Israel Forcibly Injected African Immigrants with Birth Control, Report Claims

This weekend, a report revealing that African women immigrating to Israel were subjected to mandatory contraceptive injections, effectively amounting to forced (if temporary) sterilization made global headlines.

Some 130,000 Ethiopians, most of them Jewish, live in Israel. The community experiences higher poverty and unemployment rates than the rest of the country’s Jewish population. In the past decade, the birth rate among Ethiopian-Israelis has declined by at least 20 percent. Advocacy groups now claim this decline is the result of a birth control regimen forced upon Ethiopian immigrant women.

According to an article in Haaretz, an Israeli news source, one Ethiopian immigrant said that the doctors who injected her claimed that “people who frequently give birth suffer.” While it is possible, if highly unlikely, that doctors genuinely had the women’s health in mind when they forcibly injected them with contraceptives, there is no excuse for depriving women sovereignty over their own reproductive choices.

Israel has acknowledged the issue (without admitting any wrongdoing) and has vowed institutional changes in healthcare for immigrants. By decree of Israel’s health minister, gynecologists have been ordered “not to renew prescriptions for Depo-Provera for women of Ethiopian origin if for any reason there is concern that they might not understand the ramifications of the treatment.” Still, intense scrutiny should be applied by women’s groups and international organizations to make sure these changes are implemented in full. Moreover, more attention must be paid to the plight of vulnerable African immigrants around the world.

That Israel should allegedly engage in this activity is particularly shocking, considering the practice was widely used by the Germans throughout the Shoah. While the scale and effects of these operations cannot be compared, Israel’s implicit intent to limit ‘burdensome’ (read: undesirable) portions of the population recalls the dark eugenics experiments of World War II.

Immigration, legal and otherwise, is a difficult and invariably sticky issue for developed nations. Israel, like the United States, has struggled to find a way to accommodate the needs of both its citizens and its immigrants, particularly the latter group, which has been the subject of much scrutiny and misunderstanding.

Elise Knutsen, Contributor
I cover international movers and shakers.

Israel Flag (Photo credit: Wikipedia)
secure its borders and its population while dealing with a constant stream of immigrants from neighboring countries and, increasingly, the African continent. While admitting the difficult security issues that Israel faces, the international community must loudly and unanimously rebuke the systematic violations of human rights inflicted on women immigrants of African origin.

From a sociological perspective, this incident shows the strain between Israel’s religious heritage and its modern political agenda. “Behold, the heritage of the Lord is sons, the reward is the fruit of the innards. Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the sons of one’s youth. Praiseworthy is the man who has filled his quiver with them,” the Torah proclaims. The involuntary sterilization of African immigrants suggests that the Jewish moral code (inextricably connected with Israel’s domestic legal codes) can be selectively applied to those with ‘desirable’ backgrounds. It is hard, indeed almost impossible to believe that an American Jewish woman immigrating to Israel would be forced to take birth control.
Can you understand the difference between treating refugees who are being let into your country as a gesture of mercy and people in concentration camps gathered to work as slaves and die? Where did you go to school?

Reply

ADRIENNE FAWKES 1 month ago

These aren’t “refugees”, these are JEWS returning to their homeland like all Jews are allowed to do. But because they are from Africa and not Europe or America, they are treated differently and looked down upon although they ARE the Jews of the Bible.

Reply

Alexander Popivker 1 month ago

Jewish legal code is not connected to Israeli law and Israelis use contraceptives like any other free society where people choose to be religious or secular. Your article is based on hot air and fallacies. The truth of the matter is that the refugees were admitted into Israel and were not “forced” to take these shots and it’s not because they are African or a different race which is common in Israel. There are Ethiopians all over Israel. The issue here is refugees and technically they have no rights to enter Israel at all. Other countries don’t let them in. Israel does and you choose to compare them to Nazis. How do I contact your editors?

Reply

Elise Knutsen, Contributor 1 month ago

Dear concerned commenter,

I would argue that Jewish legal code is in fact intimately related to Jewish religious law, particularly related to domestic issues. Conversions, custody, marriages, divorces are all treated by the religious courts. As such, questions related to the family are deeply influenced by Jewish religious heritage (a tradition which, for the record, I have the utmost respect and have spent considerable time studying).

