

# Yoseph Haddad's Brilliant Defense Of Israel In The Irish Parliament

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NEW YORK (VINnews) — An amazing defense of Israel was presented last week at the Irish parliament, known as the Oireachtas, by Yoseph Haddad, a passionate defender of Israel in international forums. Despite the antisemitic nature of the parliament, which has invited anti-Israel personalities and numerous terrorists to speak against Israel and has condemned Israel for “de-facto annexation” the members were stunned by Haddad’s eloquency and rhetoric.

“My name is Yoseph Haddad and I am an Israeli Arab. I was born in Haifa, which is the largest mixed city of Arabs and Jews in the country, and I was raised in Nazareth, the largest Arab city in the state of Israel. This may surprise some of you after what you’ve heard about Israel, but myself, my friends and all my community regularly interacted with Israelis from all sectors and a huge part of my childhood was playing football. I grew up playing football with Jewish, Christian and Muslim kids and let me tell you – the Jews didn’t think “Oh, he’s an Arab” before passing the ball. We didn’t see each other as any different, and in fact through these childhood friendships we learned about each other’s

religions and lifestyles, even taking part in each other's holidays for Eid or Christmas or Passover.

Now fast forward to age 18, in Israel, military service or national service is mandatory for Jewish citizens, but every year, thousands of Israeli Arabs volunteer, a number that's increasing with time. When I turned 18, I saw my Jewish friends go to the army and I didn't understand why I, as an Arab, wouldn't also serve my country. After all, it is my home just as much as theirs. Even more important is that the IDF does not stand for the Jewish Defense Forces rather the Israeli Defense Forces, meaning its purpose is to protect ALL its citizens, including 2 million Arab Israelis.

Just before my service was about to begin, I experienced a trauma that made me realise without any doubt that joining the army to defend my country, and my community, was absolutely the right thing to do. The Maxim restaurant in Haifa was a symbol of partnership in the city; it was owned by Arabs and Jews and it was a place my family regularly frequented for celebrations like birthdays. Yet on the 4th of October 2003, just days after my family was last there, the Maxim restaurant was targeted by a Palestinian terrorist who suicide bombed the restaurant killing 21 Israelis – Arabs and Jews and injuring 51.

I learned a painful but important lesson that day. These terrorists did not care that they were killing Arabs: they targeted us because we are Israeli. Just the same as Hezbollah in Lebanon fired rockets on Israeli Arab cities in the second Lebanon war. Just the same as how nearly half the Israeli civilian casualties from the Second Lebanon War were Arab Israeli Muslims. Just the same as Hamas who fired rockets on Israeli Arab towns throughout the country in May 2021, killing Arab Muslims.

When we as Arab Israelis join the IDF, we do it to defend our country too. When you understand this, you will see that this is not a racial conflict, but a political one. Because we too, as Arabs are targets of Palestinian terrorism.

So I joined the IDF in the Golani unit, eventually serving as a commander over Jewish soldiers, and I defended by country, and my community against the violence of Hezbollah terrorists in the Second Lebanon War where I was badly injured and almost lost my life. It was through this experience that I saw how important it is to speak the truth about Israeli society and the ties that we have to each other – both Arabs and Jews. Does that sound like a story which could occur in an apartheid state?

Here is the reality that you didn't hear from Amnesty International and Senator Frances Black a few days ago:

Arab Israelis, both Muslim and Christian, make up 20% of the entire population and enjoy equal rights under the law, the same as any other Jewish citizen. In Israel's basic laws, the right to freedom of religion is protected explicitly, as is the right to equality under the law and the democratic principles of the state.

We Arabs serve at the highest levels of nearly every position, and in fact are overrepresented in some industries. We are 30% of all doctors, roughly 50% of all pharmacists. In the last round of new doctors, Arabs were 50%!

Arab Israelis are diplomats such as Israeli Ambassador to Azerbaijan, George Deek; news anchors such as Lucy Ayoub; professional athletes such as paralympic gold medalist Eyad Shalabi; military leaders such as Major Ella Wawaya; singers such as Valery Hamaty; senior tech executives such as Jonny Srouji, the head of Apple in Israel; bankers such as Samer Haj Yahya, the head of the largest bank in Israel, Bank Leumi; and yes, even supreme court justices such as Khaled Kabub who was selected just last week as the first Muslim Arab to serve on the Israeli Supreme Court...following in the footsteps of multiple Arab Israeli Christians who have served in the same position before him.

It's true that Israel is a Jewish state, but it is also a democratic state and I am living proof that this is possible. While Israel is imperfect, and racism exists, it is not systemic but individual. Every day, Arabs and Jews are standing side by side in every sector of society, cooperating and living in peace, working to resolve the problems in our society. But do you know what doesn't help our society?

White Europeans at Amnesty International, sitting in their comfortable London office, where they ironically have been criticised for a culture of White supremacy, are telling our sovereign nation of Arabs and Jews, how to run our country.

