

ACTION ALERT from Greater Philadelphia ZOA

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ALERT**

ALERT: A vicious, toxic Human Rights Watch report that falsely accuses the Jewish state of committing “crimes against humanity” manifested as “apartheid” and “persecution” against “Palestinians” based upon Israel’s humane self-defense actions and her efforts to maintain her status as the world’s only Jewish state is making headlines world-wide. The news coverage is spreading the lies and modern-day blood libels against the Jewish People. The HRW report – and to a greater extent the reporting on the report -- are liable to exacerbate already heightened Jew-hatred and lead to more attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions.

The 213-page report, “A Threshold Crossed – Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution,” from the New York-based group that has a history of anti-Israel attacks has received wide coverage from major media outlets throughout the world (see screen shots with samples below) which repeat the accusations and lies as if they are fact-based and truthful. They are not.

This is an opportunity for each of us to take action to try to minimize the potential damage and dangers that the news accounts and Human Rights Watch report can cause to Israel and world Jewry.

ACTION: First: Please see the background information and links below which will help make for more effective advocacy. Please share this ACTION ALERT with your email contacts and on social media. Ask your rabbi to discuss these matters with congregants.

What can we do about this report, the false and misleading “news” reports and the consequential negativity that will impact Israel and by extension every Jewish person?

It is vitally important realize that simply stating alone that Israel is NOT committing “apartheid” or “persecuting” anyone as a refutation of the HRW report and media coverage is not enough. The fact is that Human Rights Watch is persecuting Jews, and the Arabs and Muslims who are committing “apartheid” against Jews.

1: Closely examine your local news outlets: Newspapers, reports by and websites of TV stations and radio stations (and their social media sites), and local news blogs (such as Patch) to see if they have reported on the HRW report.

A: If they have not, this is a great time to pro-actively remind people that again Israeli civilians are facing Arab rocket fire, and the Palestinian Authority continues to financially incentivize the murder of Jews. Write an op-ed or letter-to-the-editor to pre-empt negative reports. Remember to include (if space permits) the humane conduct of the IDF and the extraordinary steps it takes to minimize civilian casualties when it is forced to take action. Do not mention the HRW report if the media outlet has not already done so.

B: If they have reported on the HRW report, a two-step response is needed: A letter or op-ed reminding the community that it is the Palestinian-Arabs who actually practice “apartheid” by making land sales to Jews punishable by death, declaring that no Jews will be allowed in a nation of “Palestine” and their teaching children that Israel does not exist and that Jews are descendants of pigs and apes, and other forms of inciting hatred. Step-two: Contact the highest-ranking person at that news outlet who you can reach by phone and ask them to remove the article/report because it is full of falsehoods and because it can incite Jew-hatred because of the gravity of the false accusations. Attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions are near record-highs – do they want to be responsible for more of them? In any contact with media or anyone else, always be polite/civil but firm. (Continued on next page)

2: Contact Jewish media outlets and ask that they publish editorials condemning this specious HRW report. Contact rabbis and other communal leaders and ask them to publicly condemn the report as well as the mainstream media's spreading of anti-Jewish lies that can incite violence and hatred.

3: Contact your House member and both of your senators. Call for hearings and an investigation into HRW's sources of funding that may be driving the anti-Jewish incitement their report will provoke.

4: Now is the time to increase your support of ZOA and for you to encourage others to support our vital work. Donate online at <https://zoa.org/donate/philly/> . Send checks payable to ZOA to: ZOA, PO Box 56, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. Your donations/financial support are the fuel that powers our ability to challenge Jew-hatred, anti-Zionism and attacks against Israel.

5: Contact the leadership of prominent donors that support, fund and facilitate the antisemitic work of Human Rights Watch. Let them know that they are funding lies and libels and placing Jewish lives in jeopardy. Among these donors are: Postcode lottery (Netherlands): <https://www.postcodeloterij.nl/>; the Ford Foundation; pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk; EuraZeo, a global investment company; Oak Foundation; Fred Foundation; and the Netherlands-based Gieskes-Strijbis Fonds. According to NGO Monitor, another major funder is the George Soros-led Open Society Institute, and various funding sources in Saudi Arabia.

BACKGROUND:

Professor Gerald M. Steinberg of NGO Monitor wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* earlier this week that:

"The text [in the HRW report] reiterates the main claims of a 700-page 2017 submission to the ICC from a group of NGOs (Al-Haq, PCHR, Al-Mezan, Al-Dameer) linked to the PFLP terror organization, alleging that "Israel persecutes the occupied Palestinian population and subjects them to the crimes of persecution and apartheid" and condemning what they call Israel's effort to "ensure Israeli Jewish domination." Other parts reproduce B'Tselem's campaign, headlined: "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid."

"HRW allegations, also mirroring the other NGOs, exploit the inherent flexibility and political essence of international law, with claims based on far-fetched interpretation of the Rome Statute (the ICC's foundation document). For example the HRW publication asserts that "Israel's coercive policies... amount to intentional forcible transfer of civilians... a grave breach of the laws of war." These phrases, each a distortion (or falsehood), are then pronounced to be "one of the kinds of inhumane acts that make up the crime of apartheid."

Read Steinberg's full analysis at <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/human-rights-watch-demonizes-israel-through-the-propaganda-of-apartheid-666416>

Alex Safian of CAMERA has a point-by-point debunking of the HRW report at: <https://www.camera.org/article/human-rights-watch-report-maligns-israel-with-lies-on-top-of-lies/>

The full 213-page HRW report including an executive summary is at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution>

For more information about this action alert, please call the Greater Philadelphia ZOA Office at 610-660-9466.

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