

Left-Wing Jewish Israelis: Whatever You Do, Don't Forget to Blame Israel for Coronavirus

by Hugh Fitzgerald



B'Tselem is an anti-Israel group, consisting of left-wing Jewish Israelis who do not much care for their own country. It calls itself a “human rights group” in the same way that CAIR calls itself the premier “civil rights group” for Muslims in America. What it mostly issues are hyperbolic attacks on the Israeli government and especially on the IDF, for daring to protect the people of Israel. Its founder is Hagai El-Ad, whose speech before the U.N. Security Council in October 2018 did not differ in any way from the speech of the representative from the “State of Palestine” sitting approvingly beside him. For B'Tselem, Israel has no right to a single dunam of the West Bank. Neither the Mandate for Palestine, nor U.N. Resolution 242, exist for El-Gad or B'Tselem. El-Gad considers Israel's defense of its border with

Gaza – territory from which Israel withdrew every soldier, settler and settlement in 2005 – to be equally illegitimate. That includes the naval blockade of the strip that prevents Iran from shipping in heavy arms and construction materials to build terror tunnels and other fortifications, as well as the ability of the Israel Defense Forces to prevent infiltrators from crossing the border and being free to commit mayhem inside Israel.

It is not surprising that B'Tselem has decided to blame Israel for the spread of the coronavirus in Gaza. For B'Tselem, Israel's blockade of Gaza – he doesn't mention Egypt's blockade of Gaza's southern border, which is little different from that of Israel along Gaza's eastern and northern borders – has created the conditions of a “massive disaster.”

The unappetizing tale is [here](#).

According to a written statement by B'Tselem, the Israeli blockade and dense population have led to extreme poverty and the collapse of infrastructure.

The healthcare system in the Gaza Strip was already on the brink of collapse even before receiving its first coronavirus patient. It cannot meet the population's needs due to an acute shortage of medicine, equipment, doctors and professional training, the statement said.

The creator of this reality is responsible for the health of the two million people living in Gaza. Israel will not be able to deflect the blame if this nightmare scenario turns into a reality that it created and made no effort to prevent, it added.

The Israeli blockade is intended to prevent materials from reaching Hamas that could be used by the group in waging its terror campaigns against the Jewish state. Cement, for example, and steel are blockaded from Gaza because of their

use in building terror tunnels and reinforcing military encampments and rocket emplacements. The Israelis place no restriction on medicines or medical equipment. However, the Palestinian Authority, which buys the medicines for Gaza, has been restricting the amounts it supplies as a way to pressure the Gazans to reject rule by the PA's enemy, Hamas. B'Tselem knows this situation very well, knows that Israel has nothing to do with that shortage of medicines, but chooses to ignore this fact in its insensate desire to slander Israel.

As for the shortage of doctors in Gaza, that too has nothing to do with Israel. Palestinian medical personnel make their own occupational decisions. Some of them have decided to practice medicine in places where they are much better paid; they end up working in the Gulf Arab states, or Europe, or North America. If there are fewer doctors, this inevitably leads to fewer people to train new physicians. Again, this has nothing to do with Israel. B'Tselem makes no mention of the excellent training that many Arab students receive in Israeli medical schools; it doesn't fit their tale of unrelieved Israeli malevolence.

There is a shortage of medical equipment in Gaza. This represents a choice that the Hamas rulers have made. Gaza has been for decades the recipient of generous outside aid, mostly from Europe and North America. Unfortunately, much of that aid has been stolen by Hamas' rapacious leaders. Two of them, Khaled Meshal and Moussa ibn Marzouk, have each amassed fortunes of at least \$2.5 billion dollars. Hamas' current leader, Ismail Haniyeh, has a net worth of \$10-\$20 million. Another 600 members of the upper-echelon of Hamas are reported to have built million-dollar villas in Gaza. Aside from this grand theft, Hamas chooses to spend much of its aid money on stockpiles of weaponry, including rockets, and on building terror tunnels – money that could have been used to buy more medical equipment. That was Hamas' choice; it is not up to Israel to deal with Hamas' massive corruption, nor to tell

Hamas on what it may spend its aid money.

To sum up:

B'Tselem claims that there is "an acute shortage of medicine, equipment, doctors and professional training" in Gaza. To repeat, in summary fashion: The shortage of medicine is due to the withholding of some supplies not by Israel but by the Palestinian Authority. The shortage of medical equipment in Gaza has nothing to do with Israel's blockade but, rather, with the spending priorities of the terrorist group Hamas, that has long favored rockets over ventilators, missiles over ICU beds. The shortage of medical personnel in Gaza reflects the individual choices of Palestinian physicians who choose to be employed – at much higher salaries – abroad. The lack of professional training is due directly to the shortage of medical personnel who would be doing the training

Finally, B'Tselem claims portentously that Israel alone will be to blame for whatever bad things happen in Gaza: "Israel will not be able to deflect the blame if this nightmare scenario turns into a reality that it created and made no effort to prevent."

The "reality" of which B'Tselem speaks is the product of choices made by Hamas (which chose not to spend enough money on medical equipment), by the Palestinian Authority (which chose to limit the amounts of certain medicines it transferred to Gaza) and by Palestinian doctors (some of whom chose to leave Gaza altogether, to make more money elsewhere, which led to a shortage both of medical personnel and of medical training in Gaza). When Hagai El-Gad says that Israel has "made no effort to prevent" that "nightmare scenario" he appears not to know, or doesn't care to admit, that the Israelis have already delivered hundreds of coronavirus testing kits, with many more soon to be delivered, and two thousand protective medical gear kits, again with many more soon to come. It will be instructive to see how many others,

in North America, in Western Europe, and among the fabulously rich Gulf Arabs, will in the end do as much as Israel, in containing the coronavirus outbreak in Gaza.

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