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# Muslim community in protest against Israeli onslaught

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Muslims reflected in a pool of rainwater as they prayed in Freedom Square, Valletta, yesterday, before the peaceful protest against Israeli attacks. Photo: Darrin Zammit Lupi.

The Muslim community yesterday marched through Republic Street, Valletta, in a peaceful protest against the Israeli attacks on innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

Some 200 members of the Maltese Muslim Community braved the evening chill and chanted: "Free, free Palestine, occupation is a crime" and "Stop the occupation, stop the aggression" as they carried Palestinian flags and posters through the capital. Their message was spelt out on a large banner that read: "We call upon the free world to apply pressure on the Israeli government to stop the ongoing massacre and break the siege".

Before the protest started, a group of Muslims gathered in a corner of Freedom Square for their evening prayers to Allah whom they thanked during the protest as they chanted: "Allah hu akbar" (God is great).

At the forefront of the crowd, which protested in Valletta's wet roads, was a line of children, one of who carried a poster reading: "Why are we being killed?"

Behind her, an adult carried a poster showing Palestinian children killed during the war that has been going on since mid-December.

The protesters questioned what the United Nations was doing to stop the massacre as another banner accused the UN of being "blind, deaf and dumb".

They also emphasised the importance of the EU's role "to control the Israeli military machine".

Labour Party international secretary Alex Scerberras Trigona, representatives of Moviment Graffiti and television host Peppi Azzopardi were among those present.

In another protest held last week various non-governmental organisations condemned the violence that led to the death of innocent civilians when Israeli troops attacked the Gaza Strip on Sunday.

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## Comments

V. Zammit (2 weeks ago)

NO Occupation = No war

Occupation = Wars

Killing school children is a terrorist act and can never be justified.

Israel is simply an armed gang, with the support of the UK; they were illegally permitted to settle on the Palestinian peoples land.

Adrian Cardona (2 weeks ago)

"At the forefront of the crowd, which protested in Valletta's wet roads, was a line of children, one of who carried a poster reading: "Why are we being killed?""

Let me tell you, little innocent children, why you are being killed. Because your parents voted for a terrorist organization to lead your country. Because the terrorist organization leading your country place rocket launchers in the midst of your residences and fires them at another country, hoping to kill other children like you. Because your parents celebrate when kids and their mothers in another country are blown up and torn to bits on their way to school. Because when you grow up you will be taught to hate anyone who is not Muslim. And you are being killed because your leaders planned it like that, so that they can further justify their bloody jihad against anything civilized in this world.

Chris Borg (2 weeks ago)

D Vella. Moroccan Jews were confined to mellahs up to relatively recent times. There were pogroms in Iraq during the Second World War. In the not-so-distant past, Yemenite Jews were not even allowed to ride a donkey or wear new clothes....the point is that it is a MYTH that Arabs and Jews lived happily ever after before zionism came

around. And by the way, in Gaza you get crucified if you're found guilty of being "an enemy of Islam". Christians must be happy to live under Hamas!!!

L Chircop (2 weeks ago)

@ C Camilleri

"Such people make every country their home."

Are you aware that there are Maltese Muslims, so they are protesting in their country, as is their right. Besides, they were not insulting anyone, they were just showing their disapproval at what is happening in Palestine.

"I still want to see Catholics or other denominations protesting and praying in a capital of a Muslim country."

So you are saying that you want Malta to be as "undemocratic" as those Muslim countries which according to you do not allow non-Muslims to pray openly.

Your comments do not really have anything to do with the Israeli attacks, the reason behind the protest, but smell of bigotry and islamophobia.

D Vella (2 weeks ago)

@James de Giorgio.

The fact is that Christians do precisely that, . Some of the oldest Churches and Monasteries are on Arab Soil. They are free to worship and have been doing precisely that thousands of years.

It would be a good idea for commentators to at least do some research before voicing opinions which are not backed by fact.

