’tasem Saqf al-Hait, Ayman Abu Aram, Mahmoud Abu Hraish, Mahmoud Abu al-Rish, Zeid Abu Arra, Hazem Nasser, Mohammed Dkeidek and Amir Abu Istaitiyeh.

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**isranet-publications**

**Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019**

**<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>**

---

**In the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, only three Palestinian journalists were detained in the past few weeks: Luay al-Ghul, Executive Director of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, Salah Abu Salah, an independent reporter, and Huda Baroud, a female investigative reporter who was summoned for interrogation after she prepared a story about “rape within a single family.” The Committee for Supporting Journalists said that the crackdown on Palestinian journalists was aimed at restricting freedom of the media under the PA and Hamas.**

**These condemnations, however, do not seem to bother Palestinian leaders, who do not tolerate any form of criticism. The Palestinian leaders clearly seem emboldened by the fact that the international community and media are oblivious to the plight of Palestinian journalists. Or, more accurately, the international community does not care when a Palestinian journalist is arrested or harassed by the Palestinian Authority or Hamas. The only stories that attract the world’s attention are those in which Israel is involved.**

**The silence of the international community has inspired Palestinian leaders to the point where they have now extended their campaign of intimidation to non-Palestinian Arab journalists. When a group of Arab journalists, who hail from Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria and Morocco, recently visited Israel, the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Information issued a strongly-worded statement accusing the reporters of promoting normalization with Israel. “Normalization [with Israel] is an unacceptable and unjustified disgrace,” the ministry said. “The ministry affirms its rejection of media normalization with the occupation and considers it an unacceptable crime under all circumstances.”**

**The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate, a body dominated by PA President Mahmoud Abbas loyalists, said it is now preparing a blacklist that will include the name of any Arab journalist suspected of engaging in normalization with Israel. The syndicate expressed “shock” over the visit and called for ending all forms of normalization with Israel, including in the media. “What happened was a huge political and national sin.” The journalists, who work in France and Belgium, are now being accused by many Arabs of treason.**

**The Paris-based magazine *Kul Al-Arab* said it has terminated all relations with Egyptian journalist Khaled Zaghoul, who was among the group of journalists who visited Israel in December 2018. The editor of the magazine said that his staff, which is “committed to the just and legitimate Arab causes, particularly the Palestinian cause, categorically condemns this unacceptable visit.” Abdel Muhsen**

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isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

Salameh, Chairman of the Egyptian Journalists Union and CEO of Al-Ahram, said that Zaghoul had been fired from the paper in 2011. Ala Thabet, editor in chief of Al-Ahram, distanced himself from the journalist and called on all Arab media outlets to follow suit.

Another prominent Egyptian journalist, Abou Bakr Khallaf, is also facing criticism for visiting Israel. Khallaf, who is based in Turkey, is facing severe criticism after he posted a photo of himself during a visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. His Egyptian colleagues have called for legal and administrative measures against him for engaging in normalization with the “Zionist entity.” Kuwaiti writer Fajer Al-Saeed is also facing condemnations after she took the brave step of calling on Arab countries to normalize relations with Israel.

The Palestinian crackdown on reporters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is aimed at silencing critics and deterring journalists from reporting on sensitive issues such as financial corruption and human rights violations by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. For now, it seems that this crackdown has achieved its goal, as most Palestinian journalists living under the PA and Hamas are afraid publicly to voice any form of criticism of their leaders.

The Palestinian incitement against Arab journalists who visit Israel or maintain relations with Israeli colleagues is part of a wider campaign to prevent the Arab countries from normalizing ties with Israel. The Palestinians attach significant importance to their “anti-normalization” campaign, mainly because they believe that US President Donald Trump’s yet-to-be-announced plan for peace in the Middle East envisages normalization between the Arab countries and Israel. By waging a smear campaign against Arabs for allegedly promoting normalization with Israel, the Palestinian leaders are hoping to thwart Trump’s upcoming peace plan. If, in the eyes of the PA leadership, normalization with Israel is an act of “treason,” a “crime” and a “big political and national sin,” the Trump administration may well be wasting its time and prestige on a peace plan that envisions peace between the Arab countries and Israel, at least at this time.

