



NEWS

2018

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

www.HonestReporting.com



We believe Israel deserves fair treatment in the news.
We know public opinion is shaped by the media.
We empower the grassroots to respond to media bias.

Join thousands of others demanding
fair media coverage for Israel

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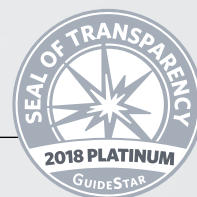
HonestReporting

Defending Israel From Media Bias

2018

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

www.HonestReporting.com



This annual report is also available online as a downloadable PDF with additional content hyperlinks at www.honestreporting.com/2018-annual-report/

Why HonestReporting?

We deliver real solutions to real problems.

Media bias is a global problem that affects Israel and Jewish communities around the world. With our monitoring, critiques, education, and social media presence, we put the media on notice and hold them to account.

We have leverage.

The most valuable assets for news agencies are their reputation and credibility. They know who we are, they know about our reach and our impact. We put the media on notice: they have to do their jobs right, or risk being exposed.

Our track record is unparalleled.

For 18 years we've been obtaining corrections, expanding our community, and pressing the news media to do their jobs with fairness and accuracy.

We mobilize at a moment's notice.

The longer biased news is out there, the more people it will misinform. That's why we activate rapid response. We monitor the news as it comes out, and respond to inaccuracy and bias as it happens. Corrections begin to appear within minutes, and we keep news agencies on notice.

Our team of non-profit professionals make every dollar go the extra mile.

We monitor the events and news coverage, we reach out to our community, we provide education and events, we engage with the media, and we get results.

We don't just critique the media, we also educate the wider public.

Our staff have intimate knowledge of the issues and are able to effectively disseminate accurate and relevant information. Our news literacy materials are an invaluable resource for anyone who wants to advocate for Israel today.

We are on the ground,

in the heart of Jerusalem.

We are the only organization that is directly involved, in person, at every stage of the news cycle: before, during and after.

Message from the Executive Director

At the end of 2018 I stepped into the role of Executive Director of HonestReporting, taking primary responsibility for all of our staff and programming. It is a privilege and the opportunity of a lifetime. Special thanks to Joe Hyams, who is moving on from the organization after 13 years of dedicated service in the role of CEO.

As I build my strategic vision for our future, one fundamental truth stands out in my mind:

The word “media” doesn’t mean what it used to.

Our calling is spelled out on our logo, “Defending Israel from Media Bias,” and we’ve done so with passion for almost two decades. Yet even as our mission remains constant, **we continue to adapt to the changing meaning of the word “media.”**

Here’s how we did it over the past year:

- » An audience of **over a million young adults on YouTube** viewed our video critique of an Ahed Tamimi story from Al Jazeera’s online channel, “AJ+.” Most of our viewers were ages 18-34 and they watched, on average, over 94 percent of the video. In fact, we **beat CNN’s prime time news ratings** that week.
- » We engaged conventional journalists as always, but we multiplied our effect by **using our website and Twitter as a tool for publicly exposing journalistic failings**. The result? When riots broke out on the Gaza border and the press misleadingly called them “protests,” we changed the conversation, and helped bring the violent truth of these “protests” into the mainstream.
- » We supplemented our real time rapid-response with **proactive work**: writing in popular news sources and appearing in live, televised debates with journalists, activists and even high ranking members of Palestinian government.
- » And let’s not forget: we **tackled the BDS movement head-on**, such as when we filed a complaint against Airbnb with the US Office of Antiboycott Compliance: for their racist policy targeting Israeli Jews. Both Airbnb and the BDS movement as a whole are examples of what we call **“media opinion influencers,”** forces that directly misinform news audiences at a scale that often dwarfs conventional journalists.

In the coming year, our new **“Proactive Media Project”** will dramatically increase our presence on mainstream news in America and Israel, as well as on social media: bringing vital facts and context directly to news audiences.

