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5.09.23

Killing of collaborator for Israel exposes PA tensions, suspicions, paranoia

5.09.23

Killing of alleged collaborator exposes Palestinian tensions

The Lion's Den armed militant group kill 23-year-old Zuhair al-Ghaleeth after he was surveilled and uncovered as a collaborator for Israel; family disavows him and refuses to pick up his body from the morgue after finding out about his betrayal
Associated Press|08:32

There was no mourning tent for 23-year-old Palestinian Zuhair al-Ghaleeth. There were no banners with his portrait, no chants celebrating his martyrdom.

Instead, a bulldozer dropped his bullet-riddled body into an unmarked grave, witnesses said.

The day after six masked Palestinian gunmen shot and killed al-Ghaleeth over his suspected collaboration with Israel, his family and friends refused to pick up his body at the morgue, the public prosecution said. He was buried in a field cluttered with discarded animal bones and soda cans outside the northern West Bank city of Nablus.

It was a grim end to a short life. The April 8 killing in the Old City of Nablus — the first slaying of a suspected Israeli intelligence collaborator in the West Bank in nearly two decades — riveted the Palestinian public and cast a spotlight on the plight of collaborators, preyed on by both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The case has laid bare the weakness of the Palestinian Authority and the strains that a recent surge in violence with Israel is beginning to exert within Palestinian communities.

“It feels like we’re in war times,” said 56-year-old Mohammed, who heard shouting that night, followed by gunshots. He ventured out of the Ottoman-era bathhouse where he works to find his neighbor, al-Ghaleeth, motionless on the ground, his eyes rolled up and mouth agape. A crowd of Palestinians swelled around his bloodied body. “Collaborator!” they yelled. “Spy!”

The scene had an eerie familiarity, Mohammed said, as if the horrors of the First and Second Intifadas, or Palestinian uprisings, were being replayed: Paranoia turning Palestinians against each other. Rumors ruining lives. Vigilante violence spiraling out of control. Like all witnesses interviewed about the incident, Mohammed declined to give his last name for fear of reprisals.

The angry gathering around al-Ghaleeth’s body quickly turned into a protest of the Palestinian Authority, which administers most Palestinian cities and towns in the West Bank. The cries against al-Ghaleeth’s perceived betrayal took on new meaning as the crowds directed their anger toward the deeply unpopular self-rule government, which ordinary Palestinians accuse of collaboration with Israel for coordinating with Israeli security forces.

“It was chaos,” acknowledged Ghassan Daghas, a Palestinian Authority official. Palestinian security forces fired tear gas. Medics rushed al-Ghaleeth to a Nablus hospital, where they tried to resuscitate him but could not get a pulse. A medical report seen by The Associated Press said al-Ghaleeth died of gunshot wounds in his lower extremities at 10:15 p.m.

The next morning, as word spread that al-Ghaleeth had been building a house in the nearby village of Rujeib, Palestinians swarmed the construction site, poured gasoline over the unfinished walls and set them on fire.

The public prosecution is still investigating al-Ghaleeth’s killing and has yet to announce arrests.

But an independent armed group known as the Lion’s Den, which has risen to prominence in the past year, seemed to take responsibility.

In the Old City of Nablus, where al-Ghaleeth lived and died, the Lion’s Den has brought together militants from the secular nationalist Fatah party and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group. The young men — disillusioned with the moribund Israeli-Palestinian peace process and with the undemocratic Palestinian Authority — have made the Old City a sort of private fiefdom.

After news of al-Ghaleeth’s death broke, the Lion’s Den declared that “the traitor was liquidated.”

“A traitor sells his homeland and his value as a human being for money,” commander Oday Azizi wrote on Facebook.

Lion’s Den member Tyseer Alfee said the killing was a warning. “We want all to see the fate of those who collaborate with the Israeli occupation,” he wrote in a text message when asked why al-Ghaleeth was shot publicly in the bustling marketplace, his body left for residents to find.

A grainy video purporting to show al-Ghaleeth confessing to his collaboration was posted on social media and quickly garnered many views. In the four-minute clip, al-Ghaleeth — looking tired and swallowing hard several times — tells how Israeli agents used footage of him having sex with another man as blackmail.

He said an Israeli recruiter ordered him to gather intelligence on Lion’s Den leaders to help the military target them. After each mission, he said, the Israeli agent gave him 500 shekels (about \$137) and a carton of Marlboro cigarettes.

Two members of the Lion’s Den, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, said that after months of suspicion, they began following al-Ghaleeth around. They caught him surveilling another militant and detained him. They described a six-hour videotaped interrogation, with just a clip leaked to social media to protect sensitive information about the group. “He confessed to everything after 30 minutes, maybe in hopes we wouldn’t kill him,” one said.

The public prosecution said it filed the online video as additional evidence in the case. But the confession raised as many questions as it answered, evoking the fraught judicial processes of grisly executions in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip — both those considered legal and those with little or no due process.

Since its 2007 takeover of the enclave, the Hamas militant group has publicly killed 33 suspected collaborators and other convicted criminals, according to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. During war times, Hamas gunmen have seized at least 29 alleged

collaborators from detention centers and killed them in the streets, without any pretense of a trial. Their bodies were dragged through Gaza City by motorbikes and left for crowds to gawk at or stomp on.

In the occupied West Bank, killings of alleged collaborators have occurred only in periods of intense unrest. Over 900 suspected collaborators were killed in the chaos of the First Intifada that began in 1987. More than 100 were killed in the second uprising, from 2000-05, according to Israeli rights group B'Tselem.