D Vella (2 weeks ago)

Mr callus

You are so very wrong. Jews and Arabs have always, right through history to the present, lived peaceably together, from the nearby shores of Tunisia to the Mountains of Iran and all points in between.

The problem is the Zionists, East and Central European Jewry, recently joined by American and Northern European jews who have nothing at all in common with that part of the World who have stolen Palestinian land and made it theirs and in the process made 2000000 people homeless. Now they are bombing them to smithereens.

C. Camilleri (2 weeks ago)

Such people make every country their home. They have their countries where to protest. They must remember that their stay as guests in foreign countries does not give them the right to insult other people. I still want to see Catholics or other denominations protesting and praying in a capital of a Muslim country. Instead of abusing the freedom enjoyed in democratic countries they should return to their countries and fight to bring freedom there.

Chris Borg (2 weeks ago)

The Jews just got 20% of the Mandate of Palestine in 1948...not really a case of occupying ALL so-called Palestinian land, is it? And full-blown conflict would have erupted after the British left even if the State of Israel had not been established.

I think it's much better to leave religion out of this issue...it's a political issue and that is what it should remain.

Hamas do not make use of powerful weapons not out of love for Israelis but simply because they don't have any. The argument justifying Hamas by their relative weakness is thus fallacious. Neither thus the non-intentional killing of civilians (which is very bad in itself) by Israel make Hamas right. So many German civilians were killed INTENTIONALLY during the second world war...does that mean that the Nazis were right and the Allies wrong?

Having said that, I think there's nothing wrong with these protestors carrying Maltese flags...always better than the Hizbollah flags they carried a few years ago in a similar protest in Valletta. We live in a democracy so they should have every right to organise protests and present their own perspective.

James De Giorgio (2 weeks ago)

I wonder how long Christians would last if they knelt and prayed the Our Father in full view of passers-by in Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Gaza, Iraq or Iran. I believe this is but the beginning.

s.bugeja (2 weeks ago)

@Stephen Spiteri

"it was given to them by a celestial institution higher than the United Nations, called God."

It was not. lands are taken by military conquest. the history of the world is replete with such conquests. in fact they form the biggest part of the world's history. According to the bible the land of israel was taken and retaken dozens of times by different empires which held sway over the region at one time or another. there is nothing divine or supernatural going on. It is simply that israel lies midway between eastern and western civilizations. malta is in a similar situation smack in the middle of the mediterranean and an important sea gate. that's why we have been under all the powers which have at some time commanded the middle sea.

Ri Bugeja (2 weeks ago)

The Israeli response is so disproportionate that it is time for the whole world to stop asking who is to blame and to speak out about what is happening here,"

This conflict can be described by one word, namely, occupation. Synonymous with occupation is oppression, injustice, which is translated into the fact that people have no voice, no freedom, that they cannot choose what they want to do. Land is taken away and movement is restricted - permission is granted at random.

This was not said by a Muslim living in Palestine but by a Christian Nun (Times of Malta - Interview). Anyone who has been commenting here can read this - Enough said!

And Iris Azzopardi, if Peppi Azzopardi and Alex Sceberras Trigona decided to protest along with the Muslims it is because they feel that they should protest against the killing of innocent people and children! All people should protest and not just Muslims.

Clive Brockdorff (2 weeks ago)

I do wish that these protests would call themselves what they really are - demonstrations calling for the annihilation of the "zionist entity".

If they were really "peace protests" they would have taken place when Hamas was constantly lobbing rockets into Israel's civilian centres.....but then, for certain sectors, the killing of Jews has never been seen as a bad thing and the protestors only put in an appearance when Hamas (or hezbollah) takes a beating.