Even more appalling, the white Europeans at Amnesty International have the audacity to define my identity as an Arab, labeling me as a "Palestinian" despite the fact I am an Israeli Arab. Not only that, but according to a recent poll on identity by Sahariya, only 14% of Israeli Arabs define themselves as Palestinian...

14%...out of 2 million.

Yet Amnesty International thinks they know better than us, how to define us?

Amnesty doesn't care about the well-being of Palestinians or Arabs in Israel, and neither do those of you who call for the dismantling of Israel. This report is about eliciting an emotional response to smear my country, despite the fact that the definition of apartheid according to international law does not apply to the State of Israel in any capacity. In fact, the definition of apartheid is so long and complex according to international law that no country has ever been convicted of such a crime; it was defined after South Africa.

Amnesty International spoke here just a few days ago and when asked about whether or not they included the testimonies of Israeli Arabs like me, they tiptoed around the issue until finally explaining that they primarily focused on the Negev region as an example of the so-called apartheid. They explained that there are varying levels of oppression, but that we "all suffer under the same apartheid system."

They are lying. There is no apartheid system in Israel, and if we suffer varying levels of oppression, then it isn't a system of apartheid. By the way, the Negev has roughly 100,000 Israeli Arabs, which is 5% of the Arab Israeli population. Amnesty International took 5% of the population to get the answers they were seeking and then came here to the parliament and presented it as if it represented 100% of the population. Think about that.

Another thing you should know about Amnesty's report is that it often references the lack of access to water and electricity for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, claiming this comes as a result of settlements and implying that the lack of resources is Israel's fault.

What they don't tell you is that this is physically impossible because the electricity grids and the water pipelines in the West Bank are shared between Israelis and Palestinians. There is no apartheid! If infrastructure is built for a settlement, that would mean infrastructure in the area is expanding, not decreasing. Water shortages do occur, but you probably didn't know that the pipeline which runs across the entire West Bank and provides water to the city of Hebron has holes dug in it across the West Bank to divert water flow to Palestinians villages who refuse to pay for the services.

And what about those sob stories about Palestinian chicken farms that Senator Frances Black talks about? What she might not understand is that the Palestinian Authority was required under the Oslo Accords to

develop water aquifers in the West Bank. But doing so requires financial resources that will come from the pockets of PA officials...so guess what they haven't done?

You guessed it, build an aquifer to provide for their population.

The corruption doesn't end there. Let's talk about Gaza.

Gaza is a humanitarian catastrophe without adequate electricity or water, but who is responsible for that?

Firstly, Israel withdrew from Gaza completely in 2005, only to have terrorist organisation Hamas take over and begin an ongoing oppression of their own people. Why? Because there is no one Hamas hates more than their political rivals.

No, not Israel.

Fatah, the primary party of the Palestinian Authority.

Instead of putting the well-being of the people of Gaza first, Hamas and the PA have spent years playing politics trying to get back at each other. For example, the PA is responsible for providing electricity to Gaza, they purchase it from the Israel Electric Corporation and provide the fuel for the power station. But when there are political rifts, they sometimes refuse to pay.

Even worse, for years, Gaza has needed a new power station, something they're capable of building, but power stations require fuel and fuel costs money.

Guess who refuses to pay for it? That's right, the PA.

A similar crisis is occurring with sewage and water treatment facilities in Gaza – something Hamas has known for years they need to build, something else which needs fuel.

Yet instead of allocating resources to this, they've invested \$1.25 billion in building underground tunnels to carry out terrorist operations against Israel.

Even Israel can't step in to help because the PA doesn't want them to, it would be undermining their authority as the representatives of the Palestinian people to directly negotiate with Hamas. Sadly, it's the Gazan people who pay the price...and then the Palestinian "leaders" complain here to you that Israel is to blame.

Don't you see? The Palestinian leaders are scamming Europeans out of their money and perpetuating this conflict because it's a cash cow.

Your money is perpetuating this conflict, and Israel, while imperfect, isn't the problem here.

There are members of this body who obsess over Israel in the name of supporting Palestinians. But calling for boycotting Israel even in the Occupied Territories, and making a blacklist of companies disproportionately harms Palestinians on the ground, thousands of whom work in factories over the green line. Regardless of the legality of settlements, there's nothing humanitarian about actively harming the well being of Palestinians on the ground.

TDs here have accused Israel of crimes against humanity, and yet where is your urgent session on Syria's or Lebanon's treatment of Palestinians? Palestinians are forbidden by law in Lebanon from becoming doctors or lawyers and from over 70 other professions. They are restricted to living in refugee camps, they are not permitted to share the healthcare system, the pension system, the education system, and they cannot own property. Most importantly, they cannot be citizens.

In Syria, over 4,000 Palestinians were murdered by the Assad regime. That's 15 times the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza in the last operation between Israel and Hamas. And unlike in Gaza, all 4,000 of the Palestinians in Lebanon were civilians.

I ask this honestly, as an Arab, and I urge you to look inside yourselves in a moment of self-reflection: why do you insist on holding Israel to a different standard than all other nations? Could it be, just maybe, that it is because it is the only Jewish and democratic state? The double standards here reek of antisemitism, classic antisemitism, and as an Israeli Arab I'm here to tell you that this antisemitism affects me too.

