

NGO Monitor Denies Truth for Israel

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NGO Monitor “was founded to promote accountability, and advance a vigorous discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to promote moral agendas, such as humanitarian aid and human rights.”

In fact, it’s a Jerusalem-based pro-Israeli front group. It disseminates propaganda, other misinformation and hate. It debases legitimate human rights organizations, independent journalism, and other truth, equity and justice advocates.

Its founder and president Gerald Steinberg teaches political science at Bar Ilan University. Students in his classes lose out. He also founded Bar Ilan’s Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation. In addition, he participates in Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA) workshops, and various other organizations promoting pro-Israeli issues.

On February 19, The [Times of Israel](#) published his article titled, “Israel’s vibrant democracy.” He called it “as robust and pluralistic as any in the world.” He claims no protest or advocacy restrictions, “including very fierce and unpopular criticism of the government and military.”

He said “(n)o other democracy can claim to have greater freedom of expression, despite more than six decades of war and terrorism; threats of annihilation; and (various challenges) of developing a cohesive society based on numerous divergent communities” with no democratic traditions.

Fact check

His claims read like bad fiction. Like America, free expression’s dying. Dissent’s an endangered species. War and state terror are official policies. Democracy’s on the chopping block for elimination. Arab citizens have none. Neither do most Jews denied social justice. Israel’s privileged alone have rights, no others, and conditions keep getting worse.

Like America, racing to the bottom forced mass privatizations, welfare and benefit cuts, and massive wealth shifts to corporate favorites and rich elites. Predictable poverty, hunger and homelessness followed. Growing human need’s unmet.

Unaddressed social gaps divide mainly along religious, ethnic and national lines. Inequality’s near the highest among developed countries.

Protests raged last summer against unaffordable housing, high food and energy prices, low wages and eroding social benefits, onerous working household taxes, lost education and adequate healthcare benefits, weak labor rights, misallocated settlement construction, the

high cost of raising children, and more.

Netanyahu's government is Israel's worst ever. Racist discrimination defines it. Repressive laws deny Arab citizens fundamental rights. Occupied Palestinians are virtual prisoners, especially besieged Gazans. They're also war zone victims under frequent air, land and sea attacks.

Steinberg admits Israel's "not perfect – like other nations, we have flaws, and it is our responsibility to correct them. But aggressive campaigns greatly exaggerate these imperfections (to) delegitimize Israel."

In fact, Israel delegitimizes itself. Its policies reveal its deeply flawed character. Its credentials exclude electoral freedom. Free expression's gravely threatened. Critical NGOs face extinction. Minority rights never existed and don't now.

Steinberg says otherwise. His methodology excludes facts too patent to deny. Selective myths support his claims. He calls indisputable crimes of war and against humanity false accusations.

Numerous other civil and human rights abuses are denied. Torture as official Israeli policy's ignored. Jewish superiority's supported. Diaspora Palestinians' right of return's opposed, and Arabs are called inherently violent.

All Jerusalem should be Judaized, he believes. Palestinians have no right to their capital. Jewish history, traditions, culture, heritage, language and identity must be preserved. Arabs deserve being marginalized, maligned, and denigrated.

Israeli critics employ double standards, he says. Opposition groups are "empowered through secret funding processes, and not subject to any checks and balances....the real threat to Israeli democracy."

He uses hyperbole to make baseless claims. State policies debase democracy. Weak at best always, it's headed for elimination entirely.

Recently passed laws show how. They includes:

(1) the Law to Prevent Infiltration permits imprisoning refugees and asylum seekers. It deters entering Israel to keep it ethnically/religiously pure.

(2) the Preventing Harm to the State of Israel by Means of Boycott allows civil suits against anyone advocating boycotts of settlement products. It sanctions participating NGOs. It strips their tax exempt status.

(3) The Entry into Israel Law limits work permits given migrant workers residing in Israel. It binds them to one employer. Calling the practice illegal, Israel's High Court equated it to modern-day slavery.

(4) The Revoking Citizenship for Persons Convicted of Terrorism and Espionage lets courts strip it for persons convicted without evidence. Denying it eliminates other basic rights.

(5) the Nakba Law lets the Finance Minister reduce or prohibit funding any institution under

the following conditions:

- refusal to support Israel as a Jewish state;
- racist, violent or terrorist incitement;
- support for any nation, group or entity Israel calls an enemy or terrorist organization;
- mourning Israel's Independence Day; and/or
- committing vandalism or physical desecration dishonoring Israel's flag or symbols.

In other words, mourning Palestine's worst ever catastrophe's illegal.

(6) The Acceptance to Communities Law lets villages and communities deny individuals admittance for "fail(ing) to meet the fundamental views of the community," its social fabric, and other characteristics. In other words, for not being Jewish.

(7) the Funding from Foreign State Entities law requires foreign state NGO supporters submit quarterly financial reports. At issue is delegitimizing and curtailing legitimate activities, not legislating transparency. Human rights and other civil groups are targeted for supporting rights Israel opposes.

(8) The Extending Arrest of Persons Suspected of Security Offenses permits arresting suspects in security related cases for longer periods without judicial oversight. Extending arrests without their presence is also authorized.

(9) the Pardoning Protesters of Gaza Disengagement distinguishes between political and ideological activists. Instead of general principles, the political agenda of Israel's elected majority's promoted.

(10) the Abu Basma Bill on Regional Council Elections lets the Interior Minister postpone democratic regional council elections indefinitely.

In January, Israel's High Court rejected a challenge to Israel's Israel's Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law.

It denies citizenship rights to Palestinians with Israeli spouses. Enacted in 2003 as temporary legislation, it was extended twice after its initial expiration date.

The law lets the interior minister grant citizenship only if affected Palestinians identify strongly and cooperate with Israel. They must also contribute to national security. As a result, few qualify.

In addition, potential eligibility's limited to Palestinian husbands 36 or older and Palestinian wives at least 26.

A Qara village attorney called the decision a "declaration of war on Israeli Arabs." A mixed couple said the decision "will lead to the expulsion of thousands of families from the country."

Proposed bills include:

- prohibiting the word Nazi and Third Reich symbols;
- authorizing libel without proof of damages;
- restricting support from foreign state entities;
- depriving human rights NGOs getting foreign state funding of their tax exempt status and taxes them at a punitively high rate;
- permitting libel suits and criminal prosecutions of anyone slandering Israel and/or its official bodies;
- extending preferential civil service treatment for persons with military service;
- requiring foreigners seeking Israeli citizenship pledge allegiance to the State of Israel as a Jewish, democratic, Zionist state and serve a term of military or national service;
- imprisoning persons publishing a call that denies the existence of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state;
- establishing a tribunal for non-Jewish foreigners seeking legal status in Israel;
- prohibiting organizations deemed harmful to Israel from operating;
- requiring anyone receiving an ID card, passport, driver's license, or other official document declare loyalty to Israel as a Jewish, democratic state;
- declaring Israel "the national home of the Jewish people," no longer permitting Arabic as an official language;
- prohibiting entry into Israel of anyone involved in boycotts, suing the government or military, or denying the holocaust; and
- requiring civil servants and council members swear loyalty to Israel as a Jewish, democratic state, among other proposed measures.

Other anti-democratic laws also passed. Israel's a rogue pariah state, not a democratic one. Arabs never had rights, but increasingly Jews are denied social justice and fundamental freedoms in a nation eroding them entirely.

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