

The Israeli Assassination Policy in the Aqsa Intifada



By: Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad

Jerusalem Media & Communication Center

© Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre
November 2001
All Rights Reserved

WRITTEN BY
TRANSLATED BY
EDITED BY
DESIGN
PRINT

Dr. Saleh Abdul Jawad
Toufic Haddad
Charmaine Seitz
JMCC
Emerezian Est.

Information in this report may be quoted providing full credit is given to the Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre (JMCC). No part of this report may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature, without the prior written permission of the JMCC.

Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre
JMCC
POB 25047, East Jerusalem
Tel 02-5819777 Fax 02-5829534
Email jmcc@jmcc.org
Website <http://www.jmcc.org>

.....

.....

.....

***The Israeli Assassination Policy
in the Aqsa Intifada***

By Dr. Saleh Abdel-Jawad

Jerusalem Media & Communication Center

Contents:

Forward	5
Introduction	9
The Importance of Assassinations	10
Contents of this Study and Problems Faced	15
General Background and Basic Notes	19
<i>Might makes right</i>	19
<i>Assassins from gangs to freedom fighters</i>	19
<i>Removing opposition</i>	21
<i>Jews killing Jews</i>	23
<i>Murder for hire</i>	24
<i>Terrorism by a democracy</i>	25
<i>A wide group of satellites</i>	25
<i>First-hand experience</i>	27
<i>Beyond the sovereignty of the state</i>	29
<i>No Palestinian assassination strategy</i>	30
tives	31
Assassination Policy Throughout History	33
<i>Pre-State (1902-1948)</i>	33
<i>From 1948 to 1967</i>	33
<i>From 1967 to 1987</i>	35
<i>The Intifada</i>	36
<i>The Oslo Process From 1993 to 2000</i>	37

The Anatomy of Assassinations	37
<i>Determining the target</i>	37
<i>Means of collecting information</i>	39
<i>Implementation</i>	40
Assassinations and the Current Intifada: What's New	45
Conclusion	49
Appendix	51

Forward

The Israeli assassination of the Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Abu Ali Mustapha on August 27, 2001 carried the previous Israeli assassination policy into a new and more dangerous phase. The proof of that lies in the Palestinian response, carried out by the PFLP, in assassinating Israeli minister Rahavam Ze'evy. That assassination brought confrontations between the two sides (as well as Palestinian resistance, in general) into a new and perilous phase.

It is evident that recent development of the Israeli assassination policy and then its adoption - for the first time - by Palestinians has pushed the ongoing struggle and confrontations towards an irreversible situation. Both have proven the hypothesis of this research concerning the danger of continuing the Israeli assassination policy against Palestinians, particularly as there has been no deterrence offered from outside.

The continuity of an Israeli assassination policy that has touched the highest ranks of the political leadership has contributed to transferring this fight into an existential realm. This transition is in harmony with the ideology of this Israeli right-wing government, which does not believe in the compromise that the two sides had been trying to reach in negotiations. A policy of assassination is also congruent with the strategies and ideologies of some Palestinian factions that do not believe in Israeli-Palestinian compromise, but rather push the struggle towards an existential conflict. The practices of the current Israeli government and the Palestinian opposition to the peace process reinforce each other. The assassination policy and its results are examples of this.

The Israeli use of assassinations has been a major strategy in its confrontations with Palestinians since the beginning of the conflict. That it has been intensified during the current Intifada and carried to the highest levels of politics and leadership is another sign of the Israeli government's mentality that contradicts the spirit of compromise and the

desire to reach an agreement. It is the tool of those who believe in a zero sum game.

In the same way, we can look at the Palestinian response, the assassination of Ze'evy, as a sign that the Israeli insistence on carrying out assassinations can produce a similarly dangerous response and that Palestinians, when under extreme pressure, can become quite lethal.

The assassination of Ze'evy has put this struggle at a crossroads. It might have had a deterrent effect on Israel, convincing Israeli citizens that increasing the pressure on the Palestinians, through assassinations in particular, might have dangerous consequences. Israel could have been forced to try other approaches - peaceful ones, for example. Or it could have been the start of a massive retaliation from the Israeli side, further emphasizing the existential nature of the current ongoing confrontation. The immediate Israel reaction shows that Israel has chosen the second option, especially considering that part of the Israeli response was to assassinate a prominent Fateh leader in Bethlehem, together with whoever happened to be with him in his car.

With no serious international interference to convince Israel of the illegality, irrationality and dangerous product of its assassination policy, it is clear that things will continue to deteriorate and assassination will become the most prominent strategy in this ongoing struggle. More and more, the violent confrontations between the two sides seem headed to irreversibility.

*Ghassan Khatib,
JMCC Director*

Chris Bury, host of the ABC Network television program *Nightline*: *"...Israel prides itself on being a democratic nation based on the rule of law, and so how--how does one justify assassination when the security forces in--in these cases are jury, judge and executioner?"*

Avraham Burg, speaker of the Israeli Knesset, front-running candidate to lead the Labor party: *"No doubt that in the Western world and the Western value system that we both live in, the lamb is usually having a fair chance before the wolf is biting it. In the Middle East, you have some different rules. Unfortunately, the relationship between us and the Palestinians are not exactly like the relationship between the US and Canada. You know why?"*

"Not because we're not Americans, because I'm not at all sure they're Canadians. We're living in a different hemisphere, of Islamic fundamentalists, of human bombs, of suiciders-- suicide people, of killers, of kidnappers, of people you do not want your daughter to get married to. Don't try to ask me to relate to my inhuman neighbor the way the Scandinavians are treating the Swedes." -excerpt from Nightline, August 2, 2001)

Introduction

THE CURRENT phenomenon of political assassination is part of a broader Israeli phenomenon of using military power and violence as a means to achieve political goals. The need for a discussion of the roots of these phenomena has motivated this research to include a survey of assassinations in the past up until the present. To my knowledge, this is the first time that a Palestinian or Arab researcher has tackled the issue.

This study explores the following: why the Israeli assassination policy is important in the current Intifada and the problems faced in this research; the historical background and present reality of assassination within the Zionist movement and the state of Israel, including ways assassination has been and remains an important part of Zionist praxis; the differing historical phases of this policy; the objectives of Israel's assassination policy; a summarized anatomy of assassination including the mechanisms and its implementation; the characteristics that define assassination in the current Intifada, and finally a detailed list of the casualties of the policy from the start of the uprising up until August 15, 2001.¹ Cases discussed in the text will not be accompanied by full details; readers should refer to the appendix for the circumstances of each individual case.

The reader will notice the absence of a legal and human rights dimension to this research. This tack has been chosen because there are many institutes and organizations that fulfill the role of describing the ways that assassination violates law and human rights.²

¹ This list contains 62 victims of which there is incontrovertible evidence that the casualties resulted from assassination. It is, however, necessary to point out that a second list could be composed including cases where the circumstances of death were more vague.

² See A License to Kill, Israeli Undercover Operations Against "Wanted" and Masked Palestinians, Middle East Watch/ Human Rights Watch July 1993. Also see Targeting to

The Importance of Assassinations

Political assassination or extrajudicial execution of Palestinians during the current Intifada in general, and over the last few months in particular, has become a significant issue for several reasons:

1. The high number of victims of the policy

At least 62 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of this Intifada on September 28, 2000 up to August 16, 2001 out of the 538³ total Palestinians killed in the same period. That is over ten percent of the total killed. The victims range across the political spectrum, from political leaders, military activists to civilian bystanders.

The victims can be divided into three categories, as follows:

- 31 alleged military activists
- 4 political leaders, Jamal Mansour, Jamal Saleem, Thabet Thabet, and Salah Darwazeh. (This tally does not include the leader of the Popular Front for The Liberation of Palestine, Abu Ali Mustafa, who was killed after the 15th of August, and outside the time period of this research.)
- 27 people who were not wanted by Israel. Some of these were friends or relatives of the wanted victims present in what were

Kill: Israel's Undercover Units, Palestine Human Rights Information Center, Jerusalem, May 1992. Also see Willful Killings: A Sustained Israeli Policy in the Occupied Territories, Human Rights Focus, Al Haq, November 21, 1992.

