

# THE ANGRY ARAB: How Arabs Watch Israeli Elections

The view is no different from how South African blacks regarded elections of whites in apartheid South Africa, writes As'ad AbuKhalil.

By **As'ad AbuKhalil**

*Special to Consortium News*



Israeli elections are treated by U.S. media as an American affair. It was only after I came to the U.S. in 1983 that I realized the extent to which the American political establishment invests in Israeli elections. And with every election, the U.S. media and dominant political class pretend that if only this side wins (or that side), peace will be at hand and that a historic compromise would be achieved if only the Palestinians show some pragmatism.

U.S. administrations stay neutral toward Israeli candidates (they love them all equally) although some U.S. presidents favored some over others (Clinton favored the Labor Party and Obama favored anyone other than Benjamin Netanyahu – not that he treated Netanyahu's government with anything but the fawning and generous treatment that Israeli leaders are accustomed to receiving from U.S. presidents).

U.S. media purposefully cover Israeli elections to excess, partly to contribute to the myth that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East region (Cyprus is possibly the one country which deserves that label). Lebanon has been holding elections long before Israel was (forcibly) created

but its elections are scantily covered by U.S. media.

In excessively covering Israeli elections, U.S. and Western media act out of racist preferences: Israel leaders have been exclusively European immigrants (or descendants of European immigrants) and the denigration and political marginalization of Sephardic Jews don't detract from the image of the "only democracy." That's not to mention the mistreatment of the Arab population, both inside the 1948 boundaries of the occupation state, as well as those who are in West Bank, Gaza or outside Palestine.

Israeli leaders visit Washington more than other Western leaders. The declared affinity and "shared values" myth between the two countries was invented to cover up the historical record of anti-Semitism inside the U.S., and to conceal U.S. complicity in the Western inaction toward the Holocaust.

Arabs' views of the Israeli elections are no different from how South African blacks regarded elections of whites in apartheid South Africa. Israel made sure to establish a state in which votes of non-Jews don't count and can't make a difference. You can't expel 82 percent of the native population of a country, and then call elections democratic in that country (after you rendered the natives into a small – albeit growing – segment of the voting population). The whole idea of declaring Israel as a "Jewish state" is a juridical commitment made by the State of Israel to its Jewish supremacist origin and purpose. It basically promises Jews of Israel that the state (through its military) won't allow the number of non-Jews to ever reach a point in which they can count or make a difference. Yet,

they still call that system a “democracy” in the West.

### **Treated as a Suspect Community**

The Arabs, after being expelled from their homes, and after the land was forcibly stolen from the Palestinians, were treated as a suspect community which was put under direct military rule from 1948 to 1966 (when Israel was already being referred to as “the only democracy in the Middle East.”) Arabs needed permits to travel from one village to another and most had to register with the police station for their daily survival. And not a single Arab poet who rose in the 1950s and 1960s (from Tawfiq Zayyad, Samah Al-Qasim, to Mahmoud Darwish) managed to write Palestinian nationalistic poetry without having to serve time in jail and suffered state harassment for his/her literary production. That Israel is “the only democracy in the Middle East” was – and is – one of the most offensive Western political gimmicks in the eyes of Arabs.

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Some Arabs were drawn early on to communist groupings in the state, because Israeli communists were seen – not always justifiably – as the least racist within a fundamentally racist political spectrum. Some Arabs rose within the Israeli Communist Party but increasingly Arabs realized the fundamental limitations of a state officially founded on an apartheid doctrine. Arab voter turnout was always low, but Arabs managed in the 1970s to produce their own “Arab parties and lists” although divisions and splits marred their political emergence.

The Zionist movement from its inception sought to sow discord and divisions among the Arabs, and recently declassified Israeli documents from the Labor Party archives from the 1960s confirmed those Israeli plans. They not only speak of averting the “formation of an educated class” among the Arabs but also of creating divisions among them: “We should continue to exhaust all the possibilities [inherent in] the policy of communist divisiveness that bore fruit in the past and has succeeded in creating a barrier—even at times artificial—between certain segments of the Arab population.”

### **Participation as Propaganda**

Palestinians in the diaspora and Arabs at large looked with contempt and deep suspicion at Arab participation in Israeli elections and opposed Arab representation in the Knesset. Arab critics rightly pointed out that Arab participation, while failing to achieve any meaningful results for the Arab minority, merely provided an added layer in Israeli political legitimacy and propaganda.

Propaganda booths of the Israeli embassy in the U.S. often feature Arab members of the Knesset without explaining that all of them have been subjected to severe and discriminatory treatment by the state: many are often prevented from speaking, or expelled from the halls of the Knesset, or expelled outright from the Knesset. Furthermore, political participation by Arabs in the Knesset weakens the Arab case against the very legitimacy of the Israeli occupation state.

While residents of the refugee camps never distinguished between Labor or Likud, because the bombs kept falling on

them whether the government belonged to the right, center, or left, PLO leadership often put too much stake in the results of the election.

