



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifteenth session

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

## **Written statement\* submitted by the Association for World Education, a non-governmental organization on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 September 2010]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **New trends in Arab-Muslim Judeophobia / Antisemitism: abandoning Holocaust denial**

**Arab and Muslim Judeophobia-Antisemitism includes three major components:**

- a) Anti-Jewish views derived from traditional Islamic sources.
- b) Antisemitic stereotypes, images and accusations of European and Christian origin.
- c) Holocaust Denial and equating Zionism with Nazism.

### **The Islamic Component**

#### **The Jews Are Descendants of Apes and Pigs**

It is very common in Arab discourse for Jews to be called "apes and pigs" or "descendants of apes and pigs." This insult appears not only in Friday sermons but also in political articles. It is based on a number of Koranic verses which state that some Jews were turned into apes and pigs by Allah as punishment for violating the Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

This image has pervaded the public consciousness, even that of children. In May 2002, the Saudi satellite television station *Iqraa* interviewed a three-and-a-half-year-old girl about Jews, on a program called "The Muslim Women's Magazine." Asked whether she liked Jews, the little girl answered, "no", and explained that they were "apes and pigs," because Allah said so in the Koran.

#### **The Jews Attempted to Poison the Prophet Muhammad**

Another common anti-Jewish charge is that the Jews conspired to assassinate the Prophet Muhammad. One such attempt is particularly notorious: the alleged attempt by a Jewish woman to poison the Prophet, according to much later Muslim accounts.

#### **The Promise of the Stones and the Trees**

This too is a common traditional anti-Jewish motif. According to a widely quoted prophetic tradition (*hadith*), before Judgment Day, the Muslims will fight the Jews and kill them. The Jews will hide behind stones and trees, and the stones and trees will call out to the Muslims and say: "A Jew is hiding behind me. Come and kill him." The premise here is that Jews are so vile that even nature itself – the trees and the stones – reject them in revulsion. Article 7 of the 1988 Hamas Charter concludes with this same *hadith* quotation.

### **Western Elements**

#### **The Blood Libel**

The blood libel is still current in the Arab and Muslim world, and crops up even in the most important government newspapers. The most notorious case of spreading the blood-libel is that of Mustafa Tlass, who, until 2004, was Syria's vice-president and defense minister for

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<sup>1</sup> Koran, 2:65, 5:60, 7:166. Two of these texts (2:65 and 7:166) specify that violation of the Sabbath was the cause of the transmutation. In one instance (5:60), it is mentioned as a punishment brought upon *ahl al-kitab* ("the people of the book," a term signifying both Jews and Christians) who refused to accept the True Faith.

over thirty years. In his book, *The Matzah of Zion*, he relates the story of the Damascus 1840 blood libel, telling it as though the Jews were actually guilty of committing the crime.<sup>2</sup> The book has been republished in many editions since 1983. Some writers have even expanded the blood libel accusations, claiming, for example, that the Jews use human blood to make their traditional Purim pastries.<sup>3</sup> In Tlass's own words, in a preface: "The Jew can...kill you and take your blood in order to make his Zionist bread." On 8 February 1991, David G. Littman quoted this passage at the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission on Human Rights; in a 'right of reply', the Syrian delegate declared: "We should like to launch an appeal to all members of this Commission to read this very important work [*The Matzah of Zion*] that demonstrates unequivocally the historical reality of Zionist racism...and those unmasked realities in Zionism."<sup>4</sup>

On 8 August 2010, Syrian author Muhammad Nimr Al-Madani declared on Iranian Al-Alam TV: "In many countries, on the Matza of Zion holiday, they would kill people, take the blood of the victims, and mix it with the Matza of Zion [...]."<sup>5</sup>

### **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

Since 1925, when it was first translated into Arabic, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has been frequently used in anti-Jewish discourse in the Arab world, to back up claims that there is a "Jewish plot to take over the world." Many Arab shapers of public opinion cite this fabricated document, claiming that the Jews' malicious plan, as set out in the *Protocols*, is now being realized. The Jews are constantly accused of using devious methods to accomplish their goal: controlling the economy and the media, corrupting morals and encouraging international and internal conflict.

The use of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in the Arab-Muslim media became a topic of discussion worldwide in 2002, when an Egyptian satellite station began to air the Egyptian television series, *Knight Without a Horse*, throughout the Arab world over Ramadan (November-December).<sup>61</sup> During Ramadan in 2003, also during prime-time hours,

<sup>2</sup> An infamous affair in which the disappearance of a Capuchin friar Thomas and his Muslim servant were blamed on the Jews who were falsely accused of engaging in ritual murder. See Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: "Ritual Murder", Politics, and the Jews in 1840*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 354, "Saudi Government Daily: Jews Use Teenagers' Blood for 'Purim' Pastries," March 12, 2002, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/628.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> David G. Littman, "Syria's Blood Libel Revival at the UN: 1991-2000", *Midstream*, 46, no 2 (Feb.-March 2000), p. 2-8.

