Applause Can Kill

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The story of the horrific murder of Hallel Ariel last Thursday did not begin when the Palestinian terrorist entered her home in Kiryat Arba, or even earlier when he decided to set out on his ghastly mission.

Rather, it began a week before the attack, far from Israel, when Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas delivered an address full of anti-Semitic incitement to the European Parliament in Brussels.

In his speech to hundreds of EU lawmakers, Abbas claimed Israeli rabbis had demanded that the government poison Palestinian drinking water. And instead of walking out of the hall and immediately condemning Abbas, EU lawmakers, who are supposed to represent democracy and moral values, enthusiastically applauded the PA leader.

At that moment, the world saw Abbas' deliberate and unrestrained incitement. But instead of repudiating this anti-Jewish blood libel, the world gave Abbas its seal of approval.

We Israelis were outraged by Abbas' statements. "How could he say that? How could he lie to the European Parliament? This is blood libel," Israelis said. Our disgust with Abbas is completely legitimate.

However, the main issue here is not what Abbas said (the extent of PA incitement against Israel has been known for years), but rather the applause he received from EU lawmakers.

Incitement has seeped into the minds of young Palestinians and incitement is what caused a 17-year-old Palestinian boy to turn into a monstrous beast and murder a 13-year-old Israeli girl in her sleep. Incitement is what terrorists use to justify their sick actions. In their minds, it is fine to slaughter a young girl because "rabbis want to poison our wells." There is, however, a step between believing in a twisted ideology and committing a terrorist act based on that ideology. But it becomes easier for a young Palestinian to take that step when he or she gets ideological affirmation from EU lawmakers. The line of thinking is: "If they cheer for Abbas, they will definitely cheer for me too."

Unfortunately, in today's complex world, applause can kill. As I was writing these very lines on Friday, I read the news of another tragedy. "Israeli man murdered in front of his family, three family members wounded" was the headline.

These vile killings are not part of human nature. Rather, they are the product of longstanding Palestinian incitement. The terrorists are fueled by the pure hatred propagated by Palestinian leaders. Just a week ago, a senior Abbas adviser said, "Wherever you find an Israeli, slit his throat." Only a few days later, we saw that order carried out.

We must not give up. We will defeat terrorism. We will win because we believe in life. We will continue to deepen the bond between the people of Israel and the Land of Israel. We will continue to build our country, based on our morals and our value for life. We will continue to fight Palestinian terrorism and work to cut the roots of PA incitement -- for the purpose of halting the assembly line of human monsters who live an eight-minute walk from the homes of Israeli citizens.

We will carry on and we will be victorious.