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Police integration

In April, during the swearing-in ceremony of Jamal Hakrush as deputy commissioner of Israel Police, Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan declared his intention to increase recruitment of Israel's Arabs to the police force. The appointment of Hakrush, an Arab Israeli, to the rank of deputy commissioner was a watershed event. It marked the first time a Muslim-Israeli citizen had reached such a senior level in the force. And Erdan took advantage of the event – covered by most of the major international media outlets – to call on Israel's Arabs to join its ranks.

Perhaps it was Hakrush's appointment, perhaps it was the campaign Erdan's office has launched in recent months, perhaps it has to do with other changes in Israeli society, whatever the reason, there has been a sharp rise in the number of Muslim Israelis applying to Israel Police.

According to data released this week by the police, so far in 2016 1,420 Arab Israelis applied to the force, compared to 543 for all of last year. If this trend continues, it would mean a significant change in the make up of Israel Police.

Still, the data should be treated with caution. When counting the number of Muslims in the force there is a tendency to lump together Beduin, Christian Arabs and Druse – when in reality these three groups are very different from the vast majority of Arab Israelis. The percentage of Muslim Israelis who serve either in Israel Police or Border Police units has not changed much since 1967 – about 10 percent. This is significantly lower than their relative size in the general population which is about 20%.

But of this 10%, over half are Druse who serve in the IDF and can easily make the transition to the police force. Another 1.7% of police are Christian Arabs, 1% are Beduin and only 1.3% are Arab Muslims. These Arab Israelis shun the ranks of the police because they want to refrain from coming into conflict with Palestinians in Jerusalem or the West Bank.

The police's interest in Arab officers has to do with the notion that Arab Israelis are uniquely positioned to handle crimes among their own people. They can gain access to places where Jewish policemen would feel uncomfortable entering; they know the language and are familiar with cultural nuances.

Another goal Erdan and others would like to achieve is improving relations between Arab citizens and law enforcers. This might be a bit more difficult to do. That's because Arab Israelis perceive the state and its policies as fundamentally biased and discriminatory toward Arabs. The low point in relations between Arab Israelis and the police came in October 2000 when clashes left 12 Arab Israelis dead and dozens injured.

Encounters with Israel Police often tend to be negative and many of Israel's Arabs are less than enthusiastic about serving a state that defines itself as Jewish. Many believe that in order to advance in rank an Arab police officer must prove his or her loyalty by demonstrating a willingness to place Israeli-Jewish interests before Israeli-Arab ones, which tend to be perceived as perpetually conflicting.

Still, according to a survey of Arab-Israeli opinions conducted by Guy Ben Porat and Yuval Fany in 2013 in a number of Arab towns, the majority responded positively to the idea of Arabs serving in Israel Police units. Fifty-nine percent said they thought Arabs should serve in the force while 35% said they shouldn't.

Forty-five percent said they thought recruiting Arabs would improve relations between the police and the Arab population, 26% said it would not and 19.3% said it would exacerbate bad relations. Over half said they preferred police patrols made up of both Arab and Jewish police officers.

Another poll conducted by Ronald Weitzer and Badi Hasisi brought the researchers to the conclusion that the symbolic impact of Arab Israelis in uniform could improve perceptions of Israel Police among Arabs and foster a feeling of involvement and influence in the country's socio-political system.

Integrating Israel's large Arab minority remains one of the most formidable challenges facing the State of Israel. In a country that values service to the state so highly – whether in the form of military or national service – it is imperative that Arab Israelis are given the opportunity to serve and in a way that is in line with their sensibilities and values. Israel Police provides this opportunity.

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Benjamin Netanyahu and the 'otherwise enlightened'



OUR WORLD
 • BY CAROLINE B. GLICK

Sometimes, nothing is more infuriating than the truth.

On Friday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu infuriated the Obama administration when he told the truth about the nature of the internationally supported Palestinian demand that Israel must transfer control over Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem to the Palestinians Jew-free.

In a video address posted to his Facebook page at around dawn Washington time, Netanyahu said, "The Palestinian leadership... demands a Palestinian state with one precondition: No Jews."

"There's a phrase for that. It's called 'ethnic cleansing.' And this demand is outrageous."

Netanyahu then turned his fire on the so-called international community that supports this bigoted demand.

"It's even more outrageous that the world doesn't find this outrageous," he said, adding, "Some otherwise enlightened countries even promote this outrage."

