

# Why I carry a Palestinian flag in my pocket

by Mark Vandermaas

Based on content originally entitled, 'Why I don't have a Palestinian flag on the base of my U.N. flag alongside the Israeli flag (and why I carry one in my pocket,' from Day 9 (July 01/11) UPDATE during 'Blue Beret' vigil at London (Ontario) Muslim Mosque in opposition to its support for the Canadian Boat to Gaza : <http://voiceofcanada.wordpress.com/2011/06/23/updates-blue-beret-protests-at-london-ontario-muslim-mosque/>

Some of you on the anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian side might wonder why I don't have a Palestinian flag on the base of my U.N. flag stand with the small Israeli flag. After all, if I'm claiming to be conducting my Blue Beret protests for the benefit of both Jewish and Palestinian victims, why not put their flag there, too? And, you might argue, am I not supposed to be neutral as a former peacekeeper? Wouldn't displaying their flag show goodwill to Palestinian victims?



1. The UN's primary mission during peacekeeping is to protect civilians and work to restore the rule of law. I will never be neutral in the face of people like Hamas who intentionally target innocents as part of a deliberate plan to exterminate a race of people and destroy a member state of the world community, especially when that state was created by a U.N. vote.

Neutrality in the face of violence directed at innocents can never be neutral. It is siding with evil. In fact, neutrality demands that one take a side – on the side of truth, on the side against those who believe such violence is an alternative to the rule of law.



As highlighted by the Blue Beret protests the UNHRC has condemned the Hamas charter [[LINK](#), [PDF](#), VoC download [PDF](#)] for its call to kill Jews and "obliterate" Israel, but the Palestinian Authority (which the naive and disingenuous portray as 'moderate') is just as guilty of inciting Jew-hate among its citizens on a daily basis.

In my recent [letter to the editor](#) of the Hamilton Spectator I said, “

“History proves that ‘land’ is not the issue. Rabid, genocidal, anti-Semitism is the issue. If readers have any doubt of this I suggest they visit the site operated by Palestinian Media Watch ([www.palwatch.org](http://www.palwatch.org)) and review the day-to-day glorification of violence against Jews and Israel – even in children’s programming. It is nothing short of nauseating.”

Here is a sampling of items from/or based on the work of [Palestinian Media Watch](#) and the [Middle East Media Research Institute](#):

- VoiceofCanada, May 18/11: VIDEO – [Hamas MP: Jews brought to Palestine for the “great massacre” in preparation for United States of Islam caliphate](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch special report, May 2011: [The establishment of the State of Israel in Palestinian Authority ideology and education](#) “The Zionist gangs stole Palestine...and established the State of Israel.” (Official Palestinian schoolbook, 12th Grade)
- VoiceofCanada, Sept 21/10: [Palestinian Authority: Death to Arabs who sell land to Jews](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, Sept 01/10: [Mother of 4 terrorists serving 18 life sentences for murder honored by Palestinian Authority](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, Aug 25/10: [PA and Abbas honor terrorist planner of Olympics massacre](#) (See also – Wikipedia.org: [Munich massacre](#))

- Palestinian Media Watch, Aug 11/10: [Fatah song: Terrorists who killed 37 were “heroic” and “birds of prey”](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, July 28/10: [Israel is off the map on PA TV kids’ show](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, Feb 08/08:  [Hamas children’s TV: Rabbit puppet vows to eat the Jews](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, re Al-Aqsa TV (Hamas), July 20/07:  [Hamas children’s show teaches that Jews are murderers](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch: [Violence for Kids](#) (how Palestinian children are indoctrinated into hating Jews)
- Palestinian Media Watch: [Violence for Adults](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch report, May 06/10: From Terrorists to Role Models [[PDF](#), 28P]
- Palestinian Media Watch report: Kill a Jew – Go to Heaven: A study of the Palestinian Authority’s Promotion of Genocide [[PDF](#), 18 p]
- memritv.org, MEMRITVVideos, , Jan 08/09:  [Hamas in their own voices](#)

I argue that, for Palestinians to be recognized as a state by the UN, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority need – at the minimum – to demonstrate by their words and actions they have completely renounced the use of violence against Jews; acknowledged Israel’s right to exist in peace as a Jewish state; and ceased teaching Jew-hate to their citizens.

Unfortunately, the ‘moderate’ Mahmoud Abbas made it clear to the Arab League in 2010 that he was completely in favour of another war to destroy Israel – as long as other Arabs joined in:

“If you want war, and if all of you will fight Israel, we are in favour. But the Palestinians will not fight alone because they don’t have the ability to do it.” – *P.A. Chairman Mahmoud Abbas to Arab League Summit, March 2010.*

Abbas’s comments were eerily similar to those made by another leader just before another war to exterminate Jews and their state:

“Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight.” – *Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser, May 30/67*

- VoiceofCanada, July 07/10:  [Abbas comments show Israeli military strength only hope for peace](#)
- Palestinian Media Watch, July 07/10:  [PA Chairman Abbas: “If all of you \[Arab States\], will fight Israel, we are in favor”](#)

In my opinion, if the UN declares a Palestinian state created on the backs of Palestinian [war crimes](#), a genocidal Hamas charter, and the wistful dreams of war against Israel by the Palestinian Authority before these conditions are met, it would represent, not a just solution to a difficult problem, but a crime against all humanity for the future victims it will create by legitimizing the use of violence against innocents as a tool of politics:

“And so I say to you today that I still stand by nonviolence. And I am still convinced that it is the most potent weapon available to the Negro in his struggle for justice in this country.

