FLAME.HOTLINE.

November 3, 2026

Democratic New York Congressional nominee Brad Lander takes a selfie with armed Israeli security entering his unauthorized tour bus. He and other activists visited Judea and Samaria not to harvest olives as they claimed, but rather to stage cheap political theater to defame Israel.

Israel's enemies use cheap "olive harvest" theater to besmirch the Jewish state

Word count: 1,036; estimated reading time:3.91 minutes

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

Left-wing anti-Zionists are using Palestinian olive harvests to defame Israel and its residents in Judea and Samaria (aka, the West Bank). By provoking Israeli authorities with cheap theatrics, these agitators attempt to dramatize a fiction in which Israel's presence in the Biblical Jewish homeland is oppressive and Israeli "settlers" are violent extremists.

Two weeks ago, Brad Lander, Democratic nominee for New York's 10th Congressional District, was detained by Israeli security forces along with other activists who staged a drama in a Palestinian olive grove in the Gush Etzion region, near Bethlehem in Area C, controlled according to the Oslo Accords by Israel. A day later, the *Washington Free Beacon* revealed an internal document—a script—from trip organizers detailing their anti-Israel narrative, which accuses the Jewish state of "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide."

Other, similar incidents have occurred during this year's olive harvest. In each case, the visitors *failed to* coordinate their visits with Israeli authorities, as required by law. Rather, their provocations of Israeli security forces were performed in order to fabricate a storyline in which Israel is ethnically cleansing Judea and Samaria of its Palestinian population.

Not surprisingly, American legacy media have parroted this narrative, producing headlines such as the *Washington Post's* "Israeli settlers attack Palestinians and Washington Post photographer in West Bank" and NBC News's "New York congressional candidate Brad Lander says IDF detained him in the occupied West Bank."

Fact is, none of these theatrics would have taken place if those involved had coordinated their activities with Israeli authorities. No one would have been injured or detained, no show would have been staged.

Furthermore, *no* ethnic cleansing, let alone genocide is occurring in Judea and Samaria, nor has it ever. Jews have long been the majority population in Area C, and no Palestinians are being moved out.

Finally, the amount of "settler violence" in Judea and Samaria pales in comparison to much more frequent violence committed by Palestinians on law-abiding Jews.

Truthfully, Western agitators who come to Judea and Samaria to provoke confrontations with Israelis aren't there to help Palestinians. They arrive strictly to put on a performance—often spending virtually no time "harvesting olives" and

hours arguing with and filming Israeli authorities. They are there exclusively to promote a false narrative on false pretenses—their goal is to discredit and demonize Israel.

Lander didn't come to Judea and Samaria to pick olives. He came to put on a show for legacy media. Indeed, a document obtained by the *Washington Free Beacon* outlines Lander's real mission—not harvesting olives, but "shed[ing] a light on the reality of the occupation."

The document contains instructions—"talking points"—on what to tell reporters, with subheadings such as "Palestinian communities in the West Bank are facing the imminent threat of ethnic cleansing" and "Settler violence is state policy." It also refers disingenuously to Israel's defensive campaign against Hamas in Gaza in response to the October 7th massacre as a "genocidal assault."

Lander described his detention by Israeli authorities as "one more element of escalating, and very clearly state-sponsored ethnic cleansing." What exactly does his being detained have to do with ethnic cleansing? If Lander was truly interested in just harvesting olives, he could have followed the law and coordinated his trip with Israeli authorities, which have facilitated some 100 olive harvests this season without any issues. But his real intention, and that of his fellow activists, was to provoke a confrontation with Israelis, allowing them to sell their fake narrative.

Legacy media parrot the agitators' fabricated fiction. Thus, reporters leave out crucial details about clashes between Western activists and journalists, against Israelis in Judea and Samaria. One incident occurred in which Heidi Levine, a photojournalist working for the *Washington Post* was injured in a confrontation between Palestinians and Israeli citizens.

The narrative told by mainstream media such as CNN and NPR blamed the entire incident on violent Israeli "settlers." What they failed to mention, however, was the presence of Palestinians armed with fireworks and foreign activists recording themselves provoking the Israelis. Such details would, of course, ruin their dramatized provocation.

Israel has never attempted to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Area C. First, most Westerners don't realize that Area C is not, nor has never been "Palestinian land." The Palestinians have never controlled it, let alone had sovereignty over it.

Secondly. Jews are by far the majority population in Area C and have been since the 1990s, when the territory was defined under the Oslo Accords. As for the Palestinians, reliable estimates note that their population in Area C has actually increased and now stands at upwards of 300,000. There is no organized Israeli effort to remove legal Palestinian residents of Area C. Ethnic cleansing is an ultra-left and media fabrication.

Mainstream media grossly exaggerate "settler violence" while ignoring Palestinian terrorism. The United Nations reports over 2,000 settler attacks in Judea and Samaria the last 12 months. In fact, many of these "attacks" weren't violent at all, as the UN counts Jews peacefully visiting Jerusalem's Temple Mount or other religious sites in Judea and Samaria as "settler violence."

In contrast, Israel's Shin Bet security agency reports twice that amount of Palestinian violence, including stone-throwing, petrol bombs, shootings and stabbings. Yet legacy media coverage of "settler violence,"—almost all the misdeeds of a few hundred at-risk Israeli youth—dwarfs coverage of Palestinian terrorism. Indeed, an analysis of international coverage in early-to-mid 2026 reveals a journalistic travesty—roughly 984 stories focused on "settler violence" vs. only nine on Palestinian attacks against Jews in Judea and Samaria—an outrageous 109:1 ratio.

Theatrics designed to malign Israel. The performances put on by activists like Brad Lander and House member Ro Khanna, who staged a similar farce back in July, are pure fiction—performed to discredit and demonize the Jewish state, while ignoring the real conflict, which is Palestinians and useful leftist idiots conjuring deceptive dramas in order to remove—ethnically cleanse—Israeli Jews from their indigenous homeland.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues, or in letters to the editor, that the theatrics put on by people like Lander, Khanna and other leftist provocateurs don't deserve to be taken seriously by mainstream

media—and especially not by voters.

If you agree we need to spread this truth, please use your email browser to forward this Hotline issue to fellow lovers of Israel—and encourage them to join us by subscribing to the Hotline at no charge.

Best regards,
Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor

Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)P.S. As you know, we at FLAME are constantly fighting to defeat our enemies' slanders against Israel. But I hope you agree that it's *just as important* for us lovers of Israel to spread the word about the amazing triumphs of Zionism. I believe that in addition to defending Israel from media and politicians' lies, we need also to help the world understand Israel's righteous cause and its power for good—we need as well to trumpet Israel's miraculous achievements. God knows, Americans will never learn about Israel's good deeds in mainstream media, like the *New York Times*, CNN or NPR! I believe we need to stand tall because of who the Jewish people are . . . be proud of what Israel does for the world. For this reason, I hope you'll approve of FLAME's new *hasbarah*—our explanatory message called "How Zionism's Miracle Benefits Us All." With your agreement and support, FLAME will soon begin running this message as a paid editorial ad in major mainstream newspapers nationwide. This ad tells the truth about Zionism's unmatched power to create economic prosperity, global security, world health and democratic freedoms. It also explains why the enemies of Zionism are not just foes of Israel, they are also the enemies of human progress. Please review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME is about to publish to millions—in leading social media, as well as in the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal, New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune, Orlando Sentinel, Houston Chronicle, Denver Post* and *Los Angeles Times*. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, the President and Vice President. 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.