

# What Happened? Israeli Settlers Burned Palestinian Infant to Death

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, August 01, 2015

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

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*On July 31, extremist Israeli settlers attacked at least two Palestinian homes in Duma village near Nablus. They arrived late at night.*

They spray-painted anti-Palestinian racist hate slogans on the Dawabsha family home. They smashed a window, threw firebombs inside, set the structure ablaze, burned 18-month-old Ali Saad Dawabsha to death, inflicted third-degree burns (the most severe kind) on three other family members – his mother, father and brother aged four.

Their home was completely destroyed. An adjacent one was partly burned. The attack reflects more than criminal arson. It represents an extreme example of systemic settler violence and vandalism committed against nonthreatening Palestinians on their own land – vicious racist acts rarely punished.

IDF spokesman Lt. Col. Peter Lerner called the attack “nothing short of a barbaric act of terrorism. A comprehensive investigation is underway in order to find the terrorists and bring them to justice.” We’ll see what follows.

Racist settler supporter Education Minister Naftali Bennett condemned the attack as “criminal...Terrorism is terrorism is terrorism,” he twittered.

What Israeli officials expressed outrage over its premeditated genocidal wars on Gaza, its ruthless persecution of millions of Palestinians for not being Jewish, its gulag filled with thousands of Palestinian political prisoners wanting freedom on their own land in their own country, a rogue state run by fascists, racists and religious zealots threatening world peace.

Settler crimes are a microcosm of issues of far greater consequence. So far this year, they carried out at least 120 West Bank/East Jerusalem acts of violence and/or vandalism – according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Often they happen with Israeli security force protection – or soldiers and police ignoring what’s occurring.

B’Tselem says

“(t)he undeclared policy of the Israeli authorities in response to these attacks is lenient and conciliatory. Perpetrators are rarely tried, and many cases are not investigated at all or are closed with no operative conclusions.”

The Yesh Din Volunteers for Human Rights group addressed the issue in a June report titled

[“Standing Idly By,”](#) saying:

Israeli soldiers do virtually nothing to protect Palestinians from settler violence and vandalism. According to an unnamed IDF staff sergeant:

A Jew throws rocks. The soldiers will call the police. The soldiers won't point their guns at him. They will not arrest him. They won't do anything to him. The police likely won't either, except for telling him off – if that.

Israeli Knesset members just passed legislation mandating up to 20 years imprisonment for Palestinians (including young children) accused of throwing stones with intent to cause harm – true or false. No evidence needed. Guilt by accusation is standard Israeli practice.

Yesh Din said “(t)he phenomenon of ‘standing idly by’ refers to incidents when soldiers witness violence by Israeli citizens against Palestinians and their property and do nothing to prevent the harm while the action is ongoing; refrain from detaining or arresting the perpetrators after the event; fail to secure the scene to allow the collection of evidence; or fail to testify about the event to the police.”

International law requires occupying powers to protect the welfare of people in territories they control. Israeli High Court rulings mandate this responsibility.

“(T)he IDF is obligated to maintain law and order in the West Bank,” Yesh Din stresses. Its actions are polar opposite – facilitating settler violence and vandalism, doing virtually nothing to prevent it or arrest guilty parties.

Dozens of Breaking the Silence soldier testimonies show they're not aware of their obligation. They're not trained to help Palestinians they control.

Only one soldier was ever held accountable for failing to provide protection as international law mandates. Disciplinary action alone followed, not criminal prosecution, Yesh Din explained.

It “demands that the phenomenon be addressed on the criminal level and be defined as a crime in the Military Justice Law, which should impose a deterring punishment on soldiers and officers who commit such offenses.”

“Offenses by Israeli citizens in the West Bank – settlers and others – have been tolerated for decades,” Yesh Din's Eyal Hareuveni noted.

“In order to confront this long-standing and entrenched pattern, the IDF must issue clear and concise standing orders that clarify to the soldiers their powers as law enforcers and their duty to protect the Palestinian population,” he added.

“Likewise, the offense of standing idly by should be defined as a criminal offense in the Military Justice Law.”

Lawless Israeli occupation remains ongoing after nearly half a century.

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net).

*His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."*

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com).

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#### About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at [lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net). His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III." <http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at [sjlendman.blogspot.com](http://sjlendman.blogspot.com). Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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