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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 8, 2021



Scandalous media lies about Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah feed a false Palestinian narrative

Dear Friend of FLAME:

In the days leading up to the recent Israel-Hamas conflict, the mainstream media and various talking-heads were provocatively reporting the “evictions” or “ethnic-cleansing” of Palestinians from their homes in eastern Jerusalem in favor of “Jewish settlers.” Thus begins one of the most outrageous sagas of twisted journalism and media disinformation so far this century.

The *New Yorker's* Steve Coll disingenuously put it this way: “For many Palestinians, the eviction cases evoked a long history of dispossession while presenting evidence of continued efforts to remove them from the city.”

Missing context. Few journalists—and certainly not Mr. Coll—bothered to provide background beyond these breathless declarations, which at times bordered on incitement and anti-Semitism, and which are part of the wider battle against legitimacy of Jews in their national, indigenous and ancestral homeland.

Rule of law. While the Palestinian Arab street is free to think what it wants, the Sheikh Jarrah case is neither a case of ethnic dispossession nor evidence of efforts to remove anyone from Jerusalem. In fact, it's the evidence of nothing more than the *rule of law*—a seemingly unmentionable issue for mainstream journalists where Israel is concerned.

Hidden facts. Coll and other commentators hid the fact that the Jerusalem neighborhood today known as Sheikh Jarrah is actually the site of the gravesite of Shimon Hatzadik, a prominent high priest of the Jewish Second Temple period and a pilgrimage site for many Jews. Shimon Hazadik served from about 300-200 BCE, some 700-800 years before the arrival of Muslim invaders.

Jewish ownership. Most importantly the *New Yorker* (and NPR in its coverage) failed to clarify that this area was legally purchased in 1875 by two Jewish trusts committed to the development of the Jewish population of Jerusalem, as the

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

No Fool's Deal with Iran

Any new agreement with Iran must halt its development of weapons of mass destruction and its sowing of terror against the U.S. and our Middle East allies.

While the *Wall Street Journal* reports on the U.S. State Department's new policy of "no deal, no deal," the *New York Times* reports that the U.S. is "in talks" with Iran. These conflicting reports are a sign of the confusion and disinformation that surrounds the Iran nuclear deal. The U.S. should only agree to a deal that meets the following criteria:

- What are the facts?** As the world's greatest exporter of terror—and militarily anti-Israel—Iran stands as one of the greatest threats to the United States and the global community. This danger is underscored by Iran's threats and outright attacks on its Middle East neighbors, as well as its ballistic missile program. Iran's nuclear program is a direct threat to the U.S. and its allies. Iran's nuclear program is a direct threat to the U.S. and its allies.
- Why the first Iran Deal failed.** The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) fell short on four key points. First, it failed to prevent Iran's cheating, leading to a series of Iranian nuclear tests. Second, Iran continued to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels. Third, Iran continued to develop its ballistic missile program. Fourth, Iran continued to support terrorism.
- How to persuade Iran to make a deal.** Experience shows that Iran responds to pressure. Good news: Biden and his team can end the negotiating advantage currently enjoyed by Iran. Iran has already accepted its economic isolation and is desperate for relief. Biden's administration should use this leverage to demand a deal that meets the criteria above.

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Jewish community started to build neighborhoods beyond the Old City. During the War of Independence in 1948, the Jewish residents of these neighborhoods fled for their lives in fear of the attacking Jordanian army.

Illegal Arab occupation. In 1956, the government of Jordan, which illegally occupied most of Jerusalem, in cooperation with the United Nations Relief Works Association, arranged for the housing of 28 Arab families in the area of the abandoned residential compounds in the Shimon Hatzadik neighborhood. The families leased the apartments subsequently built from the government of Jordan, paying a nominal rent.

Owners return. After Israel liberated these areas in the Six Day War in 1967, the Jewish families who had their homes and lands confiscated—and had the deeds to prove it—began proceedings to reclaim them. In 1972 these claims were accepted by the courts, and ownership was returned to the original owners.

