

# 'Human rights,' incitement and child murders

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Perhaps the murderer from Toulouse would have committed his despicable inhuman acts without having the excuse of avenging the deaths of Palestinian children, but this is the justification he used.

From the apparently staged death of Mohammed al Dura in 2000, filmed dying in his father's arms, through the inventions of the 2009 Goldstone Report and the recent responses to missile attacks from Gaza, Israel has been repeated and falsely accused of deliberately killing Palestinian children. As [Joe Hyams wrote](#), this is the modern version of the blood libel. As often happens in this crude propaganda war, the terrorist targeting of Israeli and Jewish children is flipped into an accusation against the defenders. Even the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Ashton, echoed the ignominious comparison in a public statement.

In this long campaign, many of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that claim to promote human rights and humanitarian assistance have become accomplices, both willingly and unwillingly. The leaders of international organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International propagated the al Dura accusations based entirely on the claims of a single Palestinian cameraman working for French television, without any independent corroboration. In the notorious 2001 UN Durban conference in which 1500 NGOs, including HRW and Amnesty, launched a deadly political war to isolate Israel as a "racist" and "apartheid" state, the image of al Dura was dominant.

As part of the Durban plan of action, a 2009 [HRW "report"](#) on Israeli drone strikes in Gaza had an emotionally laden cover picture with photos of two children – alleged victims of these attacks. The graphic and HRW's entire report were based on a combination of unverifiable Palestinian "eyewitness" testimony and pseudo-technical claims that were contradicted by military experts. The lead author this report, Marc Garlasco, was forced to leave HRW after his obsessive collection of Nazi memorabilia was revealed, but no independent review of the accuracy of his reports was undertaken. This report reinforced the propaganda campaign that seeks to label Israelis as child murderers and war criminals.

Palestinian NGOs have also focused on children as a cornerstone of their demonization campaigns. The misnamed Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) recently issued a [press release](#) alleging that "Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) killed a Palestinian child and seriously

wounded and arrested another one in Yatta town, south of Hebron...IOF [Israel occupation forces] opened fire at Mohammed Omar Awwad al-Jundi, 17. Reporting on the same incident, [journalists later reported](#) that a single Palestinian man in his 20's had been killed – after he stabbed an Israeli soldier. (Hat tip to [CAMERA](#).) (Palestinian sources also reported that 8-year-old [Barka al-Mugrah](#) died of wounds from an Israeli airstrike – and later admitted he was killed by Palestinian gunmen firing “shots of mourning” in a funeral.)

In another example, on the day of the Toulouse murders, the Palestinian section of [Defense for Children International](#) (DCI-PS), launched a report headlined “Bound, Blindfolded and Convicted: Children held in military detention”. There was no mention of the ways in which Palestinian adults exploit their children to attack Israelis (including rock throwing assaults in which children, in many of the cases, are hurt or killed).

The discredited Goldstone report provided a particularly fertile opportunity for NGOs to promote the blood libel of intentional Israeli attacks against Palestinian children. In one example, the report quotes from an Al Haq statement entitled “[Right to life of Palestinian children disregarded in Ni’lin as Israel’s policy of willful killing of civilians continues](#)”. Judge Goldstone belatedly acknowledged that the entire foundation for his report was wrong, and there was no evidence that Israel had intentionally targeted civilians, including children. But the damage had been done, and the report continues to feed the incitement and violence.

At the same time, there is little NGO condemnation of the Palestinian practice of deliberately placing children and other civilians in harms way. Missiles used for terror attacks are stored in the middle of residential areas and have been launched from schools. These are obvious violations of international norms, and yet the human rights NGOs systematically turn a blind eye.

Many of these political NGOs, whose influence and impact would otherwise be marginal, are able to promote their campaigns through the funding provided by foreign (largely European) governments and donor organizations. The tens of millions of dollars, euros, krona, and pounds go to pay for press conferences and other public events around the world, including submissions to the United Nations Human Rights Council. (DCI-PS receives funding from the [European Union](#) for a project entitled “Promoting and protecting the rights of Palestinian children affected by armed conflict and occupation.” Other funding comes from Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Britain, and the Swedish government.) When Catherine Ashton made her offensive comparison, she was simply repeating the allegations featured in many NGO reports funded in secret by European Union and its members.

If there is one lesson to be drawn from the tragedy of Toulouse, it is the need to halt the spread of these allegations. Tragedies occur, particularly in war, and certainly the death of any child – Israeli or Palestinian — is tragic. However, falsely demonizing Israel on this issue is morally repugnant and must cease. This must be done immediately – including a halt to funding for all organizations and individuals involved in its propagation. NGOs, journalists, political officials, and diplomats that have falsely accused Israelis of intentionally targeting children must be named and shamed for

their participation in this immoral campaign.

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