<sup>5</sup> See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 3219, "Syrian Author Muhammad Nimr Al-Madani on Iranian TV, September 8, 2010, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/4589.htm>

<sup>6</sup> On November 6th, 2002 (the first night of Ramadan), some Arab television channels (including the Egyptian State Television) aired the first segment of a 41-part serial called "A Knight Without a Horse," which is based on "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." It should be noted that the nights of Ramadan are considered peak time of television viewing in Arab and Muslim countries. The series sparked protests in the West, with the U.S. State Department calling on the Egyptian government to prevent the broadcast – a demand that was rejected out of hand by Egyptian Information Minister Safwat Al-Sharif. The series aroused much debate in the Egyptian and Arab press. Most writers supported the airing of the series, but a few criticized Egypt's obsession with antisemitic writings. The series was viewed and approved for broadcast by a committee appointed by the Egyptian Censor. A committee from the Egyptian Radio and Television Association declared the series "a landmark in the history of Arab drama." The Egyptian Information Minister stated that "the dramatic views expressed by the series contain nothing that can be considered antisemitic." See MEMRI's Inquiry and Analysis Series, nos. 109, 113 and 114 (Nov. 8, Dec. 10 and Dec. 20, 2002, respectively). A video cassette of the relevant sections with English subtitles is available from MEMRI.

Hizbullah's TV station Al-Manar aired another antisemitic series: the Syrian-produced *Al-Shatat* (The Diaspora), which purported to show Jewish life in the Diaspora and the emergence of Zionism. It included gruesome scenes such as the ritual murder of a Christian boy and the ritual murder of a Jew who married a gentile. The series also shows how Amschel Rothschild, the purported founder of a secret world Jewish government, instructed his sons from his deathbed to start wars and corrupt society all over the world in order to serve the financial interests and the political goals of the Jews.<sup>7</sup>

An official tenth-grade history textbook published in 2004 by the Palestinian Authority includes a chapter on the history of Zionism. After summarizing the resolutions of the first Zionist Congress in Basel, the chapter adds: "There are a number of secret decisions issued by the Congress known as 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion', which aim at taking control of the whole world."<sup>8</sup> The Hamas Charter refers to *The Protocols* extensively.<sup>9</sup>

When *The Protocols* are mentioned in the Arab media, they are referred to as unquestionably authentic, and the irrefutable evidence since 1921 proving it to be a forgery is totally ignored. The following incident is very revealing: in November 2003, the Arabic translation of *The Protocols* was included, along with the Torah and the Talmud, in an exhibition on the sacred books of the three monotheistic religions in the Alexandria Library. Dr. Yousef Zeidan, director of the Centre for Arabic Manuscripts at the library, proudly told the Egyptian weekly *Al-Usbu'*: "When my eyes fell upon the rare copy of this dangerous book, I immediately decided to place it next to the Torah... [because] it has become one of the Jews' sacred [texts] and part of their basic constitution, their religious law, and their way of life... [It] is more important to the Zionist Jews of the world than the Torah." After complaints were made from various sources, Dr. Zeidan was obliged to remove *The Protocols* from the library exhibition.

There are a few notable exceptions, among them some prominent figures who publicly denounced *The Protocols* as forgeries. These include Syrian philosopher Dr. Sadeq Jalal al-'Azm, President Mubarak's advisor Sr. Usama al-Baz, and the late Dr. 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Masiri, an Egyptian authority on Jewish history and author of an Arabic-language encyclopedia of Judaism.

### **Holocaust Denial**

Holocaust denial appears in many different forms, and is one of the central elements in modern anti-Jewish propaganda.

Sometimes the claim is total, namely that the Holocaust never happened, and is a Jewish invention aimed at justifying the stealing of Palestine from its rightful owners, and at exploiting the world's sense of guilt in order to solicit money and support for the Jews and for Israel.

At other times, the claim is more limited, namely that the Holocaust happened, but the number of victims has been grossly inflated – for the same purpose.

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<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that the exact same scene, in which Amschel Rothschild divides Europe between his sons, appeared in the Nazi propaganda film from the 1930s, *The Jew Süß*.

<sup>8</sup> Tarikh al-'alam al-hdith wa'l-mu'asir (Modern and Contemporary World History), The State of Palestine Ministry of Education, Ramalla-Al-Bireh, 2004, p. 63. Incidentally, the preparation of this textbook received financial support from Belgium.

