

# He Said-They Said: Mahmoud Abbas October 14th speech, and the Mainstream Media

by Robert Harris (June 2016)



Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority's president, delivered an important televised speech to Arab-Palestinian society on October the 14<sup>th</sup> last year, during the height of a newly resurgent period of violence, which some commentators thought to be the opening salvo of a new Arab-Palestinian intifada or uprising. AFP (Agence-France Presse) described the speech in an article entitled "[wrote](#):"

"In a brief speech Wednesday, Abbas called for a peaceful "national struggle." He also threatened to submit a case to the International Criminal Court against what he called Israel's "extrajudicial killings" of Palestinians."

That same day RTE's 9 PM news programme featured a report by Carol Coleman ("[stated](#):"

"Addressing Palestinians for the first time since the violence began, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas said in a recorded televised speech he supported 'peaceful and popular' struggle against Israel."

The [supposed desire](#) for a meaningful peace, while in an article carrying the headline "[condemned Abbas' speech](#)". Indeed, the leader of the liberal secular Yesh Atid party [Jerusalem Post](#) (much of which is reproduced below) amply validates the criticism that emanated from Israel.

In the paragraph below, Abbas does indeed speak of "non-violent popular resistance" but he simultaneously endorses the past violence of the PLO, to which he repeatedly refers:

"We will continue our legitimate national struggle, which is based on our

right to defend ourselves and on non-violent popular resistance and political and legal struggle. We will work with needed patience, wisdom and courage to protect our people and our political and national achievements, which we have achieved after decades of hard work and persistence through a long path of martyrs, injured people and prisoners.”

He continues, describing this violence or terrorism as the “price of our freedom” which will soon come:

“It’s true that we paid a big price through the blood of our martyrs, the injured, the tears of our mothers and the pain of our prisoners. However, it’s the price of our freedom, which is around the corner..”

Abbas speaks of tearing up the Oslo Accords, the foundational agreement between the PLO and Israel allowing for Yasser Arafat’s return to Ramallah in 1993 from exile in Tunisia, which facilitates shared security measures ([water resources](#) etc., to the new Palestinian Authority:

“We will together continue with you our national, political and legal struggle. We will not remain hostage to the agreements that are not respected by Israel, and we will continue to join the international organizations and treaties”

Abbas claims that Israel did not respect the Oslo Interim Accord, a view that he has [undermine the notion](#) that the terror group was ever serious about peace. An [not changed](#) to recognise Israel ([incitement to violence](#) (Article XXII) upheld. Abbas also continues to breach the agreement with unilateral moves to achieve statehood without negotiation.

The speech ends with the threat of continued violence and an exhortation of those Arab-Palestinians involved in the violence and terrorist acts:

“Here, I invite you my great people, wherever you are, to, unite and be wary of the occupation schemes designed to abort and terminate our national project. We will never hesitate to defend our people and to protect them this is our right.

A tribute to the martyr’s... greetings to the wounded, greetings to the prisoners.”

In an earlier part of the speech, Abbas describes the conflict in apocalyptic terms, and blames Israel solely for the violence:

“The Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, land and holy places continues to escalate. The racist barbarism exacerbates the ugliness of the occupation, in a way that threatens peace and stability and the igniting of a religious conflict that would burn everything, not only in the region but perhaps the whole world. [...]

We are clearly saying that we will not accept a change in the status quo of al-Aksa Mosque compound, as we will not allow any Israeli schemes aimed at compromising its holiness and Islamic identity to pass. It’s our exclusive right: for the Palestinians and Muslims everywhere in the world.

We are asking for our rights, justice and peace, we do not commit aggression on anyone and we do not accept aggression against our people, our nation and our holy places”

Abbas describes the clashes on the Temple Mount in purely defensive terms. When speaking of self-defence, Abbas is [October 8<sup>th</sup> statement](#):

“Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas says the Palestinians will not be ‘dragged’ into more violence with Israel, but says his people stand with those ‘protecting Al-Aqsa mosque.’

Speaking to business leaders on Thursday in Ramallah Abbas says he is committed to ‘peaceful popular resistance,’ though he backs rioters who recently barricaded themselves inside Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque and clashed with Israeli police on the Temple Mount.”

Whilst describing the clashes on the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif in defensive terms, he nonetheless reiterated in the October 14<sup>th</sup> speech that Muslims had sole rights over the contested religious site, asserting that “it’s our exclusive right: for the Palestinians and Muslims everywhere in the world.”