“These killings are a symptom of increased violence,” said Nathan Thrall, an analyst and author of a book on Israel and the Palestinians. Without due process, he said, “there are people who will use these accusations opportunistically to eliminate rivals and settle scores.”

Now Israelis and Palestinians are in the midst of one of the region’s bloodiest phases, outside a full-blown war, in two decades. As of Tuesday, 105 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire this year, according to an AP tally, about half of them affiliated with militant groups. Palestinian attacks against Israelis have killed 20 people in that time.

In recent months, the Israeli army has killed most key commanders and founders of the Lion’s Den, it says. In an apparently rare targeted killing last fall, a bomb on a motorbike exploded as militant Tamer al-Kilani walked by. Purported security video provided by the Lion’s Den shows an unidentified man parking the motorbike and exiting the frame before the blast killed al-Kilani. During raids, Israeli special forces often adopt disguises, such as of local worshippers or laborers, to quietly slip into the Old City — most recently last Thursday.

As the deaths rose, mistrust grew in the Old City. “We are all terrified because of how many have died,” said Ahmad, a 23-year-old hotel waiter in Nablus. “There are drones and cameras. There must be spies. Everyone suspects everyone.”

On Instagram, al-Ghaleeth looks like any other 20-something Palestinian. His page is full of mirror selfies in tracksuits, beauty shots of Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque and fan photos of Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi, with captions praising Lion’s Den “martyrs” sprinkled in.

Rumors abound about how he first aroused suspicion. Some say he always covered his face with a keffiyeh scarf in the Old City, as though trying to hide. Others talk of his apparently sudden wealth that allowed him to build a large house on a hilltop even though he once swept streets for cash. A few neighbors allege he resembled the shadowy figure in security footage of al-Kilani’s killing.

“We all knew he was an agent,” said Nael, a 52-year-old cafe owner in the Old City, whose nephew, a leader in the Lion’s Den, was killed last year. “It was the way he walked and talked. We have a sense for these things.”

Despite Israel’s sophisticated technology for surveilling militants, former intelligence officials say Palestinians themselves remain a crucial tool in preventing militant attacks, allowing Israel to conduct intelligence operations at safe remove.

“People think we only target terrorists, but the person down the street is very interesting as well. You can blackmail all kinds of people even if they’re not involved,” said one former Israeli intelligence agent, among nearly four dozen operatives who refused to report for reserve duty in 2014 to protest his unit’s tactics. He spoke on condition of

anonymity for fear of reprisals. “There is no military control without this kind of intelligence.”

He said relationships between recruiters and collaborators often become twisted into something else. “The gifting of a pack of cigarettes is very symbolic,” he said. “This person has to be under the impression that you care for him, that you’re just a friend who’s helping out.”

Collaboration has featured in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since before the 1948 war surrounding Israel’s creation. Palestinians have been blackmailed into service — threatened with having behavior exposed that’s forbidden, or “haram,” in their conservative Islamic communities, such as alcohol use, gambling or homosexuality. Others are recruited when seeking permits to get medical treatment in Israel.

“If they’re gay? Absolutely,” said retired Col. Miri Eisin, a former senior intelligence officer, referring to how the Israeli military, with great leverage over Palestinians’ lives, tries to recruit them. “Family problems. Money problems. None of it makes you feel lovely in the morning, but it’s very effective.”

The Shin Bet, Israel’s main agency responsible for collecting intelligence in the West Bank and Gaza since Israel’s capture of those territories in 1967, declined to comment on its tactics or on al-Ghaleeth’s case. The Israeli military also had no comment.

Al-Ghaleeth’s family declined to be interviewed, instead sharing a statement saying that Zuhair “has nothing to do with them.”

“The history of the family is honorable in serving Palestine,” it added.

Neighbors said the family had barely scraped by, collecting garbage in the Old City.

The Palestinian Authority, which is responsible for prosecuting suspected Israeli collaborators, said it considered al-Ghaleeth’s death symptomatic of a larger failing.

“This is a dangerous sign,” the public prosecution said. “It affects the safety of citizens.”

The Palestinian leadership accuses Israel of undermining its security forces by raiding cities and villages under its control. Israel contends it has been forced to act because of the authority’s ineffectiveness in dismantling militant infrastructure.

“Our situation is very weak, and that empowers extremism,” said Daghlal, the Nablus official, describing growing Palestinian militancy he fears could render the authority irrelevant. “We are not Gaza, where such killings happen all the time. But Israeli escalations push us in that direction.”

Whether the authority will hold the gunmen accountable is unclear. Palestinian security forces are wary of acting against militants, especially after their arrest of a popular Hamas financier in Nablus last fall sparked a day of riots. Detaining gunmen with family ties to Fatah could exacerbate internal tensions.

Nael, the Old City cafe owner, was blunt when asked why al-Ghaleeth was killed rather than handed over to Palestinian security forces. “How can a collaborator investigate a collaborator?” he said.

In a pasture outside Nablus — between a horse farm and an Israeli military checkpoint — teenagers working the field steer clear of a certain patch of rocks.

“If the spy was guilty, he deserves what happened,” said 16-year-old Laith, looking toward the unmarked grave. “Only God knows the truth.”

5.09.23

Gaza factions shocked but vowed to continue the path of fallen leaders

5.09.23

Official says Gaza factions shocked but response coming

IDF releases footage of the targeted killing of two of the three senior PIJ officials in Gaza;

Defense Minister Gallant stated they are ready for any scenario

Elisha Ben Kimon, Itamar Eichner, Einav Halabi|07:19

A security official on Tuesday said that the Gaza factions were shocked by the Israeli strike that killed three Palestinian Islamic Jihad commanders, but their response would certainly come.

