

The Parliamentary Council of Europe (PACE) mum as the world stands agape over Israeli atrocities in Gaza

By Edward Campbell

MISSOULA, MT Jan. 30 (Al-Masakin)—The world is holding its breath awaiting comment by The Parliamentary Council of Europe (PACE) on the recent war crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip.

Though the Council placed Gaza on its Agenda to be debated Jan. 29, and acknowledged yesterday that such a debate had taken place, the official news center for the organization has not as yet disclosed the results of that discussion besides releasing a startlingly laconic statement on Thursday which said little more than:



“PACE can offer its political know-how to try to ease daily life for the populations of the two parties in conflict,” said Göran Lindblad (Sweden, EPP/CD) in Strasbourg today, opening a current affairs debate on the situation in Gaza. He highlighted the need for a change of attitude by the two parties to try to work out a just and lasting peace, including “recognition of secure borders”. As rapporteur, he said the Parliamentary Assembly’s Sub-Committee on the Middle East would pursue its efforts in support of the peace process.

Whereas PACE made it clear on Jan. 27 that it seeks expanded powers of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and resoundingly condemned the ‘climate of impunity’ surrounding murders of several members of the Press and human rights activists in the Russian Federation, including the Jan. 19 assassination



of human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and Indy journalist for *Novaya Gazeta* Anastasiya Baburova, the body has remained silent on Israeli attacks on the media during the recent Gaza assault in which four journalist were murdered, two detained, and, among other things, the Reuters Bureau and the NBC headquarters were assaulted, all of which caused the International News Safety Institute (INSI) to publish a Jan. 15 ‘News Safety Alert for Gaza,’ and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) along with the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) to roundly declare that Israel was deliberately targeting the media.

This is of course to pass over the grim statistics of those killed and injured, the assaults on at least 27 Muslim houses of worship, and the use of banned weapons on civilians such as White Phosphorus, Dense Inert Metal Explosive (DIME), Depleted Uranium, dart weapons, and more.

Whereas PACE appears to be so committed to the theory of Universal Jurisdiction unto the prosecution of those who have targeted media personnel elsewhere, it stands to reason that the Council should now take the lead in demanding War Crimes trials for a number of Israeli officials.

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