To achieve peace with Israel, Palestinian leaders need to prepare their people — and all Arabs and Muslims — for peace and compromise with Israel, and not, as they are now doing, the exact opposite. Shaming and denouncing Arabs who visit Israel is hardly a way to prepare anyone for peace, or the possibility of any compromise. Meanwhile, the Trump administration and the international community would be doing a real service to the Palestinians if they start paying

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isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

attention to assaults on public freedoms, including freedom of the media, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Holding Palestinian leaders accountable for their systematic abuses of public freedoms, assaults on journalists and incitement is the only way to encourage badly needed moderate and pragmatic Palestinians and Arabs to speak out.

[Contents](#)

**PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY STILL PAYS MILLIONS  
TO TERRORISTS AND USES FOREIGN AID TO DO SO**

*Steven Emerson*

[Algemeiner](#), Jan. 27, 2019

The Palestinian Authority (PA) transferred over \$135 million to imprisoned terrorists in 2018, Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reports. Based on open-source information and the PA’s own budget, PMW broke down PA terror payments into various categories. More than \$62 million was sent to terrorists while they were in jail, while almost \$48 million was paid to released prisoners. Roughly \$26 million was used to pay other terrorist-related salaries and additional benefits.

PA security personnel jailed on terrorism charges continue to receive higher salaries from a different budget than other prisoners, which underestimates the overall figure of payments transferred to jailed terrorists. Payments are a function of the severity of the attack and prison sentence. The more brutal the attack or murder, the more money a Palestinian prisoner receives. Prisoners with previous arrests receive more money as well. These figures do not include other forms of PA support to Palestinian terrorists, such as payments to the families of “martyrs,” or dead terrorists.

Israel’s Knesset passed legislation last July to impose structured sanctions targeting the PA for its financial incentives to murder program, which promotes violence against Israelis. The PMW report was sent to Israel’s Ministry of Defense to help the government with their annual assessment of the PA’s terror payments. Last year, senior Palestinian officials, including PA President Mahmoud Abbas, issued defiant assurances that they would not end the payments.

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PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

Qadri Abu Bakr, who directs the Palestine Liberation Organization’s Commission of Prisoners’ Affairs “emphasized that the leadership ... will continue to support the resolve of the prisoners and their families and will not succumb to the Israeli and American pressures calling to stop the Martyrs’ (Shahids) and prisoners’ salaries (rawatib) and allowances (mukhassasat).”

“By Allah, even if we have only a penny left, it will only be spent on the families of the Martyrs and the prisoners, and only afterwards will it be spent on the rest of the people,” Abbas said on official PA TV last July, adding that “martyrs and prisoners” are “stars in the sky,” and these terrorists “have priority in everything.” These statements reaffirm that the PA places more emphasis on taking care of Palestinians convicted of attacking Israelis than other sectors of Palestinian society. In fact, terrorists and their families receive far higher payments than welfare recipients. Despite international pressure to halt this practice, roughly half of the foreign aid that the PA receives is allocated for payments to terrorist inmates and the “families of martyrs.”

[Contents](#)

**PEACE: THE MISSING ISRAELI ELECTION ISSUE**

*Evelyn Gordon*

[Commentary](#), Jan. 10, 2019

Israel’s election campaign has only just begun, but one key issue is already notable by its absence: peace with the Palestinians. To many Americans—especially American Jews, who overwhelmingly consider this the most important issue facing Israel—the fact that almost none of the candidates are talking about the peace process may seem surprising. But several recent incidents help explain why it’s a very low priority for most Israeli voters.

Not so long ago, of course, the peace process was Israel’s top voting issue, almost its only one. But in a poll published last month, self-identified centrists and rightists both ranked the peace process dead last among six suggested issues of concern. Even self-identified leftists ranked it only third, below corruption and closing socioeconomic gaps.



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PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

There are many well-known reasons why Israelis have stopped believing peace is possible anytime soon. They range from the failure of every previous round of negotiations, to Palestinians’ refusal to negotiate at all for most of the last decade, to the fact that every bit of land Israel has so far turned over to the Palestinians—both in Gaza and the West Bank—has become a hotbed of anti-Israel terror. Yet the root cause of all the above receives far too little attention overseas: Israel’s ostensible peace partner, the Palestinian Authority, educates its people to an almost pathological hatred of Israel.

