Quotes of the Week...

Canadian Political Leaders’ Responses to Sunday’s Terrorist Attack in Ofra

“Absolutely gutted by the news that Amichai and Shira Ish-Ran’s baby boy has passed away after being born prematurely following a targeted and guiltless terrorist attack in Ofra. Jill and I are praying for their family in Montreal and for Amichai and Shira’s full recovery. Conservatives unequivocally condemn, in the strongest possible terms, this vile terrorist attack as well as all acts of violent anti-Semitism. We must stand up to the cowards who target and attack innocent people simply for being Jewish.” – Andrew Scheer, Leader, Conservative Party of Canada

“[Absolutely nothing!]” - Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister

Commentary...

Born Too Soon, Dead Too Soon By Emily Amrousi

Born too soon. Dead too soon. Laid to rest without having had a minute of peace during his short life. A pure soul, unmarrred by sin. And if he had sinned? The profound bewilderment caused by savage murder has no age - murder is murder. But when it happens in this way – before the victim even saw the light of day - the pain is so much greater. He was targeted with murderous intent, ripped from his mother's womb into bloody chaos and was left with no chance to fight to survive.

A baby delivered in an emergency cesarean section in the 30th week of pregnancy was ultimately taken from this world. This day's old infant will not be forgotten. His first and last bed was an incubator full of tubes and beeping machines. Then he died. In his mother's blood. One of the reasons the doctors decided to deliver him was to save his mother's life. The baby, who had no name (we called him Shira's son in our prayers), was named Amiad Yisrael upon his death. The murderers remain nameless. And that is how it should be. Nameless and faceless. May they be forgotten forever. May their name be erased.

In a horrifying turn of events, he loosened his grip on life shortly after being reunited with his mother, who had been in intensive care as well. One can only imagine how excited Shira must have been to see him for the first time. But a short while after they first laid eyes on each other, both wounded and exhausted, he passed away. The baby, who had no name (we called him Shira's son in our prayers), was named Amiad Yisrael upon his death. The murderers remain nameless. And that is how it should be. Nameless and faceless. May they be forgotten forever. May their name be erased.

Let us refrain from using the passive form of the verb. The baby was not “murdered.” Lowly Arabs murdered him. They aimed an automatic rifle at his young mother’s abdomen and fired. A cell of Islamist terrorists spilled the blood of a young woman and the blood of a fetus.

Back in 1929, during the Arab riots in Palestine, Muslims tore open the pregnant belly of a Jewish woman, and her husband, Amichai, both of whom suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

On Monday morning, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the actions of the “horrible terrorists” at the weekly Likud Party faction meeting in the Knesset.

“It’s monstrous,” said Netanyahu. “Security forces are pursuing … They’ll capture them. We’ll bring them to justice and settle the score.”

But Israelis are not interested in bringing individual terrorists to justice. And they most certainly are not interested in a pattern of suffering deadly terrorist attacks, only then to capture the terrorist in a manhunt and then “settle the score.”

Israelis are interested in a policy of deterrence that prevents these growing number of attacks from happening in the first place.

Recent polls have shown that Israeli support for Netanyahu remains at all-time highs—for his numerous accomplishments in building and strengthening the economy and the diplomatic channels of the Jewish state, as well as for the lack of a suitable successor.

Israelis recently backed Netanyahu over his political rivals to the right, regarding the de-escalation of hostilities with Hamas in Gaza, after the rogue terror organization fired more than 450 rockets at Israeli population centers, including Ashkelon and Beersheva, sending hundreds of thousands of Israelis ducking for cover.

Yet a policy of de-escalation is not necessarily a policy of security for Israel’s citizens.

Within Israel, and particularly in Judea and Samaria, there is a steady stream of radical violence against Israeli citizens. In 2018, there have been nine deadly incidents not including this week’s shooting. Each of the incidents has killed parents of young children. Each of the incidents tears at the heart of the Jewish people.

The shootings, stabbings, car-rammings, as well as the rockets from Gaza and Lebanon, are not part of some lone-wolf phenomenon that cannot be defended, deterred or fully eradicated. Rather, they are part of an anti-Semitic campaign to eradicate Jewish life and destabilize the State of Israel.

