

Israeli Police Brutality: Unnoticed Murder of Palestinian Autistic Man Eyad Hallaq

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Global Research, July 01, 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)
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It is sometimes difficult to comprehend the savagery of the Israeli police state. There may be two reasons for this: 1) because the actions of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) and illegal settlers are so extreme and violent as to stagger the imagination, and 2) because their barbaric actions have become so commonplace.

But the murder of Eyad Hallaq, a 32-year-old autistic man, shot to death at point-blank range while lying immobilized from a shot to the leg, with his caregiver begging for his life, is the latest shocking savagery in a long line of crimes against humanity committed by Israelis.

Mr. Hallaq lived with his parents who devoted their life to his care. He had walked every morning for six years to a vocational training program at the El Quds center in Jerusalem. Israeli police had seen him regularly during that time. Yet on this fateful day, May 30, 2020, Israeli police shouted 'Terrorist' at him, then shot him in the leg. Moments later, terrified and helpless, with his caregiver screaming that he was disabled, he was executed.

The caregiver, Warda Abu-Hadid, devastated and horrified by the cruel scene she had just witnessed and had been unable to prevent, was then taken to a police facility, strip-searched for a weapon which she didn't have, and questioned for hours. Witnesses to Mr. Hallaq's murder corroborated her testimony that she told the Israeli assassins that he was disabled, but to no avail.

Can one expect any justice for Mr. Hallaq? Based on historical evidence, it is highly unlikely.

In 2016, Abdul Fatah al-Shari was shot and badly injured by Israeli soldiers. As he lay on the ground, completely immobilized, another soldier, 19-year-old Elor Azaria, approached him, pointed a gun at his head and pulled the trigger, killing him instantly. This horrendous crime was captured on video. Yet Azaria, hailed as a hero among the Israel community, was only sentenced to eighteen months in prison, a sentence later reduced to fourteen months; he was paroled after nine months.

In 2015, Israel passed a law that states the penalty for throwing rocks at moving cars can be up to twenty years in prison. Palestinians living under occupation in Jerusalem and the West Bank have no weapons, although Israelis are allowed to carry any and all weapons they want. So, Palestinians use what they have to oppose the occupation, and that is generally rocks.

Consider that a Palestinian teenager can spend as much as twenty years in prison for throwing a rock at a car, while an Israeli teen can spend nine months in prison for the cold-blooded murder of a Palestinian, a murder captured on video and widely seen.

There are some people who take great umbrage at the suggestion that Israel is an apartheid regime. Israel has roads on which Palestinians can't drive; there are numerous, arbitrarily-manned checkpoints that Palestinians must pass through within Palestine. These are not checkpoints that border Palestine and Israel: these are checkpoints that Palestinians must cross to move from one part of Palestine to another. And laws, such as the one mentioned above, all demonstrate the clear fact that Israel is a brutal, racist, apartheid regime.

Anyone one with any degree of feeling mourns the tragic death of Mr. Hallaq; his blood cries out for justice, justice that will not be satisfied. The United States government officials proclaim that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, using their narrow and twisted view that if a nation votes, it is democratic, and that Israel will investigate any such crimes as the killing of Mr. Hallaq. That is similar to a belief that the fox can be relied on to assure that any raid of the henhouse will be impartially investigated.

The bizarre and erratic U.S. President Donald Trump is pushing for further injustices by Israel by encouraging the annexation of large areas of the West Bank. This, apparently, is to please his equally bizarre evangelical base, the members of which seem to believe that God is a real estate agent who has sold Palestine to Europeans and Americans of Jewish descent. This annexation, which would violate international law and has been condemned by even most of Israel's allies, will be just the latest in a long series of crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces.

Mr. Hallaq's grieving family cannot expect justice; the loss of their treasured son and brother, and his savage murder, will be felt until they die. Ms. Abu-Hadid will spend the rest of her life haunted by the scene of unspeakable brutality that she witnessed and tried to prevent, knowing that the perpetrators will experience no consequences from their actions.

The savage murder of Mr. Hallaq at the hands of so-called law-enforcement personnel occurred five days after the savage murder in the U.S. of George Floyd, also by so-called law-enforcement officers. But Mr. Floyd's death made international headlines and sparked worldwide demonstrations against racism and police brutality. It is possible that his death may bring some change in U.S. policies on justice and race.

Why, then, did the media basically ignore Mr. Hallaq's murder? Two innocent men were murdered by government officials: the name of one is now known globally, but the survivors of the other are left to grieve alone.

The forthcoming U.S. election does not bode well for any significant change in U.S. policy towards Palestine. Democratic candidate Joe Biden is a long time ally of Israel who has stated that he will neither move the U.S. embassy back to Tel Aviv, nor withhold any U.S. foreign aid to Israel. One can imagine that Israeli polices would change overnight if the U.S. withheld the \$4 billion it gives to that racist regime annually. But no, powerful pro-Israel lobbies which finance the campaigns of U.S. politicians must not be displeased; human rights and international law are not considered when the risk of reduced campaign contributions exists.

It is long past time for the global community to put human rights and international law

above power and political expedience. People around the world are protesting the racism and police brutality that are endemic in U.S. society; they must expand their efforts to protect the people of Palestine. Black Lives Matter and Palestinian organizations have the same goal: by joining forces at this critical time, the effectiveness of both will increase. It must happen now; more killing and oppression must be prevented.

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This article was originally published on [Peace Data](#).

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Featured image: A mural depicting the martyr Iyad Al Hallaq on the apartheid wall in the city of Bethlehem. Iyad is a young autistic Palestinian who was killed by the Israeli police in Jerusalem. (Source: [Seka Hamed / Flickr](#))

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