

Mads Gilbert and the theater of the absurd

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The latest “report” on Israel produced by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) includes a list of four “experts” with whom the two commissioners and their staffs consulted.

One of them is Dr. Mads Gilbert, a full-time propagandist from Norway who exploits medicine to promote hate. He has blamed the 9/11 terror attacks in the US on the “policy that the West has led during the last decades,” and asserted that “the oppressed also have a moral right to attack the USA with any weapon they can come up with.”

Gilbert’s role as an expert tells readers (including the 47 member states of the UNHRC) all that they need in order to understand the absurdity of this exercise. In July 2014, during the Gaza war, he was one of the five co-authors of an infamous “open letter to the people of Gaza” published in the prestigious UK medical journal *The Lancet*.

Two of Gilbert’s partners on the letter promoted a blatantly anti-Semitic video by white supremacist and ex-KKK leader David Duke, but the doctor, who claims to promote morality, has not found time to comment. Gilbert has also “forgotten” to criticize the thousands of rockets launched from Gaza at Israeli civilians, every one a war crime. Instead, he rushes to Gaza when the IDF acts to stop these attacks, and joins the Hamas media campaign. Although he gave non-stop media interviews from Shifa hospital, he ignored missiles fired from the parking lot and evidence that Hamas was using the lower floors as its military headquarters (and torture chamber), knowing the Israel would not attack a hospital. Gilbert’s “expertise” notwithstanding, the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) researchers were somehow unable to verify the evidence.

In response to Gilbert’s blatant form of ethical malpractice, 10 internationally renowned physicians published a letter in the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* calling his language on the 9/11 attacks and Hamas “extreme and disturbing,” concluding that “he exploits the medical profession to justify terrible violence.”

Gilbert is also associated with the highly politicized British NGO Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP). Under the facade of medical assistance, MAP plays a central role in the demonization war, accusing Israel of “indiscriminate attacks” and “collective punishment,” as well as promoting the “Nakba” narrative to delegitimize Israel’s very existence.

It is likely that the “expert” role assigned to Gilbert by the COI came under the leadership of William Schabas, the anti-Israel ideologue initially appointed by the Islamic bloc and its allies that form a majority in the Human Rights Commission. However, when Schabas resigned after he was exposed for having omitted his relationship with the PLO while applying to head the COI, Judge Mary McGowan Davis took over. Her failure to remove Gilbert from the list of experts and from the report reflects the lack of due diligence which further undermines its credibility.

The absurdity inherent in considering Gilbert to be an expert is compounded by the heavy reliance on highly political non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which are also given a façade of “expertise.” This NGO network is deeply entrenched in the UN structure, and visible on almost every page.

Amnesty International's versions of events are quoted 53 times; Human Rights Watch – 22; B'tselem – 69; Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) – 50, etc. As in the case of the Goldstone Report and the 2002 Jenin "investigations," these political organizations, lacking in systematic and professional fact-finding methodology, created the scaffolding around which the COI was constructed.

In this destructive process, the European government backers of the political NGOs (including Norway, which funds Mads Gilbert's campaigns) that lobbied for this report and from which it was largely constructed must be held accountable. The COI repeats standard NGO slogans decrying Israeli "impunity," but the impunity enjoyed by these funder-enablers of abusive NGOs is very real.

The COI is also notable for what it did not examine – there is no mention of the role of Qatar and Iran, among other governments, in funding Hamas and arming it with deadly rockets.

While these are clearly war crimes, they were missed by the UN- Schabas -McGowan Davis team because the NGO networks also erase this deadly dimension, which is not part of their anti-Israel agenda. Similarly, the COI ignored the evidence that NGO submissions on which they rely have no fact-finding methodologies.

Indeed, in a moment of candor, McGowan-Davis acknowledges that in many cases, "it was not possible to establish with certainty the factual circumstances of a given incident." But instead of accepting the conclusions of this admission, she became part of the Schabas -Gilbert-NGO theater of the absurd, and contributed to its agenda of hate .