Of course, we will also continue reacting to the media in real time, holding conventional journalists to account for their work.

All of this is what “Defending Israel from Media Bias” means in the modern age.

We hope to count on your consistent and generous support in the year to come.

On behalf of the entire HonestReporting team: Thank you.

Sincerely,



Daniel Pomerantz

Executive Director



STATS



Production



145

Featured
Articles



202

Daily News
Roundups



65

Email
Campaigns



58

Corrections

Social Media



Facebook

**3.8
million**

people reached



Twitter

**5.7
million**

impressions

1168

Tweets



VIDEOS

**2.4
million**

views

40

Videos

Website



2.4M

pageviews



MEDIA CORRECTIONS

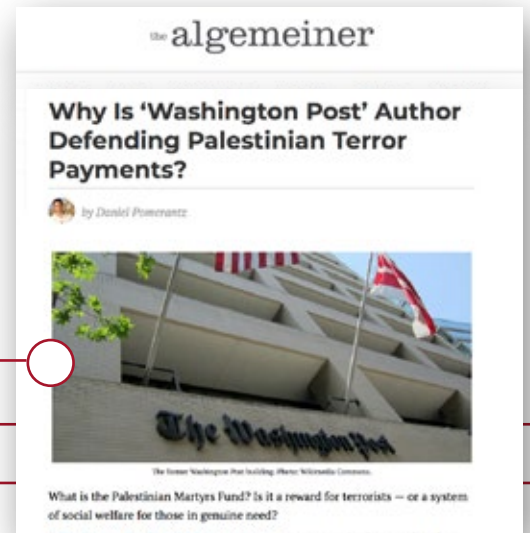
During 2018, HonestReporting and its affiliates have achieved 58 significant corrections. Our results demonstrate our ability to not only effectively monitor the media but also our credibility, as editors respond to our requests and those of our readers when errors or bias occur.

Media outlets that issued corrections include:



HR IN THE MEDIA

» HonestReporting content was republished on multiple occasions in The Algemeiner as well as the Jewish Press and Australia's J-Wire.

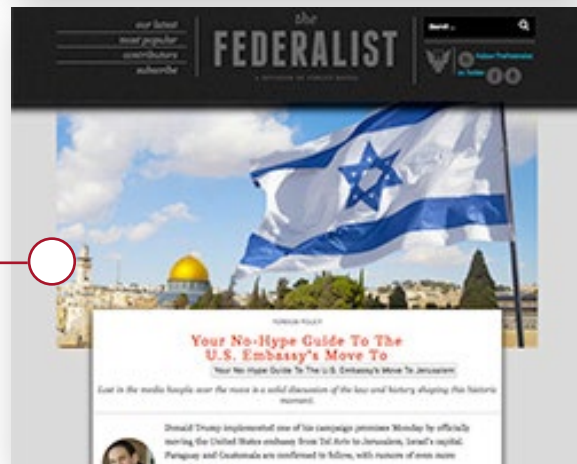


» Daniel Pomerantz appeared on i24 News on numerous occasions during the year, including going **head to head** with PLO executive committee member Mustafa Barghouti, **debating** the Israeli BDS blacklist with former Peace Now head Yariv Oppenheimer, giving **his perspective** on the Ahed Tamimi case, **appearing live** with American diplomat and former peace negotiator Dennis Ross, and **addressing Gaza rocket attacks**, the **Breaking the Silence** organization and **US funding cuts** to the Palestinians.



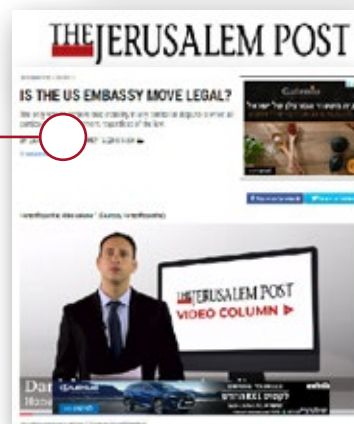
» Simon Plosker was published in **The Times of Israel** taking the media to task for spreading a blood libel that Israel had tear gassed a baby to death at the Gaza border.