I’ve discussed the way this plays out in Palestinian textbooks and the Palestinian media many times. But nothing better illustrates the problem than three incidents over the past two months. The most shocking occurred in November when a Palestinian accused of selling real estate to Jews in eastern Jerusalem was denied a Muslim burial by order of the imams of Jerusalem’s Muslim cemetery, religious officials at Al-Aqsa Mosque and Jerusalem’s PA-appointed grand mufti. He was finally buried, with approval from Jerusalem’s chief rabbi, in the non-Jewish section of a Jewish cemetery.

Of course, selling land to Jews is a crime in the PA, for which the maximum penalty is death. Just last month, a Palestinian-American was sentenced to life in prison for it. But in Islam, like in Judaism, proper burial is a religious commandment. Consequently, even the most heinous crime—for instance, killing fellow Muslims—does not preclude someone from burial in a Muslim cemetery, just as Jewish criminals are entitled to Jewish burial.

Thus, PA clerics effectively ruled that a major religious commandment was less important than opposing a Jewish presence in Judaism’s holiest city (to which, not coincidentally, the PA adamantly denies any Jewish connection). Grand Mufti Ekrima Sabri even justified his decision by saying that “whoever sells to the Jews of Jerusalem is not a member of the Muslim nation.” But if PA-appointed clerics claim that selling even a single plot of land to Jews makes one an apostate, how exactly is the PA supposed to sign a peace deal that formally grants the Jews even pre-1967 Israel, which Muslims consider to be no less a part of “historic Palestine” than Jerusalem?

That same month, the PA suspended Hebron’s police chief after social media posts showed him trying to help Israeli soldiers fix a stalled jeep (the original posts said he changed the jeep’s tire, but Palestinian sources denied that, and it’s highly unlikely that none of the soldiers could change a tire). Col. Ahmed Abu al-Rub was

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PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>

---

**just doing his job: The jeep was stalled on a Palestinian road and blocking Palestinian traffic so, as a policeman, it was his duty to try to remove the obstacle and get traffic moving again.**

**But ordinary human interaction with Israelis, aka “normalization,” is anathema to many Palestinians, including many PA officials. Though the PA will (usually) cooperate with Israel on hunting down Hamas terrorists, since it views Hamas as an existential threat to itself, preventing person-to-person contact with Israelis has been official PA policy for over seven years. So how exactly is Israel to make peace when the PA’s hatred runs so deep that a normal neighborly act like helping Israelis with car trouble—for the sake of unsnarling a Palestinian traffic jam—can endanger a policeman’s job?...**

**[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]**

**[Contents](#)**

**[On Topic Links](#)**

**[The Palestinian Civil War: T Dr. Mordechai Kedar, Arutz Sheva, Jan. 24, 2019](#)**—The tension between the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas Organization in Gaza is approaching the boiling point, as a result of several factors...

**[Most Palestinians Killed in Gaza Protests Have Terrorist Ties: IPT News, Jan. 22, 2019](#)**— The vast majority of Palestinians killed in response to weekly violent protests on the Israel-Gaza border are affiliated with Hamas and other terrorist groups, reports the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center.

**[Israel Blocks Palestinian Bid to Get Observer Status at UN Disarmament Panel: Raphael Ahren, Times of Israel, Jan. 22, 2019](#)**— Israel on Monday thwarted the Palestinians’ attempt to obtain observer state status at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD).

**[The Palestinian Jihad Against Peace: Bassam Tawil, Gatestone Institute, Jan. 28, 2019](#)**— Palestinian leaders have recently stepped up their efforts to stop Arab countries from normalizing their relations — or even signing peace agreements — with Israel. The campaign comes against a backdrop of reports about the warming of relations between Israel and some Arab countries, including a recent visit to

**“PALESTINIAN” LEADERS SABOTAGE PEACE PROCESS BY  
PREVENTING NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL**

**isranet-publications**

**Isranet Daily Briefing, January 30, 2019**

**<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/palestinian-leaders-sabotage-peace-process-by-preventing-normalization-with-israel/>**

---

**Oman by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.**