# Arguments "Ad Hominem" and "By Ethnic Identity" in Defense of Goldstone Report

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Even before the Goldstone Report was released, Richard Goldstone was arguing for its credibility by invoking his Jewishness, his Zionism, his daughter’s residence in Israel and his connection to Hebrew University. It was the mirror image of the classic fallacy known as the argument ad hominem, which is defined as follows: A substantive argument should not be rejected solely because of who has offered it.

It follows of course from this fallacy that an argument should also not be accepted because of who offered it.

A close relative of the ad hominem fallacy is what I have called “the argument by ethnic identity,” which I have defined as follows: An anti-Israel argument is made stronger if offered by a Jew. (“See, even a Jews agrees that…)

These are precisely the fallacious arguments being offered in defense of the Goldstone report by Richard Goldstone and his supporters. Goldstone has even elicited his daughter’s help. This is what she has said: “Had Richard Goldstone not served as the head of the UN inquiry into the Gaza War, the accusations against Israel would have been harsher.” She continued. “My father took on the job, for peace, for everyone and also for Israel.” She told the Jerusalem Post, “My dad loves Israel and it wasn’t easy for him to see and hear what happened. I think he heard and saw things he didn’t expect to see and hear….”

The problem is not what Goldstone saw and heard. It’s what he willfully and deliberately refused to see and hear. He refused to watch videotapes, easily accessible on the internet, that show conclusively that Hamas terrorists routinely fired rockets from behind human shields. He refused to credit eye witness reports published by refutable newspapers and even admissions by Hamas leaders. He willfully refused to listen to the testimony of one of the world’s leading experts on how democratic militaries fight asymmetrical warfare against terrorists who hide behind civilians, who said:

“I don’t think there has ever been a time in the history of warfare when any army has made more efforts to reduce civilian casualties and deaths of innocent people than the IDF is doing today in Gaza.”

Instead of defending the report against the many substantive arguments offered against it, Goldstone has repeatedly cited his Jewishness as both a shield against the criticism and a sword with which to continue to attack Israeli actions.

Had Goldstone not been the author of the United Nations Human Rights Council report on Israel, it would be tossed in the trash barrel along with other one-sided and biased reports by this prejudice group which targets only Israel for human rights violations. But those seeking to defend this indefensible report point to Goldstone’s authorship as proof that it must have credibility because a Jew wrote it (“See, even a Jew….)

In a criminal trial, it is impermissible to attack the character of the defendant unless he has placed his character at issue. That is precisely what Goldstone has done in his campaign to lend credibility to his mendacious report by constantly invoking his Jewishness. The appropriate response to an ad hominem positive argument is an ad hominem negative argument. That is why, in addition to providing a 49 page substantive response to the arguments and methodology of the Goldstone report, I have raised questions about Goldstone’s motivations in accepting leadership of the mission and signing his name to a report which is so demonstrably false and one-sided.

In light of the hard evidence, that is easily accessible online and in the media, Goldstone cannot possibly believe that Hamas did not intentionally use human shields, have their fighters deliberately dress in civilian clothing and use mosques and hospitals to store rockets and other weapons. Videotapes conclusively prove these charges, and Hamas acknowledges—indeed boasts of—them. He cannot possibly believe that Israel used the thousands of rockets that Hamas directed against its children as an excuse, or a cover, for its real goal, namely to kill as many Palestinian civilians as possible. Nor could he possibly believe that the Israeli government made a policy decision, at the highest levels, to deliberately target Palestinian babies, young children, women and the elderly for murder. All the evidence points away from these wild charges. Yet he signed a report asserting that those demonstrably false conclusions were true. Shame on him. And even more shame on him for exploiting his Jewishness to get others to believe these defamations against the Jewish state.

The Goldstone report should be rejected on its demerits. The added fact that it was authored by a Jew—selected precisely because he is a Jew with aspirations to be honored by the international community—should diminish, rather than increase, its credibility.

I have challenged Goldstone to debate the substantive points in his report. I promise not make any ad hominem arguments against the report if he stops making ad hominem arguments in its favor., Or as Adlai Stevenson once promised a political opponent: “If you stop lying about me, I will stop telling the truth about you.”