Later that day, Associated Press correspondent Matt Lee asked US State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau what the administration thought of Netanyahu's statement. Apparently turning to a prepared text, Trudeau declaimed robotically and emphatically, "We obviously strongly disagree with the characterization that those who oppose settlement activity or view it as an obstacle to peace are somehow calling for ethnic cleansing of Jews from the West Bank."

"We believe that using that type of terminology is inappropriate and unhelpful... We share the view of every past US administration and the strong consensus of the international community that ongoing settlement activity is an obstacle to peace. We continue to call on both sides to demonstrate with actions and policies a genuine commitment to the two-state solution."

The only thing missing from Trudeau's response was an explanation of why Netanyahu was wrong. She didn't explain, nor was she asked, how the US's opposition to Israel's respect for Jewish Israelis' property rights in these areas squares with her denial that its policy supports ethnic cleansing.

To make this point a bit more clearly, here are a few questions that Trudeau was neither asked nor explained on her own, but whose answers are self-evident from the administration's apologetic response to every move by Israel to permit Jews to lawfully build homes in Judea, Samaria and unified Jerusalem.

- In the US government's view, does Israel have the right to pass laws or ordinances for land use in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria? If not, why not?

- And if you do respect Israel's right to issue rules on land use, why do you oppose the destruction of illegally built structures in Susiya? Why do you oppose the legal purchase of land by Jews in the so-called outposts?

- Under what circumstances is it legal for Jews to buy land beyond the 1949



THE US State Department condemned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claims of 'ethnic-cleansing.' (Reuters)

armistice lines in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria?

- Under what circumstances is it legal for Jews to build homes for themselves in these areas?

Through its consistently stated and deliberately applied policy of totally rejecting all rights of Jewish Israelis to live and build in these areas, from its first days in office, the Obama administration has made clear that it rejects the civil rights of Jews as Jews in these areas and seeks the complete negation of their rights through mass expulsion, property seizure and destruction, that is, through ethnic cleansing.

As Trudeau noted, the Obama administration's support for the ethnic cleansing of Jews is a continuation (and radicalization) of the policies of its predecessors.

Netanyahu's statement flummoxed the administration because no Israeli leader has ever stated the obvious bigotry of the US position regarding the so-called settlements so pointedly.

To the contrary, for much of the past 20 years, in a futile attempt to mobilize international support Israel, it has been the consistent policy of successive Israeli governments to ignore the anti-Semitic bigotry at the heart of "otherwise enlightened" nations' rejection of Jewish civil rights.

The problem for Israeli leaders has been that the so-called "two-state solution" which successive governments have been strong-armed by "otherwise enlightened countries" into supporting is predicated on the ethnic cleansing of Jews.

You cannot have a "two-state solution" unless Israel forcibly expels more than a half million Jews from their homes in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.

In his remarks, Netanyahu argued that it is impossible to base peace on bigotry. And of course he is right. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005

proved his point.

Eleven years ago, with the support of ideologically driven jurists and journalists and the Bush administration, then prime minister Ariel Sharon suspended the rule of law in Israel when he denied the due process rights of 10,000 Israelis lawfully residing in lands to which they had legal title in Gaza and northern Samaria, and denied their supporters' the right to lawfully protest his policies.

Far from convincing the Palestinians or their "otherwise enlightened" supporters of Israel's commitment to peace, Sharon's actions convinced them that there is no downside to supporting ethnic cleansing of Jews in furtherance of a Jew-free Palestine.

Hamas's victory in the Palestinian elections the following year, and the Bush and later Obama administrations' increasingly extreme rejections of Jewish rights across the board in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria proved that limited enactment of ethnic cleansing of Jews merely whets the "otherwise enlightened" nations' appetite for more.

Rather than point out this state of affairs, until last Friday, Israel's leaders pretended it away. And then, all of the sudden, Netanyahu decided to overturn the appeacart.

Lee asked Trudeau whether the administration was demanding that Netanyahu "walk back" his statement. Trudeau gave no answer.

But it wouldn't matter if they were. It is too late.

As Trudeau's non-denial response showed, Netanyahu's statement was the truth. The anti-settlement policies of the Obama administration and its predecessors are founded on the anti-Semitic assumption that Jewish civil rights – as opposed to everyone else's rights, are conditional. When Jewish rights collide with the internationally supported demand for a Jew-free Palestine, Jews

and Jewish Israeli governments become "obstacles to peace." That is, they become evil and therefore deserving of persecution.