Israel launched strikes on Gaza in the early morning hours on Tuesday in a targeted killing of the PIJ commanders and the destruction of the Islamist terror group's bases and weapon production sites.

The IDF released video footage of the targeted killing of Khalil al-Bahtini, the commander of the northern Gaza Strip region, and Jihad Ghannam, the secretary of the Jihad Military Council. Both were among the three senior operatives who were killed in an airstrike.

Israeli officials are currently awaiting a response from the Gaza Strip following the initiation of Operation "Shield and Arrow".

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu conducted a one-hour situation assessment with top security officials, including Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi, National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi, Shin Bet Chief Ronen Bar, and Mossad Chief Dedi Barnea.

Defense Minister Gallant spoke with officials in Gaza, informing them that Israel is prepared for any scenario, including a prolonged and expanded campaign. He emphasized that the IDF and security forces are equipped with all necessary resources and that the security apparatus is ready to offer any necessary assistance.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the military wing of Hamas, Abu Hamza, denounced the attack as an "inhumane crime" and vowed to continue the path taken by the fallen leaders, which he claimed would ultimately lead to the downfall of the enemy and its commanders.

He further called on the public to support the resistance and "oppose the Zionists", indicating a potential escalation in the future.

"Our message was that deterrence is not achieved on a whim, but rather we carefully analyze the situation," the Israeli official said

"As early as Wednesday afternoon, the Prime Minister instructed the security establishment to prepare a response. The goal was to take action against those responsible for the rocket fire last week, and prevent future attacks," he said. "We held meetings on Thursday and Friday, waiting for the right operational conditions that would minimize harm to civilians."

With operation "Shield and Arrow" currently focused on the Islamic Jihad, it is unclear whether Hamas will decide to sit on the sidelines or choose to engage in the fight.

Current Israeli security estimations point to the former.

The security cabinet is scheduled to convene later on Tuesday after most of its members were left uninformed about the military operation. The ministers had not given the authorization to resume the policy of targeted assassinations.

On Thursday, Defense Minister Gallant said that the probability of any military action escalating into war was low. The Prime Minister's Military Secretary, Avi Gil, reiterated this point as well and received approval to launch the strike, from Attorney General, Gali Baharav-Miara.

Following the initial airstrike that killed three senior officials in the Gaza Strip, IDF continued their attacks on various weapon production sites.

The targets included rocket production workshops in Khan Yunis and a site used to produce components for terrorist tunnels. Additionally, six military compounds belonging to the Islamic Jihad were attacked, which were primarily used for weapons storage and logistical support. A military position of the Jihad in the southern Gaza Strip was also targeted.

President Yitzhak Herzog expressed his appreciation for the IDF's operations in protecting the state and its citizens.

In an interview with Ynet, IDF spokesperson, Brigadier General Daniel Hagari, said that the decision to target the senior officers in Gaza was made in response to the extensive rocket fire to the southern region the previous week.

"The political apparatus approved the operational alternatives for us, and since then we have been waiting for the best conditions to carry out the operation," he said adding that the conditions early on Tuesday were deemed optimal, leading to the execution of the attacks.

Hagari described the targeted killing of the three senior activists as a highly complex operation that required coordination and intelligence from various sources.

"We are talking about three operatives, two living in different residential buildings in the heart of Gaza City, one of the densest areas in the world, and another in Rafah," he said.

"The ability to put together such a puzzle, operational intelligence, military intelligence, general security service, operational planning of the Air Force, over 40 aircraft in the sky for detection and attack. This operation is a very complex one."

Regarding the possibility of a reaction from the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, Hagari said that the IDF was prepared to respond to any scenario or development.

5.09.23

Netanyahu, Gallant, Bar & IDF concerned with leaks; kept MK's out of decisions

5.09.23

Radical Ben-Gvir kept in the dark on IDF Gaza operation

Netanyahu opts to avoid clueing ministers in on decision to resume targeted killing of terrorists in Gaza and operational plans backed by the AG; Likud denies Ben-Gvir allies' claims his pressure prompted military strike person
Itamar Eichner|05:22

Last Tuesday, May 2nd, the Islamic Jihad fired 104 rockets toward southern Israel in response to the death of Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan after an 87-day hunger strike. During the unfolding of events, a security meeting was held at an IDF base, attended by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar, and members of the IDF General Staff.

That evening, the IDF attacked Jihad infrastructure targets in the Gaza Strip, which sparked criticism of the military response being too weak. At the meeting, Gallant suggested that the IDF and Shin Bet expand their targets from stationary assets to include targeted assassinations.

Behind the scenes, an operation was beginning to unfold with the goal of taking down three senior commanders of the Islamic Jihad at one time. These PIJ chiefs were Khalil Bahtini, the Jihad commander for the northern Gaza Strip who was responsible for firing the rockets; Tareq Izzeldeen, who was responsible for the Jihad's terror in the West Bank; and Jihad Ghanam, a veteran activist in the organization.

Since the three were most certainly in hiding, the assassination could not take place on that same day, so intelligence officials spent the days that followed, tracking them down and waiting for the opportunity to strike. The assumption that guided the security system was that splitting up the assassinations would be ineffective because a single strike against one of them would immediately lead to a loss of the other two targets.

Later that week, on Friday, a meeting was held in the Shin Bet headquarters in which Operation Shield and Arrow, was approved by Netanyahu and Gallant, and since then, the Shin Bet and the IDF have been preparing for its execution.

