

Human Rights Watch, founded in 1978 as "Helsinki Watch" had very different origins. Founder Robert Bernstein—a Jewish American—started the group to monitor Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Accords, which opened the door to Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. It was a noble cause, and Bernstein's start-up American NGO earned well-deserved plaudits for its energetic—and successful—efforts on behalf of Soviet Jews.

With the fall of the iron curtain, the group broadened its mission to a global one, opening "Watch Committees" around the world. Eventually, it merged all of these into Human Rights Watch in 1988.

Gradually, the group assumed an increasingly anti-Israel tone. While it criticized the manifold abuses of closed, authoritarian regimes elsewhere in the Middle East, its volume and acidity of Israel critiques intensified during the 1990s, culminating in its leading role in the 2001 Durban Hate-Fest against Israel.

Today Human Rights Watch is a \$75 million operation with hundreds of researchers and analysts around the world—and especially in Israel, under Omar Shakir's leadership. One of his senior advisors on Human Rights Watch's Arab-Israeli Advisory Board is Shawan Jabarin, a leader since at least 1984 of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

You may be familiar with the PFLP as a leading terrorist group, responsible for many hijackings in the 1970s and 1980s, the post-9/11 murder of Israeli minister Rehavam Ze'evi, and the 2014 Jerusalem synagogue attack that killed a half-dozen worshippers, including three American rabbis.

Jabarin, residing in Ramallah, has been barred from world travel by Israel's Supreme Court since 2009. Jordan has banned his entry into its country since 2006 due to his terror-related activities.

With such a senior advisor to its Middle East mission, it is hardly surprising that Human Rights Watch's output is consistently distorted in a virulently anti-Israel way.

Human Rights Watch generally has done its work worldwide by publicizing—naming and shaming—human rights abusers around the world. In the case of Israel, it augments its often distorted public-relations depictions of Israeli malfeasance with actual activism to harm the Jewish state through its alliances with the BDS movement.

One of Human Rights Watch's "triumphs" was causing the SodaStream company to close its Ma'ale Adumim plant in the disputed territories in 2015 through outright BDS activism. (In the process, 500 Palestinian Arabs lost their high-paying jobs in a plant that was a model of economic cooperation between Jews and Arabs.)

At the time, Human Rights Watch opined: "It is impossible to ignore the Israeli system of unlawful discrimination, land confiscation, natural resource theft, and forced displacement of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, where SodaStream is located."

And, in a case just weeks ago, AirBNB terminated its listings of apartments in the disputed territories because Human Rights Watch was set to release a major report attacking the company for profiting from "discrimination, displacement, and land theft."

PLEASE HELP US!!

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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The planned expulsion of Human Rights Watch director Shakir represents Israel drawing a clear line for foreign nationals who operate in Israel with the serious intent to damage gravely or even destroy their host country.

Human Rights Watch founder Robert Bernstein realized this in 2009 when he attacked his mutated creation in the *New York Times*. Among the points he made in that op-ed was that Israel has all of the machinery to correct human rights violations, including an independent judiciary, hundreds of resident NGOs, and more news reporters per capita than anywhere in the world.

In Gaza and Lebanon, none of that human-rights-protection infrastructure is present, yet Human Rights Watch is content to rely on uncorroborated testimony and evidence provided through—and closely managed by— Hamas and Hezbollah, respectively. In other words, Israel is the "safe and easy" place to look for human-rights issues and investigate them adequately: Israel is the low-hanging fruit for analysts looking for problems.

In his op-ed summation, Bernstein said, "Israel, the repeated victim of aggression, faces the brunt of Human Rights Watch's criticism."

In talking with friends, family and colleagues, inform them of the unrelenting and unjustified attacks on Israel by Human Rights Watch. Explain to them that—especially in the case of Human Rights Watch director Shakir—Israel is not abridging free speech rights. Acts of subversion through BDS promotion are the real issue.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaign asserting the need for Israel to maintain its sovereignty over the strategically critical Golan Heights on the border of Syria.

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

Editor, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. After Syria used its control over the Golan Heights to attack Israel with thousands of rockets and sniper bullets—then belligerently invaded Israel in 1967—the Jewish state defeated Syria and ejected it from the Heights. Syria has refused to negotiate peace in exchange for the Golan Heights for all these decades. No wonder Israel annexed this strategically important territory in 1981. Today, the Golan Heights gives Israel the ability to protect Middle East security against Iran, Hezbollah and Syria. It's time for the U.S. and the world community to affirm Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[Recognize Israel's Golan Heights Rule](#)." I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which began running last month—including in the *New York Times*. It supports efforts by bipartisan members of Congress to officially recognize the Golan Heights as Israeli territory. In addition to running in mainstream media, this editorial will be sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support

us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on Israel's critical role in protecting U.S. interests in the region—as well as protecting itself.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).

The logo for FLAME, featuring the word "FLAME" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter "A" is stylized with a flame shape inside it.

Facts and Logic

About the Middle East

PO Box 3460

Berkeley, CA 94703

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