

Imprisonment for Stone-Throwing: Only in Israel

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Israel equates stone-throwing with terrorism. It calls premeditated naked aggression against 1.8 million near-defenseless Gazans self-defense.

Last November, Israeli cabinet ministers approved up to 20 years imprisonment for Palestinians accused of stone-throwing – if authorities claim it was with intent to cause bodily harm. No proof needed. Guilt by accusation suffices.

The measure applies to targeting police or their vehicles – allegedly to hinder their performance of duties.

Earlier stone-throwing convictions mandated to up to two years in prison. Last year, Netanyahu said “Israel is operating aggressively against terrorists, against stone throwers, against hurlers of firebombs and firecrackers.”

“We will legislate more aggressive legislation to this regard, in order to return quiet and security...”

On Monday, Knesset members overwhelmingly enacted legislation approving up to 20 years imprisonment for stone-throwing.

Overtly racist/hard-right Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked said “(t)olerance toward terrorists ends today. A stone-thrower is a terrorist and only a fitting punishment can serve as a deterrent and just punishment.”

Earlier she accused Palestinian mothers of giving birth to “little snakes.” She called for all-out war – genocide targeting an entire population.

The new law mandates up to 10-year sentences for defendants not accused of intending to cause harm – otherwise, up to 20 years.

Up to five years for anyone “interfer(ing) with the policeman’s performance of his duties or to prevent him from performing them.”

The measure was introduced by hard-right MK Nissan Slomiansky accompanied by an irrelevant/offensive statement, saying:

David killed Goliath, the strongest Philistine of all, with a stone. In other words a stone can kill. (T)his dangerous phenomenon of throwing stones must be aggressively eradicated.”

Israel annually detains hundreds of Palestinians for allegedly throwing stones – true or false, seldom harming anyone.

From 2005 – 2010, B'Tselem said “93 percent of the minors convicted of stone throwing were given a prison sentence, its length ranging from a few days to 20 months.”

Five Palestinian teenagers face possible life in prison – charged with attempted murder from a stone-throwing incident.

Outraged Palestinian MKs criticized another hugely unjust Israeli racist measure – applying solely to Arabs.

“Who will the (military) judge send to prison,” MK Jamal Zahalka asked? “He who demolished the home, seized the land, killed the brother, or the (little) boy who threw a stone” harming no one?

“The one who demolishes the home gets a medal, but the boy whose anger is justified gets punished. There is no justice in this law.”

Palestinian MK Hanin Zoabi, said “(w)e are not talking about a law. We are talking about the occupation. If the law is meant to protect the weak, it is also meant to protect those victims who are killed every week by soldiers. Imagine a soldier with a gun facing a teenager with a small stone. What symmetry is there?”

Palestinian Prisoners Club head Qadura Fares called the new measure “racist. (It’s) hateful and contradicts the most basic rule that the punishment fit the offense.”

Palestinian boys and youths often throw stones in response to brutal occupation harshness. It’s one of the few ways they have to justifiably resist what no one should tolerate.

Israel rewards IDF and other security force killers. Settler violence and vandalism are largely ignored.

Collectively punished Palestinians are victimized more than already.

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