The one good thing to come out of this fracas is that we have seen that, notwithstanding years of very skillful propaganda, there are still enough people who can see things for what they are.

r.callus (2 weeks ago)

I am all for democracy and the right to protest but this must work both ways. if the shoe was on the other foot would pro israeli protesters be allowed to show their opinion in a muslim country? probably not as no israeli would be crazy enough to live in such a country for obvious reasons. We all know how 'tolerant muslims are to non muslims. Can a muslim convert to another religion? can a christian man marry a muslim woman and keep practising christianity?

John Caruana (2 weeks ago)

The Palestinians ( Hamas ) started this fight so they should finish instead of crying foul. As for civilians being killed , that is because Hamas has no respect for its own people and they use them as a shield ,then when they get killed they send pictures around the world of children hurt or killed but the fact is that they ( Hamas ) killed them while using them as a shield. Israel should press on and finish hamas once and for all.  
John.

Jo.Galea (2 weeks ago)

@ D Grima

Maybe you should take a look at the following news links below so you gain more knowledge regarding the situation in these holy lands in question.

<http://switch3.castup.net/cunet/gm.asp?ClipMediaID=867436&ak=null>

The following is from NBC News about a palestinian patient tried to blow up herself in the Israeli hospital where she was treated for her previous injuries.Later the army sent in an automated robot and blew up the explosives in a controlled explosion and saved the woman.

[http://mideastview.com/videos/pub/186500\\_suicide\\_bomber\\_fails.wmv](http://mideastview.com/videos/pub/186500_suicide_bomber_fails.wmv)

@ M Grima and others who is worrying a lot about this situation.I think there is a lot more to worry about ourselves as we are now europeans.

Muslim protesters in england who threatened violence during a march without the authorities taking action.

<http://www.faithfreedom.org/Gallery/cartoon-protest11.jpg>

<http://www.faithfreedom.org/Gallery/cartoon-protest10.jpg>

<http://www.standwithus.com/gallery/cartoonprotest/LondonProtest.jpg>

<http://www.uepenland.com/webimages/cartoon-protest3.jpg>

[http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2006/08/muslim220806\\_600x400.jpg](http://img.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2006/08/muslim220806_600x400.jpg)

<http://www.uepengland.com/webimages/cartoon-protest1.jpg>

[http://farm1.static.flickr.com/71/175032347\\_d344011aa6.jpg](http://farm1.static.flickr.com/71/175032347_d344011aa6.jpg)

This is Arab-American Psychiatrist Wafa Sultan, who speaks about islam and the jews amongst others.

<http://switch3.castup.net/cunet/gm.asp?ai=214&ar=1050wmv&ak=null>

These Israeli attacks on Palestinians does not concern us. I hope that we as a nation take care of our safety and interests first.

M Portelli (2 weeks ago)

Well said Mr John Portelli. Israel is taking over Palestine backed by the US. Of course these victims cannot take it anymore and that is why they fight with the best they have. World leaders need to stop this mess.

John Spiteri (2 weeks ago)

Israel ended the occupation of Gaza in 2005. it was hoped that the palestinians would grab the opportunity and demonstrate to the world that they could build a stable state. instead they elected Hamas, spent most of the foreign aid on weapons and fired over 6000 rockets into israel. they never learn. where was the Maltese Muslim community when these 6000 rockets were being fired? where was the Maltese Muslim community during Mumbai, Madrid or London? Where were they in Sept 11 - we know that the palestinians were somewhere - they were celebrating in the streets. Israel is right to pursue this to the bitter end

H Dempster (2 weeks ago)

@D Grima.

When you are sitting around a table discussing the possible peace treaty , you dont just go around other peoples back and shoot risking to break the peace talks.

Iris Azzopardi (2 weeks ago)

Have the Noble Alex Sceberras-Trigona and Joe alias Peppi Azzopardi become Muslims?

A.J. Anastasi (2 weeks ago)

May I ask a simple question, please?

If the land that Israel holds today was previously held by the Palestinians and the same land prior being held by the Palestinians was in the hands of the people of Israel, according to the Holy Scriptures; Then, how come, today, the request of the Palestinians be different from that of the Israelis?

