

# Yes... Arafat was Poisoned and Israel Killed Him, But What Can We Do?

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*We are surprised by the silence of the Palestine Authority (PA) and their continuation with the negotiations, not only after discovering this crime and Israel's role in it. Especially as settlement activity continues at an unprecedented rate...*

There are three countries in the world that possess the radioactive polonium used to assassinate the Palestinian president Yasser Arafat; the United States, Russia and Israel. The two superpowers had no direct benefit from committing this war crime. So, fingers are now pointed at Israel, the country that has specialised in carrying out assassination operations against Arabs, Palestinians and international envoys over the past 60 years, since the beginning of the occupation of Palestine.

Ariel Sharon, the former Israeli Prime Minister who is lying comatose in hospital, had made several open threats to assassinate the Palestinian president. He had refused to surrender at the Camp David retreat in 2000 and abandon occupied Jerusalem and full sovereignty over it, as well as sparking the armed Intifada against the occupation, anticipating and waiting for his martyrdom.

President Arafat took all the necessary measures, within the limits of his basic capabilities, to thwart the attempts on his life while confined in his compound. He had no water, electricity, or official Arab visitors other than those who were mediating for him to go into exile (including Omar Suleiman), in addition to Arab and foreign solidarity delegations.

Arafat put up iron bars on the roof of his compound to prevent helicopters from landing and capturing him and locked his refrigerator that operated on a small electric current generated by a small motor; he was the only one with the keys. This refrigerator contained canned food, which was the only thing he ate out of fear of being poisoned. He also kept a gas mask and his small automatic gun near his bed in case gas bombs were thrown to kill him and in order to defend himself until he was martyred.

The only thing he had not taken into account was being poisoned by radioactive polonium and its lethal radiation. This type of poison was not discovered until November 2006 when it was used to kill Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko in a London hotel. It is hard to detect and it kills the victim a few days after being poisoned, leaving no trace.

We did not need a Swiss lab to confirm that President Arafat was poisoned. The report by Percy Military Hospital near Paris, his final stop, confirmed that he had been poisoned but the type of poison was unknown.

President Arafat himself realised during his final days in Ramallah that the Israelis had been able to poison him, and his farewell to his supporters, after arriving at Amman International Airport in a helicopter, where, he was not greeted by any senior Jordanian officials, was a farewell of a man who knew very well that he would not be back alive.

The last time I contacted him by telephone, just a few weeks before his death, he was the model of steadfastness, unafraid of death and reiterating his pride to belong to a powerful people. We all lent on him, even while he was confined by the Arabs and Israelis, to draw energy, strength and a boost in morale. He told me that in distress he had called the Arab leaders, but none of them had bothered to take his call.

Now the question is, what role the Palestinian Authority will play, what will their next move be and why have they remained silent all these years and not even tried to investigate his assassination?

They say that this authority, which is led by Arafat's comrade in arms, does not have the money to finance criminal and laboratory investigations. This cannot be true because the examinations conducted by the Swiss Institute did not cost more than a million dollars. Can it be true instead that this authority, which has piled on a debt of over \$4 billion on the Palestinian people, is unable to spare another million to reveal how the historic leader of the Palestinian jihad was martyred!

We are surprised by the silence of the PA and their continuation with the negotiations, not only after discovering this crime and Israel's role in it. Especially as settlement activity continues at an unprecedented rate and Netanyahu insists on keeping the Jordan Valley, abolishing the right of return and recognising Israel as a Jewish state.

Calling for an international investigation should not be enough for the PA, it's nothing but a speck in the corner of their eye. In fact, the PA needs to withdraw from negotiations, join the International War Crimes Tribunal and prosecute the Israelis. They need to maintain the late president's legacy of resisting the occupation.

The most important investigation will be the internal investigation to expose the 'political' tools used by Israel to facilitate the assassination and the criminals who executed the crime.

Will the PA and its leader take these two investigations seriously and follow them through until the end without worrying about the negotiations or anything else? Despite our doubts, we hope so.

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