The willingness of the current government to allow even a limited number of civilian deaths—as long as they aren’t piling up in mass-casualty events or too quickly one after the other—is disturbing.

Harsh statements of condemnation and assertions that the murderers will be captured do nothing to deter the next murderer from carrying out an attack. Immediately following the Barkan Industrial Park shooting last month that left two young parents dead, the prime minister assured that “the security forces are in pursuit of the assailant. I am certain that they will apprehend him, and we will deal with him to the fullest extent of the law.” The shooter was caught and killed two months later (exactly one day after the original version of this piece was published).

Chaim and Liora Silberstein, the parents of Shira Yael Ish-Ran, who now have three members of their family in the hospital, spoke with clarity about the need to dramatically improve the security situation.

“We want to send a clear message to the government that it’s unthinkable that sweet innocent children are shot at,” said Liora Silberstein. “We cannot accept such a reality.”

Chaim Silberstein, while expressing his great appreciation for “the work of the IDF, Shin Bet and everyone else in the area,” stated that the Israel Defense Forces have been prevented by the political establishment from “re-establishing deterrence … so that terrorists and degenerates will think twice—or 10 times—before carrying out such acts.”

To accomplish that type of deterrence, harsh steps must be taken. Roadside shootings and car-rammings represent an abuse of the roads that Israeli taxes have paid to build and maintain. When Palestinian terrorists abuse these roads to injure or kill Israelis, their access to these roads should be completely restricted. Immediately increasing roadblocks would send a strong message that acts of terror have repercussions on Palestinians, not just Jews.

In the 25 years since the failed Oslo peace accords were signed, were Shira Ish-Ran, a 21-year-old and 30-week pregnant woman, and her husband, Amichai, both of whom suffered multiple gunshot wounds.
Palestinian terrorists have been taught to target, kill and injure Jews in all facets of their lives—from school textbooks to television, to city squares and soccer fields that have been named after martyrs, to ongoing incitement on social media. The generation that grew up watching “Hamas Mickey Mouse” and attending summer camps where they learn to murder Jews is now acting exactly as they have been trained.

The Palestinian Authority, which most of the Western world continues to view as legitimate rulers of the Palestinian people and legitimate peace partners, incites its constituents publicly at every possible opportunity, and literally pays individuals to attack Jews, while providing lifetime stipends to terrorists’ families if the attacker is killed during the act of attempted murder.

The 2018 Palestinian Authority budget earmarks $340 million in payments to terrorists and their families—amounting to 7 percent of its entire budget.

While Israel recently passed a law to withhold payments it makes each month to the P.A. as part of an Oslo-generated tax-collection arrangement, that law has yet to be implemented. Many of the law’s proponents are afraid that the government will find a means to prevent the law’s execution, out of fears that restricting funds could lead to the collapse of the P.A. together with pressure from the international community to restart the payments.

Yet the continuing cycle of violence against Israeli civilians will not disappear until Israel’s political leaders are ready to take responsibility for each and every Jewish life, and to defend each one as if it were the entire nation. Israel’s government and its security forces must take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the death of the next young parent going about his or her life at work, a bus stop, crosswalk or supermarket.

If the current leadership, including Israel’s prime minister are not willing to take such steps, the Israelis who increasingly find themselves under attack, may task a new set of leaders with the challenge of deterring terrorists and preventing these heinous acts once and for all. (JNS Dec 11)

The writer is managing director and Jerusalem Bureau Chief of JNS.

Hamas Tries to Ignite the West Bank By Yoni Ben Menachem

A grim shooting attack took place near the community of Ofra in the Ramallah area on Saturday night.

The drive-by shooting attack was carried out from a car driving past a bus stop. As a result, seven Israeli citizens were injured, one of whom was in an advanced stage of pregnancy; she and her baby were left in serious condition.

Security sources reckon that this incident was perpetrated by a terrorist cell that has already carried out shooting attacks in the area, such as shooting at a bus near Beit El about six weeks earlier. This cell is apparently affiliated with Hamas.

IDF forces are operating in Palestinian villages in the area of the attack in an attempt to locate the terrorist cell, and particularly in the village of Silwad, close to Ofra.