By the 1970s and 1980s, the leadership of Yasser Arafat failed in mounting a successful armed resistance against Israel (because Arafat had such hopes in the U.S. "peace process," which excluded him from the start) and failed in ending the U.S. boycott of the PLO. In a confirmation of the bankruptcy of the leadership of the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas (who was an advisor to Arafat on Israeli affairs) persuaded Arafat that change would come from Israel provided the Labor Party stayed in power. PLO offices around the world (especially in Paris) used to open champagne bottles when Labor won over Likud. They had no other course of action except to rely on their enemy to deliver liberation for them.

Not much will change in Israel after this election. The racism, aggressiveness and contempt for the native population are beliefs that are shared across the Israeli political spectrum. It is not that there is new racism in Israel: the new racism is the old Labor Party racism but without the camouflage and layers of concealment.

The entire political spectrum of Israel keeps moving further to the right, but occupation and apartheid were planted by the Zionist left in Israel. The notion that Israel is changing (toward racism and exclusiveness) is a myth planted by those who believed all along that there was a "peace camp" in Israel. The political debate between Netanyahu and his opponents shows that both sides competed in demonstrating hostility and aggression toward Arabs. Gen.

[Benny Gantz](#), who ran against Netanyahu this time, bragged about the number of Palestinians he managed to kill in Gaza in 2014, when the overwhelming majority of the casualties were [civilians](#).

Israel will not change on its own, but will be forced to change with a change in the regional balance of forces and the steadfastness of the Palestinian population. More people are disqualified from voting in historic Palestine than those who are enfranchised (largely the Jewish population, including any Jewish person as soon as he or she comes to Israel from anywhere in the world). Palestinians who were born in 1948 Palestine and who left homes and orchards behind were shot at the border if they ever tried to return. The state that killed, displaced, and prevented the return of the natives can't be said to be democratic, even if the majority Jewish population are permitted to select who among them should lead the apartheid state.

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## Emergency Meeting for Assange

Kim Dotcom led an emergency meeting on the day Julian Assange was arrested.

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## Requiem for the Fourth Estate

The arrest of Julian Assange adds to the steady erosion of the rights we once took for granted, says Ray McGovern.

**By Ray McGovern**

It is a very sad day for the rule of law.

Today's broad-daylight manhandling and kidnapping of Julian Assange from political asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London demonstrates in bas-relief that in today's Anglo-America, the Magna Carta and the Bill of Rights are now "quaint and obsolete," to use the words of pseudo-lawyer, Alberto Gonzales.

White House attorney Gonzales was referring in January 2002 to other basic principles of international law, the Geneva Conventions, from which he decided he could grant Bush an exemption so he could authorize torture – which he did on February 7, 2002. (We have that memo.)

This no secret; we also have the Gonzales's memo to Bush.

For services performed, Gonzales was nominated and confirmed as Attorney General, the chief U.S. law enforcer.

When WikiLeaks revealed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Sam Adams Associates for Integrity chose Julian Assange for its annual integrity award. The award's "Oscar," a corner-brightener candlestick holder for shining light into dark places, was presented to Mr. Assange by UK Ambassador Craig Murray and Daniel Ellsberg after a major press conference in London on October 23, 2010. Julian Assange became the eighth in what has become an distinguished line of sixteen truth-tellers – awardees of the Sam Adams Associates.

The citation reads as follows:

*Sam Adams Associates for Integrity*

### **Julian Assange**

It seems altogether fitting and proper that this year's award be presented in London, where Edmund Burke coined the expression "Fourth Estate." Comparing the function of the press to that of the three Houses then in Parliament, Burke said:

"...but in the Reporters Gallery yonder, there sits a Fourth Estate more important far than they all."

The year was 1787—the year the U.S. Constitution was adopted. The First Amendment, approved four years later, aimed at ensuring that the press would be free of government interference. That was then.

With the Fourth Estate now on life support, there is a high premium on the fledgling Fifth Estate, which uses the ether



and is not susceptible of government or corporation control. Small wonder that governments with lots to hide feel very threatened.

It has been said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." WikiLeaks is helping make that possible by publishing documents that do not lie.

Last spring, when we chose WikiLeaks and Julian Assange for this award, Julian said he would accept only "on behalf of our sources, without which WikiLeaks' contributions are of no significance."

We do not know if Pvt. Bradley Manning gave WikiLeaks the gun-barrel video of July 12, 2007 called "Collateral Murder." Whoever did provide that graphic footage, showing the brutality of the celebrated "surge" in Iraq, was certainly far more a patriot than the "mainstream" journalist embedded in that same Army unit. He suppressed what happened in Baghdad that day, dismissed it as simply "one bad day in a surge that was filled with such days," and then had the temerity to lavish praise on the unit in a book he called "The Good Soldiers."

Julian is right to emphasize that the world is deeply indebted to patriotic truth-tellers like the sources who provided the gun-barrel footage and the many documents on Afghanistan and Iraq to WikiLeaks. We hope to have a chance to honor them in person in the future.

