

“Freedom of Religion” and Other Lies

Christian and Muslim persecution in Israel ignored by the White House

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The United States government, in its incessant bullying of foreign nations to get them to see the world the way that the cabal that runs Washington sees it, ironically often cites such fictions as the “rule of law” that guarantees such “rights” as “free speech” and “freedom of religion” to justify its illegal actions. Right at the moment, the United States maintains garrisons illegally in both Iraq, where the country’s parliament has as it to depart, and also in neighboring Syria where the government is fighting an insurgency that seeks regime change and is supported by both the US and Israel.

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 is analogous to what Russia has done in Ukraine though Moscow certainly had stronger compelling national security reasons for doing what it did while the United States had to construct a series of lies to provide as an excuse to topple Saddam Hussein, an objective strongly supported by Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, who added his own fabrications to the exchanges.

One has to look to the media to discern the reasons why some developments are wrapped in “religious freedom” or “democracy promotion” while other actions are ignored or even covered-up. Currently the right-wing Jewish extremists who have gained control of Israel’s government are engaging in something like genocide directed against the Palestinian population, many of whom are actually Israeli citizens though possessing second class rights when they are enforced at all. Israel regards itself legally as a Jewish state, so what is the “rule of law” for those who are not Jews and how does it perceive “religious freedom?” Considerable government pressure is being exerted to force the “terrorists,” as the Arab residents are frequently called, to emigrate or face the consequences if they choose not to. It is directed most particularly against those Palestinians who are leaders in their community and it has therefore focused on the major Arab religious groups, both the Christians and the Muslims.

Ironically, though one can read in the US media almost daily accounts of alleged surging

anti-semitism and the myth of perpetual Jewish victimhood, the ongoing brutality against the Palestinians, including their religious foundations and practices, is hardly noticed. That is the fundamental problem as the silence or perhaps the willful connivance of the American media and entertainment industry, firmly in the grip of the Jewish community and its “standards,” has shaped the narrative and limited any propagation of contrary opinion. It is a process that is similar to what has taken place with any discussion of the Ukraine war in the mainstream media, where there is also a heavy Jewish footprint.

There have been two major incidents involving Jewish assertion of its occupation of and control over all of Jerusalem that have recently impacted on the country’s religious minorities during their holy seasons, Easter and Ramadan. The [first consisted of](#) two consecutive middle-of-the-night attacks by Israeli police and soldiers in full riot gear armed with stun grenades and clubs on Palestinians spending the night at the al-Aqsa mosque on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the third holiest site for Muslims. The Palestinian men were there in part to protect the building from Jewish settlers who have been threatening to destroy it. The Palestinians inside were beaten by police, who had broken into the mosque, and as many as 350 mostly young men were later arrested for resisting.

The second incident was an [order by Israeli police](#) limiting the regular Christian gathering on Holy Saturday, referred to as the “Holy Fire” celebration, at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which normally attracts 10,000 worshippers, to no more than 1,800 attendees. On the day of the ceremony, [Israeli police reacted](#) with heavy-handed tactics to block hundreds of Orthodox Christians from gathering at the church, which is at the center of the old Christian quarter of the city. Several Coptic Orthodox priests were particularly targeted in front of the church and beaten with batons. Israeli forces closed off access to the site with roadblocks and barriers at the gates of the Old City, permitting only small numbers of Christians and those with government permits to enter.

Both steps restricting freedom of religion were taken without any consultation with the respective communities and without any evidence that there would be disorder or violence without the police interventions. The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the Israeli action as a “blatant attack on the freedom of worship” and a “flagrant attack on the existing political, historical and legal *status quo* in occupied Jerusalem and on Israel’s obligations as an occupying regime in Jerusalem” that “violate international law, international humanitarian law and signed agreements.” The Christian churches’ leadership also separately objected to no avail and responded to the threat by observing that Palestinian Christians are themselves under increasing pressure from the Israeli government to force them to emigrate. Christians constituted 20% of the Israeli population in 1947 but now are fewer than 2%.

Indeed, since the rise this year of Israel’s most far-right government in history, Palestinian Christians frequently experience Jewish Israeli discrimination at all levels. They directly observe how their 2,000-year-old community in the Holy Land has come under increasing attack. In March, two Israeli men assaulted and beat a priest in the church sited at the Tomb of the Virgin Mary. In February, a statue of Jesus was vandalized by an American Jewish tourist at the Church of the Condemnation, where Jesus was flogged and sentenced to death while a month earlier, dozens of Christian graves were desecrated by two Jewish teenagers at the Anglican cemetery on Mount Zion, where Jesus’s Last Supper took place. In November, two soldiers from the Israeli army’s Givati Brigade spit at the Armenian archbishop and other pilgrims during a procession in the Old City. Christian clerics living in

Jerusalem claim that they are frequently physically assaulted and spat on by settlers and other Jewish Israelis when they are walking in the streets. The Israeli government has also been increasingly confiscating church properties for various projects that benefit only the Jewish community. When Christians seek redress from the Israeli courts they are almost always denied justice.

