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Doctors recount the horrors of terrorism

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Correspondent

TORONTO — The reality of terrorism hits home in the emergency wards of hospitals. More than 300 doctors from all disciplines gathered at the University of Toronto to share experiences with colleagues from Israel, Afghanistan and Pakistan — ironically on the campus where Israel Apartheid Week was born.

The doctors, members of Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (DARA), heard Dr. M. Fuad Khan, consultant psychiatrist, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre of Boston, describe his life in his home city of Peshawar where kidnappings and killings were a part of daily life and where his own life was in constant peril. Where the Taliban were once cherished, he declared, “they are now feared and hated.”

Tahera Q Ali recounted her life in her native Afghanistan. She is founding director and president of Afghans Youth Association of

Canada.

In Jerusalem, when you hear the sirens of three ambulances, you know there is a suicide attack, said Dr. Janice Halpern, psychoanalyst, Mount Sinai Hospital who described her service in Israel, repairing the lives of terror victims. Discussions focused on experiences of Israeli doctors such as Eran Regev, maxillo-facial surgeon at Hebrew University in Jerusalem who has had to reconstruct faces of victims, and Omri Lubovsky, orthopaedic surgeon at Hadassah Medical Centre, Jerusalem. Both recounted the horrors their patients suffered in suicide attacks.

Psychiatrist Frank Somer, who had served in Afghanistan and is a former member of the Canadian Armed Services related his experiences.

The media was excluded from the part of the conference where terrorism, itself, was discussed and cannot report on that segment. However, terrorism was the subject of closing comments by Dr. Steve Samuel, Toronto



Dr. Steve Samuel, chair of Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (DARA), addresses more than 300 doctors at the Medical and Psychological Impacts of Terrorism Conference in Toronto.

plastic surgeon and DARA chair.

Dr. Samuel pointed out that the anti-Israel propagandists have hit the medical world head on. “Recently a number of articles

relating to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians have appeared in reputable medical journals, including the *British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet*

and even our own *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)*. They all followed the same pattern,” he stated, “inserting anti-Israel rhetoric into ostensibly neutral academic literature, presenting uncorroborated statistics, condemning Israel for supposedly attacking Palestinian health services and committing heinous war crimes.”

Referring to the blood libels now common in the Muslim world, he said: “For example, the author of a *BMJ* article wrote, ‘Israeli soldiers are routinely authorized to shoot to kill children.’ The author offers no proof but the appearance of that lie in a purportedly objective medical journal, lends it credibility in the eyes of uninformed readers.”

DARA, founded in Toronto, is dedicated to pursuing “honesty, accuracy and objectivity in the medical field and truthfulness and freedom from intimidation and harassment in academia.” The association is open to all medical practitioners.