The original date was set for Sunday, but at the last minute, there were concerns that it would not succeed in its accuracy, and a decision to postpone it until the conditions ripened overnight, was taken. An effort was made to minimize harm to any non-combatants, but it was clear that since they would be sleeping amongst a civilian population, it would not be possible to avoid it entirely.

Netanyahu did not raise the planned operation for cabinet approval because according to assessments, it would not lead to war. Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara approved this and claimed that "according to the law, there was no need for a cabinet meeting, to take military action."

Since Tuesday's strike, the political system has been discussing Netanyahu's decision not to bring ministers into the picture. Some claim that he was concerned about leaks, while others believe that the goal was to prevent National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir from taking credit for the operation. He has been pushing for targeted assassinations for some time and could claim that thanks to his decision to boycott cabinet meetings and votes in the Knesset Netanyahu took action.

Some officials who were exposed to inside information claim that Netanyahu informed Ben-Gvir of his intention to readopt targeted assassinations a month and a half ago. Allied of the minister were convinced that his pressure prompted the strike and that an end to the political crisis between Ben-Gvir and the prime minister, was near. Netanyahu's Likud Party said that there was no connection between the operation and Ben-Gvir.

5.09.23

IDF operation "Shield & Arrow" closed Gaza Strip to settle West Bank terrorism

5.09.23

All round political support for IDF Gaza operation

Opposition leader Yair Lapid and National Unity Party Chairman Benny Gantz express support say they government has their full backing;
Moran Azulay, Sivan Hilaie, Sharon Kidon, Yishay Shanrev|04:11

Politicians from the opposition on Tuesday voiced their full support for the IDF's strikes on Gaza that targeted senior commanders of the Islamic Jihad.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid praised the military operation in Gaza on Tuesday, stating "Full backing to Israeli security forces for the operation against the Islamic Jihad in Gaza." He is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday to receive a security briefing.

Lapid affirmed that the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip were aware of their close monitoring by the intelligence community and security forces. He stressed that there would be a decisive response to any further terrorist attacks and that the Israeli military would act at a time and place of their choosing.

He also stated that all necessary measures would be taken to safeguard the residents of southern Israel. Following the security developments, Lapid canceled a scheduled press conference planned to discuss the cost of living.

Benny Gantz, Chairman of the National Unity Party, said that the enemies' assessment of the situation was incorrect, and he fully supports the IDF and the security forces in their operations.

Gantz welcomed the recent action in the Gaza Strip and expressed his hope that the government would continue to act with both determination and responsibility in future operations.

Yisrael Beitenu leader, Avigdor Liberman, congratulated the IDF and security forces for the targeted killing of three terrorists in Gaza, stating "The elimination of every terrorist, whoever he is, should be celebrated," Liberman said.

He called for the government to redirect funding towards protecting homes and infrastructure in the south and north, instead of giving it to coalition partners and associates, after the details of the National Budget bill were revealed on Monday.

Lieberman criticized Prime Minister Netanyahu's decision to give Hamas leaders immunity during the operation, stating "Precisely against the background of the elimination of the senior leaders of the jihad, the immunity that Netanyahu grants to the heads of Hamas is jarring."

He highlighted Hamas as the greater threat, responsible for shootings and directing terrorist activities against Jews throughout the country. Lieberman called for a comprehensive plan for Gaza, saying "You can't manage life from one military operation to the next."

MK Ze'ev Elkin of the National Unity Party said in an interview with Ynet Radio that "the model should be of the type that was in action a little less than a year ago."

"In the operation led by the previous government and Benny Gantz as the Minister of Defense, the entire senior military elite of the Islamic Jihad was eliminated. We managed to finish the round in a few days, I really hope that's what will happen right now."

General (ret.) Yair Golan who was a lawmaker for the leftist Meretz Party when it was in the parliament, said "It is impossible to know how Hamas will react, whether it will sit on the sidelines or decide to get its hands dirty. Israel needs to be prepared for escalation, there is no escaping it." He further expressed his hope that "what we saw this morning is the beginning of a new policy direction."

After Tuesday's targeting of three senior PIJ commanders in Gaza, marking the beginning of operation "Shield and Arrow", Defense Minister Yoav Gallant instructed calling up IDF reservists to bolster the front lines as well as the units supporting them.

Roads have been closed for traffic and several train lines have been suspended in areas adjacent to the Gaza Strip, and special safety directives have been released by Home Front Command.

The Israeli Defense Forces conveyed to Hamas that their actions were not targeted at them, stating "The operation is targeted solely against the Islamic Jihad," as confirmed by an IDF spokesperson.

Gaza Ministry of Health reported at least 13 fatalities and 20 injuries. Palestinian sources claimed that the Israeli Air Force and helicopters completely destroyed Islamic Jihad military facilities in contrast to previous attacks.

In addition to the threat of rocket fire from Gaza, the IDF was on high alert and gave heightened instructions to the Central Command and IOS Division due to the possibility of attacks in the West Bank.

The operation in Gaza had commenced approximately a week following a brief round of conflict with the Islamic Jihad, which started with the death of Khader Adnan, a prisoner who died following a hunger strike, and involved a volley of 104 rockets aimed at Israel, to which the IDF responded in a manner considered to be relatively mildly.

A key objective of the operation was to settle scores with those responsible for terrorism in the West Bank, and Shin Bet officials indicated that "it's about shifting the paradigm."

