

Family of Palestinian who died in Israeli detention rejects compensation

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People stand next to a poster of Palestinian-American Omar Abdalmajeed As'ad, in Jalaliya village in the occupied West Bank on January 12, 2022. (File photo by Reuters)

Ramallah, October 16 (RHC)-- The family of an elderly Palestinian-American man, Omar Abdalmajeed As'ad, who died after being forcibly detained, blindfolded and handcuffed by Israeli soldiers, has vehemently rejected a claim from Israeli authorities that the parties have reached a compensation settlement.

Nawwaf As'ad, Omar's brother, strongly denounced Israeli reports that the family had accepted financial compensation in exchange for closing the lawsuit, the Palestinian official Wafa news agency reported.

As'ad stressed that he had instructed the family's lawyer to continue the legal procedures until the perpetrators are held to account for their crime. He further said that the family would continue the legal procedures in courts.

"We will not give up the case for any reason. The death of my brother Omar cannot be compensated with money. His wife and children miss him and his grandchildren are still calling for him and looking for him at home."

An autopsy carried out on the body of the Palestinian-American elderly showed that he had died of a stress-induced heart attack caused by the circumstances of his detention, with signs of bruises and abrasions on his body and head.

As'ad died in January after he was stopped at a checkpoint on his way home to Jalaliya in the occupied West Bank and "resisted a check," according to an Israeli statement, and was then handcuffed, gagged and blindfolded for between 20 minutes and an hour.

In interviews, several witnesses who were detained by the unit at the same time said As'ad had clearly lost consciousness and stopped breathing, but the Israeli soldiers left without checking his well-being, despite the fact that a military medic was nearby.

The high-profile case attracted significant international attention and calls from US legislators for a thorough investigation. Criminal prosecutions against Israeli soldiers who harm Palestinians are extremely rare.

Senior Israeli authorities have been encouraging troops to kill Palestinians they suspect of attacking Israelis even when they are no longer a threat. Human rights groups have documented a large number of cases of Israeli soldiers gunning down peaceful Palestinian protesters across the occupied territories.

Palestinians say that such cases must be taken to international courts and that Israelis must be held accountable for their atrocities. In recent years, there have been hundreds of instances in which Israeli forces fatally shot Palestinian adults and children suspected of trying to stab, run over, or shoot Israelis across the occupied territories.

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