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After Israeli Diplomat's Statement On Pakistan, Pro-Military Pakistani Politicians Lambast Israel, Zionists, And Jews, Deem Populist Politician Imran Khan A 'Jewish Agent'

By **Tufail Ahmad**
pro-military political leaders have launched antisemitic attacks on Israel, Zionists, and the Jews after Israel's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Adi Farjon, speaking at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), voiced concern over the deterioration of human rights situation in Pakistan and the Pakistani state's persecution of opposition leaders and activists. Adi Farjon's comments attracted hateful remarks from ruling politicians as well as Imran Khan, the former prime minister whose Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party is being shredded by the military and the government. Their antisemitic attacks are, ironically, aimed at delegitimizing Imran Khan, whose populism threatens to unseat them.

Speaking in the context of UNHRC in Geneva adopting the Universal Period Review (UPR) of Pakistan's record on human rights, Adi Farjon said: "Israel remains deeply concerned about the overall human rights situation in Pakistan where enforced disappearances, torture, crackdowns on peaceful protests, and violence against religious minorities and other marginalized groups remain prevalent... Israel believes that it is essential that Pakistan heed our recommendations to take all appropriate steps to prevent arbitrary arrests, torture, and other ill-treatment and bring perpetrators of such acts to justice."^[1]

"Israel also urges Pakistan to decriminalize same-sex activities in accordance with international human rights standards and to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that addresses discrimination, including based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Israel is also concerned that in January 2023 Pakistan's National Assembly passed a vote to tighten its blasphemy laws which are often used to target and prosecute religious and other minority groups," the Israeli representative said.^[2]

In Pakistan, Islamic religious scholars and political leaders are known to be nursed in antisemitism. In recent decades, Pakistani opinion shapers have blamed the so-called "Jewish lobby" for working against Pakistani sportsmen in international cricket, dismissed polio vaccination campaigns as "Jewish conspiracies," alleged an "Israeli hand" in India-Pakistan water disputes, accused Jews and Hindus of promoting Valentine's Day, and April Fool's Day against Muslims, dismissed Facebook as a Jewish conspiracy, accused Jews and Israel of targeting Pakistan's nuclear assets, and so on.^[3]

The anti-Jewish views run so deep that in 2012 a Pakistani Christian was forced, along with his family members, to leave his home in Lahore simply because his name was Jew Jurian, triggering a Pakistani official to reevaluate his application for a national identity card.^[4]



Former legislator Hina Parvez Butt's tweet describes Imran Khan as "Israel's son-in-law" in Urdu.

On July 12, following the Israeli diplomat's statement at the UN, Pakistan's mass-circulation Urdu newspaper *Roznama Jang* ("War Daily") published frontpage articles under the headlines: "Israel Should Look At Its Own Record On Human Rights, Advice Not Wanted – Foreign Office"; and "Imran-Zionist Nexus Comes To The Fore – Sherry Rehman, Ata Tarar."^[5]

Sherry Rehman, from Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of the slain Pakistani leader Benazir Bhutto, is a minister for climate change in the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Shehzad Sharif. Ataullah Tarar is also a federal minister and special secretary to the prime minister. According to the Urdu daily, Sherry Rehman stated: "When did Israel become a champion of human rights? The killer of Palestinians has stood up in support of Imran Khan."^[6] Sherry Rehman is seen in the West as liberal and secular.

Speaking at a press conference alongside Ataullah Tarar, Sherry Rehman said: "No former prime minister has engaged in enmity against the country as Imran Khan has done. After failing to get America to criticize [the government of Shehzad Sharif], Imran Khan has brought Israel to the front... Supporting PTI and [Imran Khan] Niazi from the forum of the United Nations proves who is behind the events of May 9; their links are connecting to the country's enemies. These are the people behind the atrocities on the Muslim Ummah's oppressed nations of Kashmir and Palestine."^[7] Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is Imran Khan's political party whose members are being forced to resign at the behest of Pakistani military.

The "events of May 9" refers to mass protests, some violent, after Imran Khan was abducted by the Pakistani military forces from a courtroom without court order, an arrest that the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared illegal the next day. The protesters targeted Pakistani military institutions and homes of senior military officers because the former prime minister has accused the military establishment of seeking to kill him – and he was indeed injured in an assassination attempt on November 3, 2022.^[8]

In the deepening political uncertainty in Pakistan, the government of Shehzad Sharif defied a Supreme Court order to hold provincial polls in May 2023 in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces despite being past due, while the governors, who are the federal government's nominees, refused to issue notifications for the election process to begin, the Election Commission declined to organize the vote after the Shehzad government did not release funds, and the Pakistani military told the apex court it could not provide security forces to maintain law and order – all acting in concert against Imran Khan.