As Trudeau was failing to explain how the US's support for ethnic cleansing was anything other than support for ethnic cleansing, The Jewish Press reported that the administration-supported pro-ethnic cleansing group J Street is lobbying the IRS to trample the civil rights of a group that rejects ethnic cleansing.

According to the report, J Street's president Jeremy Ben-Ami sent an email to the group's membership announcing that he is lobbying the IRS to revoke the non-profit status of Regavim. Regavim is a private group that documents illegal Palestinian construction.

Regavim works to convince the courts and the government to enforce land laws without prejudice to Jews and non-Jews alike. For rejecting anti-Jewish bigotry, Ben-Ami wrote, Regavim acts in defiance of US government policy. As a consequence, J Street is seeking to deny Regavim's American supporters their right to lawfully donate and raise funds on behalf of Regavim's lawful activities.

Netanyahu's decision to tell the truth about the anti-Semitic nature of the anti-settlement movement was a watershed event. From now on, leaders from Ramallah to Washington to Brussels will have to account for their anti-Jewish policies.

For the first time, the Israeli government has made clear that there is no distinction between the civil rights of Jews in Tel Aviv, Beit El or New York. Like every other national, religious, ethnic, racial and other group in the world, Jews have the right to exercise their civil rights to property. And if the Palestinians and their "otherwise enlightened" supporters don't like it, that's their problem, not ours.

The call for women to serve on religious councils

• By SETH FARBER

The recent decision of the attorney-general to increase to 30 percent the number of women serving in state-sponsored religious councils is a great achievement. It is also a smokescreen.

Religious councils in Israel are responsible for overseeing the distribution of religious services in Israel, including mikvaot (ritual baths), *eruv*, kashrut and marriage registration. Religious councils could be a great way of providing religious services in Israel based on community need. Theoretically, if a municipality decided to be more pluralistic in its approach to the composition of the religious councils, state-sponsored Jewish life would be much more democratic.

But what has happened in reality is much more complex. At present, there are functioning religious councils in 40 municipalities in Israel, and their composition includes only 16.5% women. Studies by the Advot group and Neemani Torah Va'Avodah have demonstrated that these numbers are disproportionate. Last week, the attorney-general stepped in and said that religious councils should increase their representation to 30% women.

Since, halachically speaking, there is no reason why a woman shouldn't serve on a religious council – notwithstanding the opposition that was raised in the 1970s when the first woman, Leah Shakkid,

was appointed to one – this is a move that is late in coming but certainly laudable. Women's participation in religious councils stands to benefit everyone, especially the average citizen who receives religious services. Unquestionably, the kinds of complaints my organization, ITIM, receives about mikvaot are significantly smaller in municipalities where women are part of the religious council and there is good reason to think that the sensitivities women bring to the table when creating local policy related to religious services will be a breath of fresh air.

Moreover, since the religious councils are government institutions, the call of the attorney-general is basically a step forward in fighting discrimination against women, who until now were being prevented from serving.

And yet, there is something incredibly problematic about the call for women to serve on religious councils.

In Israel today there are 132 municipalities that provide state-sponsored religious services, and yet only 40 religious councils are functioning. What, you may ask, happens in the 92 other municipalities? Well, in the absence of a religious, the minister of religious affairs is charged with appointing a body that will oversee religious services. This appointment is meant to be temporary, but this is Israeli religious bureaucracy, where inertia rules. In Jerusalem, for example, the temporary appointed body has func-

tioned for more than 14 years! Many of the 92 appointed bodies have become permanent.

What should really raise red flags, however, is the number of women serving on these appointed committees. I mentioned above that 16.5% of the 40 religious councils' members are women. However, I need not talk in percentages when speaking about the 92 appointed committees. In all 92 (which usually number two representatives), there is exactly one woman serving.

It is simple for the attorney-general to call upon religious councils to increase the percentage of women serving on existing councils. But if we really want to change the way religious services work in this country, we need to insist that women serve on the appointed committees as well, and we need to have oversight on those committees. At present, Jerusalem's religious council is functioning without any women. And so are 90 others.

If the attorney-general is motivated to allow women to start playing a role in the Jewish lives of Israeli citizens, it is insufficient to have the 30% rule effect only existing councils. At present the directive will only have a limited effect. But should the attorney-general apply the requirement to the appointed councils as well, there is an opportunity for some real change. And can't we all agree that that is necessary?

The author is the director of ITIM: The Jewish Advocacy Center (www.itim.org.il).