

# Pinkwashing

“Pinkwashing” is an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory meant to demonize Israel, suggesting that the Jewish state deliberately promotes itself as a free country for LGBTQ individuals in attempt to conceal its alleged negative treatment of Palestinian-Arabs. It is a conspiracy theory because it relies on the anti-Semitic idea that every Jewish act is based on malicious intent. In reality, Israel is a liberal democracy that grants equal rights to both LGBTQ and Palestinian-Arabs individuals.

## **Pinkwashers slam Israel for its equal treatment and welcoming of LGBTQ people and spread lies about Israel’s treatment of Palestinian-Arabs.<sup>1</sup>**

- Sarah Schulman created the concept of “pinkwashing,” suggesting that Israel's progressive efforts to welcome the LGBTQ community is “a deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violation of Palestinians’ human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life.”
  - In other words, **those who accuse Israel of “pinkwashing” condemn the Jewish state for the equal rights its LGBTQ community enjoys.**
  - Schulman criticizes Israel for opening itself up to the international LGBTQ community as a safe place to vacation.<sup>2</sup>
  - A 2011 online poll ranked Israel as the world’s best LGBTQ travel destination.<sup>3</sup>
  - Rather than celebrating this inclusivity, Schulman stated “Last year, the Israeli news site Ynet reported that the Tel Aviv tourism board had begun a campaign... to brand the city as ‘an international gay vacation destination...a deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians’ human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Instead of protesting countries that actually abuse LGBTQ individuals, pinkwashers bully Israel, the only country in the Middle East that grants its LGBTQ community equal rights.**

- Israel is the only country in the Middle East that provides a safe haven for LGBTQ individuals running from persecution, while surrounding Arab governments make homosexuality a “crime” punishable by imprisonment, torture, or death.<sup>5</sup>
  - Every other country in the Middle East either executes LGBT’s (such as Iran, Hamas, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, etc), tortures them (areas under the Palestinian Authority, Iraq, and Turkey), or sends them to prison (Gaza, Egypt, Syria, etc).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Israel and ‘Pinkwashing’*. Sarah Schulman. The New York Times. November 22, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> *Israel and ‘Pinkwashing’*. Sarah Schulman. The New York Times. November 22, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *LGBT Rights in Israel & The Middle East* (Project of StandWithUs: <http://www.standwithus.com/booklets/lgbt/>)

<sup>4</sup> *Israel and ‘Pinkwashing’*. Sarah Schulman. The New York Times. November 22, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> *LGBTQ Rights*. CAMERA on Campus, Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America.

<sup>6</sup> *‘Pinkwashing’ Deconstructed*. Scott Piro. HuffingtonPost. February 20, 2012.

- LGBTQ soldiers are fully accepted in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). In fact, in 2014, the LGBT Military Index ranked Israel among the top 10 nations globally for its inclusion and treatment of sexual minorities in its military. Israel even surpasses the United States on this list.<sup>7</sup>
- The Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade consistently ranks as one of the most exciting LGBTQ events in the world, with roughly 100,000 people in attendance every year.
- By 1992, the Israeli Knesset outlawed discrimination in the workforce on the basis of sexual orientation, which is not outlawed in some US states.<sup>8</sup>
- In 1998, Michal Eden became Israel's first openly lesbian elected official.<sup>9</sup>

### **Anti-Israel groups promote their “pinkwashing” conspiracy as a means to hijack the agenda of progressive LGBTQ organizations.**

- People who accuse Israel of “pinkwashing” often manipulate well-meaning LGBTQ activists into supporting Boycotts, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel<sup>10</sup>, an anti-Palestinian movement that is also dedicated to the delegitimization of Israel and the prevention of cooperation between Israelis and Palestinian-Arabs.
  - Destroying Israel through the BDS movement **will result in further persecution of the Palestinian-Arab LGBTQ community**. The destruction of Israel would take power away from the only country in the Middle East that supports gay rights, while giving more power to dictatorial regimes that persecute and kill members of the LGBTQ community.
  - The BDS movement harms Palestinian-Arabs working in Israel by boycotting companies that employ them. **If BDS succeeds, roughly 100,000 Palestinian-Arabs will lose their jobs.**<sup>11</sup>
  - BDS undermines peace efforts by encouraging Palestinian-Arab leaders to not associate or negotiate with Israeli peace partners.
  - Freedom House ranked Israel as the *only* completely free country in the Middle East, yet BDS only targets Israel.<sup>12</sup> **Why is BDS ignoring actual human rights abuses in the region and instead targeting the only Jewish state?**

<sup>7</sup> *IDF in top-ten most gay friendly armies*. Ynetnews. February 22, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> *Israel: The Facts*. Anti-Defamation League.

<sup>9</sup> *Wigstock Riots*. Qualia Folk. December 8, 2011

<sup>10</sup> *Our Work*. US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

<sup>11</sup> *EU Survey: Palestinians working for Israelis are paid double those working for Palestinians in the West Bank and triple those in the Gaza Strip*. Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik. Palestinian Media Watch. February 26, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Freedom House: Middle East and North Africa, Countries and Topics.