5.08.23

Israel kills 3 Jihad commanders in 40 aircraft strike on Gaza

5.08.23

Israel kills 3 Islamic Jihad commanders in targeted Gaza strikes

IDF launches Operation Shield and Arrow a week after a bout of cross-border violence during which over 100 rockets were fired from the Palestinian enclave into southern Israel in less than 24 hours; Gallant calls up reserves
ynet correspondents|22:39

The IDF launched a military operation against Gaza early on Tuesday, with the targeted killing of three senior commanders of the Islamic Jihad terror group in an airstrike. The IDF spokesperson said.

The attack comes after a week after a bout of cross-border violence during which over 100 rockets were fired from the Palestinian enclave into southern Israel in less than 24 hours.

Gaza border area residents within 40 km (25 miles) of Gaza were told to stay near bomb shelters from 2:30 a.m. on Tuesday until 6 p.m. on Thursday, at the instruction of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant as emergency measures were put into effect in expectation of rocket fire.

Highways were closed around the Gaza Strip border, railway traffic south of the city of Ashkelon was halted, and special instructions were issued by the Home Front Command to the public.

The strikes hit the top floor of an apartment building in Gaza City and a house in the southern city of Rafah. The Palestinian Health Ministry said at least 12 civilians died including family members of the targeted men, and 20 others were injured, and that ambulances were continuing to evacuate people from the targeted areas.

The PIJ commanders were identified them as Khalil Bahtini, the Islamic Jihad commander for the northern Gaza Strip; Tareq Izzeldeen, the group's intermediary between its Gaza and West Bank members; and Jihad Ghanam, the secretary of the Islamic Jihad's military council.

Further strikes were conducted after the assassinations, against weapons production facilities including rockets and six military installations of the PIJ used mostly for storage and logistical centers for the terror group. Palestinians reported fire from the sea in some of the attacks.

In a message to Hamas, Israel said the Gaza ruling group was not the target of the operation but Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh warned that Israel will "pay the price" for the killings. "Assassinating the leaders with a treacherous operation will not bring security to the occupier, but rather more resistance," Haniyeh said.

In a statement, the military said its Operation Shield and Arrow, had achieved the operational goal and will expand its attacks if needed. Chief of Staff Herzi Halevy was in consultation with the Shin Bet and reservists would be called up in the course of the day.

According to the IDF after the latest rocket attack on southern Israel, security forces gathered intelligence and an opportune moment was found to take out the three

commanders of the PIJ at the same time. Some 40 aircraft were involved in the operation which was a combined effort of the military and the Shin Bet.

5.08.23

American academic association votes to boycott Israel in June, failed in 2015

5.08.23

Threat of academic boycott rattles Israeli universities

The largest American academic association AAA to vote on a boycott of Israeli institutions over the treatment of Palestinians if passed vote would be a win for BDS and a setback for Israeli academia person

Itamar Eichner|10:03

Israelis are worried about the American Anthropological Association (AAA) as they might soon decide to boycott Israeli universities.

A petition has been submitted by 206 members of the association requesting a vote on the matter due to Israel's so-called apartheid regime and inhumane treatment of the Palestinians.

Interestingly, a similar proposal was voted upon on November 20, 2015, and it didn't pass by a whisker as only 39 votes separated the supporters (2,384) from those opposed (2,423).

Rewritten: With a membership of 11,000 academics, the American Anthropological Association is the largest academic body in the US.

If approved, the proposal would be a significant accomplishment for the BDS movement and a major setback for Israeli academia. Concerns are growing in Israel that the proposal could pass due to the right-wing government's policies and opposition to judicial overhaul.

The resolution's initiators reference the Israeli government's nationality law and an Amnesty report labeling Israel as an apartheid regime. An electronic vote is scheduled for June.

5.08.23

Six terrorist student cell in Bethlehem, plots revealed by Shin Bet, IDF & police

5.08.23

Shin Bet reveals: Bus bombing in Beitar was orchestrated from Lebanon, Gaza
Botched bus bombing attack in Beitar Illit was carried out by cell of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Israel National News May 8, 2023, 12:07 PM (GMT+3)

A botched bus bombing attack south of Jerusalem two months ago was the work of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terror group, Israel's Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) revealed Monday, adding that the plot was directed by operatives in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

On Monday morning, Israel's military censor cleared for publication details of the investigation into the failed bus bombing in Beitar Illit on March 9th.

In a joint operation of the Shin Bet, the IDF, and the police, a terrorist infrastructure was exposed in the Bethlehem area last month which was responsible for the attempted bombing attack on a bus in Beitar Illit at the beginning of March. The cell had also planned to carry out additional terrorist acts.

As part of the investigation into the case, six terrorists were arrested from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, all of them members of a PFLP student cell operating on its behalf. The suspects were identified as residents of the Deheisheh refugee camp, Batir, and Beit Jala in the Bethlehem area.

In addition, an Israeli woman was arrested for transporting one of the terrorists across the Green Line on the day of the attack.

After being questioned, it was found in that the woman was not aware of the terrorist's intentions though an indictment was filed against her for the offense of transportation of an illegal resident into Israeli territory.

During the investigation of the terrorists, their involvement in the planning and execution of the bombing attack on the bus in Beitar Illit was exposed, starting from the preparations they made for the attack and the distribution of roles among themselves, including recruiting a bomber, renting hideout apartments, one of which served as a bomb-making lab, manufacturing explosive materials for the explosives in the apartment, and purchasing a getaway car. Some of the members of the infrastructure also plotted to carry out additional attacks on behalf of the organization.

Authorities are preparing to charge the terrorists with attempted murder, manufacturing of explosive materials, membership in a terrorist group, and other charges.