Several senior Hamas figures grew up in this village, such as Khaled Mashal, former chairman of the movement’s political bureau, and Ibrahim Hamed, currently jailed in Israel, who used to head the military wing of Hamas and is responsible for the deaths of dozens of Israeli civilians and the injuries of hundreds more.

The Hamed clan in Silwad identifies with Hamas, and security sources expect to carry out arrests in the village.

Security sources have gathered photographs from CCTV cameras in the area, while Hamas has publicized its activities on social media networks to sabotage the cameras to hinder the investigation carried out by Israel’s security forces.

Is the terrorist wanted for the Barkan attack part of the same cell?

At the same time as hunting for the terrorist cell in the Ramallah area, the Israel Defense Forces is continuing to search for the terrorist Ashraf Naalwa from the village of Shaweika, near Tulkarm, who carried out a murderous terror attack in the Barkan Industrial Park in October that resulted in the brutal murders of two Israelis.

For a long time, Hamas has praised the terrorist and adopted him as a symbol of “the resistance” in the West Bank and as one who managed to outwit the Israeli security forces.

It is also possible that Ashraf Naalwa is a member of the terrorist cell operating in Samaria. The fact that he has remained in hiding for more than 60 days without being apprehended proves he is receiving assistance from local elements, which also provided him with the weapon he used to perpetrate the terror attack and even taught him how to shoot.

Hamas published a notice in praise of the attack near Ofra. It states that the terror attack shows the “resistance” has made a security breakthrough and “the West Bank is leading the initiative in resistance to the occupation and the response to attacks on Palestinians, and it demonstrates that the resistance is alive, despite constant efforts to mortify it.”

The chief of the Israel Security Agency (ISA) Nadav Argaman warned in November in a debate of the Knesset Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defense that the quiet in Judea and Samaria is deceptive, and that the security situation there is very complex.

He stressed that Hamas is making every effort to perpetrate terror attacks from Judea and Samaria. According to Argaman, ISA arrested 219 Hamas cells and thwarted 480 terror attacks.

Indeed, it is apparent from declarations by Hamas leaders that indirect contacts with Israel through the Egyptian intelligence services on calm in the Gaza Strip do not also include a cessation of terror activities in the West Bank.

From the point of view of Hamas, this is an area of “occupation,” where terror attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians are legitimate.

Hamas sources state that as Israel is now dealing with two fronts, in the south and the north, this is the time for it to inflame the territories also within the West Bank in order to strike at Israel, and at the same time attempt to ruin the security cooperation between Israel and Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah.

Furthermore, igniting the West Bank will serve the Iranian-Hamas goal of toppling U.S. President Donald Trump’s “deal of the century,” which he is expected to unveil at the beginning of 2019.

Is there a Hezbollah connection?

Hamas is following Operation Northern Shield, to locate Hezbollah tunnels and a possible escalation between Israel and Hezbollah, with great interest.

The possibility that Hezbollah asked its ally Hamas to inflame the West Bank following the discovery of its terror tunnels should also not be ruled out.

The leader of the Hamas military wing in the West Bank is Saleh al-Aroui, vice chairman of the political bureau, who is also the liaison with Hezbollah and Iran.

Al-Aroui is based in the Hezbollah enclave in the a-Da‘iya neighborhood of Beirut, and he is responsible for many of the terror attacks that have taken place in the West Bank in recent years.

Activating the Hamas “sleeper cells” in Judea and Samaria—and recruiting new terrorists to its military wing—is done through the “West Bank headquarters,” which operates from the Gaza Strip and through the military wing’s office in Istanbul, Turkey.

These offices are run by terrorists released under the Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011 and deported to Gaza and abroad. They are former residents of the West Bank, who are very familiar with the territory, and who have extensive familial and social links that they use for recruitment and for carrying out terror attacks against Israel. (JNS Dec 10)

The Maccabees, the Mount and Modern Israel By Michael Freund

Just a few days before the start of Hanukkah, Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan delivered remarks that would have made the Maccabees proud.