Today we honor WikiLeaks, and one of its leaders, Julian Assange, for their ingenuity in creating a new highway by which important documentary evidence can make its way, quickly and confidentially, through the ether and into our

in-boxes. Long live the Fifth Estate!

*Presented this 23rd day of October 2010 in London, England by admirers of the example set by former CIA analyst, Sam Adams.*

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## Moreno Withdraws Asylum as Assange is Arrested

The WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange has been arrested after the Ecuadorian president, Lenin Moreno, withdrew Assange's asylum, in a move that runs counter to international asylum law.

## Charged With Conspiracy to Hack Government Computer; Not Espionage

WikiLeaks tweeted that Ecuador allowed British police into the London embassy to arrest Assange at around 10:30 am British time, 5:30 am in Washington.

The U.S. charged Assange with conspiracy to hack a computer government computer related to the 2010 release of classified information, according to the criminal complaint unsealed hours after his arrest. The indictment does not charge Assange with espionage.

URGENT

Julian Assange did not "walk out of the embassy". The Ecuadorian ambassador invited British police into the embassy and he was immediately arrested.

– WikiLeaks (@wikileaks) [April 11, 2019](#)

This is the moment when Assange was dragged out by police. He was heard to say, “The UK must resist this...the UK must resist.”

BREAK: Full [@Ruptly](#) video of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange’s arrest by British police this morning [pic.twitter.com/tdBw1Kbpxn](https://pic.twitter.com/tdBw1Kbpxn)

– Barnaby Nerberka (@barnabynerberka) [April 11, 2019](#)

Assange was taken with an arrest warrant for skipping bail when he entered the Ecuadorian embassy in June 2012, fearing extradition to the United States, where there is a sealed indictment with his name on it. Assange lawyer Jennifer Robinson tweeted that he has been arrested for breach of bail conditions and also because of a request for extradition from the U.S.

Just confirmed: [#Assange](#) has been arrested not just for breach of bail conditions but also in relation to a US extradition request. [@wikileaks](#) [@khrafnsson](#)

– Jen Robinson (@suigenerisjen) [April 11, 2019](#)

From [#Assange](#): The US warrant was issued in December 2017 and is for conspiracy with Chelsea Manning [@xychelsea](#) in early 2010.

– Jen Robinson (@suigenerisjen) [April 11, 2019](#)

Assange was taken to a police station and will later be brought to [Magistrate’s court](#), according to a tweet from Christine Assange, Julian’s mother.

I have just spoken to one of Julians lawyers.

Julian is likely to appear before a UK Magistrate within 24 hrs re (old defunct) "bail warrant"

UK likely to seek max prison term of 12 months in higher court.

Our focus is as always to STOP a U.S. Extradition!

Let's get to it!

– Mrs. Christine Assange (@AssangeMrs) [April 11, 2019](#)

Former Ecuadorian President Rafael Correrá reacted by calling Moreno the “greatest traitor in Ecuadorian and Latin American history.”

Full translation: “The greatest traitor in Ecuadorian and Latin American history, Lenin Moreno, allowed the British police to enter our embassy in London to arrest Assange. Moreno is a corrupt, but what he has done is a crime that humanity will never forget.”

El traidor más grande de la historia ecuatoriana y latinoamericana, Lenín Moreno, permitió que la policía británica entre a nuestra embajada en Londres para arrestar a Assange.

Moreno es un corrupto, pero lo que ha hecho es un crimen que la humanidad jamás olvidará. <https://t.co/GwZ40Lreuo>

– Rafael Correa (@MashiRafael) [April 11, 2019](#)

Moreno made a national television address to announce his decision. While the expulsion of a refugee to a country that could harm him for political reasons, known as [refoulement](#), is against international law, Moreno accused Assange of “repeated violations to international conventions and daily-life protocols.”

Ecuador decidió soberanamente retirar el asilo diplomático a Julian Assange por violar reiteradamente convenciones internacionales y protocolo de convivencia. [#EcuadorSoberano pic.twitter.com/V02pvvtPY0](https://twitter.com/V02pvvtPY0)

– Lenín Moreno (@Lenin) [April 11, 2019](#)

Unity4J will hold an emergency vigil under the hashtag [#FreeJulian](#) beginning at noon U.S. Eastern Standard Time that will be webcast live on ***Consortium News***.

NSA whistleblower Ed Snowden reacted on Twitter:

Images of Ecuador's ambassador inviting the UK's secret police into the embassy to drag a publisher of—like it or not—award-winning journalism out of the building are going to end up in the history books. Assange's critics may cheer, but this is a dark moment for press freedom. <https://t.co/ys1AIdh2FP>

– Edward Snowden (@Snowden) [April 11, 2019](#)

Journalist and filmmaker John Pilger tweeted:

The action of the British police in literally dragging Julian Assange from the Ecuadorean embassy and the smashing of international law by the Ecuadorean regime in permitting this barbarity are crimes against the most basic natural justice. This is a warning to all journalists.

– John Pilger (@johnpilger) [April 11, 2019](#)