Imran Khan's single demand was to hold the provincial elections on time. Both Khan and the Supreme Court were thwarted jointly by the Pakistani government and the military leadership, fearing he would immediately return to power. In fact, after the May 9 protests, the Pakistani military has launched a not-so-covert campaign to break up his party, creating a new Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party. Meanwhile, the politicians and Islamic religious scholars who are part of the coalition government led by Shehzad Sharif continue to attack Imran Khan, declaring him "*fitna* [strife]" – a pejorative term in Islamic societies.



The front page of Roznama Jang alleges "Imran-Zionist Nexus."

A wave of attacks on Imran Khan, after the Israeli diplomat's observations at the UNHRC, are part of a larger antisemitic narrative in Pakistan, where opinion-shapers do not distinguish between Jews and Israel. Politicians have found Adi Farjani's observations as a convenient tool to attack Imran Khan, whose populist politics the ruling coalition fears the most.

Speaking alongside Sherry Rehman, Ataullah Tarar stated: "The matter is serious and involves Pakistan's security. Atrocities were committed on unarmed Palestinians; a massacre of Muslims was carried out; the May 9 is an anti-nation operation. We have been saying it from day one. Those who organized [the May 9 protests against the military] have connections with country's enemy [Israel]."^[9] Atullah Tarar, the special assistant to the prime minister, added: "Israel's coming out in support of Imran Khan at the United Nations is revealing everything. [Late philanthropist, governor, and founder of Hamdard medical laboratories] Hakeem Saeed had said long ago that a leader will emerge in Pakistan whose nexus with Israel will come to the fore."^[10]

Sharjeel Memon, the Information Minister of Sindh province where Pakistan People's Party of Bilawal Bhutto is in power, said that Imran Khan was "launched" in Pakistani politics by Israel and now Israel has come in support of the opposition leader.^[11] Sharjeel Memon also said "secret ties of the PTI with anti-Pakistan foreign lobbies" are very alarming, adding that Israel should not have anything to do with Pakistan nor support Khan.^[12] "This is not the first time in history that Israel vocally spoke about the internal affairs of Pakistan," the Sindh's minister added.^[13]

Sharjeel Memon's attacks on Israel militate against the facts on the ground in Pakistan, where politicians have dubbed Imran Khan a "test-tube" baby birthed by Pakistani military's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), whose role in creating and rearranging political parties and jihadi organizations is public knowledge across South Asia.^[14] Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan, a senior politician from Shehzad Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) party, is on the record as having said that the Pakistani military was behind "the test-tube politician," i.e., Imran Khan.^[15]

Mian Javed Latif, another federal minister of Pakistan, revived allegations of funding from India and Israel for Imran Khan "whose objectives were achieved on May 9-10" in the form of the protests against Pakistani military installations and warned: "We will teach such a lesson to the opponents of the state that the world will remember."^[16] Fayazul Hasan Chohan, the spokesman of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party – arguably the new test-tube baby being birthed by Pakistan's ISI – said the Israeli statement at the UN proved that the year and a half of unrest in Pakistan was an international conspiracy, adding: "The objectives of Israel and the Jewish lobby were being fulfilled in the name of true freedom."^[17]



Chairman PTI is ally of India and Israel, Sherry Rehman Press Conference - Aaj

Sherry Rehman and Ataullah Tarar addresses a joint press conference where they alleged an Israeli conspiracy to support Imran Khan

These comments against Israel might give the impression that Israeli diplomat Adi Farjon expressed support for Imran Khan. In fact, she did not mention Imran Khan in her statement. However, her remarks about Pakistan's "crackdown on peaceful protests" and "arbitrary arrests" are viewed as Israel's support for Imran Khan because her observations reflect ground realities in Pakistan where thousands of political activists are being rounded up for trial in military courts. Hina Jilani, the chief of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, has criticized "the arbitrary manner" used to select cases to be heard in military courts following the May 9 protests, adding: "There is no due process in military courts. The independence and impartiality of these courts are always questionable, and people do not get real justice."^[18]

Hina Parvez Butt – a former legislator of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) party who was honored as the Young Global Leader 2016 by the World Economic Forum – insinuated about the Jewish faith of Imran Khan's former British wife Jemima Goldsmith in a tweet declaring Khan to be "Israel's son-in-law" and as "fitna," an Islamic religious term which is translated as mischief in Urdu and rebellion in Islamic shari'a literature.