Speaking at the Conference on the National Interest arranged by the My Israel organization at Jerusalem’s Menachem Begin Heritage Center, Erdan addressed the topic of the Temple Mount and the right of Jews to worship there, which of course is a central theme of the holiday we are celebrating this week.

While much of the media seems not to have taken notice, Erdan’s comments may signal the beginning of a much-needed and long-awaited change in Israeli policy, one that would herald a full restoration of Jewish rights at our nation’s holiest site.

“I have instructed the police to act in every way to restore our sovereignty on the area of the Temple Mount, which has been badly damaged,” Erdan said, “and to allow as many Jews as possible to visit the Jewish people’s most sacred place.”

After noting that the number of Jewish visitors to the Mount is the highest it has been in recent years, he went on to announce, “I believe the time has come to re-examine the restrictions that are imposed on Jews who ascend the Temple Mount, to assess what is really necessary from a security viewpoint and what is practiced as a result of a discriminatory status quo that became entrenched over the years and that has no real justification”.

For anyone who has followed the issue of the Temple Mount, Erdan’s statement was refreshing for both its honesty as well as its veracity.

After too many years in which Jewish visitors and worshipers on the Mount were subjected to harassment, humiliation and hassle, all out of fear of offending Islamist extremists, a change in approach is long overdue.

Two incidents that took place three months ago underline just how absurd the situation has become. On September 20, Jerusalem Police District Commander Yoram Halevy signed an administrative order barring an Israeli named Shlomo Puhu from the Temple Mount for a period of six months. His crime? Puhu had gone up to the Temple Mount and blown a shofar on Rosh Hashanah.
Haley justified the order, which is clearly a violation of Puah’s basic civil rights, by asserting that “it is necessary to prevent serious harm to personal security or property.” No further explanation was given, and with the stroke of a pen, an Israeli citizen’s freedom of expression, freedom of worship and freedom of assembly were unceremoniously trampled upon.

Barely a week later, on September 26, during the holiday of Sukkot, four young Israelis were detained by police on the Mount for kneeling and reciting aloud, “Shema Yisrael.” A video on YouTube shows police literally dragging them away for questioning, even though the Supreme Court has ruled that Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount is entirely legal.

The restrictions imposed on Jews on the Temple Mount are as intolerable as they are inexcusable, and given the key role the site played in the Hanukkah miracle, now is the perfect time to change them. Indeed, isn’t it painfully ironic that while the Maccabees fought to free the Temple Mount from foreign control, Israel allows the Palestinian Muslim WaKf and Jordan to dictate what happens there?

According to the First Book of Maccabees 2:6-8, at the very start of the Hasmonean revolt, Mattityahu bemoaned the fate of our people’s holiest site: “Why must I bow to these abominable things, the ruin of my people and of the holy city? Must I sit here helpless while the city is surrendered to enemies and the Temple falls into the hands of foreigners? The Temple is like someone without honor.”

Sadly, the same could be said now, when Jews ascending the Mount are barred from bringing a prayer book or a Bible, or even uttering a few words of prayer, all in the name of “security.”

Bureaucrats Should Not Be in Charge

By Orfi Haivy

Here is a true story. Some 20 years ago, my family and I lived in a small rental unit that belonged to a senior official in the State Attorney’s Office. At the time, she was a department head and she was responsible for publishing a controversial report on the outposts in Judea and Samaria. In short, she was a senior member of a group often referred to as the “gatekeepers” or “watchdogs of democracy.”

We owned a young female dog at the time, and this attracted many male dogs who wanted to have their way with our female. One day, one of those male dogs attacked and killed our landlord’s dog.

About a day later, she sent us a letter blaming me for the loss of her small dog. The letter demanded that my family and I immediately vacate the housing unit we were renting from her and threatened us with a lawsuit.

It turned out that despite the many qualities and good judgment officials at the State Attorney’s Office have, those watchdogs know how to become attacks dogs when things become personal. The letter made ludicrous claims and was treated accordingly. But it underscored the principle that has become mainstream even among liberal thinkers: No one is fit to be his or her own judge.

I was reminded of this case in the wake of the recent controversy over who gets to decide the cabinet’s positions on legislative matters. On the one hand, the government is arguing that the Prime Minister’s nominees, who have no legal qualifications, should be allowed to make up their own mind; on the other side, we have the past and present officials at the Justice Ministry, who believe only they have that right.

