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Write to: maglet@jpost.com
 Only a selection of letters can be published. Priority goes to those that are brief and topical. Letters may be edited, and must bear the name and address of the writer.

POLITICAL AGENDA

Sir, - I very much enjoyed the article describing treatment given to Palestinians by Israeli doctors ("The good doctor," Cover, April 4).

I recall other noteworthy efforts by physicians to assist patients from areas less developed than Israel, including the Palestinian territories, such as the "Save-A-Heart" program, the treatment of casualties from the Syrian civil war and the regular visits to hospitals in the West Bank by specialists from Shaare Zedek Medical Center, my husband among them, as well as regular attendance at medical conferences in Israel by Palestinian physicians prior to the intifadas.

As leader of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, Dr. Raphael Walden could not resist showing his NGO's political agenda with his claim that our government is abdicating "Jewish values" and his description of the Israeli occupation as "the mother of all sins." I would remind him that the "occupation" followed the attempt by the previous rulers of the West Bank to join in the war to annihilate our country.

I would further remind him that since the so-called occupation, the health structure of the Palestinian population has improved greatly, as measured by crude death rates and life expectancy, and continues to improve in parallel with the figures in Israel, exceeding those in Jordan, the previous "occupiers" of the area.

MYRA ZION
 Tel Mond

Sir, - The humanitarian work of Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, providing medical care for Palestinians in the West Bank, is unobjectionable. But this is only part of its agenda. Its radical political advocacy, far removed from medical and humanitarian concerns, is unmentioned.

In 2009, PHR-I provided pro-Palestinian activists with first-aid training in preparation for the violent protests against the security barrier at Bil'in "in solidarity with their struggle against Israeli occupation." Dr. Yoram Blachar, then president of the Israel Medical Association, criticized PHR-I for the course: "Physicians for Human

Rights has proved that it is a radical political group disguised as a medical organization."

Another example of PHR-I's political actions was in February 2003 when it placed an advertisement in *Haaretz* declaring that the "organization will only work with doctors who resist the occupation."

As noted in the article, PHR-I's activities are funded by governments, including the EU and Norway. This largess enables an unholy combination of medicine and politics.

NGO Monitor has shown that NGOs and NGO officials who proclaim a mandate related to human rights, particularly with a medical focus, are regularly shielded from scrutiny. This "halo effect," an added degree of credibility reflecting an undeserved perception of altruism and expertise, allows damaging political warfare to continue under the guise of humanitarianism and activism.

RIVKA HECHT

The writer is a research fellow at
 NGO Monitor.
 Jerusalem

'PHR-I's activities are funded by governments, including the EU and Norway. This largess enables an unholy combination of medicine and politics'

WORLD OF HIS OWN

Sir, - I have nothing but admiration for the parents of autistic children and the special strength they have ("Lessons learned from having a son with autism in Israel," Feature, March 28). It is so sad to know that one's child is locked into a world of his own and will always be there.

This condition is still not understood. Hopefully, one day the cause will be found. God bless these very special families. My heart goes out to them.

SALLY SHAW
 Kfar Saba