Moreover, as another commenter noted, these are not refugees coming to Israel as you suggest, but Jews returning to the homeland. They have the same rights as any other immigrating Jews.

Also, in mentioning eugenics, I in no way intended to compare Israel’s alleged forced sterilization of Ethiopian immigrants to the horrors of the Shoah. The scale, effect, and intention of these projects are entirely different, one unquantifiable worse than the other.

Lastly, I would like to point out that many other reputable news sources also covered this story, including AFP, the Los Angeles Times and Renters. I used the same sources as these publications.

As for the typo, that ones on me, entirely!

I appreciate your comments,

Elise

Reply

Elise Knutsen, Contributor 1 month ago

***“I would argue that Jewish legal code is in fact intimately....” Excuse me, I meant Israeli legal code

Reply

Kirk 1 month ago

Elise,

I want to thank you for your well written article. As a Gentile who lived in Israel, I am not at all surprised by this story. The “State” of Israel is not a worthy successor to the “people” of Israel and their people’s 5000 year old history of moral thought and actions. These actions will rightfully be deplored by majority of the people of the State of Israel. I doubt, however, that will be influential in stopping the practice. It has not in any of the other circumstances recently shaming the face of the “State” of Israel.

Reply

Alexander Popivker 1 month ago

The fact that Israel acted to stop any such injections in case the person doesn’t understand what it is doesn’t suggest that this was a common practice that women were forced to as you write. It is not only the spelling but the innuendo that this was forced upon them that I see as your theory rather than a factual practice which Israeli officials actually negated and clarified that they...
were clarifying their policy and not admitting that they ever forced anyone. If somebody acted beyond that policy that's a problem of those individuals and not of any policy of Israel which your article attempts to demonstrate and condemn. Just because other news sources write similar articles doesn't mean you actually did any serious research as a journalist. Did you contact a representative from the Israeli medical community? Or someone in immigration? In Israel marriage is indeed controlled by religious courts for Jews but there is no policy discriminating against people of different races as you falsely suggest in your article. With all the garbage written about Jews and Israel I would hope you'll be more professional in your future reports about Israel as well as all your other reports. Good luck to you in Africa. G-d Bless!

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Miguel Hermon 1 month ago

It is interesting that Forbes would come out with this headline and not mention anything about North Korea directly threatening the U.S. with Nukes on the same day. I think I'll subscribe to something else.

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I have to commend your courage for speaking out against atrocities committed in Israel. Sadly it is not shocking news for those of us living in the Middle East as we are very familiar with the many crimes committed against humanity by the "only democracy" in the Middle East. The Parallel between Nazi practices and Zionism has been noted by many for decades when Israel deals with the "undesirables" such as the Arabs or Africans. I will leave that to Psychologists to figure out why the victims are copying the crimes of their oppressors.

BTW, don't worry about the tactics that the supporters of atrocities follow to prevent the truth from coming out. The truth will always prevail.

---

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

The worst thing about this story is that the pure and compassionate nation of Israel is being held hostage to the low individual creatures who perpetrated this act against principle and policy. Fortunately it is not a permanent harm. But to have a representative of the Islamic zoo surrounding Israel lecturing anyone on crimes or truth is the height of hypocrisy and fraud.

---

Adam Smith 1 month ago

No doubt you consider being alive while Jewish an atrocity.

"The truth will prevail!" You mean like the truth about how Muslim countries treat their women?

Why don't you compare that to Israel?

---

me 1 month ago

dear mohammed alibaba here only cares to spread lies and propaganda because he knows the rest of the world will eat it and like it.

---

GuSamsn 1 month ago

So, whatever bad things Muslims do to women justify forced sterilization of immigrants? Are you for real?

---

Elise Knutsen, Contributor 1 month ago

Dear all,

While I appreciate your enthusiasm I would rather this not become a forum for the greater Arab Israeli conflict. Please direct your conversation elsewhere, and remember to be civil!