This is a perfect example of how people like Talia Sasson, a senior official at the ministry who now leads the left-wing New Israel Fund, interpret the term “democracy’s watchdog.” Sasson recently said that “staked cannot represent the Justice Ministry at various legislative meetings because Deputy Attorney General Dina Zilber does not agree with her views.

There you have it: Justice Ministry officials are now saying outright that they are in charge of formulating the government’s views rather than letting elected officials make policy. The ongoing spat emerged from disagreements over a bill aimed at curtailing state funding for provocative art, but it represents an even bigger demand from the Justice Ministry’s bureaucracy: that only they can decide what the government’s views are on the issues at hand, even if they have nothing to do with constitutional matters.

According to this premise, if there is a Knesset hearing about the dairy industry, and some ministers want to open it up for competition, they can be overruled by Justice Ministry officials who want “distributive justice.”

As a result, what carries the day is not what elected officials and ministers believe in but what Justice Ministry officials want.

How can supporters of this approach justify it? According to Sasson, “the attorney general represents the public interest,” and this puts him above the ministers, who are just elected officials and have no legal qualifications.

But nothing is wrong with harboring a blind belief that the attorney general and his cohorts are gifted with some unique judgment that can never be flawed, but this works only in fairy tales. The dog incident and many other such incidents show that we would be best served if we stop believing in fantasy and accept that all make mistakes and occasionally even have ulterior motives when they discuss a topic that has to do with them. For all of democracy’s faults, letting bureaucrats rule is still not a better alternative.

As Plato wrote in “The Republic,” the guardians must know their place; otherwise, they won’t wait for others to destroy the state but will do themselves. (Israel Hayom Dec 11)

Is Ocasio-Cortez Really Jewish? By Jonathan S. Tobin

At a time when DNA tests are a national craze, as well as source of political controversy, we shouldn’t be surprised about claims of Jewish identity from anyone. But when they come from someone as controversial as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the expressions of joy and dismay about her possible connection to the tribe were predictably partisan and downright foolish.

The incoming member of Congress from Queens, N.Y., made headlines when she told those in attendance at a synagogue Hanukkah party in her district over the weekend that “a very, very long time ago, generations and generations ago, my family consisted of Sephardic Jews.”

As she explained, the people of her native Puerto Rico are descendants of many different strains of immigrants, including those Jews who fled Spain in the 15th century. Within her family’s collective memory is some sense having been descended at least partly from such Jews.

Those who already liked the young Democratic Socialist, who has become the rock star of her party, were thrilled that she could be claimed as part of the family. On the other hand, Jews who dislike her leftist politics were disgusted. It was a rerun of what happened when House Speaker Paul Ryan found out that his DNA was 3 percent Ashkenazi Jewish during historian Henry Louis Gates’s “Finding Your Roots” PBS TV program. Liberal Jews responded to that item with nasty partisan abuse, as well as declarations that he wasn’t wanted. Ocasio-Cortez’s detractors were quick to use the same sort of invective.

But those who accused her of attempting to steal Jewish identity weren’t being fair. This is unlike the antics of fellow Democrat Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who attempted to back up her claims of a Native American heritage in part by testing her DNA, and whose alleged Native DNA test that showed that, at best, she was 1/64th descended from either the Cherokee or Delaware tribes. Ocasio-Cortez wasn’t pretending to be Jewish or trying to show that DNA was identity, let alone to justify using it for personal advancement as the senator allegedly did when she claimed to be the first “woman of color” to be named a professor at Harvard Law School.

Attacks on her for mentioning her Catholic family’s memories of their partial Jewish past, or her DNA test, or our DNA test that showed that she was a woman of color, has been a standard tactic of adversaries. It has been a standard tactic of adversaries.

The Justice Ministry, or the Clinton White House, or the Rubio administration, or the 20th century of post-exile persecution has resulted in many branches falling away from the Jewish ancestral tree, so her story is hardly uncommon. It is also a heartening sign of the times that prominent non-Jews, and even Jews, are becoming the rock star of their party.

