

Tis the season to flog Israel

written by David M. Weinberg | 05.01.2026

The Western media annually devotes considerable Christmas ink, and many Christian NGOs dedicate their Christmas appeals, to propagating the lie that Christians are under assault by Israelis. And worse still, that Jews are crucifying Christians smack in the heart of Bethlehem.

Not only is this untrue, but it ignores the radical Islamic assault on Christians across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, often with government encouragement and support.

The international media does its best every Christmas season to demonize Israel. For example, Ben White of Middle East Monitor published a filthy piece entitled “Bethlehem Bantustan: Have Yourself an Apartheid Christmas.”

White wrote that Bethlehem is “a microcosm of Israel’s colonization of Palestine.” The refugee camps are home to those expelled from their villages in the “ethnic cleansing” that enabled a majority Jewish citizenry; camps where “Israeli soldiers snatch residents and deploy lethal force” against youth raised in the shadow of the “apartheid, choking wall.”

Harriet Sherwood of The Observer wickedly evoked Biblical and Christian imagery to savage Israeli settlement in and around Jerusalem. She painted a picture of a pastoral “Christian biblical landscape” with “gnarled olive trees,” “bleating sheep and goats,” and “vine covered terraces,” “near the site where angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds in a field” - all tended to with love by Bethlehem’s remaining Christian heroes.

She then contrasted this with the evil Israeli security fence - “Eight-meter-high concrete slabs casting a deep shadow, both literally and metaphorically, snaking around most of Bethlehem,” along with the monster “cranes, bulldozers, and concrete apartment blocks” - all of which are “strangulating” the Christian city.

According to Lubna Masarwa and Peter Osborne of Middle East Eye, Christians in Bethlehem face no less than an “existential threat” under Israel’s occupation. And Al-Jazeera - that genocide-against-Israel-supporting radical Islamist propaganda organ - had the chutzpa to publish this week an account of supposed Israeli

violence against Christians in Jerusalem and Gaza.

THESE SCREEDS seek to cover up the real reason for Christian decline in Bethlehem: The Palestinian Authority and radical Islam.

It started with Yasser Arafat. Arriving from Tunis, Arafat immediately set out to suppress the Palestinian middle class across the West Bank, which he understood could be the only real opposition to his planned dictatorial authority. He nationalized most business sectors and squeezed Palestinian small businessmen out of business. Especially hard hit was the mainly Christian middle class of Bethlehem.

Arafat then sidelined the long-time Christian mayor of Bethlehem, Elias Freij, and Arafat's henchmen led a campaign of terror and intimidation against Christian institutions and families in the city. Land theft, beatings, and intimidation of Christians in Bethlehem by PA security services and other gangs became routine. Forced marriages between Christian women and Moslem men were reported. In 2002, Arafat's terrorists even took over and defiled the Church of the Nativity for 39 days, holding 200 priests hostage as the terrorists sought to escape Israeli justice.

The result was an inexorable and ongoing Christian exodus from Bethlehem: a city captured by the PA and taken over by a very intolerant strain of Islam.

Nevertheless, Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas annually releases a malevolent Christmas message in which he cynically calls Jesus Christ a "Palestinian messenger," and goes on to blast Israel for denying "millions" of Christians their "right to worship in their homeland."

This is an ugly attempt to apply replacement theology (in which Christians are said to have superseded the Jews in a covenant with G-d) to the Palestinian assault on Israel. In Abbas's reversed and warped world, the Jewish-Christian Jesus has been replaced by a Palestinian Christ, and Christianity is under attack by the Jews, not the Arabs and Moslems.

INSTEAD OF exposing this nasty history, the global media prefers to parrot Abbas's nonsense and to play up isolated instances of Jewish hooliganism against Christians in Jerusalem. Concurrently, the media and world leaders ignore the systematic, rampant, chronic, and deadly persecution of Christians in the Arab

and Islamic worlds.

