Palestinian Health Ministry Passes Off Fauxtography to WHO

May 29, 2016

Camera

http://blog.camera.org/archives/2016/05/post\_161.html

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) [decision](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_BCONF1-en.pdf) last week harshly critical of Israel for "Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan" prompted Yesh Atid Chairman Yair Lapid to [describe](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/World-Health-Organization-condemnation-of-Israel-is-anti-Semitism-says-Lapid-455124) it as antisemitic.

In preparation for WHO's publication of the decision, the Palestinian Ministry of Health submitted a [report](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_INF6-en.pdf) to the international organization. Apart from the usual allegations propagated by various NGOs, the official Palestinian submission also includes the following outrageous charges:

• Israel is damaging prisoners' health by "Holding prisoners in polluted areas, such as in the vicinity of the Dimona reactor or near areas in which waste from that reactor has been buried" (page 29).

• "In April 2013 the Russian newspaper Pravda accused Israel of injecting a number of Palestinian prisoners who were approaching their release date with cancer-causing viruses. Despite Israel’s rejection of the accusations made by the newspaper, the question remains: is it true that Israel is injecting prisoners with viruses?" (page 29)

• A Palestinian doctor contends that the Israeli practice of freezing terrorists' bodies and insistence that they will only be returned to Palestinians if they are buried immediately "makes it impossible to ascertain whether the deceased individual’s organs have been stolen" (page 49).

Beyond the unfounded, vitriolic allegations, the pictures appearing in the Palestinian Health Ministry's report highlight the submission’s total lack of credibility. Here are some examples:

On page 30, the following picture is meant to illustrate "Settlers attacking a Palestinian child while being observed by Israeli occupation forces":

However, as noted by blogger [Israellycool](http://www.israellycool.com/2015/11/20/blood-libel-the-case-of-the-torturing-settlers/) two years ago when this picture first started to appear on social media, it is a [Getty Images](http://www.gettyimages.com/event/jewish-settlers-clash-with-israeli-security-forces-at-west-bank-outpost-90701513#israeli-settlers-try-to-pull-a-fellow-settler-as-he-is-dragged-away-picture-id90700136) picture showing the eviction of Israeli settlers. The scene does not at all involve Palestinians.

When it comes to the summer 2014 Operation Protective Edge, the Palestinian Ministry of Health delves into science fiction. This picture on page is accompanied by the following caption: "Photograph taken during the Israeli war on Gaza, 2014":

This image, with its primitive Photoshop makeover, was making the rounds in the summer of 2014, and Israellycool exposed it as a [hoax](http://www.israellycool.com/2014/07/16/stop-using-this-obvious-fake-image/) at the time. The original picture was published on a blog to illustrate a story on how Israel might attack Iran's nuclear reactors:

Editors of the "Gaza" version cropped the photo and changed the aspect ratio so that the mountains and tower of a building, which simply don't exist in Gaza, are no longer visible. (The previous sentence was updated to clarify how the mountains and tower of a building were essentially erased.)

The Palestinian Health Ministry's fallacious use of photos continues with two more pictures ostensibly illustrating the Operation Protective Edge:

The picture on the right is from [Lebanon](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/news/newsid_5186000/5186392.stm), not Gaza. The one on the left is from Gaza, but from [2012](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/14/world/middleeast/money-woes-could-erode-high-hamas-standing-in-gaza.html?_r=0).

Even pictures from the current wave of violence are misleading:

The Palestinian "girl killed in cold blood" is [Yasmin Tamimi](http://aljazeerah.info/News/2016/February/29%20n/Israeli%20Repression%20of%20the%20Palestinian%20People%20Continues,%20With%20More%20Shootings%20and%20Kidnappings,%20February%2029,%202016.htm). Tamimi is not, apparently, a "girl," nor is it even clear that she is dead. The [Palestinian Center for Human Rights](http://pchrgaza.org/en/?p=7873) identifies her as 20 years old and does not claim that she was killed. And B'Tselem does not include her in its [list](http://www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/after-cast-lead/by-date-of-event/westbank/palestinians-killed-by-israeli-security-forces) of Palestinian casualties. According to Israeli [reports](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Bleeding-Palestinian-female-attacker-emerges-as-the-symbol-of-Palestinian-Valentines-Day-444944), after her engagement to be married was called off, Tamimi attempted to stab an Israeli policeman, and Israeli forces fired on her, seriously wounding her. She survived, and was transported to Shaarei Tzedek hospital.

While searches did not reveal the source for the picture on the left, the image does date back as far as [2009](https://paltoday.ps/ar/post/55488).

Could you imagine the outrage if Israel was caught using just a single fake or distorted photo? On second thought, there's no need to imagine. Media outlets including [*Haaretz*](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.541772), [*The Jerusalem Post*](http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/IDF-removes-fake-photo-of-Gaza-mall-from-blog-323202), [*The International Business Times*](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/idf-gaza-mall-malaysia-blog-pic-499498) and [Times of Israel](http://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-shows-great-life-in-gaza-in-malaysia/) covered the 2013 case in which the Israeli army's English blog posted a photograph misidentifying a Malaysian mall as located in Gaza. Will those same outlets now cover the Palestinian Ministry of Health's use of several egregiously mislabeled and even photoshopped images in an official submission to the World Health Organization?