

Israel News Digest



Christian Friends of Israel

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Human Rights Organization Rewards Terrorist Lawyer

You know how the Bible warns against calling evil good, and good evil (Isaiah 5:20)? Well, one European group just blatantly defied that admonition.

On Sunday, the Geneva-based International Institute for Human Rights and Peace and the Caen Memorial for Peace presented a “human rights” award to Palestinian Arab lawyer Mohammed Alyan.

Alyan was honored for his legal representation three years ago of the wife of one of the terrorists involved in the synagogue massacre in Jerusalem. In that attack, terrorist Ghassan Abu Jamal and his accomplice shot, stabbed and beheaded four Jewish rabbis at worship before also gunning down one of the responding police officers.



Muhammad Alyan (second from L) and his prize for his award-winning argument (photo via jewishpress.com, “New Low: French Consulate in Jerusalem Awards ‘Human Rights’ Prize to Terrorist’s Proud Father” by Hana Levi Julian).

When questioned by police, Jamal’s wife, Nadia, expressed support for the massacre and revealed that she had prior knowledge of her husband’s bloody plans. She was subsequently stripped of Israeli residency and lost the health care that Israeli taxpayers had previously covered for her and her family. Nadia insisted her human rights had been violated, and Alyan jumped to her defense. That in itself makes Alyan more villain than hero. But that’s not where the story ends.

Alyan is also the father of Bahaa Alyan, one of two terrorists responsible for the October 2015 attack on a Jerusalem commuter bus, during which three Israelis were mercilessly murdered.

Beyond the fact that Alyan raised a son capable of committing such atrocities, a year later, in 2016, he was arrested for publicly praising his son’s heinous actions during lectures at local elementary schools.

Alyan is actively trying to encourage future generations of Palestinian Arabs to follow in his son’s footsteps by murdering Israeli Jews. And the Europeans reward him as a “champion of peace and human rights.”

Arab Woman Tells Truth about Israel

A *Times of Israel* journalist writes: “I first met Boshra Khalaila in the Spring of 2010, at the Ministry of Public Diplomacy’s offices in Jerusalem. She was 24 at the time. Like me, she’d been alarmed by the public relations debacle that followed the Gaza flotilla incident and had somehow found her way to the Ministry’s hastily set-up situation room, to volunteer her time and do damage control, in Arabic.

“I next saw her last January at the first preparatory meeting for the Faces of Israel program, which I have previously written about. She had again volunteered to defend her country and taken time off work to drive from Jerusalem, where she lives, to Tel Aviv for the preparatory sessions, a ritual she would have to repeat often. I was sent to California as part of that program. Boshra’s destination was South Africa – during Israel Apartheid Week.

“In South Africa, she traveled to both Johannesburg and Cape Town, lecturing at four large university events that included a serious round of follow-up work – public discussions, five radio interviews, and a host of newspaper interviews.

“Boshra, a secular, independent and patriotic Israeli Arab woman, defies stereotypes. She grew up in a liberal home in the Arab village of Deir Hana, in the Galilee. Her first contact with Jewish Israelis came at the age of 18, when she enrolled in Haifa University. There, she had to speak Hebrew for the first time. And it is there that she started to develop her political conscience and her attachment to the State of Israel.

“I am married and doing a master’s degree [in Tel Aviv]. I am a liberal, free woman, with all the rights that I could enjoy. I compare myself to other women my age in Jordan, the territories, Egypt, any Arab country. They don’t have the rights that I have: freedom of expression, the right to vote. They are forced into marriage at a young age, and religious head covering, despite their own convictions. With me it’s the opposite; I have everything.”

On one occasion, we sat down for an interview in the lobby of a Tel Aviv hotel. My first question to Boshra was why she feels the need to speak up for Israel so publicly – something that most Jews don’t even feel compelled to do. She answered me in perfect Hebrew: ‘To sacrifice myself for the country that I live in and that gives me rights, that’s a natural price.’



Boshra (R) with “Faces of Israel” participants in S. Africa (via timesofisrael.com; “Telling Israel like it is — in Arabic” by Philippe Assouline).

“Boshra was part of a team of five people, including another Israeli Arab and a Druze, who were sent to South Africa with Faces of Israel during Israel Apartheid Week. Like us, Boshra and her team had to deal with widespread ignorance about Israel, compounded by a campaign of demonization waged by pro-Palestinian students. Unlike us, she could counter the anti-Israel Middle Eastern students as an Arab herself, in Arabic.

“[The pro-Palestinian students in Johannesburg] had built fake barriers and put up all kinds of slogans demonizing Israel and accusing it of Apartheid, of being a child murderer and the like. There were awful pictures, pictures with dead children, [it was] really terrible.”