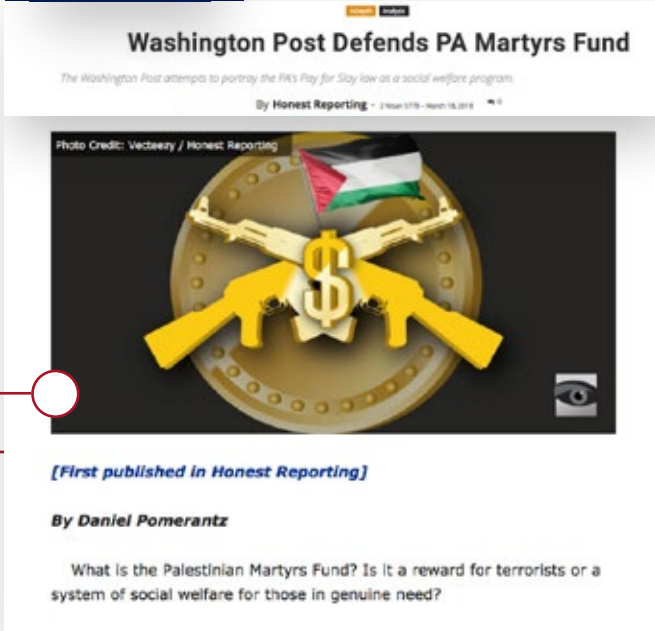
» Daniel was published numerous times in The Federalist, addressing the legality of the US **Embassy move** to Jerusalem, US **funding cuts** to the Palestinians, and the **Airbnb boycott** of Israeli settlements.



» The Jerusalem Post **republished three of** HonestReporting's videos.

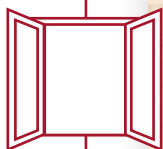
» Simon Plosker, Daniel Pomerantz and Pesach Benson all appeared on HonestReporting's weekly segment on South Africa's **Chai FM** while Simon appeared twice on Australia's **J-Air radio** and Daniel was interviewed in Hebrew on Israel's **Radio Eretz FM**.





- » In advance of Simon's visit to South Africa, the **South African Jewish Report** published a feature article on the work of HonestReporting.
- » HonestReporting's expose of Australian ABC News journalist Sophie McNeill's selective editing of Ahd Tamimi footage of the Palestinian teen inciting violence was covered by Australia's **J-Wire** and was picked up by the Australian section of the **Daily Mail**, the world's most widely read online news site.
- » HonestReporting was cited by **Hamodia**, the **European Jewish Press** and the **Jewish Voice**.
- » Daniel Pomerantz was interviewed by the **Jerusalem Post** concerning HR's legal action against Airbnb, while **Forbes** also cited HR in its coverage. (More later in this report.)





HR's NEW JERUSALEM HQ OFFICIALLY OPENED

HonestReporting's brand new international headquarters was officially opened on August 26 in the heart of downtown Jerusalem.

HR staff were joined by many friends, including Laura and Peter D. Weinstein along with their children and grandchildren, to celebrate the inauguration of the office suite that bears their name in honor of their incredibly generous contribution to its realization.

Aside from providing HonestReporting's editorial team with the facilities to monitor the media and produce content on the ground in Israel, the new offices also include state-of-the-art facilities for video production, the results of which can already be seen on HR's YouTube channel.

Among the guests at the reception was Jerusalem Deputy Mayor, Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, who reiterated the importance of HonestReporting's work for Israel and the cause of fair coverage in the media.

