

What does Israel's new justice minister really think about Arabs?

Ayelet Shaked has quickly become one of the country's most controversial and talked-about politicians. A guide to separate the fact from the f(r)iction.

By [Judy Maltz](#) | May 11, 2015 | 6:22 PM | 11

Does Israel's new justice minister truly believe that a good Palestinian is a dead Palestinian, as some of her detractors would argue?

For those convinced that MK Ayelet Shaked (Habayit Hayehudi) is a flaming racist and, therefore, entirely unsuitable for her new job, one particular Facebook status update from last summer is providing potent ammunition. Written on June 30, as tensions were escalating between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, it cited an article authored by the late [settler leader Uri Elitzur](#), which included the following passage, widely interpreted as a call by Shaked to murder innocent Palestinians:

“Behind every terrorist stand dozens of men and women, without whom he could not engage in terrorism. Actors in the war are those who incite in mosques, who write the murderous curricula for schools, who give shelter, who provide vehicles, and all those who honor and give them their moral support. They are all enemy combatants, and their blood shall be on all their heads. Now this also includes the mothers of the martyrs, who send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there.”

The post was picked up around the world, with the Turkish prime minister (and now president) Recep Tayyip Erdogan – not a great fan of Israel in the best of times – [famously comparing](#) Shaked to Hitler. Shaked published this post a day before [Mohammed Abu Khdeir](#), a Palestinian teenager from East Jerusalem, was beaten and burned to death by Jews, in retaliation for the kidnapping and murder of [three Jewish teens](#) in the West Bank. The update was then rather mysteriously deleted.

Responding to the huge backlash that ensued, Shaked explained that her words had been taken out of context and mistranslated from the Hebrew. In a column published in The Jerusalem Post on July 16, under the title “[Exposing Militant Leftist Propaganda](#),” the young lawmaker wrote, “A call for the indiscriminate killing of children is a terrible thing. But what if the statement was that any time you kill our children, you're exposing your own children to the same fate? Still unsettling, but rational when you consider that they purposely use their kids as human shields. It's not a call for indiscriminate murder.”

As for mistranslations of the English version of the post, the Jerusalem Post column provides no concrete evidence. Indeed, a screenshot of the original Hebrew post taken before it was deleted shows that the English translation was, indeed, very accurate.

Following the murder of Abu Khdeir, Israel's justice minister-designate appeared to show some remorse. In a status update on her Facebook page a few days later, she wrote that whoever killed the Palestinian teen deserved the same punishment as any other "cold-blooded" murderer of innocents: life in prison with no pardon.

Shaked, a 39-year-old mother of two, is both the only woman and only non-Orthodox member of the right-wing Habayit Hayehudi party to sit in this Knesset. She rejects assertions that she is an extremist, defining herself as "mainstream right."

How mainstream is she? The following quotes, culled from interviews she's given in recent years, offer some clues:

- In March 2011, terrorists brutally murdered five members of the Fogel family from the Jewish settlement of Itamar in their sleep. At the time, Shaked was running a right-wing advocacy group called My Israel (Yisrael Sheli) and had convinced relatives of the family to hand over graphic photos of the victims to be distributed to the international media. After commenting on this highly controversial PR ploy in an interview with Haaretz Magazine in June 2012, she said, "The soldiers who arrested the murderers of the Fogel family – I admire them for not shooting them in the head. I admire them."
- In a Channel 2 interview program broadcast in January 2012, she was asked the following question: "When your husband the pilot, when he's up in the air, do you hope he'll be pounding the Arabs hard with bombs?" Shaked responded first with a laugh and then said, "Yes."
- While she was running My Israel, Shaked learned that Bank Leumi was promoting the sale of a real estate company in Jerusalem to a consortium that included a Palestinian investor. Here's how she described what ensued in an interview with Haaretz in April 2011, "In order to prevent the sale of the neighborhood to Arab hands, all members of the group [My Israel] were instructed to call senior executives at the bank and protest, and those with accounts at Bank Leumi were instructed to call their branch managers and notify them of their desire to leave the bank." The campaign ultimately paid off.
- In an interview with the nrg website in March 2013, Shaked was asked to address the issue of Jewish sovereignty over the Temple Mount – a key flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "I'm not saying that now, de facto, we should get up and change the status quo. But we do need to talk about it, and we do need to allow Jews to go up there more and pray," she said.

On most issues, Shaked does not keep her views a secret. She is, in fact, quite outspoken. She was a driving force behind the highly controversial "nation-state" bill, which puts Israel's Jewishness above its democratic aspirations. She has lobbied incessantly for legislation that would outlaw foreign contributions to left-wing NGOs. She has railed against the government for not cracking down more forcefully on asylum seekers from Africa.

But on matters of religion and state, she tends to keep uncharacteristically mum. The reason, it would seem, is to avoid offending her party's overwhelmingly Orthodox

voters. So when Jewish Pluralism Watch, an organization founded by The Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, recently surveyed Knesset members about their views on matters of religion of state, the woman poised to take control of Israel's legal system pleaded the Fifth on the following queries:

- How do you feel about recognizing and providing equal status to all the various streams of Judaism [non-Orthodox movements]?
- Would you support legislation that allows religious services (marriage, divorce, conversion, burial, etc.) to be provided through all the various streams of Judaism [non-Orthodox movements]?
- Do you believe that equal rights for the LGBT community should be legislated? Including the possibility of marrying and setting up a family?