Now one would think that the United States, with its dedication to “rule of law” and religious freedom would at a minimum condemn the Israeli actions, particularly the unprovoked violent attack on peaceful Muslims during their high holy days at al-Aqsa. But no, and this is how a State Department spokesman Vedant Patel [described it](#): “We are concerned by the scenes out of Jerusalem. And it is our viewpoint that it is absolutely vital that the sanctity of holy sites be preserved. We emphasize the importance of upholding the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem and any unilateral action that jeopardizes the status quo to us is unacceptable. We call for restraint, coordination and calm during the holiday season.”

So the State Department believes that Israel did not initiate the violence, which is, of course, false. And Patel felt compelled to add an additional comment on recent home-made rocket attacks coming from Lebanon in the wake of the police and army actions: “We condemn the launch of rockets from Lebanon and Gaza at Israel. Our commitment to Israel’s security is ironclad and we recognize that Israel has the legitimate right to defend itself against all forms of aggression.” Don’t you love the frequent assertion of the claim that Israel has a “right to defend itself?” Patel was in fact wrong about Gaza firing missiles – that was a fiction invented by the Israeli government to explain why it had responded with a bombardment of its own directed against the long-suffering Gazans. The hostile rockets, which did little damage and injured no one, actually came from a Palestinian group in Lebanon. Apparently, the Palestinians and Israel’s neighbors do not have the right to defend themselves or to respond to Jewish violence. Rule of law and religious freedom appear to depend on who is attempting to exercise those rights and under what circumstances.

Interestingly, the *New York Times* had its own bizarre description of what took place at al-Aqsa. Their correspondent wrote how the [crisis started](#) when Palestinians “barricaded themselves” overnight inside the building before being “cleared” by police from the mosque in the middle of the night, to “protect Jewish worshippers” who were reportedly observing the Passover holiday in the vicinity. In other words, the violence was initiated by the Israelis but it was to prevent any threat against Jews, even though there is no evidence that anything like that was intended and why Jews were present at close quarters to a Muslim holy site is not clear. By one report, extremist Jews may have been preparing to sacrifice a goat.

On April 14th, to honor International Holocaust Remembrance Day, President Joe Biden demonstrated that he is not as brain dead as is often claimed. He knows exactly who owns him and knows how to pile it on. [His proclamation reads](#): “During Yom Hashoah and throughout these days of remembrance, we mourn the 6 million Jews who were murdered during the horror of the Holocaust—as well as the millions of Roma and Sinti, Slavs, disabled persons, LGBTQI+ individuals, and political dissidents who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators. Together with courageous survivors, descendants of victims and people around the world, we renew our solemn vow: ‘never again.’”

Clearly Joe had not gotten the message that in America every day is *de facto* holocaust remembrance day as measured by the frequent appearance of that expression in the media.

But he makes sure of the trans gay vote by including the LGBTQI+ folks as victims of the Nazis. Perhaps Joe should pay some attention to the Americans murdered by the Israelis, to include the 34 crewmen of the USS Liberty killed by the Israeli military in 1967, activist Rachel Corrie crushed by a bulldozer in 2003 and most recently Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh killed by the Israeli army last May. Israel has not been held accountable for any of those deaths and it knows it can get away with anything, including targeting and killing US citizens.

Next week, the GOP will be doubling down on the message as Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy [leads a delegation](#) of twenty bipartisan fawning congress critters to Israel. He has carefully billed it as his first foreign trip as speaker, underlining what an important ally Israel is. He will address the Knesset on May 1st and there will no doubt be a lot of kissing and hugging with Bibi and many pledges of undying commitment to the Jewish state. The Israeli government is already describing it as “Speaker McCarthy’s speech in the Knesset will be a sign for the strong and unbreakable bond between Israel and the US.” And no doubt lots of money will appear in the pipeline so Israel can defend itself. Just don’t mention Israel’s recent premeditated murder of Shireen Abu Akleh back or “religious freedom.” And to hell with the Palestinian Christians. They have been hanging around for 2,000 years but are on their way out.

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