³ The author composed this list of the 62 assassinations. The total number of Palestinians killed (538) during the period of the research is taken from the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group. This list contains all Palestinians killed, including those who died as a result of the inability to pass through Israeli checkpoints, victims of tear gas inhalation, and even the perpetrators of suicide operations. The author observed great disparities in the numbers of Palestinians killed during the Intifada between the various lists provided by different human rights organizations, including the Israeli human rights watchgroup Bt'selem.

supposed as the intended victim's houses or cars at the time of assassination. Some were journalists in the midst of interviewing the supposed targets. Some were young children playing about the houses or offices of the intended targets. Included within this category are 11 policemen killed by a 1,000 pound missile when an F-16 attack jet bombed the Nablus prison on May 18, 2001 in an attempt to assassinate Hamas military leader, Mahmoud Abu Al Hanoud, as confirmed by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.⁴ We also find cases within this category of people assassinated who only hours after the victim's death Israel acknowledged that it had committed an error and the target was the wrong person. (This was true in the case of Mustafa Youssef Hussein Yassin of Jenin.) The high number of civilian or unwanted deaths contradicts Israel's claims that it avoids inflicting-casualties upon innocent Palestinians.

2. The intensification of assassinations in recent months in comparison with the early months of the Aqsa Intifada

During the most recent months, we have witnessed a dramatic increase in the overall number of victims, an increase in the assassination of Palestinian political leaders⁵ and a significant rise in those killed in the process of striking the supposed target, i.e., collateral damage.

4 Israel's justification of its oppressive policies during the Intifada, including its use of assassination, revolves around the propaganda that the Palestinian Authority fails to arrest or rearrest Islamist activists. The bombing of the prison in Nablus was the reward the Palestinian Authority received for actually fulfilling Israel's demands. Indeed, part of Israel's intentions in bombing the Nablus prison seemed to be to embarrass the Palestinian Authority in front of its constituency.

5 At this point the Israeli media establishment began conducting an open discussion regarding the pros and cons of assassinating Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The intensity of Israel's policy of assassination can be divided into three phases:

-The Barak Phase (September 28 to December 31, 2000): Israel assassinated 12 alleged military activists, 1 political leader (Dr. Thabet Thabet) and 3 innocent Palestinians for a total of 15 victims.

Then-Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak initiated the policy of assassinating Palestinian activists 40 days after the onset of the Intifada. The reason the policy was begun later can be attributed to three main causes: First, as Amos Harel, the Ha'aretz newspaper military correspondent affirms, the decision to begin the policy was made after the political and military establishments concluded that the Intifada was to be a long struggle, rather than something that might end in the short term.⁶ Second, there was a need to first accumulate the intelligence determining those Palestinians that needed to be liquidated. Third, Israel needed to mobilize the necessary quiescence (both local and international), for acceptance, if not support, of this policy.

-Transitional Phase (January 1 to the end of March, 2001) This period includes the Israeli elections and the transitional period between the incoming and outgoing governments and emphasizes the shift in power within Israel between Barak and now-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. During this period, only 3 assassinations took place, and no innocent victims or political leaders were casualties of the killings.

It is also important to recall that within this period, Sharon made efforts to rehabilitate his prior image as a war criminal. The correlation demonstrates the relationship between the assassination

⁶ Ha'aretz, December 4, 2000. This decision to take up the policy of extrajudicial execution resembles the decision made by Israel in the early '70s, in an effort to extinguish the Palestinian resistance in the Gaza Strip.

of Palestinians and the political agendas of Israeli leaders.⁷ This phase also demonstrates that when Israel takes care not to kill innocent victims, it is able to.

-The Sharon Phase (The start of April to August 15, 2001) This period is characterized by a dramatic increase in the overall phenomenon of assassination, a steep rise in the numbers of innocent people killed and the multiplying numbers of political activists killed. Three political leaders were killed in one week at the end of July, 2001. In total, 44 Palestinians were killed including 23 innocents, a ratio of over 50 percent of the whole.

3. The changing objectives of political assassination

Though it is fair to say that Israel's assassination policy may have damaged some operational capacities of the organizations that were targeted, it is clear that the policy is a fan on the fire of Palestinians' willingness and enthusiasm to continue the Intifada. In fact, one of the objectives of assassination in the current stage, the Sharon era, is precisely to provoke the Palestinians. The backlash thus prevents the possibility of addressing any possible political agenda.

This was illustrated by Roni Shaked in Yediot Ahronoth. "Since June 1, Hamas has not committed military strikes inside the Green Line. They agreed to Arafat's pleadings to stop the military operations inside the Green Line because of international pressure. Even after the liquidation of four Hamas activists in Bethlehem, two weeks ago, Hamas bit its lip, declared that they will revenge, threatened but did not commit military hits [inside Israel]. Yesterday however, following the liquidation of

⁷ If the policy of assassination is a result of security needs as Israel continually says, how can it be explained that only three activists were killed during these three months?

Jamal Mansour, Israel will achieve the revenge [by Hamas] enabling her to escalate."⁸

Sharon's additional objectives have been to destabilize the Palestinian Authority and its political and security institutions, simultaneously destroying the process of Israeli and Palestinian negotiations begun in Oslo in 1993, while creating a climate of terror and fear. These objectives indicate that the phenomenon of assassination is likely to increase as long as Sharon remains in power.

4. Political assassination as an important element within Israeli politics

It is interesting to note the declarative fashion with which the assassination policy has been pursued. At a recent meeting of the Likud party, much internal discourse was dedicated towards demonstrating whom between Sharon and former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu could be more successful in suppressing Palestinians, using measures that include assassinations.

The reason for the debate derives from the phenomenon's wide acceptance within Israeli society. A recent survey by the Steinmetz Center for Peace showed that 70 percent of Israeli society supports this policy, including 60 percent of voters for the left-of-center Labor party.⁹ Israeli State Rabbi Meir Lauo gave full religious justification to these assassinations, referring to the policy as self-defense in the context of a "holy war."¹⁰ This support is also demonstrated among Israeli intellectuals as was shown in a recent Ha'aretz editorial that commented that assassination "against elements of terror" was the right step towards

8 Yediot Ahranot, August 1, 2001.

9 Ha'aretz, August 8, 2001.

10 Tikva Honig-Parnass, "Upgrading the Assassination Policy of the Gangster State," Between the Lines, Vol. 1 #9, August, 2001, p. 11.

strengthening those trends among Palestinians that support dialogue with Israel.¹¹

5. A policy of undeclared assassination

Israel has not claimed responsibility for the majority of its assassinations of Palestinians. Sharon stated baldly on Israeli television during a meeting with Israeli settlers in the Hebron region that "there will be things we will take credit for, there will be things that we will deny, and there will be things we never talk about."

Not claiming responsibility for assassination is an old tactic used against Palestinian leaders. This policy allows Israel to evade international criticism that would charge it with practicing extrajudicial execution at the same time that it would create confusion among Palestinians and desire for revenge on behalf of family members and political organizations.

Therefore, it is not by chance that the majority of assassinations Israel *has* claimed within the present Intifada have come about as a result of the use of Apache attack helicopters, a technique never before used against Palestinian targets.

Contents of This Study and Problems Faced

In attempting to address this subject in an objective manner, it is difficult to clearly define what constitutes an assassination in the Palestinian case. Israel's policy of not admitting to all assassinations results in a cloud of mystery surrounding the deaths of some Palestinian activists. This is

¹¹ Ha'aretz, August 8, 2001.

further complicated by the lack of clear and professional information provided by the Palestinian media.

For example, Hasan Qadi, a wanted Palestinian, was killed when the house in which he was living blew up in Ramallah (also killing two children on April 30, 2001). In this case, the Israelis denied responsibility and suggested it was a "work accident," implying that the victim was killed while manufacturing, transporting or planting explosive material. The Palestinian narrative of this event provided an assortment of causes ranging from an explosion inside the house, an explosion outside the house and a missile fired from an Israeli helicopter. Palestinians have therefore been unable to decipher precisely what happened in this case.¹² It was thus necessary to exclude cases like this from the study.