Hina Parvez Butt's tweet dated July 12 reads in Urdu: "In the manner Israel is supporting this fitnah [i.e., Imran Khan], there is something black in the lentils [i.e., a conspiracy]. Ever since, the path of this fitnah has been blocked, Israel is in great pain."^[19] Along with her tweet, she also published an image of Imran Khan – arguably the most popular pro-Islamist leader in Pakistan today – against the backdrop of an Israeli flag as if he were an Israeli leader and inscribing the image with the words "Israel's son-in-law" in Urdu.

Islamic clerics in Pakistan are known for antisemitism, but Hina Parvez Butt is no Islamic cleric. The official website of the Punjab legislative assembly shows that she is highly educated with a degree in BSc Hons in Sciences, an MBA from Pakistan's famed Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), a Master of Arts in International Relations from Middlesex University, and a short-term course in "Global Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century" from the Harvard Kennedy School, U.S.^[20]



Hina Parvez Butt is a former legislator from Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) party.

Imran Khan, far from being a supporter of Israel, has been known for antisemitic observations, often conflating Israel and Jews – accusing "the Jewish lobby" of controlling global media, "the Israeli lobby" of seeking to roll back Pakistan's nuclear program, "the Jewish and Indian lobbyists" of influencing American government, and even justifying jihad for freedom as a "verse of the Quran" – despite which he hired a Jewish organization for lobbying in the United States.^[21]

Soon after Adi Farjon's statement, Imran Khan himself slammed Israel, tweeting: "Absolutely shameful how Israel, with the worst record along with India, of human rights violations as an occupation force against Palestinians in occupied territory, had the audacity to target Pakistan. UPRs are an essential part of UN functioning and Pakistan has never been targeted by any state in this vile manner as Israel had the audacity to do now. Totally condemnable. Israel continues its massacre of Palestinians showing it is a rogue state beyond the pale of all international laws and norms of behaviour. Sadly, for us, it not only shows a complete collapse of our diplomacy by this corrupt & fascist govt that is destroying Pakistan internally and externally, but also shows our descent into the law of jungle where might makes right."^[22]

Imran Khan was also accused by Pakistani leaders of supporting "a Jew" – his former brother-in-law Zack Goldsmith – in the 2016 mayoral elections of London rather than the Muslim rival Sadiq Khan who won, while Zack Goldsmith was criticized in the British media for his "relationship with 'Taliban apologist' Imran Khan."^[23] Sadiq Khan, after winning the mayoral election, went on to ask how he could support his brother-in-law, as if supporting a brother-in-law was a crime simply if he happened to be a Jew.^[24]

Islamic religious scholar Maulana Fazlur Rehman, whose Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) party is now part of the coalition government in Pakistan, said at the time: "If he goes to London and campaigns for the friends of Israel against a Pakistani-origin Muslim, then what is he if not a Jewish agent?"^[25] After Adi Farjon's statement, Maulana Fazlur Rehman kept up the attack, saying that the Israeli representative spoke the language of Imran Khan, and said it was part of a "civilizational war."^[26] Maulana Fazlur Rehman also accused the followers of Imran Khan of being "America's agents, the agent of the Jews."^[27] On Twitter, an old video clip of the late Pakistani cleric Dr. Israr Ahmed, the founder of Tanzeem-e-Islami, is being shared in which he says Imran Khan's rise in Pakistani politics is due to "the conspiracy of Jews."^[28]

According to a July 11, 2023 report in the Urdu daily *Roznama Jang*, the Pakistani prime minister's special advisor on interfaith harmony and noted Islamic religious scholar Maulana Tahir Ashrafi said: "Israel has no right to talk about our internal matters. This is first time that a representative of Israel is advising Pakistan."^[29] He added: "The nation should think of who the people are for whom the Israeli representative has spoken at the United Nations."^[30] Islamic scholar Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad, the chairman of Pakistan's Moon-Sighting Committee, condemned the Israeli statement, saying those hatching conspiracies against Pakistan should be treated strictly.^[31]

Other than these statements issued by top-ranking Pakistani politicians and Islamic religious scholars, Twitter witnessed an outpouring of hateful comments against Israel and Jews, some even accusing Imran Khan of wearing white and blue clothes because those colors represent the flag of Israel. A series of screenshots from Twitter along with their captions, especially those which are part of hashtag "Israel's *Fitnah* son-in-law," are given below:



The Urdu text in the graphic in this tweet says: "The Project Imran Niazi revealed – Israel has entered the field to save its agent. Dr. Israr Ahmed had years ago declared Imran Niazi as the conspiracy of the Jews."



