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Newt Draws Rebukes After Condemning Palestinians as Terrorists

By Jason Ditz

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Top international officials are condemning US Presidential candidate Newt Gingrich today, after he responded to questions about his position on the Palestinians by insisting that his position was historically accurate and that all Palestinians are “terrorists.”

The [issue started with a Friday interview on “The Jewish Channel,”](#) during which Gingrich declared that the Palestinians are “an invented people” made up to fight Israel. When pressed during the Saturday debate, Gingrich not only defended his claim, but added that the Palestinians are all terrorists who [“teach terrorism in their schools.”](#)



[“Somebody ought to have the courage to tell the truth. These people are terrorists.”](#) Gingrich insisted when asked about the Palestinians. Gingrich initially cited his credentials as an “historian” in his claim, saying that Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire at one point. While this is true, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq were also part of the Ottoman Empire during the same period, and Gingrich never suggested any of them were “invented” people.

During the debate, Rep. Ron Paul (R – TX) insisted that Palestinians are a real thing, while former Gov. Mitt Romney and former Sen. Rick Santorum both said they would never publicly take a position on whether or not Palestinians are real unless Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu gave them permission. Rep. Michelle Bachmann (R – MN), when asked, said she thought Israel was a beautiful place, while Gov. Rick Perry responded by talking about the loss of a drone over Iran last week.

The issue of whether or not Palestinians are real is a common talking point on the Israeli far right, with the implicit (and sometimes explicit) claim that territorial possession is race-based, and that the Palestinians cannot have any self determination as a result. Traditionally it has not been used as a talking point in the US, where the concept of racially exclusive possession of territory has been considered gauche for decades.

[Arab League officials condemned Gingrich's comments, saying it was "racist"](#) to suggest that all 4 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories are terrorists, with Mohammed Sobeih warning that such claims were "irresponsible and dangerous."

Palestinian officials also condemned the comments, saying they were a cheap ploy for political gain. PLO officials challenged Gingrich to prove his allegations about teaching terrorism in textbooks, saying they were simply untrue. [Claims about Palestinian textbooks inciting genocide have been commonly brought up by US officials, but the claims have never been backed up by actual evidence.](#)