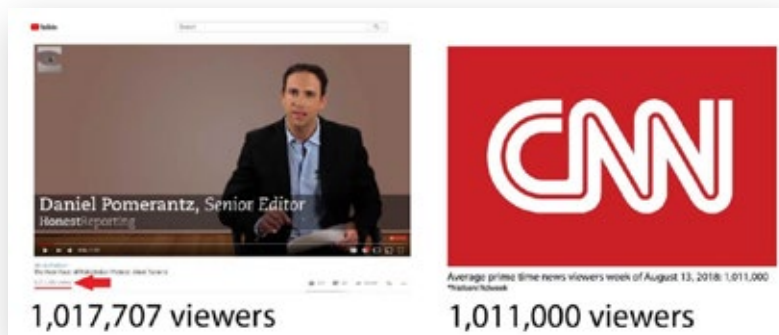
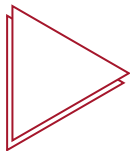
A short video review of HR's work and achievements over the years was projected on to the building for our guests to take pride in the HR story so far.

HR's then-CEO Joe Hyams addressed the guests before joining Peter Weinstein who affixed the mezuzah to the doorpost of HonestReporting's new home.

Thank you to our many partners who joined with the Weinstains in the dedication of the various departments and facilities within the new space. There are still dedication opportunities for sponsorship, and you can check out www.honestreporting.com/future to learn more.

We look forward to welcoming you to our new home the next time you are in Jerusalem!

YOUTUBE PROJECT



How do you get young people to really listen about Israel?

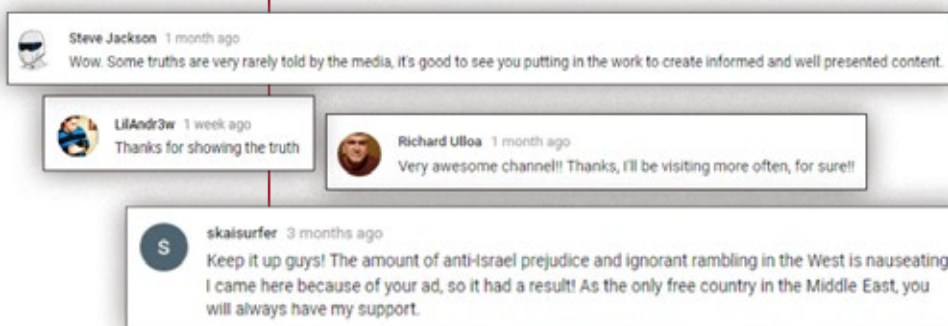
This year we launched a pilot program: a promoted YouTube campaign to compete with the rampant anti-Israel messaging that is targeted to young people on social media.

We have produced several videos so far in the pilot program: every one was viewed by over 100,000 people, and one in particular, an expose of Ahd Tamimi, was viewed by over a million people, actually beating CNN's prime-time ratings that week.

Viewers watched on average 90% of each video, and actively engaged through commenting and subscribing.

Our audience was mostly young adults in the US and UK, with 79% of viewers between the ages of 18 to 34. That means we are really reaching young adults, and they are really listening to what we have to say.

That's why we are pleased to announce that this pilot program has been converted into an ongoing HonestReporting project for the coming year.



INTERNS



With the opening of our new office, we've been able to host more interns that ever before.

We were delighted to host journalism student Elizabeth Loewenthal in our editorial department and Information Science student Maddie Met in our IT department. Both were studying at the University of Maryland and came to HonestReporting through Jewish Agency MASA internship programs.

We also hosted UK native Sara Cowen who interned with us as part of her B'nei Akiva gap year program.



Sara Cowen

Elizabeth Loewenthal (l) and Maddie Met (r) in the HR office.



Participants at the conference including Simon Plosker with Minister of Strategic Affairs Gilad Erdan.

#DIGITELL CONFERENCE



HonestReporting's Simon Plosker was honored to be invited by Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs to the #DigiTell18 conference as one of a select number of organizations and individuals considered to be the most impactful pro-Israel advocates on social media.

