



Pro-Communist Antifa Member Hit by Truck While Protesting a Christian Rally

Portland: An activist with the Antifa movement, was hit by a truck Saturday when he ran into traffic, as confirmed by video. He was protesting against an event called “March for Jesus”. In this video, he is seen referring to a Christian flag as a “white supremacist symbol.” The driver of the truck was not connected with the event. -GEG

An activist who identified as part of the Antifa movement was hit by a truck while protesting against an event called “March for Jesus” on Saturday, [RT](#) reports.

Video from the scene captured by [Ruptly](#) shows Antifa protesters shouting pro-Communist slogans into a megaphone while demonstrating against a Christian event in Portland, Oregon.

The protester who was eventually hit by the vehicle is seen referring to a Christian flag with a cross on it as a “white supremacist symbol.”

The accident reportedly broke the Antifa protester’s hip.

According to RT, the “March for Jesus” was organized by Patriot Prayer, a group led by Trump supporter Joey Gibson. Gibson is heard dedicating his event to Jesus during a speech

featured in the Ruptly video.

Gibson has led a multitude of events in the Portland area, and conflict with Antifa is common.

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Palestinian ‘Santas’ and Israeli Protests Keep Christians Away from Bethlehem at Christmas

On Christmas Eve, Palestinians, many dressed as Santa Claus, staged a rally in the city of Bethlehem in the West Bank protesting against the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Israeli forces used tear gas and stun grenades against the protesters in Bethlehem – the ancient city widely acknowledged as the traditional birthplace of Christ. -GEG

On Christmas Eve, Palestinians, many of them dressed as Santa Claus, staged a rally in the city of Bethlehem in the West Bank protesting against to the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Israeli forces used tear gas and stun grenades against the protesters near an Israeli military tower in Bethlehem – the ancient city widely acknowledged as the traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Throughout Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the West Bank pilgrimage and tourism was noticeably down over the Christmas holiday season as protests and clashes over President Trump's December 6th announcement continued, which also included plans to relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem in order to reflect the change in status.

The [AFP reported](#) that even many locals have stayed away from centrally located Christmas celebrations at traditional gathering places this year due to the clashes:

On Bethlehem's Manger Square, hundreds of Palestinians and tourists gathered in the cold near a huge nativity scene and Christmas tree to watch the annual scout parade. They took pictures as a marching band made its way through the square towards the Church of the Nativity, built over the spot where tradition says Mary gave birth to Jesus.

The square usually throngs with tourists on Christmas Eve, but clashes between Palestinian protesters and the Israeli army in the past weeks have kept people away this year.

Since Trump's announcement a total of 12 Palestinians have been killed as a result of both confrontations with Israeli security and Israeli airstrikes on Hamas positions in Gaza.

Last week Vice President Mike Pence was scheduled to meet Israeli leaders in Jerusalem, which also initially included plans to [tour religious sites in places like Bethlehem](#); however, the entire trip was canceled after essentially falling apart as multiple Arab leaders and Middle East Christian representatives slammed the US decision. Notably, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas canceled what was to be a December 19 meeting with Pence, but the vice president's office framed the trip cancellation in terms

of needing to stay in Washington in case his vote was needed to pass Trump's reform bill last week.

Though eyewitness reports suggest tourism is significantly down over the fresh protests and clashes, Israel's Ministry of Tourism is trying to keep up an image of a busy as usual holiday season. According to the [AFP](#):

But Israel's tourism ministry has said Christmas preparations have not been affected, and it expects a 20 percent increase in the number of Christian pilgrims this year compared with 2016. An Israeli police spokesman said that extra units would be deployed in Jerusalem and at the crossings to Bethlehem to ease the travel and access for the "thousands of tourists and visitors".

And the Israeli army officer in charge of the Bethlehem area said that while tensions had been high in the area following the Jerusalem announcement, he did not expect trouble on Christmas.

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US Slightly Reduces Taxpayer-Funded Subsidy to the UN after Jerusalem Rebuke

Last week, President Trump's support for Jerusalem to be recognized as the capital of Israel was overwhelmingly rebuked by UN members by a vote of 128 to 9. In response, Trump threatened to cut foreign financial aid to countries that opposed the move. After the vote, the US announced it will cut its donation to the UN by \$285 million, which sounds like a lot but is only 8.6% of the usual donation of \$3.3 billion. [In other words, this is political theater, especially in view of the fact that the US State Department and Military routinely make special payments and grants to the UN for specific purposes. This allows the administration to appear to be taking a strong stance while doing essentially nothing of significance. Even President Trump was compelled to say that the recent cuts were merely a step in the right direction. We will be greatly surprised if there are additional steps.] -GEG

The United States announced a \$285 million cut in the United Nations' "bloated" budget for next year, negotiated by UN Ambassador Nikki Haley. A statement by the United States Mission to the United Nations reads:

Today, the United Nations agreed on a budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. □Among a host of other successes, the United States negotiated a reduction of over \$285 million off the 2016-2017 final budget. In addition to these significant cost savings, we reduced the UN's bloated management and support functions, bolstered support for key U.S. priorities throughout the world, and instilled more discipline and accountability throughout the UN system.