The plot was orchestrated by senior PFLP terrorists including Ahmed Saadat – one of the plotters behind the assassination of Israeli minister Rehavam Ze'evi – and Sakr Abu Zaid. The cell's handlers directed operations from Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

5.04.23

IDF probe finds & fixes Iron Dome technical glitch during last Gaza barrage

5.04.23

IDF probe finds, fixes Iron Dome glitch during Gaza barrage

Problem was immediately addressed and did not reoccur when dozens of additional rockets were fired from Gaza; the interception success rate of the Iron Dome after the repair was 90.5%

Elisha Ben Kimon|14:35

Two days after rocket barrages were fired on southern Israel from the Gaza Strip and penetrated the Iron Dome missile defense system – resulting in Chinese workers being injured, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) published the initial investigation report of the Iron Dome system's activity which found there was a technical problem with the system on that day.

According to the IAF statement on Thursday, the problem was immediately addressed and did not reoccur when dozens of additional rockets were fired from Gaza.

The IAF said that although in the first round of rocket fire only six out of ten rockets that did not fall in open areas were intercepted, for the whole week the interception success rate of Iron Dome stood at 90.5%.

Overall, 104 rockets were fired in the recent round of violence from Gaza, of which 24 were intercepted, 48 of the rockets exploded in open areas, 24 exploded in the Strip, and 11 fell into the sea.

In the barrage of rockets fired toward the Gaza envelope on Tuesday afternoon, 26 launches were identified. Sixteen rockets exploded in open areas, six fell short, and four more exploded in built-up areas, and were supposed to be intercepted

In past operations, Iron Dome demonstrated unprecedented capabilities. For example, facing a barrage of approximately 1,100 rockets from Gaza during Operation Breaking Dawn in August 2022, the system achieved a success rate of 96% in interceptions – the highest success rate to date in a military operation.

5.04.23

West Bank checkpoint soldier stabbed; MK demands a large-scale terror sweep

5.04.23

Israeli soldier lightly hurt in West Bank stabbing attack; terrorist shot dead

Female assailant arrives at military checkpoint outside Huwara and charges at the victim with a knife, stabbing him in the shoulder; victim and another person fire three bullets at her, killing her

Elisha Ben Kimon, Yoav Zitun, Einav Halabi|05:12

A Palestinian terrorist stabbed and lightly wounded an Israeli soldier at the West Bank's Einabus Junction Thursday noon before being shot dead by Israeli troops.

The female suspect, identified as 26-year-old Eman Ziyad Ahmed Odeh from Huwara, arrived at a military checkpoint outside the Palestinian town and charged at the victim with a knife, stabbing him in the shoulder. The victim and another soldier fired three bullets at her, injuring her mortally.

The Palestinian health ministry said that Odeh was taken by the Red Crescent in critical condition to Rafidia hospital in the West Bank city of Nablus, where she was later declared dead.

Yossi Dagan, head of the northern West Bank's Shomron Regional Council, said demanded the military launch a large-scale terror sweep "against the terror nests" of the Palestinian Authority until all weapons are collected and all security checkpoints are returned.

Earlier Thursday, Palestinian terrorists involved in a deadly attack that claimed the lives of a British-Israeli mother and two of her daughters were killed in an Israeli raid on Nablus.

Some 200 Israeli special forces entered the city and surrounded a building in which several suspects were reportedly barricading themselves. Troops came under heavy fire and stone-throwing in the ensuing clash with Palestinian militants.

The Palestinians reported that at least three people were killed in the raid, including Hassan Katnani and Ma'ed al-Masri — two Hamas operatives who carried out the deadly shooting in the West Bank's northern Jordan Valley in which Lucy Dee and daughters Maia, 20, and Rina, 15, were murdered last month. The third casualty was identified as Ibrahim Hura who aided Katnani and al-Masri. Israeli troops seized M16 assault rifles and AK47s found in the hideout.

Police reported that during the raid, a 7-year-old K9 police dog named Django was killed while protecting troops, having prevented harm to soldiers with his body. Django had participated in hundreds of IDF activities including counterterror operations and aiding in the arrest of wanted individuals.

Rabbi Leo Dee spoke to Ynet after the raid and expressed relief that the killers of his wife and daughters were no longer able to harm anyone else.

"The world will be able to sleep better when these terrorists are no longer alive. I am very happy to hear that no soldier or civilian was hurt or affected in the event. It is a mission that only the IDF and the Shin Bet can do," he said.

"We are proud to live in a country where security forces are so precise and skilled, and we are very grateful to the army and forces for assassinating the terrorists."

The father added that he would like to speak with the families of the terrorists. "I would like to ask them what their relatives wanted to achieve with this murder? What will this do to their children, what did they hope to accomplish?"

Israeli-Palestinian tensions have escalated after more than 100 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel in response to the death of Khader Adnan, an Islamic Jihad member who had been on a hunger strike for 86 days in Israeli prison.

Despite the heightened tensions, a summit is set to take place in Egypt's Sinai region with the participation of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the United States, and the Palestinian Authority. The summit aims to address security concerns and work towards deescalating the situation.

5.04.23

Terrorists behind murder of Israeli family killed in West Bank IDF raid

5.04.23

Terrorists behind murder of Israeli family killed in West Bank raid

Some 200 Israeli special forces participated in operation to arrest two Hamas operatives who carried out attack in which Lucy Dee and her daughters Maia and Rina were killed in the Jordan Valley last month

Yoav Zitun, Elisha Ben Kimon, Einav Halabi|Updated:05:04

Palestinian terrorists involved in a deadly attack that claimed the lives of a British-Israeli mother and two of her daughters were killed in an Israeli raid on the West Bank city of Nablus Thursday morning.