Terminology also presents a problem in discussing the Israeli policy of assassination. The use of particular terminology shows a certain political orientation concerning the policy's moral and judicial ramifications. Israel has put a great deal of energy into opposing the use of the word "assassination," preferring "targeted killing" or other such terminology.

Originally, the Israeli propaganda machine used the term "khissoul," to refer to the policy, a word that literally means "liquidation." Sharon used this term abundantly during the '70s while Israel was assassinating dozens of Palestinian fighters and their leaders.¹³ The term was only used at the beginning of the Intifada based upon determinations that it was a neutral term.¹⁴

12 While since it has been determined that the explosion took place from a bomb inside the house, the case remains ambiguous given the possibility that Israel was able to provide or plant booby-trapped materials or detonators.

13 Hadashot Newspaper, April 11, 1993, p 42.

14 This is part of a larger battle of terminology that includes the "occupied territories" versus "disputed territory," "colonies" or "settlements" versus "Jewish neighborhoods" and "communities."

Slowly, however, connotations of gangsterism inspired a search for better language within Israel. For a short period, Israel also used the term "initiated shooting-down." An Israel Defense Force publication stated that these kinds of operations would henceforth be termed "pin-point prevention" of "terror operations".¹⁵

For these purposes, we prefer the term "political assassination or execution," or "extrajudicial execution," because even if all those killed were military activists (obviously not the case), the act of assassination itself took place for political reasons.

Amnesty International began using the term "state assassination" to refer to Israel's acts by the start of January, 2001,¹⁶ while B'tselem previously described the policy as "assassination" and "extrajudicial killing."¹⁷ Amidst the terminological battle, Israel has pressured certain western media to use less damning terminology. Influential television channels such as BBC and CNN have begun using the term "targeted killing." The British journalist Robert Fisk has reported that the BBC administration recently adopted this term.¹⁸ Needless to say when the western media uses "targeted killing" to describe this policy, it de facto encourages Israel to continue the practice.

In contrast, many Israeli journalists have refused the term "targeted killing," and persisted in using "khisolim" or "liquidation." The most liberal of Israeli presses uses the word "hitnakshout," literally meaning "assassination."

15 "The Occupation Language is Very Creative," Tanya Reinhardt as quoted in Moshe Zonder's review of Israel's assassination policy, *Yediot Aharonot*, Weekend Supplement, July 27, 2001.

16 Mouna Naim, *Le Monde*, August 2, 2001.

17 B'tselem, *Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories Bulletin*, June 2001, p. 11

18 Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, August 4, 2001.

The problem of terminology is not limited to this debate. A researcher on the subject is confronted with additional problems concerning terminology. For example, how is one to describe people who are not "wanted" but are killed during the assassination operations? If we describe them as "innocent," we indirectly imply that those that are targeted are somehow not innocent or perhaps even guilty. Furthermore, the term itself has negative legal and political connotations that provide no context for the present Israeli-Palestinian situation of occupier and occupied.

Finally, it has been difficult in the scope of this research to define a phenomena that has unclear boundaries. Why, for instance, is the killing of a youth with a stone in his hand, or even the empty-handed Mohammed Dourra targeted by a sniper from distances far beyond the youth's reach¹⁹ any less of an assassination than an activist targeted and killed by an attack helicopter? Though the latter example garners far more prominent headlines, it is the former that has resulted in a far greater death toll among Palestinians. Furthermore, how is one to define instances where five Palestinian security personnel are killed in cold blood at a checkpoint at the southern entrance of Ramallah while they are sleeping and eating? This was an act where the intention to kill was there, though Israel did not particularly care whom exactly got killed.

Despite all these questions, this study will address assassinations that are planned, premeditated and directed at specific individuals.

¹⁹ Israeli journalist Amira Hass, interview with a sniper, Ha'aretz November 30, 2000

General Background and Basic Notes

Despite the change in methods and targets, there is continuity between different historic phases of assassination. Following are some general remarks about this policy in the Zionist experience, before and after the creation of the state of Israel.

Might makes right

The current phenomenon of political assassination is part of a broader Israeli phenomena related to the use of military power and violence as a means to achieve political goals. Zionist thinkers as early as 1904 made references to the blade of the sword as the only solution for the emptying of Palestinian land.²⁰ This had much to do with the realization of Zionist thinkers in the beginning of the 20th century that the indigenous Palestinian population would not abandon its homeland voluntarily, and that the surrounding Arab nation would not accept their uprooting. This realization was propagated by the influential right-wing Zionist thinker Zeev Jabotinsky, in his article, "The Iron Wall," published in 1923, which was later adopted in full by Israeli leader Ben Gurion and thinkers of the Left Zionist camp.²¹

Assassins from gangs to freedom fighters

Various Zionist and Jewish historians have suggested the idea that violence (and therefore, assassination) satisfies a Jewish psychological need to counter European anti-Semitism, which characterized Jews as cowardly and unfit to fight.²² Though it is true that these racist ideas have

20 See Israel Zangwill, *Speeches, Articles and Letters*, The Soncino Press, London, 1937, p. 210.

21 See Avi Schlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, Norton W.W, NY, December, 2000.

22 See Ben Yehuda, Nachman, *Political Assassinations by Jews: A Rhetorical Device*

been pervasive throughout the West, and even infiltrated into Arab society (more as a result of a process of discrediting the enemy rather than one of traditional anti-Semitism), it is insufficient to attribute them to a simplistic process of Jewish reaction to historical bigotry. Rather, two additional factors need to be grasped.

First, Jewish political heritage itself, as in the case of many other experiences in world history, witnessed assassinations throughout the Jewish political experience in ancient times. Assassination, extremism and the formation of Jewish terrorist squads (such as the Sicarii) concentrated upon eradicating various other Jewish groups and foreign elements and played a significant role in the collapse of the earlier Jewish entity experiments in Palestine.²³

Throughout the ages and before the birth of the Zionist movement, Jewish perceptions of these groups can be compared to that of the Islamic disdain towards the *Hashashin* group.²⁴ Jewish assassins were qualified by traditional Jewish historical texts as *birionim* ("bandits" in Hebrew). But the Zionist movement (particularly its right wing), rather than disdain these groups - considered extremist in their own time - rehabilitated them in its effort to build a new Jewish identity of pioneering, fighting and being ruthless against their enemies.²⁵ They were soon transformed into heroes who engaged in the struggle against foreign dominance.²⁶

for Justice, New York State University Press, Albany 1993, p.81.

23 See the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in his book *Jewish Wars*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris 1977. Flavius lived and wrote during the first century AD. Also see Ben Yehuda, p. 80

24 An Ismailite Muslim sect mythologized for its skill in assassinating and from which the English word assassin is derived.

25 Schattner, Marius, *Histoire de la Droite Israelienne*, Edition Complexe, Paris, 1991, p. 95.

26 *Ibid.*, See also Whitlam, Kenneth, *The Invention of ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History*.

Second, it is essential to research the convoluted religious, national and racial elements that went into the construction of Zionist ideology, including but not limited to European nationalism without its progressive qualities; complexes related to superiority and power and the dehumanization of the Palestinians and the concept of the goyim. As Zeev Sternhall from Hebrew University emphasizes, Zionism was influenced by the tribal nationalism that developed in East and Central Europe as an antithesis to the liberal nationalism of the early 19th century. It was a nationalism of blood and soil, a cultural, historical and in the last analysis, also biological nationalism that undermined the foundations of liberalism and nourished anti-Semitism in Western Europe.²⁷

Removing opposition

The policy of assassination has not strictly been limited to individuals who have used violence to oppose Israel and the Zionist movement, but has also included those considered to have ideas or positions oppositional or impeding to the Zionist movement and its general goals. For instance, the assassination of United Nations Special Envoy Count Folke Bernadotte on September 17, 1948 was carried out because his political positions were considered incompatible with Israeli expectations and he was able through his position to influence the position of the international community.²⁸

27 Zeev Sternhal, *Nation building or a new society?* as quoted by Tikva Honig-Parnass, "How Post-Zionist Thinking Leads to an Abortive Scheme for Peace," *Between the Lines*, June 2001, Vol. I #7 (Author's translation from Hebrew).