This article is NOT a condemnation of Israel; it is a condemnation of a very particular program. As you may have noticed, I write mostly about African issues. This story interested me first and foremost because it involved the alleged mistreatment of African refugees.

Peace,

Elise
Ben Plonie 1 month ago

There is no greater proponent of Zionism or Israel than me, but this episode is an outrage and deserves to become a scandal with consequences for the perpetrators. Not because it exposes an abuse by Israel but because it exposes an violation of Israel's values. I couldn't care less if the perpetrators are hung or tossed over the Gaza fence, but to claim credibility Israel needs to distance itself from these criminals pronto.

Reply

Elise Knutsen, Contributor 1 month ago

Dear Ben,

I appreciate your insight. I agree with you: I was particularly drawn to this story because it seemed that the (alleged) program of forced sterilizations went completely against the values Israel was founded upon. I certainly didn't write this item as a condemnation of the state of Israel as a whole, but rather to draw attention to this insidious issue which, for Israel's own sake (as you mentioned) must be investigated and eradicated fully.

Thanks for your comment!
Elise

Reply

Adam Smith 1 month ago

I strongly object to your use of the word "sterilization."

Sterilization is not temporary, and the word is highly charged.

I think "forced use of contraceptives" is highly charged enough, don't you think? And it has the further advantage of being what may have happened here, versus sterilization, of which there is not one shred of evidence, and perhaps not a single claim.

Reply

Meshal al-Sharif 1 month ago

BTW, I tried to find out if other US media reported the news and, not surprisingly, none of them did. There is a reason why Israel is getting away with murder. It is scandalous when US Media can report crimes committed by governments, including the US, but wouldn't report systematic atrocities committed by Israel. Makes you wonder if there is a dictatorship in America, it is just that the dictator is watching from Tel Aviv.

Reply

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

Even though I have no sympathy for those who committed the violations, it is neither murder nor an atrocity, as routinely takes place every day throughout the Islamic Umma. The best way to handle it is for Israel to promptly and publically and justly try and sentence the criminals, or else face the wrath of propagandists like you.

Reply

Meshal al-Sharif 1 month ago

If the tactic you want to follow is "killing the messenger" then I will propose that you listen to another messenger, a Jewish holocaust survivors who saw the Nazis and the Zionists, and did not see a difference.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYgn6gjZoeM

and this is another holocaust survivor speaking out against Israel atrocities;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxNWm5Bv9nc

or watch Dr. Norman Finkelstein talking about the use of the Holocaust to silence the voices against Zionist atrocities;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoCuhsQkTA

There is no shortage of decent Jews speaking out against such crimes.

Our problem is not with the Jewish people, Jews thrived under Islamic rule for centuries and you can read about that yourself in any credible history book. Our Problem is with the Zionists who hijacked the Jewish people leadership, occupied land, displaced its people and committed war crimes that no decent person will accept.

I can see that you are in a difficult position. at one hand you can not accept this systematic and state-sanctioned crime committed against helpless women, yet you are trying to defend your country. I can't help you here, you need to consult your own conscious like the rest of us.
Adam Smith 1 month ago

“I tried to find out if other US media reported the news and, not surprisingly, non (sic) of them did.”

Typical anti-Israel, anti-Jewish Arab propaganda.

Did you try Google News? I immediately found hundreds of articles.

Systematic murder? What are the Arab countries doing about Syria? How long did it take them even to issue a condemnation of Assad’s regime?

Reply

Adam Smith 1 month ago

My parents are both Holocaust survivors, and they hold very different views.

Norman Finkelstein has been totally discredited. He accused his own mother of being a Nazi collaborator, his anti-Israel anti-Jewish rhetoric is based on unresolved mommy daddy issues.

“Jews thrived under Islamic rule for centuries”

1,000,000 Jews were expelled from Arab countries after 1948, and their property and land expropriated. Their land claims alone come to 4x the current land mass of Israel. In many Arab countries where hundreds of thousands of Jews lived for hundreds of years there is not a single Jew left.

