

Reality contrasts sharply with anti-Israel propaganda | The Canadian Jewish News

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Gerald Steinberg
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In Syria, the inhuman violence of an ongoing civil war has taken at least 100,000 lives, including more than 1,000 victims of chemical weapon attacks.

In the sharpest contrast imaginable, in an Israeli hospital in Safed – less than 100 kilometres away from this carnage – Jewish and Arab doctors are saving the lives of hundreds of Syrian civilian victims, and in early November, a baby was born to a young refugee mother. The delivery room nurse, Mira Eli, told reporters, “We gave her a hug, a shower and food... She’s a very young woman who came without her husband or anyone else... and it was her first delivery... Our job is to ensure that every new mother remembers her delivery as an unforgettable, positive experience, whatever her ethnic, national or religious background.”

While this might seem entirely unexceptional, history has hardly been conducive to such aid. For more than six decades, Syria has been at war with Israel, and before 1967, Syrian artillery on the Golan Heights regularly pounded the Jewish towns below, near the Sea of Galilee. Some of the harshest treatment of Israeli prisoners of war took place at the hands of the Syrians, including frequent torture.

Nevertheless, Israelis have opened their arms and treated hundreds of wounded Syrian civilians, including many children and the elderly, some with horrendous injuries, providing them with the best possible medical care. The IDF has been centrally involved in evacuating and safely transporting these unlikely patients from the war zone into Israel, under difficult conditions. No one has been asked to cover the costs of this treatment, and no payments are expected. In addition, and with no publicity, Israeli aid agencies are helping hundreds of thousands of Syrians now living in Jordanian refugee camps.

However, none of this has blunted the propaganda campaigns and political warfare that



falsely accuse Israelis, including the IDF, of “war crimes” and wholesale violations of human rights. On university campuses in Europe and North America, ritual chants of “Israel apartheid” and immoral boycott, divestment and sanctions activities continue. In some churches, groups such as Sabeel are given platforms to promote hatred under the facade of peace and human rights, and in the United Kingdom, the Methodist church is currently conducting another round of anti-Israel activity, again exploiting moral language. The same is true for some labour unions that have been captured by the anti-Israel warriors, particularly in Canada.

As part of this attack, a tiny group of Israeli and Jewish zealots are often trotted out to validate this modern blood libel. For example, a fringe group known as Breaking the Silence is currently doing a world tour spreading false “war crimes” allegations, including a recent appearance on CBC Radio. This organization was quoted as a source 27 times in the discredited Goldstone report published in 2009, but the CBC neglected to inform its listeners of this salient fact, as well the other evidence contradicting their ideologically motivated “testimony.”

Breaking the Silence is supported by generous funding from political groups such as the New Israel Fund, as well as anti-Israel organizations in Europe and biased aid groups such as World Vision. This money promotes anti-Israel campaigns around the world instead of aiding Syrian war victims, for example.

While the zealots are beyond reason, journalists (including at the CBC), academics, government officials and members of organizations seeking to promote human rights and humanitarian aid might be able to recognize the contrast between the propaganda and the reality. For this group, the story of a 20-year-old Syrian living on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights who was evacuated by the IDF from the war zone in order to give birth safely at Ziv Hospital in Safed should at least raise some questions about the narrative they’ve been peddling for many years.

The young mother’s words might also give them pause: “I don’t feel like I am in an ‘enemy’ country. The staff are all helping me and worrying about me... My baby too is getting wonderful, devoted care.”

Such behaviour reflects the Israeli reality, far from the propaganda campaigns that have done so much damage.