28 See Marton, Kati, *A Death in Jerusalem: The Assassination by Jewish Extremists of the First Arab/Israeli Peacemakers*, Pantheon Books, New York 1994. Bernadotte was assassinated due to his well-known positions on the right of return of Palestinian refugees, as well as his desire to territorially compensate the Palestinian side for the Zionist occupation of the Western Galilee in the war of 1948- an area previously allocated to Palestinians in the Partition Plan of 1947. Also see Roni Shaked, "This is How We liquidated Bernadotte," *Yediot Aharonot*, September 11, 1988, Special Supplement, p. 2-5.

This is also visible in the assassination of Palestinian writers and thinkers who had no relationship to military activities, most notably in the attempted assassination of Anis Sayigh, head of the Palestinian Research Center in Beirut, and the successful assassination of Ghassan Kanafani, one of the most prominent Palestinian writers in the 20th century. In the cases where Israel claims responsibility for the assassination of Palestinian intellectuals, it attempts to smear the names of its victims by saying they had involvement in the organization and planning of military actions against its citizens. In the case of Kanafani, Israel published in advance alleged pictures of him in friendly acquaintance with a group of Japanese in the Red Army faction that carried out the attack against civilians in Lydd airport (In reality, the picture showed the side-profile of someone else who resembled Kanafani).²⁹

A new Israeli study shows that of the 13 Palestine Liberation Organization political leaders assassinated by Israel in the '70s while claiming their alleged relationship with the 1972 Munich Olympic Games attack, only one of them, Abu Yousef Al Najjar, had a direct connection to the operation. The study shows that the main objective of these assassinations was to terrorize and paralyze the PLO.³⁰

A recent example of this strategy during the current Intifada is the assassination of Jamal Mansour, a high-ranking Hamas political leader and thinker who was killed in Nablus in his research and media office (together with seven other people including two children) on 31 July 2001. His name was intentionally and disingenuously associated with a suicide operation in Tel Aviv where twenty young and innocent youth were killed by a suicide bomber.

²⁹ Kanafani was assassinated in July 8, 1972. The Lydd airport attack took place on May 30 of the same year.

³⁰ Zonder, Moshe, "Shooting Without Crying Anymore," Week End supplement, Yediot Ahranot, July 27, 2001.

Jews killing Jews

Violence and political assassination has not been limited to non-Jews, but has been used against Jews and even Zionists themselves. Inter-Jewish/Zionist assassination took place in five general categories:

1. Jewish anti-Zionist political opponents. The most famous case of this was that of Yacov Israel De Hahn, assassinated June 30, 1924.³¹
2. Jewish Zionists from other factions. The most notable example here is that of Dr. Haim Arlosoroff, a political head of the Jewish Agency, killed June 16, 1933³².
3. Zionists within the same organization in either a struggle for power or over political differences. A well-known example is the case of Eliyahu Giladi, a LEHI leader who was killed by Yitzhak Shamir in the summer of 1943.³³
4. Jewish collaborators who worked with the British.³⁴
5. Jewish Zionist activists who were assassinated by their organization because of the fear that their detention and interrogation would lead to confessions endangering the organization. The most interesting example of this is that of Joseph Lishansky from the Nily spy network during WWI, on October 9, 1917.³⁵

31 Ben-Yehuda, Nachman, p. 137-140.

32 Ibid. p 140-43. It is interesting to note that unknown Zionist elements succeeded in making two Arabs (Abdel Majid Al Hindi and Issa Darwish al Kurdi) admit that they committed the crime against Arlosoroff. However, later on their innocence was proven. (See Filistine Newspaper, Jaffa, January 21, 1934 p. 10. Also see, Abd el Hafiz Muhareb, Hagannah, Etzel, Lehi: Relations Between the Zionist Armed Organizations 1937-1948 Beirut, Palestine Research Center, 1981 p. 40-44 (in Arabic).

33 Nachman, pp. 178-185.

34 At least 30 collaborators with the British were killed by the different Jewish paramilitaries, especially the Etzel and Lehi.

35 For this example and others see Muhareb, pp.36 and 61, Ben Yehuda, pp. 129-31.

Although Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in November 1995 drew attention to the idea of inter-Jewish assassination, it was by no means the first case. This complicated history makes it difficult to define the rules and criteria regarding the usage of political assassination by Zionists. Additionally, one should note that the political and military violence Israel commits against Palestinians has a counter effect within Israeli society that is characterized by suppressed violence and tension.

Murder for hire

Political assassinations are not restricted to merely Palestinians or Israel's enemies. In efforts to attain or increase influence, power and money, Israel has deeply involved itself in assassinations on the Arab and international fronts. Israel was directly and indirectly involved in the assassination of leaders and members of the FLN in Algeria after certain cooperative alliances were forged with French officers in occupied Algeria, particularly in the city of Algiers.³⁶ Additionally, Israel participated in the assassination of the senior Moroccan revolutionary Mehdi Ben Barakeh in 1965,³⁷ with the blessing of then-Mossad head, Meyer Amit.

Israel or Israeli mercenaries, sometimes in direct coordination with the Israeli Ministry of Defense or the Mossad, have furthermore provided various services to parties within conflicts that have resulted in the assassination or liquidation of revolutionary cadre throughout Latin America assisting the most dictatorial and bloodiest regimes. Recent examples in these regards can be seen in the Israeli participation in the

36 Author's interview in Paris with Algerian historian and ex-FLN political bureau Mohammed Harbi, January 5, 1995.

37 Steven Stuart, *The Spymasters of Israel*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1980, pp.236-252. Also see Raviv, Dan and Millman, Yossi, *Every Spy a Prince: The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community*, Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Pp. 157-60.

kidnapping of the Kurdish PKK leader Abdullah Ochelan, and the assassination of the Chechen leader Dodayef.

Terrorism by a democracy

Israel is not the only state in the world to practice state assassination against its political opponents. Yet there are features that distinguish Israel from other examples. Here, state terrorism is practiced by a democratic political system, and is institutionalized with clear, openly-declared political statements advocating such positions, together with the necessary resources of the state. Furthermore, it is carried out on a large scale.

Additionally, it is important to stress, as Nachman Ben Yehuda does, that in the overwhelming majority of known cases (in the pre-state period), assassinations were not carried out by a lone fanatic killer, but were premeditated, planned acts committed by a group or by the representative of a group. In most cases the assassin is linked very intimately to a group that plans the assassination, gives the assassin much-needed moral support, the vocabulary of motives needed to perform the task, as well as shelter and the means required to execute the plan of assassination. "After 1949, a new political and judicial justice came into being as the state of Israel was established, hence the need to resort to political assassinations declined sharply. Since 1948, instead of political assassination, the new state has carried out cases of state-sponsored assassination: political execution."³⁸

A wide group of satellites

The act of political assassination is not restricted merely to state institutions, but also includes Jewish terrorist organizations composed of extremist Zionists that work in an independent manner, such as The Jewish Defense League, formerly led by Rabbi Meir Kahana. He chose to

38 Ben Yehuda, p xxii.

use his methods initially in the United States before focusing it on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The assassination of Alexander Odeh, a Palestinian human rights activist in the United States, is only the more well-known example of this phenomena of extremist Zionist terrorism.

