

# I Condemn

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In his op-ed piece "Innocents Caught in the Cross-Fire" (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, May 8, 2008) former President Carter stated that "It is time for strong voices in Europe, the U.S., Israel and elsewhere to speak out and condemn this human rights tragedy among the Palestinian people."

Heeding Carter's plea I strongly condemn this human rights tragedy among the Palestinian people. And now that I condemned it in Carter's precise words, then what? How is this going to change what the Palestinians have brought upon themselves through their own choice of representative leadership, incitement, terrorism and the ideology of destruction?

Carter's moral stance is based on the value he attributes to human rights. However, when human rights are selectively applied to some groups but not to all he loses that moral stance and is left with nothing else to stand on, unless one legitimately views what he does as an outright support of terrorism. Frankly it matters little whether it is intentional or not on Carter's part.

It is hard to object to having a human rights policy, attitude or approach. But devoid of context Carter's human rights record has brought disaster to the world. He favored the "human rights" of Ayatollah Khomeini over that of the Shah and refused Iranian efforts to block his revolution; thus he helped form the most dangerous regime in modern times. Once the Iranians took over the US Embassy Carter failed to secure the release of the 52 US hostages (or didn't they have human rights?).

Carter uses very selective descriptions of the Palestinian predicament: "economic sanctions and restrictions in delivering water, food, electricity and fuel are causing extreme hardship among the innocent people in Gaza..." The clear implication is that Israel is causing all of this misery. It is as if "vicious" Israel is sitting on the supply spigot and arbitrarily opens or shuts it as it wishes to torment the "innocent population" without any justifiable reason. Carter says nothing about the role of Egypt in closing the border with Gaza or the role of Hamas in attacking the border crossings that provide the very fuel and food the residents need. Nor does he mention Hamas's manipulation of supplies for propaganda purposes and the fact that the shortages are manufactured and not real.

Carter prides himself on mentioning the rockets launched against the Israeli city of Sderot when he met with the leaders of Hamas, but for someone who pretends to have a strong moral stance he miserably failed again when he compares the number of Palestinians killed with the number of Israelis killed implying that Israel is to blame because of the higher death toll among Palestinians. Given that Carter teaches Sunday School he should know the difference between *killing* and *murder*. The 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment specifically prohibits murder (not killing).

When Hamas launches rockets, under the cover of a (Palestinian) civilian population, it purposefully harms (Israeli) civilians and proudly celebrates every "success." That constitutes willful and intentional murder. Yet, when Israel kills innocent Palestinians it does not rejoice and it regrets the *unintentional* harm it inflicted. Carter's claim that the number of victims on both sides should somehow have an "equal" quota is nothing but asinine as it legitimizes the cause of the terrorists. It is as if the same number of police officers "should" die as criminals when the latter open fire on them. This is warped logic at best. In reality it shows a deep disrespect for the same values he seems to promote as this is nothing but a false standard.

Carter failed miserably as a president despite the appeal of his human rights theme. International policy and interest do not evolve solely on a single value be it highly admired as that of human rights. Given his misplaced attributions of blame he might have supported Nazi Germany when her citizens were bombarded by the allies. After all, those Germans clearly suffered and would have deserved his compassion.

Carter's context-less moral judgments are damaging his very own cause. Moreover, they are patronizing as they remove the demands for mature and responsible behavior from the Palestinians and place it solely on Israel (Europe and the US). Whatever the plight of the Palestinians might be (and various groups define it differently in different times) at the very least they should act as if they belong to civilization and abide by agreed upon conventions. They cannot go on murdering as if it is an inalienable entitlement.

Carter would do much better if he would condemn terrorism and not its victims. Frankly, it would be helpful to promote human rights by not only showing compassion to the victims but also fixing the blame on the deserving parties. Carter is awfully lacking in this regard. Carter might do even better if he limits himself to enjoying a baseball game, hammer a nail once in a while and stop meddling in foreign policy. He needs to remember that he is no longer the president. There is very little he should be proud in his own foreign policy that gives any hope that his current meddling will provide any better results. A sign of wisdom and integrity which is devoid of ego would be for him to recognize his own failings and act responsibly.

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