

In Moral Inversion, Profs Proclaim 'Islamophobia,' Not Antisemitism, the Real Threat

By Andrew E. Harrod

The word “antisemitic is used just very, very, freely,” claimed [John Esposito](#), founding director of Georgetown University’s [Saudi-founded](#) Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU). During a recent [webinar](#), “Voices Under Siege: Free Speech, Islamophobia, and Palestine in Academia,” Esposito and his fellow panelists trivialized the antisemitism currently raging globally while defending an ostensibly maliciously maligned Islam.

ACMCU’s anti-“Islamophobia” [Bridge Initiative](#) and Rutgers University’s [jihadist apologist](#) Center for Race, Security and Rights (CSRR) cohosted Esposito, currently a Distinguished University Professor. CSRR director [Sahar Aziz](#) and [Bruce Robbins](#), an anti-Israel Columbia University English professor, joined him. Bridge Associate Director [Mobashra Tazamal](#) moderated.



A former president of the Middle East Studies Association, Esposito in his prepared address stated that criticism of Israeli “apartheid” or “genocide in Gaza” is “often labeled as

antisemitic,” without admitting the baselessness of such charges against a democratic Israel. To justify his genocide calumny against Israel’s self-defense campaign in the Gaza Strip following Hamas’s barbaric October 7, 2023, assault, he cited without context casualty figures of Arabs killed in Gaza since then. “Approximately 70 percent” of an estimated 41,000 dead “were women and children,” he claimed, ignoring the [dubious nature](#) of such figures sourced from Hamas. Even the United Nations—hardly a pro-Israel institution—recently revised the figures [downward](#). Moreover, [analysis](#) of Gaza casualty figures indicates that Israeli forces are killing almost one Hamas terrorist for every dead civilian tragically caught in the crossfire, a historically unprecedented low ratio for urban warfare such as in Gaza.

While Jews fight for survival, Esposito’s main concern was an undefined prejudice against Islam, as he claimed that many observers avoid “Islamophobia to describe Israel’s indiscriminate anti-Palestinian, Muslim and Christian Palestinian policies.” “Dehumanization of innocent Palestinians” and their global supporters, he suggested, involves “indiscriminate association of the religion of Islam and Muslims” with “terrorism and antisemitic violence.” Such

vague platitudes failed to explain vital Israeli security policies in the face of a Palestinian Muslim population [deeply steeped](#) in Islamic doctrine's [historic antisemitism](#).

Esposito's reference to Christian Palestinians implied a diverse Palestinian society, yet Palestinians are almost monolithically Muslim and [live](#) under an officially Islamic [Palestinian Authority](#) or Hamas. The *CIA World Factbook* [entry](#) on Gaza quantifies the Christian population there as "Christian <1.0%," while the [entry](#) on the West Bank, including Jerusalem's Christian Israeli residents, lists "Christian 1-2.5%." This miniscule minority suffers not from any "Islamophobia," but rather [sharia supremacist repression](#), contrary to Esposito and the ever [factually challenged Aziz](#), who gaffed that "about 20 percent of Palestinians are Christians."

For Esposito, Gaza's Muslim Arabs, not Israel's Jews and other citizens, are the real victims on the defense against Israeli aggression. "Israel's continued absorption of Palestinian territory, the Golan heights" helped provoke Hamas attacks, he argued. Yet the massacres of October 7, 2023, manifest precisely how jihadist groups like Hamas [genocidally reject](#) any existence of a Jewish state whatsoever.

In the face of these realities, Esposito asserted that Hamas terrorists were merely part of a wider political movement, as only "Hamas militants" committed the "October 7 killing and kidnapping of Israelis." "Little distinction is made between the political and military wings of Hamas," he said, yet the latter excludes the "vast majority of Gaza's Palestinian Muslims," notwithstanding Hamas's [widespread Palestinian popularity](#). It would be intriguing to know Esposito's distinctions between the "political and military wings" of the Nazi movement in the Third Reich during World War II.

Israel's "totally out of control" Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to Esposito as the real threat to peace, as

beleaguered Israel, bombarded from almost every direction, wages “seemingly unending war.” Israel’s menace is “epitomized by Netanyahu’s threat to bomb Lebanon back into the Stone Age,” Esposito said in misattribution of a [statement](#) from Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Thus, “alleged antisemitic” threats today are a “distraction from the real issue,” namely American “financial and military support for Israel.”

Aziz’s presentation on an academic environment of “policing of Muslim and Arab professors,” “smear campaigns,” and “ad hominem attacks” exhibited a similarly warped moral perspective. University “antisemitism task forces” have “no anti-Palestinian racism” counterparts and “very few Islamophobia task forces,” she said, an “asymmetry” also echoed by Robbins without defining these supposed bigotries. Universities publicize “empathy for Jewish students,” not “Palestinian students whose families are being killed,” and neglect “Palestinians who feel trauma or offense” from “protests that defend Israel’s genocide in Gaza,” she added. Her regurgitation of Israeli genocide libels did not explain why jihad’s victims are morally equivalent to deaths among Palestinians, whether combatants or civilians, due to Israeli self-defense.

“Zionist organizations” are often “very proud of their advocacy campaigns to defame Muslims,” Aziz argued, which involves distorting a supposedly benign Islamic religion of peace. “That Muslims are presumptively antisemitic” and “hate Jews” is an “Islamophobic, racist trope,” like the “stereotype that Muslims support Hamas,” she said. The [long history](#) of Jews subjugated under Islamic rule as second-class dhimmis demonstrates otherwise.

In such ideological contention, Aziz perceived not pushback against anti-Israel and Islamist shibboleths, but nefarious Zionist conspiracies. “The ultimate objective is to silence any critique of Israel,” including “provision of billions of

our dollars to Israel," she said. The "legalized corruption" of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)—a [mythologized bogeyman](#) among the radical professoriate—rather than American interests in an [Israeli ally](#), heavily influences legislators, she said. "If they don't support unconditionally Israel even when a genocide is happening, then they will lose their office."

Echoing Aziz's comments, Robbins decried a "new McCarthyism" and "culture of fear" while the "pro-Israel lobby is extremely well organized and well financed." "Wealthy Jewish megadonors" form one "obvious reason why" Columbia University opposed "critics of the Israeli slaughter in Gaza," he said, although he warned against antisemitic themes of rich Jews. Accordingly, three "extremely out Zionists" chair Columbia's "so-called task force on antisemitism," he said, as if Zionism were not [central](#) to [Jewish identity](#), or Jewish Voice for Peace, approvingly mentioned by Esposito, were not decidedly [fringe](#).

Invoking the leftist view that Jews are a privileged, rather than targeted, minority, Robbins condemned the "smart tactic" of campus Zionism supporters. They are "weaponizing" the "commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, a commitment born of real disadvantage," for "Jewish students, who were not in fact disadvantaged," he said. Thus, some people "feeling uncomfortable" today are simply "not used to hearing Israel criticized. This is not antisemitism," he claimed, ignoring that Israel has faced indiscriminate terror for months on end.

Such is the inverted understanding of Jew-hatred and "Islamophobia" among many Middle East Studies academics today. In this inverted view of reality, a concept invented to censor all criticism of Islam displaces the shock at students globally cheering on incessant jihadist assaults to destroy an infidel Israel. Refuting the bigotry of these anti-intellectual charlatans is a necessary step to restoring balance and decency in academia.

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