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One is the danger that someone with some claims to Jewish identity will use it selectively in order to justify taking a stand against Israel. Over the decades, we’ve seen that happen with a number of writers or politicians who have few ties to their Jewish heritage, yet trot it out as a credential that enables them to express anger, embarrassment or outrage about the conflict in the Middle East. “The ‘not in my name’ meme in which Jews who know next to nothing about Israel and its geopolitical dilemmas seek to dissociate themselves from Israelis fighting for their lives is despicable. If Ocasio-Cortez were ever to use such a rhetorical device to justify siding with her close allies—incoming House Reps. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib—who are supporters of the anti-Semitic BDS movement that seeks Israel’s destruction, that would be outrageous.
Yet there’s another more serious argument to be addressed. It’s the theme sounded in the Forward after the latest Ocasio-Cortez story broke—that the Socialist politician is actually more authentically Jewish because of her politics than conservative or Zionist Jews.

Part of this mindset is the notion that modern American political liberalism and Judaism are interchangeable. It’s more than just an old joke to say that many American Jews conceive of their faith as more or less the Democratic Party platform with holidays thrown in. While it’s an insult to Judaism to conceive of it as nothing more than an elaborate theological justification for partisan politics, it’s also true that many American Jews see their faith as determining their votes. In that sense, there are Jews who see American Jewish conservatives or supporters of the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as representing a point of view that is alien to their conception of what it means to be Jewish.

More troubling is the idea that a loose sense of identity in which a multicultural frame of reference about the world—as opposed to a strictly Jewish one—is more representative of the way young Jews think today. Given the demographic implosion of non-Orthodox Jews in the United States, it is hardly surprising that some Jews think this way, but the consequences in terms of a decline in a sense of Jewish peoplehood are obvious and serious. If we begin to worship inclusion and diversity to the point where Jewish parochialism and nationalism, even in its most benign forms, are rejected as illiberal, then we will be part of a community that stands for nothing and is incapable of sustaining itself.

The real tragedy is that too many young Jews see Jewish observance or Zionism as antithetical to their progressive political views. If we get to the point where Ocasio-Cortez’s sensibilities about Israel or those of others on the left who might falsely regard Zionism as a form of racism because it contradicts their intersectional beliefs are accepted as legitimate Jewish perspectives, that will be a disaster. If such views are seen as more authentically Jewish than that of a typical Israeli or an affiliated Jew, then we will have arrived at a point where Jewish identity in this country for all too many of us will be nothing more than a meaningless percentage on a DNA test. (JNS Dec 11)

Exploiting Human Rights to Goad Israel

By Liora Cohen

This week 70 years ago, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One of its most important points is that humanitarian aid is to be granted on a politically neutral basis. But not surprisingly, when it comes to Israel, things appear somewhat different.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) coordinates emergency responses worldwide. Local U.N. offices transfer government money to various U.N. agencies and human rights NGOs.

The office operates in some 30 nations where humanitarian aid is required, including Syria, Libya, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan. In Afghanistan, its goal is defined as “saving life”; in Cameroon, it is to ensure that people in a crisis situation survive; and in Yemen and Somalia it’s “providing lifesaving aid.”

But the definition of humanitarian aid is different when it pertains to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2002, OCHA established a branch in east Jerusalem, where its mission was defined as ensuring that the “rights of the Palestinian people are recognized in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.”

Since then, local and international NGOs have received hefty funding, most of which comes directly from governments, for initiatives that fall under the definition of humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. Since 2003, nearly $5 billion has been raised. The total amount of money that various groups are requesting for their projects for 2018-2020, per person destined to the West Bank and Gaza and occupied territories, is $3.7 billion. This is true, despite the European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations having identified the need for humanitarian aid in the West Bank as “low” and the need in the Gaza Strip as “moderate.”

Many of the initiatives that U.N. agencies are operating in Judea, Samaria, and east Jerusalem have nothing to do with humanitarian aid. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being transferred from the EU’s emergency aid fund to projects that mainly aim to denigrate Israel. In 2017, the fund – to which many countries, including Norway, Germany, Ireland, and Spain, contribute – gave money to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights in Gaza, which is devoted to legal warfare against Israel, so it could document cases in which the IDF supposedly violated international law during Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

The Israel Observatory of the Center for the Defense of the Individual frequently petitions the High Court of Justice against the demolition of terrorists’ homes, among other issues. It recently received humanitarian funding to “expose procedures in which the military uses arrest and interrogation of minors in the West Bank.”