Some 200 Israeli special forces entered the city and surrounded a building in which several suspects were reportedly barricading themselves. Troops came under heavy fire and stone-throwing in the ensuing clash with Palestinian militants.

During the raid, troops deployed the so-called "pressure cooker" tactic, which included dropping a stun grenade off a drone at the building where the suspects were holed up in an attempt to flush them out.

The Palestinians reported that at least three people were killed in the raid, including Hassan Katnani and Ma'ed al-Masri — two Hamas operatives who carried out the deadly shooting in the West Bank's northern Jordan Valley in which Lucy Dee and daughters Maia, 20, and Rina, 15, were murdered last month. The third casualty was identified as Ibrahim Hura who aided Katnani and al-Masri. Israeli troops seized M16 assault rifles and AK47s found in the hideout.

On April 7, the Dee sisters from the settlement of Efrat were murdered in a shooting attack in the Jordan Valley. Their mother Lucy was mortally wounded and succumbed to her injuries in a Jerusalem hospital three days later.

Terrorists who were traveling in the opposite lane to the road where the family members were traveling opened fire at them in the area of Hamra Junction on Route 57.

The family attempted to escape, but the terrorists made a U-turn and chased after them. The Dee family's car, which was en route to a holiday trip, veered off into a ditch.

At this point, one of the terrorists positioned himself outside the vehicle and shot at the family's car. Twenty-two AK-47 bullet shells were found at the scene, and the sisters were pronounced dead on the spot.

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"The world will be able to sleep better when these terrorists are no longer alive. I am very happy to hear that no soldier or civilian was hurt or affected in the event. It is a mission that only the IDF and the Shin Bet can do," he said.

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First published: 09:46, 05.04.23

5.04.23

British embassy May 6, Tel Aviv reception in celebration of King Charles' coronation

5.04.23

British embassy in Tel Aviv gears up for royal celebration of King Charles' coronation

Diplomatic mission's festivities will focus on promoting modern British values of community and youth, uniting local communities ahead of the global event

Gilad Meiri|04:19

The coronation of King Charles III is a substantial cultural event not only for the United Kingdom but globally as well.

Seeing as it's one of the world's most notable occurrences of 2023, millions from around the world are expected to visit London to witness it firsthand.

Along with its extensive cultural roots, the ceremony aims to showcase modern British society with its cross-cultural mosaic and global values of community, youth and diversity.

Which begs the question - How will this manifest in the Holy Land?

The celebrations of this momentous point in time, both in the UK and around the world, are dedicated to the purpose of uniting communities so they can witness the historic coronation right alongside each other and convey a strong sense of togetherness.

The British embassy in Tel Aviv has decided to take this idea one step forward and celebrate with the local community here in Israel.

On Saturday, May 6, the embassy will hold a joint public event at the Park Hatachana in Tel Aviv, on the corner of Kaufmann and Eilat streets in the center of the city, close to the beach.

The park will be painted blue and feature British music, sites and famous Londonian symbols and landmarks, as well as creative workshops for children. On top of all that, there will be a jumbotron upon which the coronation will be streamed live from Westminster Abbey.

British Ambassador to Israel Neil Wigan will be on hand to deliver a speech among other embassy staff in attendance.

On Sunday, May 7, Ambassador Wigan will hold a formal reception in his Ramat Gan residence in a festive, intimate event. It is set to include a wide variety of governmental officials, as well as industry and trade notables, non-profit organizations, journalists, LGBT activists and more.

"I look forward to celebrating this milestone this upcoming weekend," said the ambassador. "Whether it's alongside the crowds in Israel during our Tel Aviv cultural event, or our colleagues in the ambassador's residence.

"It warms our hearts to see how Israelis are involved and excited when it comes to the British royal family. It's been 70 years since Britain has celebrated a new coronation and it's astounding to take part in a unique, global occurrence."

5.04.23

Protest of Gov` promise free education, lower food & gas prices & cost of living

5.04.23

Israelis stage fresh 'day of disruption' in protest of Netanyahu government's judicial reform

Protesters obstruct roads across the country and picket homes of Cabinet members, with focus also shifting to rising cost of living and surging crime; police make several arrests
Adam Kutub, Korin Elbaz Alush, Raanan Ben-Tzur|03:53

Major demonstrations and disruptions to traffic, education and business took place across Israel on Thursday as opponents of the government's contentious plan to overhaul the judicial system staged a fresh so-called "day of disruption."

This is the first such mass-scale manifestation of public discontent since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced he was suspending the legislation in favor of dialogue

with the opposition on the details of the plan. This comes a week after a massive right-wing rally in support of the government in Jerusalem.

Protesters picketed the homes of Cabinet members, such as Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, as well as the President's Residence in Jerusalem where negotiation talks are being held.

"This time, protests also focused on the rising cost of living. Against the backdrop of rising dairy prices, activists in Tel Aviv spilled white paint into the fountain at Habima Square. Posters hung nearby read "Yes, we cry over spilled milk" and "And what about life itself?".

The activists said that "the current government promised to provide free education from age 0, pledged to lower the prices of staple foods and gas, promised to take care of us and reduce the cost of living. That's what they promised. What has the government done since its inception? Dealing with a 'reform' that harms the justice system".

Anti-government protesters spill white paint and cereal into Habima Square fountain in protest of rising dairy prices

Members of the IDF reservist protest group Brothers in Arms demonstrated outside Ben-Gvir's home in Kiryat Arba.

