

Why Israel Has a Law that Gives Police the Power to Block Certain Websites From Israelis

By [Rima Najjar](#)

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*The new Israeli [law](#) giving police power to block websites that purportedly publish “criminal” or “offensive” content follows a similar [blockade](#) of various websites in Palestine by the [13-year president](#) of the Palestinian Authority **Mahmoud Abbas** – all in the name of “law and order”, “peace” and “fighting terrorism”.*

The equation is simple and has long been [propagated](#) by Israel through its hasbara apparatus: Palestinian armed resistance to Israel’s oppression [equals terror](#). Hasbara misinformation against Palestine and Palestinians on the Internet is legitimate [paid work](#) in Israel; Palestinian outlets speaking for the Palestinian struggle for liberation are illegitimate (criminal) forms of expression and activity:

Since before the “war on terrorism” in the West even began, the very concept of terrorism has been reduced by Israeli propagandists into an arena whereby Palestinian armed resistance by individuals or Hamas or any other militant Palestinian group is automatically regarded as terror. In a catch-22, non-violent Palestinian resistance, on the other hand, is dubbed as “incitement to terror”. [Source: [Israel’s Illegitimate Tactics Against Palestinian Armed Resistance vs. Legitimate Global Security Concerns](#)]

Israel is taking advantage of a world-wide political development concerning freedom of expression that is meant to combat terrorism. Turning the tables around in a typical Zionist tactic of portraying itself as [victim](#), Israel is exploiting this global dilemma in how to balance freedom of expression in legitimate arenas with hate-mongering – especially the kind reflecting intolerance and populism that might foment acts of violence and terrorist “cell formation”.

But there is a big difference between websites that educate on Israel, share facts that expose Israel’s [Apartheid regime](#) in Palestine and influence opinions to stand up for Palestinian rights and liberation on the one hand, and websites that spew hatred with the objective of inciting terrorism and wanton destruction on the other.

In blocking websites that expose its [illegitimacy](#), the Israeli Government is also continuing a long tradition of [brainwashing](#) its own Jewish population with Zionist dogma and [myth](#), in the same way it mobilized to “educate” American Jews after 1967, when Zionist myths began to unravel “as a result of Palestinian history books published in English, such as **Nafez Nazzal** and **Ibrahim Abu-Lughod**’s work, as well as an increasingly visible Palestinian armed resistance movement.” [Source: [On American Zionist Education: An excerpt from ‘The](#)

[Politics of Teaching Palestine to Americans'\]](#)

Since the failure of the so-called two-state “solution” (or [Oslo Accords](#)) to the problem of partitioning Mandate Palestine in 1948 and the creation of a Jewish state on a territory of Palestine, there has been a significant shift in how Israel is perceived worldwide, especially in connection with its claim to being the only democracy in the [Arab world](#).

As **Ilan Pappé** explains in [Ten Myths About Israel](#), Israel was never a democracy before or after 1967, when it occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip and annexed East Jerusalem:

Israel is not the only democracy in the Middle East. In fact, it’s not a democracy at all. ... The myth that a democratic Israel ran into trouble in 1967 but still remained a democracy is propagated even by some notable Palestinian and pro-Palestinian scholars — but it has no historical foundation. ... Systematic cruelty does not only show its face in a major event like a massacre. The worst atrocities can also be found in the regime’s daily, mundane presence. ... The litmus test of any democracy is the level of tolerance it is willing to extend towards the minorities living in it. In this respect, Israel falls far short of being a true democracy... Israeli Land Policy Is Not Democratic. ...The Occupation Is Not Democratic... Destroying Palestinians’ Houses Is Not Democratic. ... Crushing Palestinian Resistance Is Not Democratic. ...Imprisoning Palestinians Without Trial Is Not Democratic. ... What we must challenge here, therefore, is not only Israel’s claim to be maintaining an enlightened occupation but also its [pretense to being a democracy](#). Such behavior towards millions of people under its rule gives the lie to such political chicanery. [Source: [No, Israel Is Not a Democracy](#)]

Having been founded by [settler-colonial](#) European and East European Zionist Jews, whose political vision was very much shaped by the Western civilization from where they originated (including the practice of European sovereignty, domination and subjugation over non-Western peoples), Israel has always boasted of being a Western-style democracy.

Israel has also angled to be compared favorably with the Arab world’s democratic deficit, directly and indirectly implying that the obstacle to democratic change in the Arab world was to be found, not in the region’s historical institutional framework, but rather in “Arab culture” – i.e., Islam itself. [For a discussion of this latter hypothesis, see Eric Chaney’s article, Democratic Change in the Arab World, Past and Present: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/2012a_Chaney.pdf]

Mandate Palestine today is under Israeli sovereignty – all of it. It is true that the Palestinian Authority has administrative control of the West Bank and Hamas has a similar control in the besieged Gaza Strip since 2006, when it won the legislative elections and then was [prevented](#) from governing.

But such control is severely limited and contingent on Mahmoud Abbas’s continued cooperation with Israel’s “security needs” over and above the much more urgent needs of the Palestinian people to realize their rights, especially self-determination and dignity.

Unfortunately, the United States and its foreign policy allies vis-à-vis Israel, the European Union and Great Britain, have long enabled Israel’s brutal policies against the Palestinian people. Under the Oslo Accords (1993) and the Paris Protocol (1994), aid to the Palestinian territories was “militarized” to complement (not fight against) the vast US [military aid](#) given

to Israel to secure its own territory in Palestine.

In other words, aid to Palestinian Arabs ignored the human reality of a people struggling to survive for seventy years – first their ethnic cleansing and denial of return to their own land and homes and then occupation, annexation of East Jerusalem, siege of the Gaza Strip, and uninterrupted and continuing Jewish colonization meant to complete their [dispossession](#).

Today over 12 million people live in Israel, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip – primarily Jews and Palestinian Arabs, both Christian and Muslim. As estimated in 2014 by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), there are 6.08 Palestinian Arabs currently living in the Palestinian territories, including Israel (worldwide, Palestinians number an estimated 12.37 million).

Each one of these people, and not only Jews, is entitled to [full human rights](#), “including religious liberty; freedoms of expression and association; equal opportunity regardless of ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, etc.; and due process of law.” That includes access to information on the Internet.

Rima Najjar is a Palestinian whose father’s side of the family comes from the forcibly depopulated village of Lifta on the western outskirts of Jerusalem. She is an activist, researcher and retired professor of English literature, Al-Quds University, occupied West Bank.

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