In this tweet as part of hashtag "Israel's *Fitnah* son-in-law," Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah is quoted as saying: "Israel is an illegitimate state which has been

stabbed into the heart of the Ummah. Pakistan will never recognize it."



kamran jalbani @kamran_Jalbani1 · Jul 11
Imran Niazi is an agent of Israel
اُسرايئل کا فسی داماد #

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The Urdu text in the image reads: "Israel's representative in Pakistan – Jewish agent Imran Khan Niazi."



Sayrah Shams 🇵🇰/💻🐦 ✅
@MShamsZ

Provided by
MEMRI

Imran khan's fav color is white and blue colors of Israeli flag.

اُسرايئل کا فسی داماد #



This tweet alleges that Imran Khan's wears white and blue because these are the colors of Israel's flag.[\[32\]](#)



abdurrahman tahir @abdurrahman433 · Jul 11
Today's best picture is expressing hatred for Israel and expressing love for Palestinians
اُسرايئل کا فسی داماد #

...



In this tweet, Pakistanis trample Israel's flag under their feet while holding the Palestinian flag.



Malik wajahat Ali khan
@waji_Nlegi

#اسرائیل_کا_فتنه_داماں
Jewish agent responsible

Provided by
MEMRI



This tweet describes Imran Khan as "Jewish agent" who "wants to destabilize Pakistan." [33]



abdurrakhman tahir @abdurrakhman433 · Jul 12
What does this picture resemble?
#اسرائیل_کا_فتنه_داماں

Provided by
MEMRI



9 7 399 Tip

In this tweeted image, Imran Khan is declared: "Certified Israeli dog."



PMLN SMT SWL @SMTSahiwal · Jul 12

Imran Khan , the Israeli agent under the mask of Pakistaniness , has been completely exposed and seeing his son-in-law in trouble , Israel has also come forward
#اسرائیل_کا_فتنه_داماں

...



The Urdu text in the image reads "Clad in the veil of Pakistanism – the Israeli agent Fitnah Imran"; "Israel's Fitnah son-in-law."

[1] Twitter.com/MissionKarima25/status/1678530651643949057, July 11, 2023.

[2] Twitter.com/MissionKarima25/status/1678530651643949057, July 11, 2023.

[3] MEMRI Inquiry & Analysis Series No. 676, Pakistan's Jewish Problem, March 11, 2011.

[4] MEMRI Special Dispatches Series No. 4420, Pakistani Daily Report: Pakistani Christian Named 'Jew' Threatened by Islamic Extremists, January 13, 2012.

[5] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[6] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[7] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[8] Dawn.com (Pakistan), November 3, 2022.

[9] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[10] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[11] Roznama Jang (Pakistan) July 14, 2023.

[12] The News (Pakistan), July 13, 2023.

[13] The News (Pakistan), July 13, 2023.

[14] MEMRI Special Dispatch Series No. 4262, Concerns in Pakistani Press Over Successful Political Rally Of Rising Politician Imran Khan, November 8, 2011.

[15] MEMRI Special Dispatch Series No. 3792, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Accused of Supporting 'Test-Tube Politician' Imran Khan, Engaging Him in ISI's Peace Talks With Taliban, April 28, 2011.

[16] Roznama Dunya (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[17] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[18] VOAnews.com (U.S.), May 31, 2023.

[19] Twitter.com/hinaparvezbutt/status/1679101764992204800, July 12, 2023.

[20] Pap.gov.pk/members/profile/en/20/1210, accessed July 16, 2023.

[21] MEMRI Daily Brief No. 166, A Jewish Organization Lobbies On Behalf Of Pakistan's New Antisemitic And Pro-Jihad Prime Minister, August 14, 2018.

[22] Twitter.com/ImranKhanPTI/status/1679487565500649474, July 13, 2023.

[23] Independent.co.uk/voices/zac-goldsmit-s-relationship-with-taliban-apologist-imran-khan-raises-big-problems-for-the-wouldbe-london-mayor-a6978781.html, April 11, 2016.

[24] TheNews.com.pk/latest/126577-Sadiq-Khan-disappointed-by-childhood-hero-Imrans-support-to-Zac, June 9, 2016.

[25] Twitter.com/IhsanMarwat_786/status/1391421594816466944, May 9, 2021.

[26] Twitter.com/IhsanMarwat_786/status/1679162777271934978, July 12, 2023.

[27] Twitter.com/IhsanMarwat_786/status/1678989660058681344, July 12, 2023.

[28] Twitter.com/IhsanMarwat_786/status/1678751547134550017, July 11, 2023.

[29] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 11, 2023.

[30] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 11, 2023.

[31] Roznama Jang (Pakistan), July 12, 2023.

[32] Twitter.com/MShamsZ/status/1679047054188765184, July 12, 2023.

[33] Twitter.com/waji_Nlegi/status/1679034625040023552, July 12, 2023.