European hypocrisy

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Europe’s anti-Israel audacity has once again been revealed in all its shamefulness.

Following the International Criminal Court’s announcement it is investigating whether there are grounds to try Israel for war crimes in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, the Attorney-General’s Office released a range of counter-arguments. Some were technical: the ICC has no authority in the matter because Israel is not a member of the court; Israel has a strong, independent judiciary that handles such issues internally; and the Palestinians have no standing because they are not a state. Some dealt with the matter at hand: settlements are neither illegal on the whole nor are they a war crime, nor is Israel’s presence in the West Bank an illegal occupation.

But ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda’s announcement was biased against Israel overall. Not only did she barely pay lip service to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups’ modus operandi of attacking civilians, she laundered their crimes by calling them “armed groups.” To make matters worse, she put Israel, which never targets civilians, on equal footing with the murderous terrorists.

Because Israel is not a party to the Rome Statute establishing the ICC, the government did not officially present its case. But it soon came to light that not only did the Palestinians have the advantage of the Palestinian Authority petitioning the ICC, but they had a massive influx of European funding to their NGOs.

The full extent to which European countries have funded this lawfare campaign has come to light thanks to research by the think tank NGO Monitor.

The European Union, France, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland have funneled money into Palestinian and Israeli organizations that claim to be human rights groups but which, in reality, exist purely to trash Israel, including supporting putting government officials and IDF officers on trial for war crimes.

Looking more deeply at the agreements between these countries and the NGOs, one cannot argue the funders did not know what was going on. In some cases, the money is specifically earmarked for ways to undermine Israel’s judiciary such that the ICC will decide it has to get involved because Israeli courts are insufficiently trustworthy. In others, the NGOs say they consider their success to be measured by how many meetings they get with the ICC.

These are countries that wrongly believe Israel’s presence in the West Bank is illegitimate. But these are also countries whose official policy is Israel and the Palestinians should pursue a negotiated two-state solution. What kind of negotiation can take place with a partner like the Palestinians, who are taking punitive unilateral steps?

Of course, they are not just dissembling when it comes to the ICC. When European countries say they want a two-state solution, the aim is supposed to be peace. Yet European donations to so-called human rights NGOs that have ties to terrorists are commonplace.

Many of the Palestinian groups working to have Israelis prosecuted for war crimes share personnel with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Just last week, the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) arrested PFLP members in the West Bank who were part of a 50-person terrorist network. One of them was responsible for murdering 17-year-old Rina Shnerb in August. He and several others work for a number of European-funded NGOs, including in top financial positions, while being leaders of the PFLP.

The PFLP is recognized as a terrorist organization by the EU, and these revelations about their work in NGOs are not new, but these European countries keep funding them.

The hypocrisy is so screamingly obvious that it is practically smacking the staffers at various development agencies run by European governments in the face. It’s hard to understand how they can live with the cognitive dissonance. And yet they’ve been doing this for years, although research institutions and Israeli government officials from the Strategic Affairs and Justice Ministries have brought these issues to their attention.

These countries need to decide: Do they want a negotiated settlement or punitive unilateral Palestinian action? Do they oppose or support terrorists? They say one thing, but their money talks, and it says the opposite.