<sup>9</sup> E/CN.4/2006/NGO/239: The 1988 Covenant of the Palestine Islamic Resistance Movement–Hamas.

Some – such as Mahmoud 'Abbas / Abu Mazen in the Arabic version of his doctoral dissertation – claim that the Zionist Jews collaborated with the Nazis in the Holocaust in order to drive the Jews to emigrate from Europe to Palestine.<sup>10</sup>

### **Demonizing the Jew**

As a “logical conclusion” of all the above comes the demonization of the Jews, individually and collectively – well described in great detail by historian and CNRS director Pierre-André Taguieff in several substantive volumes over two decades.<sup>11</sup>

One blatant example: despite the information accumulated about the identities of the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks – politicians, officials, journalists, and religious leaders throughout the Arab and Muslim world have continued to claim that the perpetrators of the attacks were not Arabs or Muslims. The claim that American and/or Jewish or Israeli elements carried out the attacks has become an accepted, common myth in the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>12</sup> It has become the new blood libel of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jews are also accused of spreading diseases (AIDS, Polio and Bird Flu), of spreading drugs and other types of crime, and are even blamed for natural disasters, such as the 2004 tsunami.

### **Abandoning Holocaust denial for endorsement of the Holocaust**

In the last year, a new phenomenon has emerged in the Arab media: explicit acknowledgement and endorsement of the Holocaust, instead of Holocaust denial. Implicit acknowledgement of the Holocaust has always been very common in the Arab and Muslim discourse, especially as part of the repeated accusation that the Zionists' acts against Palestinians are similar to those of the Nazis against the Jews.

The claim is that the Holocaust did happen, and was completely justified: it was a deserved punishment from Allah in retribution for the Jews' iniquities. Moreover, since the Jews have not discarded their depraved ways, there will be another Holocaust, "and God-willing it will be at the hands of the Muslims."

This kind of endorsement is evident in TV programs on the Qatari Al-Jazeera channel, for example in statements by the prominent Sunni religious authority, Dr. Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi, head of the Europe-based International Union of Muslim Scholars. It is also evident on the Egyptian Islamist TV channel Al-Rahma.<sup>13</sup>

This new trend also takes the form of humorous references to the Holocaust. For example, a former Lebanese minister explained in an interview that, in the recent World Cup, he rooted for Germany because "the Germans hate the Jews and burned them – ha ha ha."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See MEMRI Special Dispatch Special Report No. 15, "Abu Mazen: A Political Profile," April 29, 2003, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/856.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> See, particularly, Pierre-André Taguieff, *Prêcheurs de Haine: Traversée de la judéophobie planétaire*, 2004; *La Judéophobie des Modernes. Des Lumières au Jihad mondiale*, 2008 ; *La nouvelle propagande antijuive*, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> A New Antisemitic Myth in the Middle East Media: The September 11 Attacks Were Perpetrated by the Jews (Washington, DC: MEMRI, 2002). <http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=archives&Area=sr&ID=SR00802>

<sup>13</sup> See MEMRI Special Dispatch No. 3023, "Al-Rahma TV Tries to Deceive French Regulator, After Being Banned from Broadcasting on Eutelsat Satellite," June 11, 2010, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/4360.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> See MEMRI-TV Clip No. 2536, Former Lebanese Minister Wiam Wahhab Warns of Possible Attacks

## **Arab voices condemning antisemitism and Holocaust denial**

It is important to note that voices have emerged which loudly and clearly condemn antisemitic myths and Holocaust denial. One prominent example is the young Egyptian researcher Dr. Sa'id Okasha, who, during a TV interview, withstood the interviewer's pressures and insisted on condemning these phenomena in an authoritative and informative manner.<sup>15</sup>

## **Appeal to the Human Rights Council & High Commissioner for Human Rights**

The Association for World Education calls on the Human Rights Council and the HCHR to condemn the growing Judeophobia /Antisemitism, propagated also on Government and private TV and media in several Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in total contradiction with the Resolution: Combating the Defamation of Religions (March 2010), sponsored since 1999 by the OIC.

### *Note*

This text was prepared by Yigal Carmon, President and Founder of MEMRI. It contains some extra material – with the author's consent – provided by the representative of AWE (David G. Littman).

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against UNIFIL and States: I Like the Germans Because They Burned the Jews," July 4, 2010, <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2536.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> See MEMRI Special Dispatch Mp. 2800, "Egyptian Researcher Sa'id Okasha Rejects Al-Faraeen TV's Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial," February 10, 2010, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/3965.htm>.