Abbas not only repeated the patently false charge that the Israeli State wished to change the status quo of the Temple Mount, a claim originating in the 1920s, [action against the financial rewards](#) provided by the Palestinian Authority for encouraging terrorism by providing substantial financial incentives.

## Ahmed Manasra's martyrdom

And yet the baleful quality of such sentiments was nothing new for Abbas – the section of his speech that [clinically dead upon arrival](#) at hospital. Abbas' claim was [Mohammad al-Dura case](#), a hoax that has been used as a widespread source of incitement in the Arab-Islamic world.

A day before Abbas' television speech, one of Abbas' spokesmen also claimed Manasrah [caused by this lie](#):

'Mr. Abbas used expressions like "Israeli aggression" against the Palestinian people, their holy places and their homes. He spoke of the "executions of children like Ahmed Manasra." He actually calls terrorists victims and heroes. And the Arabic press backs him up.

Here are two Arabic press news headlines. The first one reads: "Palestinian Child Bleeds to Death While Israeli Police and Civilians Watch, Shouting Insults." The second reads: "Teen Shot by Israelis Stomped On, Left to Bleed to Death."'

US news channel *MSNBC* [minimised](#) what was a particularly savage stabbing attack, by claiming that it was merely an attempted stabbing. However, controversy over Manasra's would lead the PA to [reprisal attack](#) occurred, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "strongly condemned the harming of innocent Arabs" and warned those resorting to violence would be brought to justice. The Western ideal of justice, with the iconic image of the scales of balance representing fairness, has no real meaning in Abbas' world.

Abbas' notion of "rights" is also problematic because it is politically loaded by decades of conflict-propaganda. The primary longstanding Arab-Palestinian demand is for the so-called "Right of Return", which is couched in the language of human rights, even though it has no [moral justification](#) – rather it is an effort to nullify Israel's existence as a principally Jewish State through demographic means, despite being wholly incompatible with the longstanding "two states for two peoples" approach to the peace process.

The supposedly peaceful stance of sentence two reinforces the difficulties in the first quoted sentence:

“We will continue our legitimate national struggle, which is based on our right to defend ourselves and on non-violent popular resistance and political and legal struggle.”

This sentence talks of “non-violent popular resistance,” which likely refers to the wide-scale riotous violence which is typically described as “protest” by the media. Furthermore, the statement distinguishes between this form of action and the “right to defend ourselves.” Thus, AFP’s claim that Abbas “favours “peaceful, popular resistance” is clearly incorrect. He actually legitimised ongoing sectarian violence, which often targeted Jewish-Israeli civilians, as an inherent right of self-defence.

In a November 16<sup>th</sup> broadcast on PA television, Abbas explained his intent. He described the attacks [a majority](#) of Arab-Palestinians believe that Fatah, the ruling party of the Palestinian Authority, supported the terror attacks.

When leaders express such obvious counterfactuals as the claim that the Arab-Palestinian collective “[asserted](#) that “the story of the [Jewish] Temple is... the greatest crime and forgery in history,” and as a means to allow the Jewish People to conquer historic Palestine and “get rid of the al-Aqsa [mosque].” In September Abbas [all too predictably](#) by an intensified period of violence, with numerous Arab-Palestinian terrorists citing these very reasons for attempting to kill Israeli civilians or security personnel, for example, Muhannad Halabi, a nineteen-year-old university student, [praise](#) their “martyred son” for “avenging” those of the Muslim faith on Temple Mount “against the impure enemies.”

Besides constituting one of many examples of the Islamist supremacism so defining this conflict, as forcefully reinforced by the [described as defenceless](#) when they themselves are killed in acts of self-defence, [regardless of how small the territory](#) might be that they may possess. For example, the 1964 PLO Charter rejects UN Resolution 181 (Article 17: “The Partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are illegal and false...”). In effect any violent response to Israel is an act of self-defence, while Abbas still refuses to [PLO Charter](#) (or ‘Palestinian National Charter’) makes it clear that war, violence and [celebrating and endorsing](#) such acts of terror, the regional mainstream media bureaux did not read Abbas’ 14<sup>th</sup> October speech with any level of scepticism. The PA president is rarely presented as anything other than a moderate politician by

the media, a peacemaker who doesn't have a partner for peace with a supposedly-intransigent Israel.

Over a period of months, the mainstream media would continue to present the surge in Arab-Palestinian violence as a [is irrelevant](#) when attempting to explain this violence, contenting themselves by [grave danger](#), despite the fact that the site has been in Israel's possession for nearly half a century, and continue to [eirael.blogspot.com](#) and lives in Ireland.

To comment on this article, please click