Reply

Adam Smith 1 month ago

“Our problem is not with the Jewish people, Jews thrived under Islamic rule for centuries”

Jewish (as well as Christian and other non-Muslim) religious services are prohibited from being held on Saudi Arabian soil.[12] When American military personnel were stationed in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, permission for small Christian worship services was eventually granted, but Jewish services were only permitted on US warships.[12] Census data does not identify any Jews as residing within Saudi Arabian territory.[15]

Persons with an Israeli government stamp in their passport or who are openly Jewish are generally not permitted into the Kingdom. In the 1970s, foreigners wishing to work in the kingdom had to sign an affidavit stating that they were not Jewish[14] and official government forms granting foreigners permission to enter or exist the country, do ask for religious affiliation.


Footnote – Jewish tribes lived in the Arabian Peninsula (now Saudi Arabia) until Mohammed slaughtered and exiled them.

Reply

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

Adam Smith has it right. Jewish life totally sucked under Islamic rule. What is happened in Toulouse in France is just tipical of the Islamic mindset. The world is afame th Moslems killing and brutalizing others and each other. They are largely nivilized savages. Not necessarily the girl who runs a newstand down the block, but her uncles and cousins. Jews were expelled from Arab lands after being robbed of their possessions and tortured w/ boiling-water enemas. The Islamic conquest was a colonialist occupation that forced Jews off their villages in Palestine and enslaved them. Jews were chased and subjegated and humiliated. Jewish women were stolen and Jewish sheep were raped.

Reply

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

absolutely, Jews owned land and controlled principalities in Arabia before Mohammed took over and committed his war crimes and atrocities. Jews also had a kingdom in Yemen before the Muslims did the same to them.

Reply

Heidy Jackson 1 month ago

As a woman, of course I find this outrageous if true. But, what the article attributes to “Israel” may very well be not a policy of Israel, but the practice of a woman’s clinic in Israel. These types of behaviors are not unheard of in many countries. Comparing this to the Nazis is way over the top. I have to question the entire veracity of the article based on the context that is given.
Alexander Popivker 1 month ago

It's ludicrous that some commentators here have the audacity to criticize Israel on how they admit refugees from countries where they are running away from Islamic militants. Not that Arab countries admit these people or that these people would want to go there... What a pathetic circus! I am guessing this "journalist" and "article" is the blogger section of "Forbes", otherwise I admit mistaking Forbes for a respectable organization that has means to hire serious reporters...

Reply

me 1 month ago

If you bothered to look into the source that this entire article is based on you'd find it more outrageous how Forbes gave you a peace of trash to which you ate and enjoyed. Try clicking on the link that the source is from and read the article, you'll see that although the title of the article is misleading the doctors were ordered only to offer contraception.

Reply

GGSamsa 1 month ago

It's more ludicrous seeing pro-Zionist Israeli trolls not only deny it, but try and flip it around in the most childish, slippery slope way possible. "Oh look, the Arabs are bad bad bad too!"

If this were Argentina, or Angola, or the USA doing this, not only would you not dare question this, you'd be screaming in uproar. Israel does it, and suddenly its "Oh, its a lie!" "Its not true!" or "So what? The Arabs are much worse than we are!"

Please.

Reply

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

You are missing the point, GG. The discussion about the Arabs came up because some Arab popped in lecturing everyone about Israeli atrocities and non-adherence to human rights. While from time to time some negative incident takes place in Israel, they are still more good and less bad on balance in that respect than anyone else, including the USA.

Reply

Elise Knutsen, Contributor 1 month ago

dear Heidy,

According to the story in Haaretz, this practice was happening in various Ethiopian transit camps run by Israeli doctors working for Israeli HMOs. The very fact that the government saw it necessary to issue a new health directive for this population suggests that the problem was widespread.

While many countries may engage in this kind of behavior, it is no less reprehensible and must be condemned.

I am in no way intended to compare this (comparatively) small program to the horror of the Nazi eugenics programs. The scope, scale and intent of these operations should NOT be put on the same level. The crimes of the Shoah should NEVER be forgotten or trivialized. I was drawing, rather, an objective link between two times in history when sterilization has (allegedly, in this case) been used as a political/social program. Even if this incident had not taken place in Israel, I would have made this connection. (Note: connection, NOT comparison).

