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Critics of Israel unfairly slander its IDF—the most humane army in history

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

Israel's detractors accuse the Jewish state of intentionally killing Palestinian civilians. Moreover, they maintain that because in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict many more Palestinians have died than Israelis, Israel uses disproportionate force. Finally, they imply this death toll is the outcome of Israel blocking a solution to the conflict. Of course, each of these accusations is an outright lie.

The truth is, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) does its utmost to avoid civilian casualties. The IDF's Code of Ethics stresses the importance of protecting civilians no matter what "side" they are on. In contrast, Palestinian terrorists deliberately put civilians in harm's way in a cynical attempt to defame the Jewish state.

The most reprehensible lie about Israel’s battlefield practices is that the Jewish state purposely targets civilians. A 2021 news bulletin by Amnesty International, for example, stated that Israeli forces showed “shocking disregard” for Palestinian civilians because they targeted residential buildings.

What Amnesty omits is that Palestinian terrorists live in residential buildings and often use them as bases of operations. During the 2021 Gaza conflict, for instance, Israel targeted and destroyed the home of Yehiyeh Sinwar, the most senior Hamas leader in the territory. Whenever Israel targets buildings in which civilians may be present, it is standard IDF procedure to warn residents using text messages, phone calls, and “roof knocking”—firing warning shots at the roof of a targeted building.

Israel has actually risked the lives of its soldiers to avoid civilian casualties. In Jenin this past July, for example, rather than relying on its massive artillery and airpower, the IDF sent soldiers into the Jenin refugee camp, where terrorists hid side-by-side with civilians in their homes. Civilian casualties are inevitable when

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the enemy invites it. Nevertheless, only 12 Palestinians were killed in the Jenin operation, of which 9 were combatants. Yet, the UN still accused Israel of using disproportionate force.

The accusation that Israel uses disproportionate force is a common libel used by the UN and NGOs like Amnesty International because Palestinian casualties far exceed Israeli casualties. But it is not a crime for a defensive army to kill more attackers than it loses to belligerents. Actually, it is the goal of a successful army to ensure that enemy casualties outnumber its own. When police raid a den of armed drug smugglers, citizens don't demand proportionate casualties.

Palestinian casualties are also higher because terrorist groups use civilians as human shields, leading to many civilian deaths. During the 2014 Gaza war, for example, terrorists shot rockets into Israel from UNRWA-run schools.

Nevertheless, the IDF has had great success preventing civilian deaths in Gaza. This was the view expressed by General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said, "Israel went to extraordinary lengths to limit collateral damage and civilian casualties." General Dempsey even sent a team of officers to study how the IDF's tactics in preventing civilian casualties could be applied to U.S. forces.

No wonder British Colonel (ret.) Richard Kemp, has called the IDF "the most moral army in the history of warfare."

NGOs and the media also often obscure and inflate the number of Palestinian civilian casualties. One reason: Unreliable sources like the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), a Gaza-based organization operating under Hamas rule, which labels most casualties as civilians when many are in fact combatants. This organization provides inaccurate data to international organizations like the UN, which in turn accuse Israel of wrongdoing.

Not surprisingly, PCHR's statistics closely match those of the Hamas-run Ministry of Health, which, according to Colonel Richard Kemp, falsely accuses Israel of killing civilians who are actually killed by Palestinian rockets that missed their targets and instead fell in Gaza.

Flagrant bias and incompetence also lead to misinformation about civilian casualties. UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese stated, for example, that 420,000 Palestinians were killed since May 1, 2022. She was later forced to issue a correction, revising the figure to 426, but the damage to Israel had already been done.

The media often fail to identify casualties as terrorists, making it appear that Israel kills more civilians than it actually does. For instance, last month, the Associated Press published an article under the headline, "A Palestinian dies a month after an Israeli raid in the West Bank." The fact that this Palestinian was a fighter with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade was not revealed until the article's third paragraph.

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Furthermore, media and NGOs often wrongfully assume that a person is a civilian unless they're wearing a soldier's uniform. But of course, terrorists don't wear uniforms. They hide among the civilian population. Indeed, IDF Colonel (ret.) Maurice Hirsch contends that "in UN jargon, the notion of a Palestinian terrorist, or even a Palestinian DPH (direct participant in hostilities), is almost non-existent."

Israel's critics also wrongly imply that the Jewish state is responsible for the lack of a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and therefore innocent Palestinians continue to die. Last month, the BBC's Tom Bateman published an article that read, "The West Bank is in the grip of the worst violence in two decades amid the absence of any political solution to the conflict, while Israel's military occupation is now into its 57th year."

Bateman omitted the fact that both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, two of the largest Palestinian factions, reject any political solution, other than Israel being wiped off the map. As for Palestinians who pay lip service to the two-state solution, like President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction, they rejected *three* Israeli offers of statehood since the turn of the century.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that when the UN, NGOs and media claim Israel's army is inhumane, they falsely and unfairly demonize the Jewish state. Emphasize that, in fact, the IDF is one of the most humane fighting forces in human history—one that makes every effort to spare the lives of non-combatants, while at the same time neutralizing murderous enemies.

Critics of Israel's successful military defense efforts would be more humane themselves if they instead held Palestinians terrorists responsible for having killed thousands of innocent Israeli civilians—both Jewish and Arab.

Best regards,
James Sinkinson, President
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME))

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing skyrocketing attacks on Jews in recent years and months—and you probably heard about the President's new National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. But all evidence indicates that the Administration is *not* committed to fighting antisemites among its own voters and party officials. I hope you'll agree that we opponents of antisemitism across all sectors of American society need to speak out. FLAME's new *hasbarah*—explanatory message—"Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?"—enumerates some of the antisemitic offenders most damaging to American Jews . . . and most likely to be *ignored* by the Administration. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. 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](#) with a donation.

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