The Israeli government recognizes that the private sector, including HonestReporting, represents the most effective way of combating BDS and the delegitimization of Israel online. The Ministry of Strategic Affairs brought participants from some 15 countries to create an advocacy network, of which HonestReporting is proud to play a significant part. "For the first time, BDS groups are on the defensive," declared Gilad Erdan, Israel's Minister of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy, to the group of activists. HonestReporting looks forward to further collaboration with the many organizations represented at the #DigiTell conference as well as assisting the Ministry of Strategic Affairs in its efforts to defend Israel and go on the offensive against BDS and anti-Israel activists.

FOCUS ON SOUTH AFRICA



Howard Feldman (l) in the HR office with Simon Plosker

South Africa's Jewish community faces particular challenges due to the country's history and an inherently anti-Israel media. HonestReporting has made a point of increasing its focus on South Africa, a key hub in the BDS campaign network.

Simon Plosker has a weekly slot on Johannesburg's Chai FM radio station. When Chai FM presenter Howard Feldman visited Israel, we were delighted to host him for a **podcast chat** about the various issues concerning South Africa and Israel. South Africa-Israel relations were also the topic of a special **guest post** by Rolene Marks, a broadcast and print journalist who serves on the executive of World WIZO and is a member of Truth be Told, a rapid response team addressing biased media. In addition, as Cape Town runs out of water while refusing to accept Israeli help to solve the crisis, HonestReporting **took on** a particularly vicious opinion piece in South Africa's Mail & Guardian that attempted to justify such a boycott through the dissemination of anti-Israel lies.

In a first for HonestReporting, Simon Plosker was invited by **Limmud South Africa** to be one of its group of international presenters at events in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town during August.

With over 80 groups across the world in 42 countries, Limmud is a global phenomenon of cross-communal Jewish learning, giving participants access to the most dynamic Jewish educators, performers and teachers, working in a variety of educational styles – lectures, workshops, text-study sessions, film, meditation, discussions, exhibits and performance.

Simon presented 10 sessions at three Limmuds, including on how HonestReporting fights media bias, a look at how Photo Bias impacts coverage, and **Red Lines: The Eight Categories of Media Bias**. In addition, he appeared on two panel discussions on Israel Through the Media Lens as well as giving a further two Israel news updates looking at the Gaza situation and analyzing the contentious Nation State Law.



A packed-out panel on Israel Through the Media Lens at Limmud Johannesburg.

Visits to Johannesburg and Cape Town were also opportunities to meet with dedicated activists through the local Zionist Federations as well as a studio guest appearance on Chai FM's morning show.

With a domestic media that appears to be overwhelmingly hostile towards Israel, HonestReporting hopes to work with many of the friends and colleagues that were made on this incredibly fulfilling visit in order to assist with tackling this particular problem.



FIGHTING BDS

Protesters urging a boycott against Israel in Melbourne, file photo (CC-BY SA Takver/Wikimedia Commons)



HonestReporting continues to take on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement with a dedicated Twitter feed (@FightingBDS) and Facebook page, as well as timely and relevant content.

When the Israeli government published a blacklist of organizations and individuals involved in BDS activities, HonestReporting addressed some of the falsehoods and media firestorm that Israel's detractors created.

HR exposed how some media **sanitized** the real motives of the BDS movement while Asad Rehman, the executive director of the War on Want charity, demonstrated exactly why his organization is on the blacklist with a hate-filled missive in **The Guardian** that HR took on. Israel's enemies hit back, including publishing a paid advertisement in the English-language print edition of Haaretz.

We called Haaretz **to account** after we were appalled to see that the ad included a direct call for "BOYCOTT," which goes beyond legitimate criticism of Israel, its policies or even its BDS blacklist.