According to a British report, pervasive persecution of Christians “sometimes amounting to genocide” is ongoing across the Middle East. Millions of Christians in the region “have been uprooted from their homes, and many have been killed, kidnapped, imprisoned and discriminated against.”

The report highlights how states, and state-sponsored social media, incite hatred and publish propaganda against Christians, especially in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.

The governing AKP in Turkey depicts Christians as a threat to the stability of the nation. Turkish Christian citizens are stereotyped as being not real Turks but rather Western collaborators. The oldest functioning Christian monastery in the world, the 5th century Mor Gabriel Monastery near the Turkish-Syrian border, has been stripped of most of its lands.

More than 600,000 Syrian Christians have been displaced or fled Syria since the civil war in that country began. Of the more than 80,000 Christians who lived in Homs prior to the uprising, only about 400 remain today. Christians have been massacred and buried in mass graves.

Iraq has lost at least two-thirds of its Christians over the past two decades. An al-Qaida raid on a Baghdad cathedral five years ago resulted in the murder of 44 Christian worshipers and two priests.

In Gaza, Islamic militants have bombed churches, killed prominent Christians, and forced others to convert to Islam. Greek Orthodox Archbishop Alexios tried to speak out against the persecution of Christians but was silenced by Hamas. Any foreign media interested in covering this story?

There are about a thousand documented cases in Egypt of the abduction, torture, rape, enslavement or forced conversion to Islam of Christians. Coptic churches have been bombed on Christmas and New Year’s Day, with flyers circulated calling for the total genocide of Egypt’s Christian Copts. As a result, tens of thousands of Coptic Christians have left.

Churches have also been attacked in recent years in Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tunisia. Christians have been threatened with death and imprisonment for “blasphemy” and “apostasy” in Algeria,

Bangladesh, Iran, and Pakistan.

My friend Umar Mulinde, an Evangelical pastor from Uganda, has been receiving medical treatment on-and-off for almost two decades at Israel's Sheba Medical Center following an acid attack that severely burned his face, destroyed his right eye, and damaged his lungs.

Pastor Mulinde, who converted to Christianity and began teaching favorably about Israel after spending much of his life as a Moslem, was attacked on Christmas Eve in 2011 in Kampala. The assailants shouted "Allah Akhbar" as they fled the scene. Since then, his wife and children have been under threat by Ugandan Islamists as well.

Have you seen any significant international media coverage of this story?

AS FOR THE situation in Israel, well, Israel is the only country in the Middle East where the number of Christians is rising (at about one percent per year, currently standing at 184,000, amounting to two percent of the population).

For the first time, there is a significant population of non-Arab Christian Israeli citizens, mainly immigrants from the former Soviet Union who, unlike Arabs, are fully assimilated into the Jewish Israeli mainstream. There are newly arrived Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox, and Ethiopian Orthodox.

Christians in Israel have it good. The percentage of Christian Arabs who graduate high school is higher than that of Muslim or Jewish students, and more than half of Christian students proceed to study at Israeli universities (including more than 60% of Christian Arab women).

But you would not know this from media reports. Instead, you likely would have received the impression that Christians in Israel are under assault by Jews – because of Palestinian propaganda, and because of a few isolated hooligan attacks on Christian clergy and sites in Jerusalem's Old City.

(Note that every responsible Israeli political and religious leader, including the Chief Rabbis, has condemned such attacks and apologized profusely in the name of Israel and Judaism.)

None of this has given any pause to anti-Israel churches in North America and Europe who continue their merry Yuletide way of divesting from Israel and

otherwise campaigning against it. ('Tis the season to bash Israel, tralalalalala tralalala ...)

They have almost nothing to say, ever, about imprisoned pastors in Iran, Islamic acid-attacks on pastors in Uganda, fire-bombings of churches in Gaza, or the mass expulsion of Christians from Syria. I guess their silence can be explained by the fact that those Christians weren't assaulted by Jews.

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