

Palestinian toddler Muhammad Tamimi dies days after Israeli forces shot him



Ramallah, June 6 (RHC)-- A two-and-a-half-year-old Palestinian boy shot in the head last week by Israeli forces—who initially denied shooting the toddler—succumbed to his wounds on Monday. Muhammad Tamimi and his father, Haytham Tamimi, were in their parked car outside their home in Nabi Saleh village near Ramallah in the illegally occupied West Bank of Palestine last Thursday when they came under fire

from Israeli troops.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said that a preliminary investigation found that two Palestinian resistance fighters fired on the illegal Israeli settlement of Halamish—located in the southwestern Samarian Hills north of Ramallah—around 7:30 pm and that IDF troops stationed nearby returned fire, hitting Muhammad Tamimi in the head and his father in the chest.

Israeli officials initially claimed the Tamimis were shot by "terrorists" before admitting the pair was likely hit by mistake, expressing "regret" over the incident, and stating that the shootings were "being investigated in depth," according to The Times of Israel.

"The question is," said British journalist and Palestinian rights advocate Ben White, "what accountability will there be for the Israeli soldier(s) who opened fire into a Palestinian community and shot a two-year-old in the head? The track record isn't promising."

About half an hour after the father and son were shot, an IDF jeep "stormed the village and started firing live bullets directly at the houses," according to the Palestinian-led International Solidarity Movement (ISM). ISM said 17-year-old Wissam Tamimi, who was standing on the roof of his family's home, was struck in the head with a sponge-tipped round and suffered a fractured skull.

After that, three snipers positioned themselves on the roof of one of the shops opposite the citizens' homes and fired live bullets and sponge bombs at anyone who moved, whether inside the houses or on the rooftops. The journalist and volunteer at B'Tselem, Bilal Tamimi, who was wearing a press uniform, helmet, and shield, was wounded after a soldier fired a sponge bomb directly and from a close range which broke his wrist and required surgery for a platinum implant. The house of journalist Bilal Tamimi continued to be targeted with live bullets, gas canisters, and sponge bombs, as a result of which his mother, who had kidney failure, suffocated.

Palestinian medics took Haytham Tamimi to a hospital in Ramallah, while an Israeli military helicopter rushed the critically injured toddler to Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan, Israel. The child was placed on life support until he was pronounced dead on Monday morning.

On Friday, Israeli occupation forces returned to Nabi Saleh and forced many of the village's residents out of their homes, not allowing them to return until they withdrew at dawn on Saturday. At approximately 4:30 pm, Israeli troops shot Noura Tamimi in the stomach with a sponge-tipped round, causing severe convulsions that required hospitalization. Kafa Tamimi, who is seven months pregnant, choked on tear gas after Israeli troops fired a canister of the chemical agent through her window.

On Saturday night, occupation forces invaded the village yet again, storming homes, beating residents, and terrorizing the community. "The incitement for this attack stems from the settlers' repeated attempts to intimidate the villagers, with the most recent incident occurring just last week," resident Manal Tamimi told ISM, referring to Jewish residents of the apartheid colony of Halamish, also known as Neve Tzuf.

"In light of these distressing events, we urgently call upon the international community to ensure the protection of this small village, with a population not exceeding 650 people," Tamimi added. "It is imperative that international humanitarian law and international treaties are upheld, and immediate action is taken to halt the repeated attacks by both the occupation forces and settlers. Over the past decade alone, these aggressions have tragically resulted in the martyrdom of five young individuals from the village."

For years, Nabi Saleh was the site of weekly Friday demonstrations against Israeli settler colonization, land theft, and seizure of the village's spring. This year alone, around 150 Palestinians—both resistance fighters and civilians—have been killed by Israeli occupation forces and settlers. This figure includes 28 children. Palestinian militants, meanwhile, have killed about 20 Israelis so far this year.

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