The advantage of these activities lies in the fact that they are committed by independent organizations, which Israel does not have to defend from political or moral repercussions, though the state may participate by providing the necessary moral justifications. For example, the June 2, 1980 attacks against Palestinian nationalist mayors Bassam Shaqa, Kareem Khalaf and Ibrahim Tawil that were carried out by extremist settlers affiliated to an underground Jewish organization *Hamakhteret*, could not have taken place without the organized campaign carried out in advance by the Israeli authorities, as well as the logistical assistance of a high-ranking army officer, Roni Gila.³⁹ The type of explosives used and the precision of the required logistical information were inaccessible to the settlers themselves. Furthermore, as the aim of the operation was to

39 Gila was the military governor assistant of Ramallah. He was part of the Makhteret and knew about the entire operation including the placement of the bomb planted in Ibrahim Al Tawil's garage. The first explosion occurred in Nablus at 8:00 a.m, when Mayor Shaka attempted to start the ignition of his car. (Resulting in both legs being amputated.) When employees from Nablus municipality tried to inform Kareem Khalaf and Ibrahim Tawil, of what happened to Shaka that morning, warning them against using their own cars, they discovered that all telephone lines were cut completely between Nablus and other Palestinian cities. This is another proof of the coordination of higher official levels with the operation.

The second explosion then took place 25 minutes later in Ramallah targeting Karim Khalaf. The noise of the explosion enabled employees from the municipality of El Bireh, to know what happened, and to go to Ibrahim El Tawil telling him not to use his car. Soon after, Tawil was taken to the hospital to check the status of Khalaf who at the time was being operated upon. (Khalaf had his foot amputated.) Gila, aware that Tawil would no longer use his car, rushed to the hospital and declared Ibrahim! Don't use your car! He then chose a Druze (not a Jewish) soldier, by the name of Suleiman Hirbawi to check Tawil's car. Hirbawi was not provided with any protective gear as is regular procedure, and the bomb exploded in his face and stomach. Though Hirbawi did not die, he was severely disfigured thereafter, not to mention deaf and blind.

physically handicap the nationalist mayors (to set an example, of sorts) and not to kill them (which the settlers might have preferred), demonstrates the dynamic interaction between state policy and Jewish underground terror groups.⁴⁰

First-hand experience

Even in war, democratic states like Israel have been reluctant to use political assassination except in extreme cases and in cases where the death of the target will have serious effects upon the other side. For instance, the United States Army engaged in deep discussion regarding whether the senior Japanese naval leader Yamamoto should be targeted for assassination. Yamamoto, the mastermind behind the attack on Pearl Harbor, was considered to be a military genius of great cost to Americans if he remained alive. Though eventually the US downed his plane resulting in his death, this example is one of relatively few instances of assassinations considered by the Americans against their enemies during World War II.⁴¹

Israel's policy of assassination has largely come about as a result of a slide towards power-worship and circumstances whereby Israel is no longer able to protect itself from itself. After the departure of former prime minister Menachem Begin from office in 1983, five prime ministers have come to power, all of whom were essentially military men with career specialties in the art of killing. With the exception of Yitzhak Rabin, who served in the regular army that generally abides by codes of conflict in states of war, the remaining Israeli prime ministers devoted their army careers to special units, where they were trained to kill.

40 Author's interview with Mayor Ibrahim El Tawil, June 2, 1980. For more information on Makhteret, see Ha'aretz June 6, 1980, p. 3, July 11, 1985 p.2, and May 8, 1985, p. 10.

41 Hoyt, Edwin, Yamamoto, New York, Mc Graw Hill, 1990, pp. 245-249.

The list is long and the record full. The current Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon was the man who established elite Unit 101, whose task it was to massacre Palestinian refugees that attempted to return to their homes and lands near the Green Line throughout the '50s, most notably the Qibya massacre, where 69 civilians were killed, mostly as a result of having their houses blown up by dynamite.⁴² Let us also not forget that he is the mastermind of the Sabra and Shatila massacre, in which thousands of Palestinian refugees were killed by Phalangist forces in Lebanon under Israel's watch.⁴³

As for Ehud Barak, he was a member and then leader of *Sayeret Miktal*, the General Staff Squad, whose primary goal throughout the '70s was the assassination of Palestinian leaders. During his reign as head of the Central region directly before the outbreak of the first Intifada, and later as Chief of Staff since 1992, Barak was personally responsible for the activities of the *Mustarabeen* units, whose assassinations escalated throughout the course of the first Intifada. Barak also personally assassinated the Palestinian poet Kamal Nasser in his house in the Fardan Quarter of Beirut.⁴⁴

42 Despite Sharon's denial of his initial intention to kill the victims, he, as Begin did when writing about the massacre of Deir Yassin, boasted of its considerable and significant repercussions: "Despite the fact that the raid in Qibya ended in tragedy, it was however a turning point against terror. It came to prove after many previous failures, that the Israeli army was capable once again to hit the enemy wherever he is, even within his own borders. The meaning of the operation to the [Israeli] army was great, because it was able to find its lost self-confidence, after two years of frustration and repeated failure. More important, the Israeli people, by the grace of Qibya, a reassured sense of security and protection from Arabs killing." Ariel Sharon memoirs, Beirut, Bisan Library, 1992, p. 114 (Arabic translation from Hebrew, Anton Obeid.)

43 See Amnon Kabulujujuck, *Sabra and Shatilla: An investigation about a massacre*, Paris 1983 (Arabic translation from French).

44 Caspit, Ben and Ilan Kafir, *Ehud Barak: The First Soldier*. Amman, Dar El Jalil, 1999, pp. 110-122 (Arabic translation from Hebrew).

Benjamin Netanyahu was also a high ranking officer of the *Sayeret Miktal*.⁴⁵ Yitzhak Shamir deserves special attention as he was a member of the LEHI terrorist organization and was wanted for committing many murders among the ranks of the British during the Mandate period. Shamir, as mentioned above, also personally killed his own comrades, as well as participated in the planning of the assassination of UN Special Envoy Count Folke Bernadotte.⁴⁶ Due to his distinguished record, Shamir was assigned to the special units section of the Mossad,⁴⁷ where he became the mastermind of Operation Democlyus whose mission was to liquidate the German experts who worked in Egypt in missile development projects. During this operation, German entrepreneurs and scientists were either killed or kidnapped.⁴⁸

Despite the unpleasantness of such conclusions, the resume of the most recent Israeli prime ministers is directly related to the fact that they were involved first-hand in killing.

Beyond the sovereignty of the state

It is important to take note of the fact that all of the assassinations took place beyond Israel's recognized borders. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are internationally recognized as Occupied Territories, and thus must be governed by laws that abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, and which organize the relationship between the occupying power and the occupied population.

Too, a great many of Israel's political assassinations have violated the sovereignty of other countries -- allies, as well as countries with signed peace treaties with Israel. In this regard, it suffices to recount that eight

45 Ibid. pp.77-88

46 Enderlin, Charles. Shamir, Olivier Orban, Paris,1991, p. 246.

47 Enderlin, pp. 273-274.

48 Enderlin, p. 279.

assassinations have been carried out on French soil since 1972, whose victims include Mahmoud al Hamshari, Muhammed Abu Dayya, Basel al Kubeisi, Mahmoud Saleh, Zuheir Muhsen, Nabil Mubarak, Iyyad al Damen and Atef Bseisou.

Many of these victims had no relationship whatsoever to military activities, as in the case of Wael Zeatar or Majed Abu Sharar killed in Italy, and Hussein Abul Kheir in Cyprus. In some cases, Israel has killed people who had no relationship with Palestine, as in the case of the Norwegian of Moroccan descent Ahmed Bushiki, who was mistakenly killed by the Mossad on July 21, 1973, after Israeli agents thought he was the wanted senior PLO security officer Ali Hassan Salameh.

Though not directly related to the issue at hand, it is interesting to note Western - particularly French - collusion in these affairs. This includes elements of the right-wing and racist French police, which most definitely would not have acted in the same manner had other parties been involved.⁴⁹

The 1998 attempted assassination of Khaled Mishal, a senior Hamas political leader in Jordan attests to Israel's cynicism and disregard for the sovereignty of an Arab country that had already signed a peace treaty with Israel, and one that does all within its power to ensure that there are no infringements upon Israel's security.