Amnesty's report is nothing but an exercise in propaganda because the so-called human rights advocates at Amnesty International had to justify their disproportionate obsession and focus on the state of Israel, while they admitted to turning a blind eye to human rights violations in other countries like China and Syria.

But you don't even need to go to China to see human rights violations that Amnesty ignores. I want you all to remember the name Nizar Banat.

Nizar was a Palestinian journalist and activist who was arrested for criticising the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

Yes, arrested for criticising his own government.

After several days in custody, the PA security forces beat him to death.

This is human rights and rule of law under the Palestinian Authority...yet you spend hours speaking about Israel here? Shame on you.

While Amnesty stokes the flames of hatred against Israel, it is us Israelis, both Arabs and Jews, who pay the price on the ground.

Amnesty's report is the height of elitism, of a modern day colonialist mindset that says, 'We Europeans know better than you brown people how to manage your country.'

I guess old habits die hard.

You would think that the Irish of all people would be able to see this scheme for what it really is given the fact the Irish suffered under British colonisation... but after watching some of the TDs a few days ago call for dismantling the state of Israel, apparently not everyone remembers history.

Even more alarming, there were some TDs here in Ireland who protested my address here today, claiming that the "other side" isn't being represented. I find this highly ironic after listening to two hours of Amnesty International speaking about their report just days ago. Even more absurd when you look at the fact there hasn't been a speaker who supported Israel in the Oireachtas in at least four years, yet TDs welcomed convicted Palestinian terrorists such as Shawan Jabarin to speak in Ireland. They posed for photos with Bashar al Assad, and praised China while condemning Israel. Yet they're afraid that I, an Israeli Arab, can speak in the Irish parliament? My comments to them are this:

Are you afraid that I will expose your lies and hypocrisy about the State of Israel as an Israeli Arab? Are you afraid that I will expose the true motivations behind your obsession with my country, that maybe, just maybe it's not about "human rights" but about a disproportionate focus on the one state in the world which defines itself as Jewish?

You know, one of the criticisms I received before my speech here was that I'm not Arab enough to speak about my own society. I ask you, what would you like me to do to be Arab enough?

Is this what you want? Theatrics? A thicker accent? Tell me, what's "Arab enough" for you? Did you expect me not to be able to think for myself? Not to have my own thoughts and opinions that refute your ignorant misunderstanding of what's happening in Israel?

Dismissing an Israeli Arab's opinion because you think it should be something that fits with the norm is not only ignorant, but pure racism.

So allow me, an Arab, born and raised in the country of Israel, which seems to garner so much attention from this body, to explain to you what Israel really stands for:

Israel stands for democracy with a government that's comprised of left wing, right wing, religious, secular, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, LGBTQ, and disabled people.

Israel stands for the rule of law, where a Supreme Court Judge is an Israeli Arab, and where a previous Arab Supreme Court Judge, Salim Joubran sent a Jewish president and a Jewish prime minister to prison when they committed crimes.

Where an IDF soldier who shot a terrorist in violation of the code of conduct is convicted and sent to prison.

Israel stands for freedom of expression, where members of the government can openly criticise their state, including in Arabic, in the halls of the parliament.

Where thousands of Israelis can protest against the government or against legislation they oppose without fear of arrest or murder.

Israel stands for free speech, where the press can, and does, openly criticise the government without fear of arrest and persecution – unlike in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel stands for humanity, where the IDF itself launched a hospital for the sole purpose of providing humanitarian aid and treatment to Syrians injured in the Syrian Civil War, despite the fact that Syria is an enemy country.

It stands for providing humanitarian aid to Gaza even when Hamas bombs their own humanitarian aid convoy which occurred in May 2021.

It stands for granting tens of thousands of work permits to Palestinians who work every day within Israeli borders for a much higher salary than they would ever earn in the Palestinian territories.

Israel stands for giving up territories in exchange for peace such as the Sinai Peninsula in 1979 for peace with Egypt, and the peace agreement with Jordan in 1994.

It stands for forming new alliances with Arab states across the region for the benefit of both peoples such as the Abraham Accords.

Israel stands for accepting the partition plan when the Arabs of the region said no and launched a war.

It stands for granting full citizenship to the Arabs who remained, like my family.

It stands for taking chances and painful sacrifices for peace over and over again, even when it ends with over 15,000 rockets being fired at

our civilians from Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

It stands for spending billions of dollars to build the Iron Dome defensive system to protect Arab and Jewish lives while Hamas is spending millions of dollars on rockets and tunnels

It stands for continuing to provide emergency medical treatment to Palestinians knowing that some of them have abused such permits to carry out terrorist activity in the past.

It stands for Arab doctors and nurses saving the lives of Jewish patients in hospitals, and Jewish doctors and nurses saving the lives of Arab patients.

It stands for the Arabs and Jews who stand side by side every day as citizens of the state of Israel.

Israel stands for life.

Thank you.

I am happy to answer any questions.”