# Israel is the only country that’s recently bombed both churches and a synagogue, but it keeps calling Muslims “terrorists”

**Izvor:** https://minbarlive.com/videos/israel-is-the-only-country-that-s-recently-bombed-both-churches-and-a-synagogue-

> A media accountability analysis documenting the destruction of religious sites in Gaza and the West Bank—including Saint Porphyrios Church and a historic synagogue in Iran—and examining the selective outrage and silence of Western religious and political leaders when compared to their rapid response to violence against Christians in other regions.

## SAŽETAK

This testimony examines patterns of selective media coverage and institutional silence surrounding attacks on religious sites and religious minorities in Palestine and Gaza. The speaker documents the October 18th bombing of Saint Porphyrios Church in Gaza, where 24 women and children were killed; the destruction of a historic synagogue in Iran by U.S. and Israeli forces; recent violence against Palestinian Christians in the West Bank, including the burning of Tabia village and the kidnapping of four female students; and the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, a Greek Orthodox Christian and American citizen, by an Israeli sniper. The speaker criticizes the absence of condemnation from American government officials and evangelical and Catholic religious leaders, contrasting this silence with the rapid mobilization of attention to religious violence in Nigeria by the same groups. The testimony argues that this inconsistency—in which some instances of religious violence receive prominent attention while others are ignored—reflects broader double standards in how humanitarian crises and civilian casualties are reported and addressed by Western institutions.

## KLJUČNE PORUKE

Saint Porphyrios Church in Gaza, the oldest continuously operating church in the world, was destroyed in an airstrike on October 18th, killing 24 women and children who had taken refuge inside.

A historic synagogue in Iran—documented in a recent film project—was destroyed by U.S. and Israeli forces approximately two months before the speaker's testimony.

Recent violence in the West Bank has included the shooting of Palestinian children, the burning of Tabia (the only 100% Christian village in the West Bank), and the kidnapping of four Palestinian female students by the IDF.

Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, an American citizen and Greek Orthodox Christian, was shot in the face by an Israeli sniper while wearing clearly marked press identification in the West Bank; the IDF subsequently beat pallbearers at her funeral and fired rubber bullets and smoke grenades into the church during her funeral service.

Western evangelical Christian, Catholic, and American government leaders remained silent on Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, but rapidly mobilized attention to religious violence in Nigeria and attacks by Boko Haram.

Two employees of the speaker's organization were killed in Gaza when their baby formula warehouse was bombed.

The speaker acknowledges the genuine threat posed by Islamist extremism while arguing that the inconsistency in how religious violence and civilian casualties are addressed by media and religious institutions demands examination and accountability.

ČLANAK

## The Destruction of Religious Sites

I'm still angry about the bombing of Saint Porphyrios Church in Gaza on October 18th. The oldest continuously operating church in the world—24 women and children took refuge there, and it was destroyed in an airstrike. We sent a film crew into Tehran to document the oldest Jewish extant community in the world and the oldest continuous synagogue in the world. The United States and Israel flattened that synagogue. Eleven days after we shot our documentary—about two months ago—it's gone, wiped from the face of the earth.

## Recent Violence Against Palestinians

Today, a Palestinian child was shot in the West Bank. An infant was killed yesterday. Taiba, the only 100% Christian village in the West Bank, was set on fire. In the past week, four Palestinian female students were kidnapped by the IDF—one a Christian, one an American citizen, and one a member of the national football team. And the world remains silent.

## The Case of Shireen Abu Aqleh

Shireen Abu Aqleh was the most important and highly respected journalist at Al Jazeera, an American citizen, and a Greek Orthodox Christian. She was in the West Bank wearing a bulletproof vest marked "press" and a Kevlar helmet marked "press." She was standing with a cameraman behind a tree to avoid getting in the way of anybody. As soon as she stepped out from behind the tree, an Israeli sniper shot her in the face and killed her instantly. After her death, the IDF entered the hospital where her body was being carried out in a coffin. They beat the pallbearers to the point where they dropped the coffin, and then they shot rubber bullets and smoke grenades into the Greek Orthodox Church while her funeral service was taking place. There was not a single word from the American government, nor from evangelical Christian leaders or Catholic leaders.

## Selective Outrage from Religious and Political Leaders

I want to know where Ted Cruz, Lindsey Graham, and Mike Huckabee are when these things happen. When Gaza made it to the front pages for about an hour and a half in December, all of a sudden on cue, all the evangelical Christian human rights groups and Catholic leaders, including Bishop Robert Barron, began calling for attention to Nigeria and Boko Haram. Yet to this day, Bishop Barron has never mentioned Gaza, the West Bank, or Lebanon. This selective focus lasted for about a week.

## Context and Accountability

My organization guards churches in Nigeria and provides security for the only synagogue there. I understand the threat posed by Islamist extremism—we lost an employee last year to it in Nigeria. I am not naive to these concerns. However, we also lost two employees in Gaza who were killed when our baby formula warehouse was bombed. The inconsistency in how religious violence and civilian casualties are addressed by both media and religious leaders demands examination.

#Gaza conflict — civilian casualties and religious sites #West Bank — violence and detention #Media double standards and selective coverage #Religious freedom and persecution #Accountability of religious and political leaders #Humanitarian crisis documentation #Journalist safety and press freedom

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