Of course, BDS is a global phenomenon. When Spanish organization ACOM contacted HonestReporting seeking assistance in taking on BDS activists, we gave a **guest post** to ACOM's president to inform HR readers about the situation in Spain and how his organization is fighting back after being targeted for legal action by the BDS movement there. As a result of the post, the story was featured in the **Jewish Press**.



When popular online hospitality service Airbnb announced that it was removing listings in Israeli settlements in the disputed territories, thereby targeting only Jews, HonestReporting launched legal proceedings via the United States Office of Antiboycott Compliance (the "OAC") which enforces America's numerous anti-boycott laws. As previously mentioned, this action was highlighted in both the **Jerusalem Post** and **Forbes**.

Attn:

U.S. Department of Commerce
[BIS/Office of Antiboycott Compliance](#)
Room 6098
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230
Phone: (202) 482-2381
Fax: (202) 482-0913

And:
Department of the Treasury
Office of the General Counsel
Room 2015
Washington, D.C. 20220
(202) 622-1945

November 25, 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

We wish to call your attention to a violation of certain laws which your department enforces, and to request that you take formal action to remedy those violations.

Airbnb, Inc. (an online marketplace and hospitality service) [is in violation](#) of the Export Administration Act (EAA) and the Ribicoff Amendment to the 1976 Tax Reform Act (TRA).

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction under the EAA and TRA applies when a "US person" participates in a boycott at the [request of a foreign boycotting country](#). In this case, Airbnb, Inc. has chosen to comply with a [request by the Palestinian Authority](#) government to participate in its boycott of Israel. Thus, subject matter jurisdiction is satisfied if the Palestinian Authority is a "country" within the meaning of applicable laws, and personal jurisdiction is satisfied if Airbnb, Inc. is a "US person."

GAZA BORDER VIOLENCE



Simon Plosker at the scene of a rocket strike on an apartment block in Ashkelon.



Simon Plosker descending into a Hamas attack tunnel discovered only meters from the Gaza border inside Israel.

For many weeks, the Gaza border was witness to some of the worst violence since the 2014 Gaza conflict. Hamas encouraged thousands of Palestinians to storm Israel's security fence with the intention of infiltrating and killing Israeli civilians located in communities only meters from the border.

With the riots falsely portrayed as “peaceful protests” and mounting Palestinian casualties, Israel found itself on the receiving end of some appalling media coverage that played into the Hamas narrative.

Throughout the crisis, HonestReporting produced timely and quality **content and materials** to both rebut that false narrative and to empower our readers to take action where they saw bias.

This included:

- » **Two primers** explaining what was really going on at the Gaza border.
- » Being the first to translate and bring to attention evidence that **exposed** the majority of the dead Palestinians as members of terrorist organizations.
- » Reviews and **rebuttal** of the media coverage.
- » A **video** that reached nearly 50,000 on Facebook.

Additionally, in August, HonestReporting brought a group of 30 supporters to Israeli communities near the Gaza border, to see the situation in person. A crew from i24 News accompanied the group in order to film a segment for the channel.

The group visited residents in Kibbutz Nahal Oz, Kibbutz Alumim and Asaf Siboni living under very real threat who explained what it is like for farmers dealing with the destruction of their agricultural fields, parents dealing with their children's trauma as well as the constant threat to their lives.

When a further escalation of violence resulted in nearly 500 rockets fired from Gaza at Israel's south, Simon Plosker accompanied journalists to see for himself the situation in Ashkelon, Sderot and border communities, including a visit to the scene of a fatal rocket strike on an apartment building in Ashkelon. Simon's on the scene report was republished by **The Algemeiner**.



UK PARLIAMENT'S FAKE NEWS INQUIRY PUBLISHES HR SUBMISSION

Following Russian interference on social media allegedly affecting the discourse in a number of countries around the world, fake news has been recognized as a serious threat to democracies.

The UK Parliament has been conducting its own **inquiry** into fake news and invited submissions from interested parties.

