

NICKOLAY MLADENOV: From Avenging Angel to Lowlife Lickspittle

by Norman G. Finkelstein

On 20 April 2018, Israeli snipers killed 15-year-old Mohammed Ayoub during the weekly protests in Gaza. He was standing unarmed some 150 meters away from the perimeter fence when he was shot dead. Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, [tweeted](#):

It is OUTRAGEOUS to shoot at children! How does the killing of a child in #Gaza today help #peace? It doesn't! It fuels anger and breeds more killing.

Mladenov's compassionate visceral reaction predictably evoked Israeli outrage, and a Twitter war ensued. He was advised by a former IDF spokesperson to "go to Gaza, engage Hamas and get them to stop sending people to the fence," "stop Palestinian incitement and organized riots at the border," and "get everybody on the UN payroll in Gaza to make a human chain at a safe distance and prevent people from going to the fence." In what proved to be his last blast of manhood, Mladenov fired back: "Here's another idea. Stop shooting children." It's not hard to divine what, more or less, happened next: an Israeli official contacted a US official; the US official contacted a UN official; the UN official contacted Mladenov's higher-up; the higher-up gave Mladenov a dressing down.

Mladenov apparently got the message. In other words, he was neutered, neutralized, Goldstoned. After Israeli snipers [murdered 20-year-old Gaza paramedic](#) Razan al-Najjar on 1 June 2018 while she was in uniform and her hands were raised in the air, Mladenov pathetically tweeted: "Israel needs to calibrate its use of force and Hamas needs to prevent incidents at the fence." This writer [commented at the time](#):

It appears, however, that Israel needs to stop targeting unarmed civilians and in particular medical personnel for murder. If Hamas already prevents violent incidents at the fence, why does Mladenov drag it in except to affect a phony balance? I would also want to pose a simple question to this groveling coward: *When Nazi Germany imposed a brutal siege on Leningrad, would you have counseled it to "calibrate its use of force" or to immediately and unconditionally end the siege, and would you have counseled Leningraders to cease their resistance or to fight unto the death until the murderous siege was broken?* If Mladenov couldn't be a character in War and Peace, it's because Tolstoy didn't include in his vast tableau of characters a lickspittle.

On 19 June 2018, Mladenov delivered a "[Briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East](#)." The table below juxtaposes Mladenov's text against the factual record. It is not easy to face the people of Gaza, urging on them the path of nonviolence, stirring the hope that public opinion, once privy to the truth, will compel Israel to lift the criminal siege, when miserable wretches like Mladenov, who, alas, represent that public opinion, grovel and bootlick as they betray the most basic principles of decency so as to climb a slimy rung on the bureaucratic ladder.

MLADENOV	FACTUAL RECORD
<p>The reporting period was characterized by high levels of violence, including rocket attacks from Gaza, as made clear in my recent briefings to this Council on 26 April, and on 15, 23 and 30 May.</p>	<p>Were the rocket attacks from Gaza really the most egregious expression of the “high levels of violence”? Here are pictures of the “high levels of violence” inflicted by these “rocket attacks.” It’s roughly the “high levels of violence” one expects from Fourth of July fireworks. Mladenov also manages to omit that, on the flimsiest pretexts, Israel repeatedly bombed sites in Gaza during this period.</p>
<p>Since March 30, during a series of protests in Gaza 135 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have acknowledged that a number of their members were among those killed. Two Israeli soldiers were also injured during the protests, with at least five other people lightly injured as a result of rockets and mortars launched from Gaza.</p>	<p>If Mladenov reports that two Israelis were injured during the protests (they incurred scratches), why does he not also mention that <i>thirteen thousand</i> Gazans suffered injuries? According to Robert Mardini, head of the Middle East section for the International Committee of the Red Cross, the “vast majority” of these 13,000 suffered not scratches but severe wounds, including multiple gunshot wounds, from which they will never recover. Also, if (as in the instant case) they were unarmed, what difference does it make that Hamas and Islamic Jihad members figured among those killed? If they are legitimate targets even as they peacefully protest, why then should they disarm—to facilitate Israel’s killing of them?</p>
<p>Under the cover of the protests Hamas, PIJ and other militants have engaged in violent and provocative acts. Hundreds have approached and attempted to breach the fence, burned tires, threw rocks and firebombs at Israeli forces, launched incendiary kites and laid improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the fence. Palestinian protesters also damaged and looted equipment and installations on the Gaza side of the border at the Kerem Shalom crossing.</p>	<p>Mladenov manages to omit the most salient facts about these demonstrations: that, according to researchers, they were overwhelmingly nonviolent, and that Israel was methodically killing and permanently injuring unarmed civilians. Amnesty International reported that, as of 8 June 2018, it had “not seen evidence of the use of firearms by Palestinians against Israeli soldiers during the protests.” Mladenov also manages to devote more space to alleged “violent and provocative acts” by Gaza militants than to Israel’s systematic lethal targeting of peaceful demonstrators. On the other hand, Human Rights Watch, in the most authoritative study to date, found that “Israeli forces’ repeated use of lethal force in the Gaza Strip since March</p>