“And the other thing, I am concerned about a better world. I’m concerned about justice. I’m concerned about brotherhood. I’m concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about that, he can never advocate violence.

For through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can’t murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can’t establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can’t murder hate through violence. Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that.”



“And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind’s problems. And I’m going to talk about it everywhere I go. I know it

isn't popular to talk about it in some circles today. I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love, I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. And I have seen too much hate. I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the South. I've seen hate on the faces of too many Klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear.

I have decided to love. If you are seeking the highest good, I think you can find it through love. And the beautiful thing is that we are moving against wrong when we do it, because John was right, God is love. He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality."

- Martin Luther King Jr., Atlanta, Georgia, Aug 16/67: [‘Where do we go from here?’](#)

Even if Palestinians are successful in convincing the UN to declare a state for them without clear proof they have renounced violence, it will be a hollow victory for them, it will precipitate more violence, and it will be an eternal stain on the United Nations that can never be erased.

3. When I built our Apology/Reconciliation monuments I asked Gary McHale each time if I should include a Six Nations flag along with the Canadian one in order to show good will, to which he wisely advised: "When Six Nations issues an apology for their role in allowing its citizens to terrorize the people of Caledonia, their flag will be added."



This week I purchased a small, desktop Palestinian flag that I now carry with me during my protests in my pocket. When Palestinian leaders do make the historic decision to reject violence and hate against their Jewish neighbours, I will be very proud to place their flag beside the Israeli one underneath my United Nations flag. You can see the empty stand waiting to receive it in the photo at the top.

I am under no illusions that I will be able to add the Palestinian flag beside the Israeli one in the near future any more than I will be adding the Six Nations flag to our Apology/Reconciliation monument (photo below), but I believe that day will come, so long as we never give up.

I learned from our ongoing work during the Caledonia crisis that change can happen at any time if you follow the teachings of Dr. King to the best of your abilities and – as [Gary McHale](#) has so often told me – you are willing to ‘stand the test of time.’ Indeed, compare the image immediately to the right with the one below. The images were taken less than 3 months apart following nearly 5 years of peaceful protests and full time civil rights work.



On March 27/11 we were swarmed by native occupiers who destroyed our Apology/Reconciliation monument and burned it along with our Canadian flag – all while officers of the Ontario Provincial Police watched. On June 19/11, however, for the first time since the Caledonia crisis began in 2006, OPP officers stood watch to ensure that our right to place our monument in front of the occupation site was protected. This is the same police force that arrested Gary McHale and me (and later 2 other non-natives) on Dec 16/06 for wanting to place a Canadian flag on a hydro pole across the street in 2006. (It would take us 31 months and 4 arrests to make the Canadian flag ‘legal’ again in Caledonia.) Remarkably, the same occupiers who had once attacked us and destroyed our original monument stood quietly as we gave our speeches as they, too, respected our right to speak and ask for an apology from the Six Nations people:

- VoiceofCanada, March 28/11: [OPP watch as natives destroy Reconciliation/Apology monument, then burn Canadian flag](#)
- Caledonia Victims Project, June 20/11: [Caledonia milestone: DCE occupiers & OPP respect rights of non-natives during Truth & Reconciliation Rally](#)
- VoiceofCanada feature: [THE END OF THE BEGINNING!](#) (making the Canadian flag ‘legal’ again)

- IFPS-Canada & Free Thinking Film Society presentation, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Mar 22/11: [‘Caledonia: No More Nightmares’](#)

There is always hope that Palestinians can be liberated from the hate and violence inculcated in them by their leaders. In 1940, my parents in the Netherlands never believed they would ever be free from Nazi domination. I’m sure Blacks in the Deep South never dreamt there would one day be a Black president in the White House.



Dr. King’s loving gift to humanity – inspired by both Ghandi and Jesus (King was a Baptist Minister whose faith was the very essence of his civil rights work) - of choosing love and ‘non-violent direct action’ instead of hate and weapons changed the hearts and minds of a great nation and made it even greater. And so, just as I refuse to believe there is no hope of an apology to the people of Caledonia from Six Nations to begin the healing process, I refuse to believe there is no hope for peace in the Middle East.

I am demonstrating my faith in the future by carrying a small Palestinian flag with me in my pocket at future ‘Blue Berets for Peace’ events. I may have a long wait – but I choose hope over cynicism as I prepare for peace.

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### ***About Mark Vandermaas***

- Caledonia Victims Project: [About – Mark Vandermaas](http://caledoniavictimsproject.wordpress.com/about-3/resume-mark-vandermaas-2/)  
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