Pleased with the cuts, Haley added "you can be sure we'll

continue to look at ways to increase the UN's efficiency while protecting our interests."

The move follows a contentious week at the U.N., after 128 nations voted in a "[stunning rebuke](#)" of President Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Prior to the vote, Trump threatened to cut foreign financial aid to any countries who opposed the move – first with a [tweet by Ambassador Nikki Haley](#) threatening that the US would be "taking names," followed by comments made by Trump to reporters last Tuesday, according to [Reuters](#).

U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday threatened to cut off financial aid to countries that vote in favor of a draft United Nations resolution against his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"They take hundreds of millions of dollars and even billions of dollars, and then they vote against us. Well, we're watching those votes. Let them vote against us. We'll save a lot. We don't care," Trump told reporters at the White House.

Haley also circulated a letter to all UN member states effectively warning them not to vote against Trump's decision. "As you consider your vote, I want you to know that the President and U.S. take this vote personally," [she wrote](#). "The President will be watching this vote carefully and has requested I report back on those countries who voted against us."

As we [wrote last week](#), The outcome of the vote was hailed as a "victory" by Palestine. "We will continue our efforts in the United Nations and at all international forums to put an end to this occupation and to establish our Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital," Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu Rudainah said. Predictably, both Israel and the US were

displeased.

The General Assembly vote came days after the U.S. vetoed a similar resolution in the U.N. Security Council. The panel's other 14 members voted in favor of that measure – a move that Haley called an “insult” to the U.S. Shortly after the Security Council vote, Arab and Muslim leaders at U.N. called for an emergency special session of the General Assembly to discuss the U.S.'s Jerusalem decision.

In a defiant speech ahead of the General Assembly vote on Thursday, Riyad Al Maliki, the Palestinian foreign affairs minister, cast the Trump administration's Jerusalem decision as an affront on regional peace and security that has isolated the U.S. from the international community. “Does the United States not wonder why it stands isolated in this position?” he asked.

Turkey, which has led the Muslim opposition to the US Jerusalem declaration, was among the first to speak at the meeting. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stressed that only a two-state solution and sticking to the 1967 borders can be a foundation for a lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. The minister said that since Jerusalem is the cradle for the “three monotheistic religions,” all of humanity should come together to preserve the status quo.

“The recent decision of a UN member state to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel violates the international law, including all relevant UN resolutions. This decision is an outrageous assault on all universal values,” Cavusoglu said.

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Did Trump's Tax Cut Bill Repeal Obamacare?

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repealed the individual mandate portion of the Affordable Care Act that requires people who reject the insurance to pay a penalty of \$695 or 2.5% of their income, whichever was larger. That will represent a substantial tax cut for those with incomes under \$50,000. However, Obamacare is still in effect and requires employers with businesses with 50 or more full-time employees to pay for their full-time employees health insurance, regardless of the cost. This is forcing many employers to reduce the number of full-time employees or go out of business altogether. -GEG

After the Republican Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repealed Obamacare's individual mandate, many still wonder whether Republicans can repeal Obamacare in 2018.

Here's what's next for Obamacare in 2018.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repealed the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate. Obamacare mandated that Americans who forgo health insurance would have to [pay](#) \$695 or 2.5 percent of their income, whichever is larger. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) [found](#) that 80 percent of those who pay the Obamacare mandate fine make less than \$50,000 a year, making the mandate's repeal a huge middle-class tax cut.

Even though Republicans repealed the individual mandate, much

of the Affordable Care Act remains intact. Obamacare still requires employers with businesses with more than 50 or more full-time employees still have to provide their full-time employees health insurance, regardless of the cost to the business.

The Affordable Care Act also [expanded](#) Medicaid to virtually every American under age 65 with incomes up to 138 percent above the federal poverty level. The federal government funded 100 percent of each states' Medicaid population from 2014 to 2016. However, the federal government will wind down the federal contribution percentage to 90 percent by 2020 and beyond, adding a significant financial burden to state governments.

The Republican Tax Cuts and Jobs Act repealed Obamacare's individual mandate, effective in 2019. On Thanksgiving, President Donald Trump promised to return to Obamacare repeal after passing historic tax reform legislation.

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