	<p>30, 2018, against Palestinian demonstrators who posed no imminent threat may amount to war crimes.” Eminent Hebrew University historian Zeev Sternhell stated that “the weekly killing on the Gaza Strip border is a campaign of barbarism.” Of Gaza militants, HRW had this to say: “ Hamas’s encouragement of and support for the protests and the participation of Hamas members in the protests do not justify the use of live ammunition against protesters who posed no threat to life.”</p>
<p>Israel has a duty to protect its citizens but must [d]o so while exercising maximum restraint in the use of live fire, and to not use lethal force, except as a last resort against imminent threat of death or serious injury. The actions of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other groups in Gaza put at risk not only the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike, but also efforts to ensure a livable future for people of Gaza. They must prevent the launching of rockets and breaching of the fence.</p>	<p>Mladenov manages not to mention that, far from “exercising maximum restraint in the use of live fire, and to not use lethal force, except as a last resort,” Israel was—in the words of Amnesty—“carrying out a murderous assault against protesting Palestinians, with its armed forces killing and maiming demonstrators who pose no imminent threat to them.” He also manages not to notice that Palestinian militants only launched “rockets” after Israel carried out murderous provocations, such as the killing of Palestinian militants, in the hope of inducing militant groups to resume armed resistance. Mladenov says Gaza militants “must prevent ... the breaching of the fence.” The UN has pronounced Gaza unlivable, while Sara Roy of Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies has written, “Innocent people, most of them young, are slowly being poisoned by the water they drink.” Is it incumbent upon the people of Gaza not to breach an unlivable confine in which they are slowly being poisoned?</p>
<p>The reporting period also included several notable prosecutions by Israeli authorities of Palestinians and Israelis for membership in terrorist cells. On 29 March, an Israeli court convicted an Israeli national of membership in a terrorist organization for participating in a price-tag attack against Palestinians. On May 1, three Palestinians were indicted for planning shooting attacks in the West Bank under the guidance and sponsorship of Hamas. On 27 May, indictments were filed against Palestinians suspected of being members of a cell planning attacks against high-level targets; and on 17 June suspected Palestinian members of another cell, reportedly operated by Hamas</p>	<p>Mladenov manages not to mention any of the killings, torture, and beatings of Palestinians in the West Bank by Israeli security forces that are chronicled on a virtually daily basis by Israeli journalists, such as Gideon Levy and Amira Hass, as well as by Israeli human rights organizations, such as B’Tselem. He also manages not to mention that Israel’s “notable prosecutions” have repeatedly proven to be trumped-up and bogus, that the Israeli military has repeatedly lied to cover up its crimes against Palestinians, and that Israel’s legal apparatus has unfailingly whitewashed these crimes.</p>

<p>as well, were indicted for preparing large bombing and suicide attacks in Israeli cities.</p>	
<p>Provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric continued during the reporting period. On April 30, during his opening speech at the Palestinian National Council, Palestinian President Abbas made a series of anti-Semitic statements that were widely condemned by the international community. At the height of the Gaza protests, a senior Hamas official called on protestors to “take down the border and tear out their [Israelis] hearts,” one of several public calls by Hamas leaders inciting protestors to violence, including on social media. Meanwhile, Fatah’s official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of past terror attacks.</p> <p>Israeli officials also made provocative statements. These included calls for the annexation of the settlements, denying that the Palestinian territories were occupied and to openly rejecting the Palestinian right to statehood.</p>	<p>Mladenov manages not to quote any of the incessant Israeli “provocative statements.” Couldn’t he have mentioned the statement of Israeli military chief of staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot that the “orders” to Israeli snipers along Gaza’s perimeter fence were to “use a lot of force,” or of Israeli defense minister Avigdor Lieberman that “there are no innocent people in the Gaza Strip,” or of Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz, who pondered whether the army would have to “strike Gaza and conquer it and put an end to this terrorist regime once and for all,” or of Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan and Education Minister Naftali Bennett, both of whom urged shooting all Gazans launching flaming kites, as “age doesn’t matter, they’re terrorists,” and they are “not innocent 8-year-olds”?”</p>
<p>I welcome Egypt’s decision to open the Rafah border crossing, which enabled some 14,000 Palestinians to cross into Egypt, and over 3,300 back into Gaza.</p> <p>I also take this opportunity to reiterate my call to Hamas to provide full information on the Israeli nationals who are being held in Gaza, as required by international humanitarian law.</p>	<p>While he mentions Egypt’s relaxation of the blockade, and while he is mindful of a few Israeli nationals reportedly being held in Gaza, Mladenov never once calls on Israel to lift its illegal and inhuman blockade that is holding two million people—half of them children—hostage in a “human rubbish heap” (<i>Economist</i>), a “sinking ship” (International Committee of the Red Cross), and a “toxic slum” (UN human rights chief). He also appears to have forgotten that ending the blockade “immediately and unconditionally” is “required by international humanitarian law.”</p>

It’s only a matter of time before Gazans abandon nonviolent resistance: for, even as they march unarmed and unafraid into the line of Israeli fire, to be shot dead by snipers poised along the perimeter of Gaza concentration camp, Mladenov lies and lies and lies some more to justify their martyrdom and exculpate their assassins. Damned if they do, damned if they don’t, is it cause for shock if Gazans do take up arms again to at least exact primal revenge? It’s not just a painful sight to behold but, in the depths of its moral depravity, probably without precedent. Did white Southerners—did the sheriffs, officials, the press, did even the Klan—purport that the Civil Rights protesters were armed, that it was the white hoodlums who were the victims when they

assaulted protesters? Did Civil Rights marchers have to absorb a thousandth part of the death and injury inflicted on the peaceful demonstrators in Gaza? And yet, despite this massive bloodletting, Gazans have so far still found the moral wherewithal to stay nonviolent, only to be crucified a second time by Judases like Mladenov. If nothing else, the likes of Mladenov need to be put on notice that they will be called out—exposed in broad daylight and damned for all eternity—every time they climb a rung steeped in a sea of blood.