“Boshra and her team were generally not welcome. They didn’t even know that there was such a thing as Israeli Arabs. They accused us of being Jews. Some people were hostile, they told us ‘get out,’ ‘we don’t want to hear from you.’ [Some] were even more unwilling to talk to me because I am Arab and was seen as a traitor, but this was only a small part of their group. Others, thankfully, came to listen; they were open-minded about it.”

“Boshra and her team delivered a number of lectures, told their personal stories, dialogued with students and gave interviews. “You want to defend yourself from people that tell the world that [Jews and Arabs] travel on different buses and study at different schools and that there is segregation,” she said. “That just isn’t true: I study in the same educational institutions, ride the same buses, shop in the same supermarkets. Everything that they say is absolutely false. And I do feel that I belong to my country.”

Hoping to give South Africans a glimpse of her everyday life as an Arab citizen of Israel, Boshra instead found herself publicly debating politics with a Palestinian PhD student from Gaza, in Arabic.

“This is what I told him in front of everyone; I spoke in Arabic, and I was translated: ‘I don’t enjoy it when soldiers attack and mothers and babies end up getting killed or injured. It’s hard. But the same is true for Netivot and Sderot, when Kassam rockets hit and, God forbid, someone is killed, it is very hard. On both sides there are mothers and it is hard. I want the Palestinian people to have a country. It’s a natural right.

That said, there are all kinds of conflicts within the Palestinian authority, mainly with Hamas, that prevent progress toward a peaceful settlement for the state of Israel and that is unfortunate.” She added, “If there is any Apartheid – in the sense of flagrant injustice – in the world, it is what is happening in Syria. Thousands of people murdered...the number of dead doesn’t even come close here.”

Thinking back to my experience in California, I assumed that her message would fall on deaf ears. But she surprised me:

“Most of the talks ended with a handshake and a hug. To me this says it all. I have to say that it was important that I wasn’t there representing the government of Israel. It was surprising for them to see that I was a simple person, defending my country for the rights that I have and not speaking on behalf of the government. It came across as very genuine. For them, this was huge – to be able to listen to someone who is not from the government, including for the pro-Palestinian students. When you tell them you are a student and not a government spokesman, they no longer see you as an enemy.”

Boshra’s appearances on campus made waves, and, among her many radio appearances, she was interviewed by an Islamic, Arabic-language radio station in Johannesburg. The interviewer, a religious Saudi man, asked her questions which revealed a disheartening level of ignorance about Israel, the most over-scrutinized and documented country in the world – an ignorance that is unfortunately all too common.

“He asked why Israel doesn’t let Muslims pray or go to Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem; why only Jews are allowed to pray [in the State of Israel]. I told them that in my own small village in the Galilee there are not only one but two mosques and two imams who both get a monthly salary from the state. The interviewer was in shock. I added that I could go pray at Al Aqsa mosque at will, freely. Sure, sometimes there are security concerns and they limit entrance temporarily, but that’s it.”

The host was receptive to Boshra’s story and as the conversation turned to the rights of Arabs in Israel, her assertiveness grew. “I said to him: ‘In Saudi Arabia, can a woman drive a car?’ He said no. I said: ‘I can.’ And he was silent. I asked: ‘Can a woman in Kuwait or Saudi Arabia meet a man and get to know him before getting married or is she just forced into marriage at a young age?’ He said no, she can’t. I said: ‘I can.’ And I would answer his questions with my own questions...and each time he would be stunned silent.”



Thousands of Palestinians pray outside Al-Aqsa Mosque, atop the Temple Mount (by Siiman Khader/FLASH90).

Boshra went on to correct other popular misconceptions that the host had, including ideas about the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. She informed him about the supplies that Israel provides to the strip on a monthly basis, and she reminded him that Egypt also enforces the embargo. She asked him why it was Israel and not Egypt, an Arab county, which provided for the territory’s necessities? “He was speechless. He was often speechless during our interview.”

“The host’s silence, and the reception she got from many if not all of the Arab students that she met, stood in stark contrast to my experience at Berkeley. Boshra’s interviewer, a religious Saudi, was more receptive to new facts than the “liberal” Ivy league students that I faced. “He saw me; I spoke Arabic, I was liberal and secular. This made him quite open-minded, actually.” [The *Times of Israel* article, by Philippe Assouline.]

“LORD, who...may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless...who speaks the truth from their heart; whose tongue utters no slander...and casts no slur on others...who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind...Whoever does these things will never be shaken” (Psalm 15:1-5).

In Messiah,

Lonnie C. Mings

A promotional banner for Israel's 70th Birthday celebration. The banner is split into two main sections. On the left, there is a collage of images: a newspaper clipping with the headline "THE PALESTINIAN POST STATE OF ISRAEL" and a photo of a group of people. On the right, there is a night-time photograph of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, illuminated with lights and fireworks in the sky. The text in the center reads: "Christian Friends of Israel invites you to celebrate Israel's 70th Birthday April 16-19, 2018 in Jerusalem Contact: events@cfjjerusalem.org".