

Mark Ruffalo, Middle East Expert, Denounces Israel

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Mark Ruffalo, an American actor, joins such profound experts on the Arab-Israeli conflict from the world of entertainment as musician Roger Waters and actress Vanessa Redgrave in his grasp of the matter, which has led to his deep antipathy toward Israel. His story is here: “Mark Ruffalo talks Palestinian issues, calls Israel a ‘kind of apartheid,’” by Zachary Keyser, [Jerusalem Post](#), October 11, 2020:

Actor Mark Ruffalo referred to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the division between the two as a “kind of apartheid” while speaking to television host Mehdi Hasan on the self-titled NBC program.

“A kind of apartheid”? What kind? In Israel Arabs serve in the Knesset, where the Arab Joint List is the third largest political group. Arabs sit on Israel’s Supreme Court. Arabs go abroad as diplomats for the Jewish state. Arabs in Israel study with Jews, work in offices and factories beside Jews, are treated in the same hospitals with Jews, play on the same sports teams and on the same orchestras as Jews. Israeli Arabs have the same civil, political, and religious rights as Israeli Jews. The only difference is that while Israeli Jews are required to serve in the army, Israeli Arabs are exempt, though they may, if they so wish, volunteer to serve, and some, especially Christians and Druze, have elected to do so.

Ruffalo accused the Israeli government of carrying out “asymmetrical warfare” against the Palestinian people, and tied in United States support for Israel as plainly aiding and abetting the separation and the “violence acted upon them.”

By “asymmetrical warfare,” Ruffalo means that Israel is militarily more powerful than the Palestinians, for which presumably it is to be pilloried. Apparently it is unfair for Israel to be stronger than the Palestinian Arabs who wish to destroy it. But it is not Israel that begins these bouts of warfare; rather, the Palestinian terror groups start these mini-wars, waging Jihad against Israeli civilians, and Israel then retaliates. And the Palestinian terrorists are not fighting alone. Depending on the group – Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah – they receive money, weaponry, and diplomatic support from various Arab states, Iran, and Turkey. That makes the warfare a lot less “asymmetrical.”

The Israelis know that both major terror groups, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, hide their weapons in civilian neighborhoods. The IDF makes great efforts to warn Arab civilians to flee from weapons depots that Israel has targeted, using the “knock-on-the-roof” technique that

describes the IDF's practice of dropping non-explosive or low-yield devices on the roofs of targeted civilian homes in the Palestinian territories, as a prior warning of imminent bombing attacks, to give the inhabitants time to flee the attack.

"There's no reason why an ally of American should not be held to the same standard as we would hold any other nation in the world," he said.

Does Mark Ruffalo have a single example to adduce showing that America holds Israel to a lesser standard than it does "any other nation in the world"? He hasn't produced one. Why not? Doesn't Israel, almost alone among the nations of the world, make great efforts to minimize civilian casualties among its enemies? Colonel Richard Kemp, commander of the British forces in Afghanistan, who has fought in many combat zones, has described why he believes that Israel has "the most moral military in the world." Here are his observations:

There are two views of the Israeli Military – what you hear in most of the media, and the truth. I'm going to tell you the truth.

I was the Commander of British Forces in Afghanistan. I have fought in combat zones around the world including Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Macedonia and Iraq. I was also present throughout the conflict in Gaza in 2014.

Based on my experience and on my observations: the Israel Defense Force, the IDF, does more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare.

Why is this so?

Firstly, Israel is a decent country with Western values, run on democratic principles. Israel has no more interest in war

than Belgium does. In fact, Israel has never started a war. The only reason it ever goes to war is to defend itself. And it has to defend itself because, unlike Belgium, it is surrounded by countries and armed groups that want to destroy it.

Secondly, Judaism, with its unsurpassed moral standards, remains a major influence on the citizens of Israel. I say this as a non-Jew.

Thirdly, the army is composed overwhelmingly of citizen soldiers.

Israel is a small country with a small professional army. To fight a war it depends on its conscripts and its reservists. These are ordinary citizens, from professors to plumbers, called upon to defend their homes. They don't want to be fighting and they don't want to harm others.

Nowhere was the essential morality and decency of the IDF more evident than in the Gaza War of 2014. If ever there was a purely defensive war, this was it.

The war was started by Hamas, the terror organization, designated as such by the US State Department, that runs the Gaza strip. In the first six months of 2014, Hamas launched hundreds of rockets at Israeli civilians.

After repeated warnings from Israel to stop, the Israeli Air Force finally conducted precision strikes to halt the rocket-fire. And the IDF advanced into Gaza to destroy a network of terror tunnels that Hamas had constructed to attack Israeli communities near the Gaza border.

The IDF took extraordinary measures to give Gaza civilians notice of targeted areas, dropping millions of leaflets, broadcasting radio messages, sending texts and making tens of thousands of phone calls. Let me repeat that. The Israelis called Gazans on their cell phones and told them to leave

their residences and move to safety. Never in the history of warfare has an army phoned its enemy and told them where they are going to drop their bombs.

Many IDF missions that could have taken out Hamas military capabilities were aborted to prevent civilian casualties, increasing the risk to Israeli citizens and soldiers.

Despite all of this, of course innocent civilians were killed. Every war is chaotic and confusing, and mistakes are frequent. But mistakes are not war crimes.

Hamas, on the other hand, committed war crimes as official government policy.

Hamas deliberately positioned its military assets among the civilian population, hiding weapons in schools and hospitals, and placing rocket launchers alongside apartment buildings, then forced those civilians to stay in areas they knew would be attacked. They also instructed their people to report the lie that every Gazan killed was a civilian, even if they were actually fighters.

And if there were no civilian deaths, Hamas made them up! Numerous Internet sites show Palestinians elaborately staging sniper victims and smashed ambulances, among other phony horrors. It's so common there's even a term for it – Pallywood, as in Palestinian Hollywood.

Ironically, it's the leaders of Hamas themselves who best understand the extraordinary measures the IDF will take to protect innocent civilians. They take full advantage of Israel's decency and adherence to the laws of war.

No army takes such risks in order to protect civilians as the Israeli army does. I say this as a professional soldier. I say it because it's true. And people who care about truth should know it.

Well, Mark Ruffalo, what about your claim, quoted above, that “there’s no reason why an ally of American should not be held to the same standard as we would hold any other nation in the world”? Israel doesn’t need to be held to a high standard by its American ally. As Colonel Kemp, a British officer who has fought in many different theatres of war and observed the standards of many different combatants, has concluded, Israel already has “the most moral army in the world.” It holds itself, without any American prompting, to the highest standard of any army in the world. Perhaps you could spare a few minutes to read Kemp’s observations. And just possibly you will learn something that might give you pause.

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