Thank you.

AJA.

Stephen Spiteri (2 weeks ago)

@D Grima

NOBODY.

In 1948, it was given to the Jews after a vote in the United Nations, in a democratic way.

Some years before, nearly 2,000 to be precise, it was the Jewish nation which lived there, before being ousted by the Romans.

A couple of years earlier, (you have to check a book called Exodus in which we all believe), it was given to them by a celestial institution higher than the United Nations, called God.

J Farrugia (2 weeks ago)

M Grima you still would not have made it. Money comes first.

Charles Sammut (2 weeks ago)

Whilst condemning all violence, one has to consider that Gaza residents have been living in hell for years. Israel cuts them off at will, be it fuel, electricity, food, travel and everything else which we take for granted. What are these people supposed to do? Of course from Israel point of view, they should abandon their land and go away.

So the Palestinians protest by firing some rudimentary home made rockets and Israel retaliates with cluster bombs. You can see them on TV, exploding at height and showering a large area with bomblets.

Criss Camilleri (2 weeks ago)

According to the Video the Times of Malta showed, I did see a Maltese flag being waved about.

I do not think that this was right. This was not a Protest organised by our MALTESE Leaders, so why involved us, the Maltese, by showing our National Flag? And please let's not permit outsiders to protest against other Countries, in our MALTA!

Dr. David Pollina (2 weeks ago)

Israel is fighting a terrorist regime - not civilians. These terrorists intentionally target civilians and then hide amongst their own civilians.

Let it not be forgotten that there never were any "palestenians" historically, and no land has ever been taken from them. Learn the true history of this.

Tony Borg (2 weeks ago)

Wouldn't it have been much better if all those people who held demonstrations against Israel sent a message to Hamas before all this bloodshed escalated, indeed before it started and tell Hamas to comply with the rules of the ceasefire which were already in place and which Hamas continually ignored. My cousin had a little dog that use to crawl under the garden fence into next door backyard and kept annoying a big German Sheperd. The German Sheperd was very tolerant of the little dog that kept nipping at his paws and ears etc; however the German Sheperd had enough and bit the front leg off the little dog. My cousin was very annoyed because hers was only a little dog; similar to the homemade rockets that Hamas keep firing over Israel I suppose, and The German Sheperd is a large and very strong dog; much like Israel I suppose with their huge and powerful army. However although I feel sorry for the little dog I cannot bring myself to condemn the big dog. He simply had enough; I suppose like Israel.

D Grima (2 weeks ago)

@Mr Dempster

Who robbed the Palestinians of their land?.

You can hardly equate what tanks, heavy firing equipment,bombs ,starvation and killing of innocent children with a few puny home made rockets.

John Portelli (2 weeks ago)

Israel is the world's 4TH MILITARY POWER.Backed and supplied by the American tax payer. While the US government pretends to be the innocent by stander.AMERICA the land of the FREE THE LAND OF THE BRAVE and ISRAEL THE HOLY LAND.Are commtting genocide with impunity.

J Oatmon (2 weeks ago)

There is a very simple solution, and it is in the hands of Hamas - don't fire rockets into Israel.

Israel has said this simple fact dozens of times but Hamas refuses to listen.

I think Israel wants to crush Hamas militarily, so that Fatah replaces Hamas in Gaza, and then Israel can negotiate peace with Fatah - with Hamas this is absolutely impossible.

H Dempster (2 weeks ago)

Who Started firing rockets??????????

M Grima (2 weeks ago)

For a people to protest when an invader with the 5th largest army in the world and who count some 400 nuclear warheads in its's arsenal,who are starving the people of food,medicine,water,electricity and all the absolute essentials of daily living sounds perfectly legitimate to me. It would be criminal if people of good will did not protest, If I had known this protest was taking place I too,as a Maltese of hopefully good heart,would have joined them in Valletta.

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