

No outrage over suicide terror

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Suicide bombings, the most horrific of all terrorist outrages, hardly register a blip on the human rights Richter scale.

The callous silence is not limited to Jewish shoppers at an Israeli mall. The murder by cellphone of two mentally disabled Iraqi women, unknowingly strapped with explosives who killed dozens of other innocents, caused no outcry.

Hitler himself, facing withering criticism from the Church, backed down from the T-4 Nazi euthanasia program against the mentally handicapped. Yet, Nazi-like outrages in Baghdad generate only silence from religious leaders.

Benazir Bhutto's recent assassination led the Simon Wiesenthal Center to place full-page ads in newspapers. Headlined: "Suicide terror: What more will it take for the world to act?" it calls suicide terror the scourge of our times and points to the threat of terrorists' acquisition of WMDs that would spawn casualties dwarfing those already suffered in 30 countries. We urged the UN to convene a special session on suicide bombing.

Nations should also use the law against all enablers of suicide terror by applying the post-World War II precedent when Nazi barbarities were declared crimes against humanity.

Religious leaders must denounce suicide bombers as an abomination and perversion of all that is godly.

Thousands of supportive e-mails from 85 countries including Egypt, Indonesia and Turkey inspired us to place the same message in four Arab and two Israeli newspapers during President George W. Bush's Middle East visit.

While the ads ran in Israel, the Arabs' response was more instructive. Saudi's Arab News and Dar Al-Hayat didn't bother to respond. Alsharq Al-Awsat's editor said no. But the Daily Star's editor-in chief told us he agreed with our message but failure to clear it with authorities meant, "I could have a bomb in my office!" Two days later came the inevitable: "Security authorities" barred the anti-terror plea.

The lessons are as obvious as they are compelling.

With all the talk of an international alliance against terror, Muslims are reluctant to join in casting a harsh light on Muslim terrorists. When our Canadian representative asked Pakistan's High Commissioner in Ottawa whether his nation would now call for a special UN session, he responded: "Well, it's not so simple. One man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter."

We confirmed another harsh reality. During the three years we have lobbied against suicide terror, not even the mounting death toll of Muslims has eroded the red line in the sand of never cooperating with Zionists. One Muslim American was puzzled why a Jewish organization would speak out at all, since today most victims are Muslims!

The demonization of Israel, Jews and Judaism, promoted by Middle East autocrats and cultural elites goes virtually unchallenged by human rights campaigners. And this poison mocks any purported solidarity in the War Against Terror.

The Arab World celebrated when suicide martyrs first descended on Israelis. Few understood then, Terror Central's direct line from the tears at a decimated bar mitzvah to the wails of victims at an Amman wedding. In 2008, too few are prepared to act.

It has been said nations sign treaties but only people make peace. The Arab news media's self-censorship severely hampers the solidarity so desperately needed to defeat international terrorism, delays Mideast peace and blocks reconciliation among all faiths.

— *Rabbi Marvin Hier is founder and dean and Rabbi Abraham Cooper is associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles; Leo Adler is director of national affairs, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center in Toronto*