

Fact Sheet: Ken Roth

As Executive Director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) since 1993, Ken Roth has transformed HRW into a platform for targeting Israel. Under his leadership, HRW claimed expertise in international law, the laws of armed conflict (LOAC), and responses to terrorism. On this basis, disproportionate efforts to isolate the Jewish state through false allegations of “war crimes” and “collective punishment” were central to HRW’s agenda.

Political Activity

- Roth and many of his staffers have lobbied for boycotts of, divestment from, and sanctions against Israeli institutions and businesses and companies doing business in Israel (BDS) for two decades, including active participation in the 2001 NGO Forum where this strategy was first adopted and support for the earliest church divestment campaigns.
- Roth and HRW are among the core advocates for the UN HRC database (“BDS blacklist”) of private companies. The blacklist selectively targets Israel apart from all other countries, is aimed at economically damaging companies that are owned by Jews or do business with Israel, and is ultimately meant to harm the Jewish state. In March 2019, Roth [tweeted](#), “Israel’s expanding settlements underscore why the UN database of businesses facilitating them must be published. Each delay further entrenches corporate involvement in these systematic rights abuses.”
- In November 2018, following Airbnb’s initial announcement that it would remove Jewish listings from the West Bank, which was the result of a [two-year long coordinated and well-financed BDS campaign](#) targeting Airbnb (and Booking.com), Roth [tweeted](#), “It’s not anti-Semitism for [@Airbnb](#) to want nothing more to do with filling ‘the pockets of a handful of vacation profiteers on stolen land, trading in stolen goods’--the Israeli settlements.”
- Since March 30, 2018, Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups have organized violent confrontations along Gaza’s border with Israel under the label of the “March of Return.” Roth accused Israel of a [“bloodbath,”](#) and expressed his dismay that there has been [“nary a scratch on the Israeli side.”](#)
- In November 2017, Roth [expressed support for US legislation to sanction Israel by restricting military aid](#), using false allegations of abusing Palestinian children. According to Roth, “US has enormous leverage to press Israel to stop its discriminatory abuse of Palestinian children. It should use it.”
- In September 2014, Roth [blamed Israel for causing the attacks on Jews in Germany](#) and the rise of antisemitism in Europe.
- During the 2014 Gaza war, Roth promoted a highly propagandistic advertisement allegedly published by the fringe International Jewish AntiZionist Network in *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* equating “Nazi genocide” with “the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza.” Roth retweeted another post which included the tagline “‘Never again’ must mean [NEVER AGAIN FOR ANYONE!](#)”
- In a response to criticism of HRW’s false allegations during the 2006 Lebanon war, Roth [used a classic antisemitic Biblical reference](#) to attack Israel: “An eye for an eye – or, more accurately in this case, twenty eyes for an eye – may have been the morality of some more primitive moment. But it is not the morality of international humanitarian law...” The New York Sun decried this statement as “a slur on the Jewish religion itself that is breathtaking in its ignorance...To suggest that Judaism is a ‘primitive’ religion incompatible with contemporary morality is to engage in supersessionism, the [de-legitimization of Judaism](#), the basis of much antisemitism.”