No Palestinian assassination strategy

Despite Palestinian use of armed violence as a response to the direct and indirect violence used against them, in particular the ethnic cleansing campaign waged by the Zionists in 1948, the Palestinian national movement has never adopted an assassination policy despite the assassination of dozens of Palestinian leaders and cadre by various Israeli agencies. This is not merely a result of the difficulty in successfully

49 The degree of collusion went so far as the French Right Wing asking the Mossad to help in the assassination of Charles De Gaulle. See Ben Yehuda, pp. 306-7.

conducting such operations (given the nature of Israeli security procedures and the low-level training of Palestinian operatives) but is also a result of the fact that there was no orientation in this direction by the national movement. Despite pretentious threats on behalf of various Palestinian organizations, as well as failed individual attempts,⁵⁰ none of these is on the same scale with Israeli actions. The absence of a Palestinian response encourages Israel to continue assassinating Palestinian leaders and activists almost everywhere on earth.

Political Assassination and Israeli Objectives

In general, Israel's policy of political assassination is constructed in a fashion that enables it to fulfill more than one objective. The most important of these objectives are the following:

1. Revenge

Israel uses assassinations to punish individuals supposedly involved in serious and violent acts against Israeli soldiers, settlers and civilians or against Zionist or Jewish institutions and organizations outside Israel. The Israeli government presents this reason as its primary defense and attempts to frame the assassination itself as the meting out of justice that would not have been possible had the assassination not occurred.

2. Prevention

The prevention or disruption of any proposed political or social changes in which the target may have been involved or have influence over in thinking, planning or implementation.

⁵⁰ In 1973, Italian police alleged to have caught a Palestinian Black September cell planning to shoot down Golda Meir's airplane in Rome.

3. Publicity and Scare Tactics

Israel intends to send the message to all parties that its arm is long and it is capable of reaching and punishing its enemies wherever they may be. Indeed part of this message is also addressed to Israel's allies, particularly the United States, in demonstrating Israel's awesome capabilities and power.

4. Warning

Assassinations send a deterrent message to all those who might consider standing in the path of Israeli objectives.

5. Depriving Palestinian organizations

Israel has removed distinguished and irreplaceable leaders from Palestinian organizations, thus ensuring that less competent individuals take over. This tactic has worked with great success as organizations have been minimized by Israeli killings (Abu Jihad for Fateh, Ghassan Kanafani for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Yahya Ayyash for Hamas, Khalil Shiqaki for Islamic Jihad). In a few cases, the goal of these assassinations backfired, thus allowing more competent individuals to take leadership positions. This was the case after Israel assassinated the former Hizbullah leader Abbas Musawi, allowing for the appearance of Hasan Nasrallah on the political stage, who is both more clever and more resourceful.

6. Direct provocation

The current Intifada has demonstrated a new objective achieved by Israel's assassination policy: to inflame the people. The cold-blooded killing of five Palestinian security personnel at a check-point in Beitunia while they were sleeping or eating, together with the more recent attack upon the Hamas media center in Nablus (killing two high ranking Hamas political leaders in addition to 6 others, including two children) are two examples from many in which Israel sought to directly provoke Palestinians into waging operations that would give Israel the pretext for a wider Israeli military assault.

Assassination Policy Throughout History

Assassination by the Zionist movement and Israel can be divided into two phases: that of the pre-state, and the phase after the creation of the state. This latter category can be divided into sub-categories:

Pre-State (1902 to 1948)

Before the creation of the state of Israel and within the *yishuv* (the term used to refer to Jewish-Zionist society and institutions before the declaration for the state of Israel), assassinations were carried out by Jewish military organizations (the LEHI, ETZEL, and Haganah) mainly against other Jews.

However, by 1942, the British were also targeted due to conflicts that arose between the Zionist movement and the British over the White Paper of 1939.⁵¹ During this period, despite the fact that wide-scale terror was conducted against the indigenous Arab population (mainly explosions within markets) assassination was rarely used against them.

From 1948 to 1967

During this period, assassinations or executions against Jews became very rare. Jewish paramilitary organizations were dissolved by the end of May 1948, and melted into the newly formed Israel Defense Forces. In contrast to its pre-state history, the Hebrew state has no policy whatsoever against Jewish opponents, even if they were anti-Zionists or agents for foreign powers. The only exception to that rule was the execution of Captain Meir Tobyanski in June 1948, carried out with the blessing of Ben Gurion. Tobyanski was suspected of collaborating with

⁵¹ The White Paper of 1939 called for the creation of a Palestinian state within 10 years, the severe restriction of Jewish emigration and the regulation of land sales to the Zionist movement

the British during the battles of Jerusalem and was sentenced to death by a military court that ignored the preliminary basics of justice.⁵² However, some individual assassinations occurred during this period, mainly targeting suspected collaborators with the Nazis or political opponents.⁵³

Experience accumulated in the pre-state period was later transferred and absorbed by the state and its security branches, which integrated the extremist elements. This experience and potential was then used against Arabs, mainly against Palestinian *fedayeen* groups in Gaza, as well as the Egyptian officers who trained them. The most famous case was the assassination of Colonel Mustapha Hafez in Gaza and Major Salah Mustapha. The former was killed July 11, 1956 through a booby-trapped package, while the latter, a military attaché in the Egyptian embassy in Amman, was killed by the same method two days later. Yehoshafat Harkabi, head of Israel's military intelligence during this period (and who by the end of his life, became a preacher of peace with the Arabs), was responsible for these two assassinations as well as others.⁵⁴

Extra-judicial execution was also applied against *fedayeen* caught after infiltrating Israel, and when Israel occupied the Gaza Strip in November 1956. Israeli forces had a list of names of *fedayeen* who were eliminated on the spot on November 2 through 5, 1956.

52 Tobyanski was later rehabilitated by the state and the case was used to promote the idea that this would never be allowed to occur again. For this reason, the kidnapping of nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu resulted in a military trial and sentencing (of 18 years) despite the fact that there was much talk that he should be eliminated. For information on Tobyanski, see Ian Black and Benny Morris, *The Secret Wars of Israel*, Al Ahlyeh Publishing House, Amman, 1992, p. 73 (In Arabic). Also see Amos Nivo, *Yediot Ahronot*, April 6, 1988, p. 9.

53 Ben Yehuda., pp. 275-286.

54 Black and Morris, pp. 132-4, and Younis Al Katri, *A Lost Chain of Palestinian Struggle: The 141 Fadayeen Battalion, Dar Il Mustaqbal Il Arabi, Beirut, 1987, pp. 64-6.*

From 1967 to 1987

With the emergence of the contemporary Palestinian resistance after 1967, assassination was used as a major instrument for confronting the challenge of the new Palestinian leadership. The first assassination attempt was against Popular Front military wing head Wadi Haddad, in July 1970.

During this phase, one must divide Israel's assassination policy into two groups. First, there was the assassination of the Diaspora cadre of the PLO. Here the main targets were the senior political leaders of the PLO and its representative factions (though most targets were from Fateh), as well as selected military cadres who had been implicated in the organization of military attacks against Israel in the West Bank, Gaza or abroad.

During this period a new committee to fight terror was created upon the initiation of Golda Meir, and was lead by General Aharon Yarev. It is important to emphasize that during this war of the spooks, Israel rarely claimed responsibility for its assassinations.⁵⁵

Within the Occupied Territories, assassination was not used against political leaders, with Israel preferring instead to deport them. Extrajudicial execution *was* used intensively in the Gaza Strip during Ariel Sharon's campaign to suppress the popular resistance from 1970 to 1973. Sharon's Rimon Unit liquidated tens of wanted Palestinian activists. The unit had a list that was revised on a monthly basis with names written in two colors.⁵⁶ Those names in black were to be killed immediately the moment the target was caught. In case of eye-witnesses, a staged escape alibi was contrived.⁵⁷ According to soldiers who served

⁵⁵ Black and Morris, pp. 254-64.

