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OBSERVATIONS



# It's time for the Hausdorff perspective



NATASHA HAUSDORFF: Vital legal perspective. (Courtesy Natasha Hausdorff)



HERE AND THERE  
BRENDA KATTEN

**W**e in Israel watch aghast at the rise of antisemitism worldwide. London is infested with thousands who come to its center every Saturday shouting, "From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free" – a euphemism for the elimination of the one Jewish state. The United Kingdom's Trade Union

OXFORD UNION debate on conscription, 1939. Hausdorff, an Oxford University alum, took part in the Nov. 28, 2024, Oxford Union debate at the university on 'Is Israel responsible for genocide?' (Walter Bellamy/London Express/Getty Images)



Congress – the largest umbrella group, embracing 48 trade unions – recently gave a work attire directive to its members, stating: "Wear something red, green, black, or a Palestinian keffiyeh to show solidarity."

Being Jewish in the Diaspora today is a challenge – even more so for the Jewish students at university.

The UK media has much to answer for with its twisted reporting on Israel – too often omitting to state that the Israel-Hamas war was initiated by Hamas on October 7, 2023, when the terror group carried out a barbaric massacre of 1,200 Israelis plus the abduction of 251 Israeli men, women, and children.

117 were returned alive, while 100 (alive or dead) are still in captivity.

At this disturbing time in the history of Israel and the Jewish people, we especially value articulate spokespersons.

One such is barrister Natasha Hausdorff. Based in the UK, she presents Israel's position with fortitude and clarity, together with the vital legal perspective.

Hausdorff has law degrees from the universities of Oxford and Tel Aviv and appears frequently on BBC and Sky, as well as numerous other international TV channels. She is a sought-after keynote speaker on international law, foreign affairs, and national security policy, focusing specifically on countering false narratives that have become widespread in current times.

Hausdorff regularly briefs politicians and international organizations and has spoken at European parliaments, as well as the UN.

The *Magazine* recently had the opportunity to interview her.

**Your impressive CV states that you are the legal director of the NGO UK Lawyers for Israel [UKLFI]. What evoked the special interest you have in Israel?**

I joined this voluntary association of lawyers a little over 10 years ago and have continued to be inspired by the dedication of all the active members to the proper application of the law to Israel and to combating antisemitism. My family goes back eight generations in the Land of Israel, so I have always had a keen understanding of the history of the place and the realities Israelis face.

The disconnect between those realities and the understanding in the UK was palpable. My international law studies at Oxford also revealed to me how much work lay ahead in combating the weaponization of international law against Israel and its abuse through lawfare.

**You have spoken out clearly against the ICC's recent ruling issuing arrest**

**warrants for Israel's prime minister and former defense minister. What are your reasons for saying that the ruling is illegal?**

The ICC prosecutor's public summary of his application for warrants against the Israeli leaders, endorsed by some celebrity 'experts,' contained only false material. Every phrase of every sentence was untrue. Allegations regarding the closure of border crossings and arbitrary restriction of humanitarian aid are very easily refuted by publicly available information on the provision by Israel of aid into Gaza.

The 'famine' report cited by the prosecutor to justify his position has been revealed by the Famine Review Committee to be 'implausible' and based on incomplete information. When UK Lawyers for Israel pointed out in its submission to the court the falsehoods and failings in the warrant application, the prosecutor told the court to ignore any submissions on the accuracy of his application, breaching his own professional duties to the court.

Quite apart from the slew of falsehoods underpinning the warrant application, the ICC has had to take the unprecedented step of acting outside its jurisdiction and in breach of its own rules in order to pursue Israel's leaders. The ICC's jurisdiction is derived from its member states and from other states that accept its jurisdiction over their nationals and their territory.

However, Israel never joined the ICC or accepted its jurisdiction, while the Palestinian Authority is not a state and could therefore never have delegated any jurisdiction to the ICC.

Further still, the international agreements that created the PA (the Oslo Accords) explicitly said that Israel would have sole criminal jurisdiction over Israelis. So even if the PA could delegate any jurisdiction to the ICC, it had no criminal jurisdiction over Israelis to delegate.

The rules of the ICC have been thrown out of the window. A founding principle of the court is 'complementarity': the ICC is a complement to national legal systems; it does not replace them. Where a nation is willing and able to investigate credible allegations, it must be left to do so.

Israel has a robust legal system and a history of successful prosecutions of its top leaders.

Even if that were not the case, the timing of this application, made during an ongoing war on the very day the prosecutor's staff were scheduled to meet Israeli officials to organize a visit by him to Israel to discuss his 'concerns,' is a clear indication that the complementarity rule has been completely disregarded.



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As we witness the worldwide demonstrations against Israel, what in your view is the reason for the current strong anti-Israel perception evolving from the political and civil leadership within so many countries?

There has been a sustained campaign of misinformation for decades, which unfortunately underpins a lot of the troubling rhetoric from political and civil leadership.

I hope that as it becomes clear that Israel and other Western liberal democracies are effectively fighting the same civilizational war, that those in leadership roles will amend their stance and cease the international community's support for terror through the Palestinian Authority Pay for Slay program, which incentivizes it, and the continued indoctrination of Palestinian children, also facilitated by the international taxpayer.