Arabs agree—then refuse—to pay rent. An agreement was reached, according to which the Arab families recognized the ownership of the Jewish owners, and in return received the status of protected tenants. As part of the agreement, the families were afforded long-term rental rights, and undertook to pay rent to the owners and to maintain the apartments. In practice, despite agreeing to do so, no rent was paid, and the Arabs damaged and destroyed part of the buildings, including an old synagogue.

Agreement nullified. Like all tenants who refuse to pay their agreed rent and damage property, they were legally called to leave. Eviction notices were issued, but the Arabs refused to leave, despite exhausting all legal avenues open to them. This is when the Palestinian Authority, possibly to deflect from the fact that its leader Mahmoud Abbas had cancelled elections once again, decided to make an international campaign about an open-and-shut legal dispute.

Journalistic malpractice. Reading and watching the mainstream media, you would never have known these facts. How could respectable—honorable—journalists *not* have reported this critical, *legally dispositive* background?

Whenever Sheikh Jarrah was mentioned, it was to highlight the false story of unfair and illegal evictions of Palestinian Arabs, who were constantly described as having lived there “for generations”. While this latter fact may be strictly true, it gives the false impression that these Arabs lived *on their own property* since time immemorial.

Reuters headlined the events as “East Jerusalem’s Sheikh Jarrah becomes emblem of Palestinian struggle” and proceeded to give a history of the neighborhood beginning in the 1950s, conveniently leaving out events preceding—and not providing a single Israeli voice.

Condemnation . . . and violence. Envoys of the Middle East quartet from the European Union, Russia, the United States and the United Nations released a statement noting with “serious concern the possible evictions of Palestinian families from homes they have lived in for generations in Sheikh Jarrah.” This was echoed by the U.S. State Department and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan.

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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Despite the truth of the matter, bloody riots soon erupted in Arab-Israeli towns in Israel to protest “Israeli theft of Palestinian land.” Many Jewish citizens were violently attacked by Arab gangs, and mobs lit buildings and vehicles on fire. Shortly thereafter, Hamas began an 11-day bombing campaign on Israeli civilians, unleashing more than 4,300 missiles.

Media swallow Palestinian narrative. The Palestinians have long understood the idiom, “If it bleeds, it leads”—meaning that the media only become interested when violence, conflict or death is involved. They have a willing international media, ignorant of or disregarding the conflict’s history and background, as well as the deeper context of the events they witness. They provide maximum space to the Palestinian narrative, which they broadcast frequently in its entirety, rarely providing context or complete facts, let alone an Israeli perspective.

Please point out to friends, family, colleagues and your elected representatives that it’s time American and foreign media commit to telling the whole story when conflicts between Israel and her enemies erupt. They should start by learning—and reporting—the truth about the millennia-old roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

If they did, frankly, it would mean the death of the Palestinian narrative. Likewise, the truth of Sheikh Jarrah/Shimon Hatzadik demonstrates that facts about current events are usually more complex than the media narrative—and they would likely favor Jewish legitimacy . . . and destroy persistent Arab claims to the entire Land of Israel.

I hope you’ll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME’s lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME’s new hasbarah campaign—which exposes the dangerous folly of the U.S. trying to entice Iran back into the failed “Iran Deal” of 2015.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

P.S. The Biden administration and many members of Congress seem determined to reengage with Iran over the coming year—and some reports indicate a willingness to return to the failed “Iran Nuclear Deal” without preconditions. As you know, this would be disastrous—for the U.S. and for Israel and our other allies in the Middle East. The Iran Deal gave the Islamic Republic a roadmap to nuclear weapons and did nothing to check their jihadi activities, including development of long-range ballistic missiles. To warn Americans of this danger, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “[No Fool’s Deal with Iran](#).” I hope you’ll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which ran in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. It spells out specifically the protections any new Iran deal

must provide. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. 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 Biden stay committed to realistic policies in relation to Iran, Israel and the entire Middle East.

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