⁵⁶ Hadashot, pp. 35-44.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

in this unit, instructions arrived directly from General Sharon who at the time was the military commander of the South. Members of the unit were encouraged to sacrifice themselves, and were provided with fine meals, films and girls upon their return to base.⁵⁸

In this way, Sharon set the foundations upon which Barak would later initiate the Mustarabeen liquidation units.

The Intifada

Extrajudicial killing was intensified during the first Intifada. During this period, Israel shifted its original policy formulated in the '70s, no longer restricting assassinations to a select few senior leaders, but expanding targets to include middle rank cadres and simple activists, including 25 young masked Palestinians caught writing political graffiti on walls.⁵⁹ In one case, a 14-year-old boy from Jenin, Walid El Souki, was shot at point blank range despite his pleas to save his own life. No less than 150 Palestinian activists were assassinated in the first Intifada, often at the hands of special undercover units (*Duveduvan* in the West Bank and *Shimshon* in the Gaza Strip) known as *Mustarabeen* (those who dress and pretend to be Arabs, allowing them to infiltrate Palestinian centers). Israeli and international human rights organizations have correctly termed this extrajudicial execution.

The new development demonstrates the lowering of the ceiling in criteria for implementing assassinations, which set the stage for the next level. Amateur paramilitary Fateh groups (Black Panthers, Masked Lions, Fateh Hawks, etc), *Kataeb el Qassam* (Hamass' military wing), *Nisr al Ahmar* (PFLP) and simple masked people were all targeted. Israel abused its logic, justifying these killings in a way that clearly led to what is taking place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip today.

⁵⁸ Al Quds, July 1, 1995, translated from Kol Hair.

⁵⁹ Names can be provided upon request. Perhaps the saddest case of this was that of an activist who was killed by undercover units while writing "Yes to Peace" on the eve of the Madrid Conference, October 1991.

The Oslo Process From 1993 to 2000

During this period, Israel limited assassinations to special cases, and mainly targeted the Islamic opposition. Notable assassinations were that of Yahya Ayyash, Muhiyiddin al Sharif and the Awadallah brothers, all associated with the military wing of Hamas. Additionally, in the window of time between the signing of the Oslo agreements on September 13, 1993 and the first arrival of the Palestinian Authority in the occupied Territories (first in Jericho and Gaza in the middle of 1994), Israel worked hard to liquidate what remained of the paramilitary groups after the Intifada.

The Anatomy Of Assassination

Determining the target

Judging from historical example, Israeli assassinations take place after two steps.

First, the presence of Israeli military intelligence assessments regarding the activities and potential dangers of the given activist. Approval for assassination must be obtained in advance from a select group of military and political higher-ups led by the prime minister, which once obtained, results in the activist's name being added to a list of those to be assassinated that is then distributed to all intelligence branches (Shabak, Aman, etc.). In some cases, the political leaders in this group are misled by intelligence officers as to the actual military role of the Palestinian in question. For example, Fateh political leader in Tulkarem Thabet Thabet was assassinated based on misinformation given by the intelligence services that left out his political involvement.

Second, assassinations occur once it has been determined that the operation can be implemented without loss of life on the Israeli side, and when the victim regularly (or even just once) lacks poor security

judgment, thus opening the window for Israel to attack. The international context, Israel's standing in the world and the desire not to attract international condemnation, affects the type and timing of each operation. Israel prepackages its justification of assassination, often by linking the victim with infamous operations (the Munich Olympics, the Ben Gurion Airport attack, the Dolphinarium disco attack in Tel Aviv, and so on). Needless to say Israel continually avoids full-fledge condemnation for its assassination policy, largely because of the free hand (and protection in international fora) provided by the United States.

In regards to the first point, after a given individual is selected, all intelligence agencies engage in a process of collecting information, surveillance and tracking for the most precise of details (including those of members of the family - especially spouses, places of residence, work, habits, friends, relatives, model of car driven and license plate number, garages used, types of transportation used, and so on. Details collected often get so precise as to encompass the type of cigarettes the victim smokes. The larger the number of details available, the greater the precision in planning and implementing the assassination itself.

Israel never assassinates an individual and claims responsibility for it before having provided the necessary political and media coverage framing the victim as a terrorist and murderer. During the present Intifada, Israel began using the term "preventative strikes" as one such way to alleviate the media scrutiny. Furthermore, in order to ensure Western public sympathy towards Israel after the assassination, and at the same time send a message, Israel justifies its actions beneath slogans of "Never Again." That rhetoric ties any spilling of Jewish blood with Western public consciousness of the Nazi genocide against the Jews.

For example, all the assassinations that took place in Europe throughout the '70s were conducted alongside publicity campaigns that referred to Israel's victims as those involved in the 1972 Munich operation, which received widespread international condemnation.

Without a doubt, the Palestinians' failure to address the importance of publicity accompanying Israel's planned military acts was a large factor in their inability to achieve their national goals. In addition, Palestinians have shown a poor choice of targets for operations (which did not change after the appearance of Hamas on the scene) including targeting civilians, bombing buses and markets and so on.⁶⁰

Means of Collecting Information

In general, there is a belief among Palestinians that collaborators are primarily responsible for providing information to Israel that enables the execution of an assassination. Unfortunately, it is difficult for the Palestinian security apparatuses to gauge the role of collaborators in these affairs. Certainly, it can be said that without the direct information provided by Palestinian collaborators, it would be much harder to implement assassinations with such precision.

However, collaborators only represent one element in a structured process that accumulates the exceptional quantitative and qualitative efforts of vigilant and attentive Israeli apparatuses with huge capacity and experience, all coordinated under the prime minister. This can be confirmed by information recently disclosed by the London daily, *The Independent*, which published an article stating that over 4,000 Israelis from various sectors of the security apparatus were involved in the assassination of Khalil Al Wazir (Abu Jihad) in mid-April, 1988.

Information is also gathered as a result of confessions made in interrogation, or through answers to simple questions asked to political prisoners that may seem useless, but allow Israel to complete its picture.

⁶⁰ Hamas was not involved in attacking civilian targets until the massacre in Hebron's Haram Al Ibrahimi on February 26, 1994, when an Israeli settler opened fire on worshippers, killing over 30 people.

Technology, too, has provided a vital means of gaining information for Israel. At the same time, Palestinians have failed to grant it due importance. This includes, but is not limited to, phone taps, fax taps, internet bugging, high powered binoculars, night-vision goggles, unmanned drones, precise photographic capabilities, satellite images, tracking devices, and so on.

Implementation

After the collection of information, the best means of assassinating the activist is chosen based on the information provided, and within the general criteria that the implementation will leave little evidence of the procedure of implementation, be conducted from afar, and not incur Israeli losses. For this reason, Israel prefers not to physically involve its personnel in the execution of operations, given the possibility that a botched attempt could result in loss of life, arrest of their operators, and dramatic political, psychological (and potentially informational) scandals.

The risks of the above were visible when a botched attempt to kill a Hizbullah leader in Al Nasriyyeh in South Lebanon resulted in the death of 14 Israeli soldiers and officers from a special unit. This also was the case when two Israeli helicopters collided on their way to implement assassinations within Lebanon, killing 73 officers and soldiers, all of them from special forces. Both of these disasters played essential roles in the decision to withdraw from Lebanon.

Among Palestinians, similar (but less damaging) scandals can be found in the botched assassination attempt on the senior political leader of Hamas, Khaled Mishal in Jordan, not to mention the killing by friendly fire of three undercover Israeli soldiers who attempted to kill Mahmoud Abu Hannoud in the West Bank village of Assira Al Shimaliyeh.

For these reasons Israel now prefers to kill from afar without direct bodily involvement of Israelis. This has taken several forms:

1. The Personal Telephone

This method involves the explosion of a hidden bomb that is detonated upon the confirmation of the identity of the speaker. The first victim of this method of assassination was Mahmoud Al Hamshari in Paris in 1972, the first semi-official representative of the PLO to France. By means of Palestinian collaborators, Israel was able to gain knowledge as to the whereabouts of his apartment, which was later broken into. A bomb was hidden beneath a small table upon which the telephone sat, and which was detonated when Hamshari answered the phone. The explosion resulted in severely injuring Hamshari in the lower half of his body, who remained in hospital for a month, thus enabling his story to be told. (There are indications that his eventual death came about as a result of tampering with the medication he received in the French hospital).⁶¹

2. Cellular Telephones

The most famous and first example of assassination via an exploding cellular phone is that of Yahya Ayyash. He was the second in command of Izz El Din Al Qassam Brigades (the Hamas military wing) but was considered the most dangerous Hamas operative by the Israelis in recent years, given his capacity to make complicated bombs and continually avoid attempts to capture or kill him.

