**A Challenge to Ban Ki-moon: Condemn the Murder of My Father and Abbas’ Embrace of his Murderer**

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Today, as an Israeli son whose father was brutally struck down by a Palestinian terrorist, I address the United Nations Human Rights Council and issue a challenge to the UN’s leader: condemn the murder of my father and Palestinian President Abbas’ embrace of his murderer.

My father, Richard Lakin, was a kind gentle person. An elementary school principal who educated thousands of children, teachers and parents. A life-long activist dedicated to promoting human rights, social justice and peaceful coexistence. In the 1960s he marched with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At home in Connecticut, he initiated and oversaw the integration of a white suburban elementary school and co-founded one of the first integrated summer camps. He moved to Israel in the 1980s and founded a school in which Jewish, Christian and Muslim children studied English together as a second language. His book “Teaching as an Act of Love” set forth his educational philosophy with the message “every child is a miracle” that needs to be nurtured with love. His Facebook page featured a picture of two children, Jewish and Arab, sitting arm-in-arm under the word “Coexist.”

On October 13, 2016 two Palestinian terrorists attacked a bus full of innocent passengers in Jerusalem. It was a vicious and brutal attack. They shot my 76-year old father in the head. They then stabbed him multiple times after he fell to the ground, severing most of his vital organs. The knife broke in the process. The scene was horrific. Screaming wounded, bodies and blood everywhere. My dad was rushed to the hospital with the giant knife blade still lodged in his stomach.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited my father in the ICU before he died. We stood next to my unconscious father, a beautiful man who once read books to his granddaughters, but now kept alive by machines. He died two weeks later and Ban sent my mother an emotional condolence letter in which he promised to “speak out against terrorism and incitement.”

But the Secretary-General and his UN never publically condemned the Palestinian terrorists who murdered my father, nor the years of Palestinian incitement that fuels this brutality. On February 3, 2016 Palestinian leader Mohamad Abbas met the terrorist’s father, calling the man’s son not a terrorist who murdered innocent civilians, but a “martyr” who has gone to heaven. Ban reacted with silence. Just as he been silent for years allowing wanton Palestinian incitement to hatred and violence in his UN schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

The UN Office at Geneva’s webpage “UN Response to Acts of Terrorism” lists terror attacks and UN condemnations. Richard Lakin is not on this list. In fact, not a single Israeli victim of the latest wave of Palestinian terror is on it.

How would Ban have reacted if a North Korean “resisting” South Korean occupation stuck a knife into Ban’s father - someone Ban has described as the humble man who nurtured him and educated him “[to lead by example](https://books.google.co.il/books?id=BfqIAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA63&dq=ban+ki+moon+father&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi_uPyt0cnLAhXnAJoKHXVKCbIQ6AEIGzAA#v=onepage&q=ban%20ki%20moon%20father&f=false)” – and stabbed him to death just for being a South Korean? Would Ban’s “guiding principle” be to sit silently as he did when my father was murdered? Would Ban rationalize the actions of his father’s murder because North Korean “[frustration and grievances are growing under the weight of nearly](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/01/opinion/dont-shoot-the-messenger-israel.html?_r=0)” 63 years of South Korean occupation – the phrase he used in a January New York Times op-ed to describe Palestinian murderers?

My father’s blood is crying out for the Secretary General to denounce by name and deed – in the strongest possible terms – that Abbas praised the murderer of my father and called him a martyr. That was not a call for Palestinians to make peace. That was, and is, incitement to terror. Ban must point blame squarely where it belongs – not play phony word games blaming "natural" consequences of Palestinian "frustration."

Ban Ki-Moon has stated “To lead by example has been my guiding principle… You have to always be more exemplary than other people, in terms of work ethics; in terms of public service you have to always be in the front, ahead of everybody.”

So today as I address the UN Human Rights Council I issue a direct challenge to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: Condemn unequivocally the murder of my father Richard Lakin. Condemn President Abbas for glorifying his murderer and inciting the next murder.

It is actually quite simple and straight forward. A peaceful old man is riding a public bus home from a doctor’s appointment. A dual citizen of Israel and the United States who has dedicated his life to educating children and teaching coexistence. Terrorists, indoctrinated in hatred, board the bus, shoot him in the head, and then stab him multiple times. He dies two weeks later. The Secretary-General witnesses this tragedy first-hand. By any moral or legal standard, this behavior is unacceptable and cannot be justified or rationalized. Clearly it should be condemned. To date, the Secretary-General and the organization that he leads have chosen to remain silent.

The failure of the United Nations to condemn unequivocally Palestinian terror against Israelis, and their continued rationalization of terror, makes more violence inevitable, and distances us from the peace and coexistence, for which my father stood, and for which the people of Israel stand today.