Best,

Elise

Reply

Adam Smith 1 month ago

"the international community must loudly and unanimously rebuke the systematic violations of human rights inflicted on women immigrants of African origin."

So perhaps "the international community" would like to help provide for these immigrants and their offspring? Or perhaps offer them refuge?

While I grant this is a troublesome issue, these complaints remind me of Republicans who fight against birth control, but at the same time complain loudly about social programs.
Elise Knutson, Contributor 1 month ago

Dear Adam,

These Ethiopian immigrants are in fact Jews returning to the homeland. Under the UN Right of Return law they have a right to return to Israel. Under Israeli law (assuming they can present the proper paperwork) they are citizens of the Jewish state.

Thanks!
Elise

Reply

Adam Smith 1 month ago

The argument is made repeatedly in the comments that the Israelis are racist and attempting to reduce or eliminate the Ethiopian population.

While you make some effort to tamp this down, the fact remains that Israel, while offering refuge under the law of return to any Jew, did not have to airlift 83,000 Ethiopian Jews to bring them to Israel.

If Israel objected to Ethiopian immigrants, it would not have airlifted 83,000. To put this in context, given the difference in populations, it is comparable to the US airlifting 4,450,000 Darfurians, and providing food, clothing, shelter, and vocational training.

Reply

I. 1 month ago

It is interesting that, on one hand, Israeli claim that every Jew has the right to return to Israel, yet, calling Ethiopian Jews "refugees". Air lifting Ethiopian Falasha Jews to Israel to displace Palestinians in the occupied lands then injecting their women with drugs to limit their reproduction for over a decade is truly a screwed-up program. Why not allow them to reproduce and be more efficient in displacing more Arabs from their own land? Maybe because these Ethiopians are not the desirable race? Israel is becoming more complacent in their crimes because they are getting away with it. Unconditional political support by the US government and protection from international community is a license to kill. How many times did the US use its veto to protect Israel? Too many to the point that makes me wonder if Israel is practically given a Veto right in the UN, albeit through their proxy US government.

The crimes of Israel is a thorn in the side of the international community and a shame to our collective conscious and as long as US politician are appeasing Israel for their own perceived political interests, rather than showing human decency and standing for human rights; then the problem will continue.

Reply

I. 1 month ago

Actually Elise, Ethiopian Jews could not have come from Palestine and most likely were converted to Judaism while in their homeland, Ethiopia. There was no African Jewish tribe living in Palestine in historic times.

The right of return is more applicable to Palestinians who were displaced from their homeland in 1948 through organized terror inflicted by Jewish organizations such as Irgun and Haganah (considered terrorist organizations by the UK).

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irgun

The poor Ethiopians were used by the Israeli government in a political stunt for international sympathy and a mean for changing Palestine demographics but it seems that the Israelis now don't like that idea anymore.

Reply

Marty Susman 1 month ago

I would like to see every female on the planet stop at two children so the planet can get it's second wind. Two children per female would mean the population would decrease over time bringing us back to say 3 billion in time, a great thing for the whole planet earth.

Reply

Ben Plonie 1 month ago

No soap radio. Let's talk when the Jews have another six million children just to get our second wind.

Reply
Dear incompetent author,

If it is too difficult for you to read more than just an articles title you should probably not be quoting it as a source. Because if you had, in fact, bother to read the very same article you linked to – in its entirety you would have realized that yet another incompetent author badly titled that article. The article itself in fact does mention that the instructions were – ONLY GIVE CONTRACEPTION IF THEY AGREE. I hope that this comment was in plain enough ENGLISH for you to understand and that you read beyond my title of incompetent author.

Thank you however, for showing us your clear bias of hatred towards Israel. Makes it easier for everyone to know where you stand.

Reply

Alexander Popivker 1 month ago

Haaretz is also trashy with their sensationalist titles that are used to feed parasites who add and spread lies as this one.

Reply