HonestReporting is no stranger to exposing fake news when it is aimed at damaging Israel. While most mainstream media outlets do not intentionally set out to create fake news about Israel, there have been examples where naive journalists have failed to fact check the credibility of their sources and have indeed spread fake news stories.

We submitted a **brief overview** of this phenomenon to the parliamentary inquiry in February 2018, which is now online and part of the inquiry's record.



70

ISRAEL 70 MISSIONS



In one of our biggest ever years for Missions to Israel, 66 people from countries including the US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand joined us to celebrate Israel's 70th birthday during Missions in May and November.

For the first time, the May HR Mission included luxury hotel stays in Tel Aviv as well as Jerusalem, giving our participants front row seats for the 70th birthday party, which included a boat trip from the ancient port of Jaffa and a magnificent view of an Israel Air Force fly past of fighter jets, helicopters and even a Boeing 747.

But it wasn't only partying. Besides sharing the incredible atmosphere, the Mission's aim to educate about the history of the country from its birth to the present didn't disappoint.

There were field trips to strategic sites led by experts such as Col. (Res.) Grisha Yakubovich, former Head of the Civilian Department in the IDF's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), former government spokesperson Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin, IDF Major (Res.) Elliot Chodoff, a leading military analyst; and guest lecturers including former Ambassador in charge of Israel's relations with the US Congress, Yoram Ettinger, Prof. Ronen Hoffman from the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Herzliya and international law expert Prof. Eugene Kontorovich.

Mission participants also heard from real people with very real stories. On Memorial Day, Israel's national day of remembrance for fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism, the group met with Esther Wachsman, mother of the late Nachshon Wachsman who was kidnapped by Hamas terrorists in 1994, held hostage for six days and killed during a failed Israeli rescue attempt. The Mission also heard from Kay Wilson, the survivor of a brutal terror attack, who gave inspiring words and introduced her Palestinian friend trying to build bridges between Jews and Arabs.

Other expert speakers included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Deputy Director General for Media & Public Affairs, Noam Katz, and Director of Digital Diplomacy, DJ Schneeweiss, while participants received practical training on media issues from HonestReporting's dedicated staff and learned how to better advocate for Israel from educator extraordinaire Neil Lazarus.

You can get a personal view from Mission participants Fern and Richard Babkes, who told the **Baltimore Jewish Times** about the incredible time they had with HonestReporting.



Mission participants at the Yitzhak Rabin Center
(Photo: Oliver Heeb)



Emotional scenes on Memorial Day as the group
visit an IDF cemetery (Photo: Janyce Katz)

SPEAKING EVENTS

Over the course of 2018, HonestReporting staff have addressed hundreds of students and members of communities around the world. Here are some of them:

Israel

- » MMY Seminary
- » Israel Government Fellows at the Begin Center
- » Amudim Seminary yearcourse
- » JNF President's Mission
- » IDF Spokesperson's Unit
- » Russian American Jewish Experience
- » AEPI
- » Sar-El army volunteer program
- » Act.IL at the IDC, Herzliya
- » Midreshet Lindenbaum

USA

- » JNF in Florida, New Jersey, Baltimore, Delaware, Washington DC
- » Numerous parlor meetings across the East and West Coasts

South Africa

- » Limmud Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban
- » South Africa Zionist Federation, Johannesburg, Cape Town



Daniel Pomerantz and Simon Plosker lecturing to IDC Herzliya students volunteering for Act.IL



Joe Hyams with students from AEPI.



Simon Plosker addressing Israel Government Fellows at the Begin Center



Simon addresses a breakfast briefing for the SA Zionist Federation in Cape Town.

**Tired of seeing Israel
slammed in the media?**
honestreporting.com/signup

*"I learned so much today about the power
of news media to shape people's views. Now
I see how important it is, for each person
to play a part in standing up to anti-Israel
bias. Thanks, HR!"*

– Arielle, Golda Och Academy



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Your generous tax-deductible donations make a real difference.

