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JEWISH NEWS

By ARIEL BEN SOLOMON

07/18/2013 01:29 X

Egypt's Jewish community head calls Zionism racism

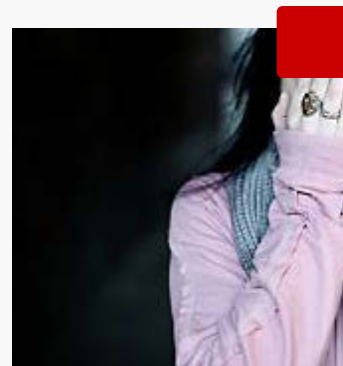
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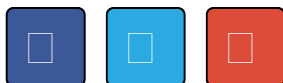
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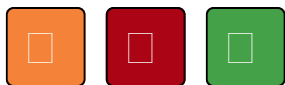
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Magda Haroun tells 'Egyptian Independent' that just like not every Muslim is a member of al-Qaida, not every Jew is an Israeli.



Peres and Egypt ambassador 370. (photo credit: Courtesy of President's Residence)

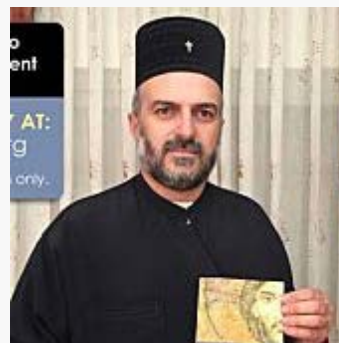
“Zionism is a racist movement,” the new leader of Egypt’s Jewish community declared in a recent interview.

“The failure to draw a distinction between Judaism as a religion and the Israeli state is the result of ignorance,” Magda Haroun continued, according to the transcript of

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the interview published on the *Egypt Independent* news website.

She also asserted that “just like not every Muslim is a member of al-Qaida, not every Jew is an Israeli.”

The Egyptian Jewish Community Council in April unanimously chose Haroun as its new leader, after the passing of the community's former head, Carmen Weinstein.

“Many people do not understand that I belong to my country regardless of my religion. Zionism is a racist movement that discriminates between people on the basis of religion. They do not understand that I am loyal to my country, not Israel. It was our father that nurtured those feelings of fierce loyalty in us,” Haroun said in response to a question that first stated that Israelis attacked Haroun's father before asking why they were attacking her.

“When someone asks why we have not left the country, I feel provoked. Why would we leave the country and emigrate? And where would we go? Why do some people think that all the Jews should emigrate to Israel? Do all Muslims emigrate to Saudi Arabia?” she continued.

When her father died, she brought a French rabbi to the country to perform the funeral, rejecting one from the Israeli Embassy in Cairo.

After being asked by *The Jerusalem Post* via phone about her statement comparing Zionism to racism, Haroun paused and seemed not to recall making such a statement. After the Post cited the interview in question, she confirmed the quote before stating, “Israel was established for Jews.”

Asked how this differs from Egypt – defined by the nation's



'Then and now photo' pro
Israel's fulfillment of bil

constitution as a Muslim state with Islam as the official religion and Islamic law as the principle source for legislation – a flustered Haroun denied the constitution's statement on Egypt's defining characteristics, saying that it is a state for various religions with Muslims being the majority.

She then ended the brief interview, telling the *Post* to submit further questions by email. *The Post* did not receive any other statements from her by press time.

In the interview she gave to the Egyptian news outlet, Haroun also stated that she took part in the June 30 revolution against former president Mohamed Morsi, and criticized the Muslim Brotherhood's rule as a “fascist dictatorship.”

Haroun said that she did not know that the Ministry of Social Affairs had canceled a grant to the Jewish community of 90,000 Egyptian pounds (or around \$13,000 dollars), adding that she had contacted the Shura Council's human rights committee and learned that no decision had been made.

According to Haroun, the community is mostly made up of elderly women with no source of income. When asked if it receives any support from Israel and if she plans on visiting the country, she replied “No” to both questions.

“Like father, like daughter. Let me tell you, some people have been critical because the Israeli ambassador attended the funeral of the last president of our community, but I say this man came to perform a duty and to pray, so was I expected to kick him out?” she said.

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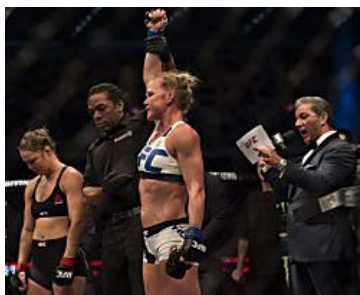
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