

This Blood Libel Brought to You by the West

Western-backed Palestinian nonprofit apologizes for anti-Semitic blood libel

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Following a rash of criticism from U.S. Jewish groups, a Palestinian nonprofit funded by Western governments has apologized for accusing Jewish people of using “Christian blood” during the Passover holiday.

[Miftah](#), a Palestinian nonprofit group founded by Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian lawmaker, said Monday it regrets publishing an article on its website accusing “the Jews [of using] the blood of Christians in the Jewish Passover.”

Miftah had refused to apologize for the article last week, instead [lashing out](#) at pro-Israel bloggers who highlighted the offensive article.

The article, which has since been removed from Miftah’s website, sparked [outrage](#) among Jewish leaders and others who condemned the Western-backed nonprofit for perpetuating an anti-Semitic blood libel.

Miftah has largely received its funding from Western organizations and governments, including U.S. taxpayer-backed National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Ford Foundation, the United Nations, and several European governments.

The original article had criticized President Barack Obama for praising the Jewish holiday of Passover, which marks the Jewish people’s freedom from slavery in Egypt.

“Does Obama in fact know the relationship, for example, between ‘Passover’ and ‘Christian blood’..?!” said the article, which was first [found and publicized](#) by the pro-Israel Elder of Ziyon blog. “Or ‘Passover’ and ‘Jewish blood rituals?!’”

“Much of the chatter and gossip about historical Jewish blood rituals in Europe are real and not fake as they claim; the Jews used the blood of Christians in the Jewish Passover,” the article continued.

Miftah at first defended its right to post the article in a statement [titled](#), “MIFTAH denounces smear campaign against it.”

“The obscure pro-Israeli website ‘The Elder of Ziyon’ has wrongly accused MIFTAH and Dr. Ashrawi of promoting Jewish blood libel during Passover through its publication of an Arabic-language article that briefly addressed the subject,” the defense stated.

The article was about promoting dialogue, Miftah maintained.

“The disclaimer at the opening of the ‘News and Analysis’ section clearly states that, ‘The views represented in [News and Analysis] are solely those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of MIFTAH but rather fulfill its mandate for open dialogue,’ ” the statement continued.

Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, quickly denounced Miftah’s anti-Semitic post and its subsequent defense.

“The MIFTAH statement defending the decision to post the blatantly anti-Semitic article by al-Zaru on its Arabic language website and claiming it is being ‘smeared’ is outrageous,” the ADL [told](#) Algemeiner in a statement. “They made a bad mistake and they should have offered a full-throated and sincere apology.”

Miftah on Monday recalibrated its position, issuing a full [apology](#) and blaming a low-level staffer for the situation.

“It has become clear to us after investigating this incident that the article was accidentally and incorrectly published by a junior staff member,” the apology stated. “The said staffer has been reprimanded and all our staff has been informed as to the disgusting and repulsive phenomena of blood libel or accusation, including its use against Jews.”

“Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, as founder, has nothing to do with the day to day management at MIFTAH and was no way involved in this incident,” the apology maintained.

Miftah, which has been criticized in the past for [glorifying terrorism](#) and advocating in favor of boycotting Israel, received support from the taxpayer-funded NED until 2010.

A NED spokesperson confirmed to the Free Beacon that it no longer funds the organization but would not provide the reason why.

Funding to the group has also been provided by Italy, Ireland, Norway, the U.N. [_ Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO), and a handful of Western nonprofits, [according](#) to NGO Monitor, a watchdog group.

Representatives of these organizations and governments did not respond to a Free Beacon request for comment regarding the controversy.