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Sam Bahour

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Over 30 armed Palestinians go on a rampage across Tel Aviv

Foreign media refuses to report the story.

By Sam Bahour





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Around 4 AM last night, six armored Palestinian jeeps entered Tel Aviv's northern neighborhoods, breaking the pre-dawn calm and causing havoc across the city. Finally, the jeeps converged on a 2-story home. Over 30 masked Palestinian soldiers surrounded the residence. Using a loudspeaker, a soldier demanded in fluent Hebrew that Shlomo Herzl exit his home. When nothing happened, a handful of soldiers broke down the front door. Shots rang out. Eyewitnesses in the house said later that Shlomo was shot point blank and killed in cold blood as he lay in bed.

Magen David Adom paramedics rushed to the scene but were held back at gunpoint until the masked Palestinian soldiers were able to confirm the kill by sending into the bedroom a K-9 police dog equipped with a camera. After 45 minutes, paramedics were permitted to enter the home, but the deceased was gone. Later, it was learned that the Palestinians had already confiscated the body and placed it in one of their jeeps.

Palestinian sources said that after over six months of meticulous intelligence gathering, monitoring Tel Aviv's phone network and email traffic, and in close cooperation with Facebook, the 8200 Unit of the Palestinian Intelligence Corps identified IDF soldier Shlomo Herzl, who was in Jenin Refugee Camp on May 11, 2022, as the person who pulled the trigger which instantly killed veteran Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. "Justice," said the unidentified Palestinian source, "has been served".

A house no more

The Palestinian jeeps left the scene and drove directly to another house on the outskirts of Tel Aviv's commercial area. There, they surrounded another home, this one a historic one-story building with the inscription "God Bless Our Home" engraved in Arabic above the front door. A tall, broad-shouldered  135 |  2 knocked on the front door and presented the Israeli owner who opened it with a written house demolition order. When the owner started shouting, demanding to know why his home had been targeted with a demolition order, the soldier explained: Apparently, the homeowner had a cousin who was also the IDF commander who ordered Israeli snipers to open fire at the kneecaps of peaceful demonstrators in Gaza, and the entire family would now be paying the price for



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explosive devices at the corners of the building. As the homeowner emerged with his four children, the youngest, about 12 years old, frantically crying and physically trembling, was observed carrying a pink school backpack on her shoulder and dragging a blanket along the ground behind her.

With the family standing outside, the Palestinian commander gave the order to demolish the home. Instantly, what had been a quaint home in this tranquil neighborhood was reduced to a pile of rubble while the family wept.

Last stop

The Palestinian contingent of jeeps made one last stop before leaving Tel Aviv. They drove to the most upscale part of the city and barged into the home of Minister of Defense Benny Gantz, kicking in the front door, after arresting at gunpoint several of the Israeli guards protecting the home. General Gantz has been the brainchild behind the increased attacks on Palestinians across the occupied territory.

Gantz's wife and children were ordered to gather in a single bedroom of the house while Palestinian soldiers rampaged through the home, yanking drawers open and dumping their contents onto the floor, knocking over cabinets, slitting the mattresses on beds and the cushions on the furniture, and smashing holes in several walls with a sledgehammer. No weapons or illegal contraband were found.

Nevertheless, General Gantz was taken into custody and could be seen being escorted from his home, handcuffed and blindfolded. He was placed in the back of one of the Palestinian jeeps before all six vehicles sped out of sight.

It was dawn and an unusually hot summer day as the six jeeps crossed the Qalandia Checkpoint back into the West Bank. As the jeep carrying Gantz whizzed by, it was greeted by dozens of Palestinian refugees from the Qalandia Refugee Camp who lined the street chanting "DEATH TO THE JEWS". A prominent Palestinian Legislative Council member, Abdul Qader Al-Mustawtan, could be seen standing on a makeshift stage leading the chants.



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screams were coming from Gantz's cell, suggesting that he was being tortured. Subsequently, a Palestinian military court issued a renewable six-month Administrative Detention order which means Gantz will be detained indefinitely without any charges being brought against him. The Palestinian Prison Authority's statement warned that anyone who sends Gantz money transfers so he can buy shampoo and cigarettes from the prison canteen will be deemed to be supporting "Pay to Slay" policies and will be dealt with accordingly.

Justification

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas issued a statement saying that this nighttime raid on Tel Aviv was a direct response to what he had promised US President Joe Biden during his last trip to the region. Abbas said, "We promised to fight terrorism, and state terrorism cannot hide from accountability behind the cloak of statehood. Israelis must understand, they have nowhere to hide if they carry out attacks on Palestinians anywhere."

Abbas went on to say he expected the US Congress to reward his administration by passing a \$40-million legislative initiative, S.2830 — Iron Vest Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022, which will provide each Palestinian a US-made bulletproof vest in an attempt to ensure that Palestinians have a qualitative edge in the form of protection from Israeli aggressions and continuous crimes against humanity.



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White House South Facade (Credit: Matt H. Wade)

Early in the morning stateside, the White House issued a statement noting that President Biden was being briefed on developments overnight and reiterating the US president's sentiment that, "At heart, I'm a Palestinian refugee." A White House spokesperson confirmed that, later in the day, Biden was scheduled to meet multiple bullet-proof vest manufacturers seeking to be granted the Iron Vest award.

Surreal

Does that account sound surreal? It should, because the events depicted above never happened — at least, not in Tel Aviv.

However, precisely these kinds of scenarios do take place regularly, perpetrated by the



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demolished on a flimsy pretext of illegal construction or as a means of collective punishment. All of this and more is happening to Palestinians all the time — sometimes at night, sometimes in broad daylight — under the noses of the international community and journalists.

If while reading this you were worried at the outset of the story, only to find it amusing at the end — you seriously need a values check. If Palestinian lives matter so little now, then later when the dam finally bursts and scenarios like the one related here begin happening in reality to Israelis and not just to Palestinians, what grounds for outrage will there be for Israelis and their enablers in the West?

That grim denouement need not come to pass, however. Acting now to end Israel's 55-year military occupation can flip the course of history and put both Palestinians and Israelis on a new shared path to peaceful coexistence.

Sam Bahour is a Palestinian-American business consultant and frequent independent political commentator from Ramallah/Al-Bireh in Occupied Palestine. He blogs at ePalestine.ps. [@SamBahour](https://twitter.com/SamBahour)

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