There are organizations that have held true to the real meaning of humanitarian aid. But it is important to note that the human rights industry, which is lavishly funded, frequently exploits important values to goad Israel politically and does so at the expense of people who really need the assistance. (Israel Hayom Dec 11)

The writer is a researcher at NGO Monitor.

#HumanRightsHypocrisy

By Rena Young

International Human Rights Day is marked on Dec. 10, with special attention made to honoring the 70-year anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Over the last 70 years, technological innovations have radically changed how human-rights groups engage with the public at large. With the advent of social media, they can amplify their voice at minimal cost. A well-crafted tweet or an eye-catching infographic can enable an organization to reach millions of people in seconds. And while advancing human rights on social media is laudable, it also makes clear that the “universal” aspect is being replaced with more particularistic goals.

Following and analyzing the Twitter accounts of the two largest human-rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, lead to some uncomfortable conclusions regarding the groups’ supposed “promotion of universal human rights.” Sadly, these human-rights groups appear to be utilizing social media to promote just a small portion of the world’s human rights abuses, and not even actual war crimes.

For instance, on Nov. 12-13, Hamas and other terror groups targeted Israeli civilians with more than 450 rockets, amounting to nearly 500 war crimes. Yet HRW, the world’s “leading human-rights group” and its director, Ken Roth, did not take notice.

Not one tweet acknowledging these war crimes and the human-rights atrocities committed against Israelis. Not one post calling for the United Nations to condemn Hamas and the terror groups responsible. Not one article encouraging the world to express support for the children who spent nights in bomb shelters and will surely suffer ongoing psychological harm.

One might conclude that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a priority for the human-rights group.

However, when it came to Palestinian riots on the Gaza border, known as the “March of Return,” conducted with the sole purpose of breaking through the border and entering Israel, HRW and Roth made this a social-media priority. At the height of the riots, on May 13-16, approximately 40 percent of Ken Roth’s tweets focused on condemning Israel for its response to the violent demonstrations.

During the same months as the Gaza riots, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards arrested scores of women who took to the streets of Tehran demanding freedom and democracy. However, HRW devoted four times more social media attention to supporting Hamas’ riots than to defending and praising the brave Iranian women.

HRW is far from the only human-rights group with questionable Twitter priorities.

In March, Ahed Tamimi was arrested for assaulting an Israeli soldier and calling for suicide-bombings, crimes with five- to 10-year sentences in many Western countries. In response, Amnesty International started a widespread social-media campaign demanding she be released despite her role in these internationally recognized crimes. While Amnesty was campaigning to stop the Jewish girl involved in violent crimes, 110 Nigerian girls were kidnapped to be sold as sex slaves. Neither Amnesty International nor HRW wrote even one tweet, article or Facebook post about the kidnapped girls. Yet Ahed Tamimi’s arrest warranted 11 posts on social media from the two organizations.

Similarly, in April, during the week that Tamimi was sentenced to eight months in prison for her crimes, the Assad regime launched chemical-weapons attacks on its citizens in Syria. Shockingly, yet consistently, Amnesty International had four times as many tweets on Ahed Tamimi as they did on the brutal Syria chemical-weapons attacks.

The phenomenon of ignoring violations against some while promoting the causes of others is a consistent approach by the world’s most renowned human-rights groups that cannot be ignored. Yet the question must be asked: Why does an organization that claims to promote universal human rights give more attention to an individual sentenced to less than a year in prison through a democratic process while completely ignoring the disappearance of over a hundred girls? Why too was this same individual given more social media attention than Syrians attacked with chemicals by their own government? And why do 400 war crimes committed by Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups in Gaza not warrant even a single tweet?

While one can infer a multitude of possible answers, one thing is clear: On social media, HRW and Amnesty International are not promoting universal human rights. (JNS Dec 10)

The writer is Communications Manager at NGO Monitor.