**Jewish students are facing unprecedented anti-Zionism – evolving into antisemitism – on campuses throughout the world. Are Jewish students receiving sufficient support?**

I know that the dedicated team at UKLFI is often working around the clock to support students and has done so for many years. We also publicize materials on the website to assist them, such as a 'Know Your Rights' booklet. I am keenly aware of the increasing challenges they face and have sought to make myself available to speak on campuses to provide additional support at events. There is still much to do.

**World leaders tend to emanate from top universities. How concerning is it that top universities adopt an anti-Israel stance? What are your thoughts on your recent experience at the Oxford Union Debate, where you spoke against the motion 'This house believes Israel is an apartheid state responsible for genocide'?**

From the word 'go,' it was clear the event was stacked with Hamas supporters virulently against us. We entered the Debating Chamber to shouts and jeers. The Muslim Brotherhood had, in effect, taken over the Oxford Union.

While the union claimed that 'free speech' must be preserved, there was no free speech for UK journalist Jonathan Sacerdoti, Mosab Hassan Yousef (son of a Hamas co-founder), Yoseph Haddad, and me speaking against the motion. Some students were actively prevented from attending, while the vast majority of Jewish students – even union members – were far too intimidated and fearful to be present at this debate.

My colleagues and I were prepared to meet and speak with the members of Oxford's Israel Society – ahead of the debate – which the Israel Society very much favored. Unfortunately, the Ox-



DELEGATES AT the First Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland, 1897: 'Answer to antisemitism.' (Wikimedia Commons)

**TEAM ISRAEL:** With her teammates just before the debate (from L): Hausdorff, Yoseph Haddad, Mosab Hassan Yousef, and Jonathan Sacerdoti. (Courtesy Yoseph Haddad)

**In light of the appalling increase in antisemitism today, what should we Jews be doing that we are not doing to secure and strengthen the one Jewish state?**

I believe the only proper response to the misinformation campaign, which is plainly impacting Israel's ability to robustly defend itself, is to challenge the falsehoods and call out the lies. Every individual with a basic understanding of the position and the realities is able to do that in his own way, in his own arena or industry.

The propaganda war wasn't taken very seriously for many years. But its effects cannot be denied. Standing up proudly for the truth and supporting those who are doing so, especially those brave students in hostile environments, is a significant part of the battle, and I believe that ultimately the truth will come out.

**Natasha, how fortunate is Israel and the Jewish people to have a spokesperson such as you; one who rises to the justified defense of the single Jewish state. You demonstrate graphically the importance of utilizing the legal aspects of Israel's right to its homeland – a perspective that others would do well to emulate.** ■

*The writer is president of Israel, Britain and the Commonwealth Association (IBCA); she has chaired public affairs organizations in Israel and the UK.*

ford Union refused to book a room for this purpose.

At the debate, Yousef and Haddad were heckled viciously in Arabic – they were called traitors and collaborators, as well as being personally threatened. At a particularly virulent moment, our colleague Sacerdoti asked the president to call in the police, who were stationed outside the debating area. He refused this request. Instead, Haddad was ejected from the chamber, with Yousef ordered out of the chamber in the midst of his speech.

Miko Peled, a proposer of the motion, referred to the massacre of 1,200 Israelis and the taking hostage of a further 251 Israelis as a 'heroic act' – a statement that is in breach of the law – reference – 12 (IA) of the Terrorism Act 2000.

The union produced a doctored video of the debate, which was anything but a true record of what transpired. The blatant viciousness, heckling, and badmouthing against our team that occurred during the debate were totally removed.

The entire speech of Mosab Hassan Yousef was eliminated, and there was no sight of the ejection of Haddad or Yousef being told to leave the chamber. So much for 'free speech.'

**Hamas's barbaric massacre on Oct. 7, 2023, appeared to be the catalyst for an unprecedented hike in antisemitism. Do you see any comparison between today's antisemitism and that of Hitler's antisemitism of the 1930s, which led to the annihilation of six million Jews?**

I was always taken by Rabbi [Jonathan] Sacks's great explanation of the evolution of antisemitism as a mutating virus. He drew parallels between the focus on the Jewish race by the Nazis, which they justified with eugenics, and the modern focus on the Jewish state.

In accordance with his analysis, I also see anti-Zionism as the modern, supposedly acceptable face of antisemitism, or Jew-hatred. Calls for

the annihilation of the Jewish state are being steeped in pseudo-legal terminology to make these calls appear acceptable, but it seems to me to be driven by the same, oldest hatred.

**In a world where the media promotes the view of internationally recognized terrorist organizations, you appear on TV stating Israel's case in a clear, articulate manner. Against this background, to what extent could Israel improve its international image?**

It would be great to see more *tachlis* [being to the point or succinct] in Israel's explanation of the legal position. The fact of the matter is that the law and the facts are on Israel's side. It is not 'breaking international law' – far from it. That message should be expressed confidently and often.

**It is 127 years since Theodor Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. It was Herzl's view that the founding of a Jewish state was the answer to antisemitism.**