The protesters displayed an exhibit on surging violent crime in the Arab sector and domestic violence. They hung a sign which read "3 months, 78 murdered - one culprit!" as several protesters were lying on the ground covered in red paint.

A women's protest staged an exhibit based on dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" in front of the Rabbinical Court in Tel Aviv. Similar demonstrations are scheduled to take place in front of the rabbinical courts in Rishon Letzion and Jerusalem.

"We are at a critical point of anti-democratic legislation and only a few hours away from the abandonment of women in Israel due to the move led by the male coalition to expand the powers of the rabbinical courts in Israel," organizers said."

Meanwhile, hundreds of protesters blocked a central Tel Aviv junction which became a flashpoint of months of unprecedented street rallies against the government's plan to overhaul the judiciary. Police made several arrests.

5.04.23

Ben-Gvir & Netanyahu parties butt heads over appeased response to 104 Gaza rockets

5.04.23

Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu's Likud butt heads over response to Gaza rockets

Ruling party says far-right minister 'doesn't have to stay in the government' after boycotting Knesset votes; Ben-Gvir and his Otzma Yehudit Party say PM 'welcome to fire us'

Moran Azulay, Matan Tzuri|Yesterday | 11:37

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and his far-right Otzma Yehudit Party announced on Wednesday that they will be boycotting Knesset votes in protest of what they deemed Israel's lax response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, which raised the ire of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party.

In response to the boycott, the ruling party issued a statement that stated that the prime minister and defense minister, as well as the IDF, dictate Israel's security policy and added that Ben-Gvir "does not have to stay in the government" if he finds the current state of affairs unacceptable.

Ben-Gvir, who was on a visit to the southern city of Sderot which was heavily targeted in Tuesday's cross-border bout that included 104 rockets fired into southern Israel, replied with a statement of his own in which he accused Netanyahu of putting a spoke in his wheels.

"About six months ago, the people of Israel went to the polls and voted in a right-wing government, a government they expected would have answers, subdue Hamas, respond to every rocket and every attack," he said.

"I love the prime minister, I respect him a lot, but this must be said — I love more and more committed to the people of Sderot, Be'er Sheva, the Negev, the Galilee, and all the people of Israel.

I'll say it plainly, if you don't want Otzma Yehudit in the government, you are welcome to fire us, you are welcome to send us packing."

Ben-Gvir's running mate in the last election, Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich, urged the sides to settle their differences and not break apart the government because "the greatest prize we can give terror is to overthrow a good government, even if not perfect, but a good government."

In recent weeks, Minister Ben-Gvir voiced his frustration on multiple occasions for not being invited to security forums.

On Tuesday, the minister was further upset for not being included in a security briefing hosted by Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Upon learning of the meeting, he urgently contacted the Prime Minister's Office and demanded to attend the meeting, but his request was denied.

Ben-Gvir claimed that he was assured of a strong response to the recent Gaza rocket fire. However, the government has received criticism from the right for appearing to appease Hamas in their response.

5.04.23

Smotrich again transfers PA taxes to victims; while PA officials pay terrorist

5.04.23

For the second time: Smotrich seizes funds from PA, transfers them to victims of terrorism

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich orders another seizure of Palestinian Authority funds for the benefit of victims of terrorism.

Hezki Baruch May 4, 2023, 1:04 AM (GMT+3)

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Wednesday ordered the Director of the Israel Tax Authority, Eran Yaacov, to transfer an amount of 3.2 million shekels from the Palestinian Authority's funds to victims of terrorism.

This follows the 138.8 million shekels that were transferred in January to the victims of terrorist acts in order to fulfill a court ruling from the past.

Minister Smotrich said, "I signed on to the offset of the terrorist funds that the Palestinian Authority transfers to the families of terrorists. We deducted 3.2 million shekels which will be transferred as compensation to the families of victims of terrorism."

"The State of Israel stops the financing of terrorism by the Palestinian Authority. We will not allow this absurd situation to happen," he added.

The Israeli government has several times in the past decided to offset the tax money it collects on behalf of the PA because of the monthly financial aid it provides to families of terrorists.

PA officials have remained defiant and have made clear that the PA will never cease paying terrorists' salaries.

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Ynet-News, May 03, 2023 – Wednesday

5.03.23 – We - - News Placed in May 03 spot – Wednesday
IDF strike Hamas production storage sites, tunnels, military bases & facilities

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
IDF measured response to Gaza aggression fails; a wider action will follow

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News Placed – Tuesday
IDF concerned with Iron Dome 67% performance after Gaza barrage of 22 rockets

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News Placed in May 02 spot – Tuesday
22 Gaza rockets in Jihad retaliation for death of inmate West Bank commander

5.02.23 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday
Jihad prisoner dies on hunger strike, PA blame authorities who refused his release

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 01 spot – Monday

Hezbollah arms depots & trucks destroyed, Syrian airfield is completely out of service

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday

US House Speaker McCarthy addresses Knesset plenum on 75th celebration

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Revealed the biggest nuclear secret: This is the 'top spy' that Iran executed

5.01.23 – Mo- - - News Placed – Monday

Israel: Polls show Netanyahu rivals gain momentum

4.30.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 30 spot – Sunday

Ben-Gvir loosens gun licensing for soldiers, policemen and firemen to fight crime

4.30.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

IDF officer dismissed after attending right-wing rally in uniform

4.30.23 – Su- - - News – Sunday

Ultra-Orthodox parties agree to push back contentious draft exemption bill

4.30.23 – Su- - - News Placed in April 29 spot – Saturday

Netanyahu keeps Florida Governor Ron DeSantis meeting on down-low