In August 1995, due to pressure from the Palestinian Authority, Hamas conceded to a freeze in suicide attacks in the heart of Israeli cities (although this was not overtly declared). Ayyash retired to Gaza, where he took up residence in Beit Hanoun beneath the jurisdiction of the newly-arrived Palestinian Authority. Ayyash's love for his family was probably his weak point, in the sense that due to his own political activity, his father, mother, brother, wife and child were continually subject to Israeli interrogation that sought information on his whereabouts. Ayyash would frequently check up on them through the use

61 Author's interview with his wife, Marie Claude, Paris, January 15, 1995.

of a cellular phone. Ayyash's mobile phone was done through an intermediary, whose uncle was a collaborator. Only after the third time the cellular phone was maintained, (so as to gain his trust) 50 grams of explosives were placed in the hearing-piece. That Friday, as every Friday, Ayyash called his father. When his voice was confirmed, the bomb was detonated by remote control from a helicopter flying overhead.

3. Public Telephones

Islamic Jihad activist Iyyad Muhammed Hardan, killed April 5, 2001, is the first example of this kind of assassination. After a period of intense monitoring, Israeli intelligence was able to gather the schedule with which Hardan would use the same public telephone. (Hardan chose to use a public phone because he believed it would be safer than using a mobile phone, fearful of the same fate of Yahya Ayyash). A bomb was planted in the lower half of the telephone, which was later detonated and killed Hardan instantly after confirmation of his voice on the line.

4. Letter and Package Bombs

Zionist LEHI activist Yashka Livstein invented this technique, which was first used worldwide against British government employees in Palestine and London in the '40s.⁶² It was later employed against Egyptian and German experts in the '50s and '60s. The technique was also used in 1972 against the head of the Palestinian Research Center in Beirut, Anis Sayigh, as well as Bassam Abu Sharif, the head spokesman for the PFLP.

In these two cases, the explosion resulted in the critical injury and disfigurement of its victims. Here, bombs are frequently placed in books that then explode upon being opened. Letter bombs usually explode when the envelopes are ripped open. Despite the fact that small bomb technology has improved tremendously, thus encouraging its use in assassinations, the drawbacks are many, including the danger of the

⁶² Enderlin, p. 274.

device exploding before delivery or the letter being opened by someone other than the target.

5. Car Bombs

This technique was introduced for the first time in the Middle East in 1938 by the ETZEL. However, it was used between 1938 and 1948 in Palestinian markets and public gatherings and not as a means of assassination. Israeli car bombs often are placed near the area where the intended victim will be seated. In its earlier use, large quantities of explosives were detonated upon the turning of the car's ignition. This was the case in the assassination of Ghassan Kanafani in 1972, whose car was loaded with 20 kilograms of TNT, killing him and his niece upon detonation.

This kind of car bomb requires both time and experience and has since caused Israel to shift its techniques to focus on smaller bombs that can be placed fairly easily, possibly beneath the drivers seat (as in the case of Iyyad al Damen in Paris), or in the head rest (as in the case of Ibrahim Beni Odeh in Nablus, a high-ranking member in the Hamas military wing). In similar fashion, or with small variations, a wide assortment of Palestinian activists have been killed, among them Muhammed Abu Dayyah in Paris in 1973, and Hamid, Tamimi and Abu Sultan, all three killed in Cyprus in 1988.

A similar but significant variation of the car bomb, involves the planting of bombs in parked cars on the roads frequently used by the victim, to be detonated when the victim's car passes by. Hasan Salameh was killed this way in Beirut in 1978 on his regular morning route to the gym. A unit of the Mossad rented a house that overlooked Salameh's house and the road he took to get to the gym. The booby-trapped car exploded as Salameh's vehicle went by, killing him and his four bodyguards instantly. The same method was used in the current Intifada against Fawaz Sherif Badran from Tulkarem on July 13, 2001.

As a result of the repeated use of the car bomb as a means of assassination (and possibly as a result of more modest financial situations), wanted activists have avoided owning their own cars. This pushed Israel to change its tactics, instead offering booby-trapped cars to wanted individuals through trusted sources who are in reality collaborators. This new method was first used in the current Intifada in the case of Ibrahim Bani Odeh. Israel had recruited one of Beni Odeh's relatives to collaborate with the Shabak, and unbeknownst to him, the relative planted a bomb in the headrest of his car. The bomb was later detonated by remote control from an overhead airplane when Beni Odeh borrowed his relative's car.

A similar attempt was made during this Intifada when two collaborators gave Naser Abu Hmeid, a popular Fateh activist from Al Amari refugee camp in Al Bireh, a present of a new (and booby-trapped) jeep. Suspicious of the present, Abu Hmeid turned the car in to Preventative Security Forces in Ramallah. The car was soon after detonated by the Israelis, when it became clear that the attempted assassination was a failure.

It would be nearly impossible to document all the means that Israel has used to assassinate activists. The yet unmentioned techniques include bombs planted in the houses of wanted activists, or in hotel rooms (as in the cases of Majed Abu Sharar in Rome and Abu Al Khayr in Cyprus). Occasionally when circumstances dictate, Israel will assassinate activists in the prime of day, using guns with silencers. The most notable of these cases was the killing of Basel Al Kabisi in the streets of Paris, Wael Zueitar at the entrance of his home in Rome, Fathi Shiqaqi in the streets of the Malta capital and a failed attempt in Warsaw on the Fateh commander Muhammed Dawoud Odeh known as Abu Dawoud.

Israel has also been known to conduct full-scale raids upon the homes of wanted individuals. This was apparent when three high ranking PLO officials were killed in Beirut on April 10th, 1973 in the Viridan neighborhood, as well as in another failed attempt the same night on a

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine compound. Additionally, there is the well-known case of the assassination of Abu Jihad or Khalil Al Wazir (killed by 77 bullets in his house in Tunis), not to mention many others who were either killed in their homes or in those homes where they sought refuge.

Poisoning targets slated for assassination seems to be a method reserved for special cases. One such case was the failed attempt to assassinate Khaled Mishal in Jordan, where the victim was injected with a mysterious substance, which Jordanian doctors were unable to identify. The affair aroused the direct intervention of the late King Hussein and resulted in Israel sending a special medical team to administer the antidote, thus absolving the Jordanian regime from any culpability in the affair. Overall however, it seems that poisoning as a means for political assassination is a technique preferred by the CIA, the KGB and the Bulgarian secret service, which used this method at least once in Britain against Bulgarian dissident Gerki Markov.

Assassinations and the Current Intifada: What's New?

The current Intifada has demonstrated many of the aforementioned Israeli techniques of assassination, in addition to new methods created in the service of two important Israeli objectives.

First, consistent with its attempts in the very first few weeks of the Intifada, Israel has aimed at portraying and characterizing the uprising as a state of war. This achieves two important strategic objectives for Israel: to transform the Intifada into a complete confrontation with the support of a wide Israeli consensus over Israel's use of power and suppression

and to make use of methods traditionally not used against civilian populations, but reserved for military targets.

Second, Israel is keen on using the current situation and the reality on the ground in the service of assassination. This reality is characterized by the complete dismemberment and discontinuity between Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps together with the presence of large amounts of Israeli troops on the periphery of Palestinian populated areas, as well as along roads. In addition, Israel maintains an important network of collaborators and technological advantages used in monitoring Palestinians.

In this way, Israel has successfully used US-made Apaches and Cobra attack helicopters capable of firing rockets that reach their targets with utmost precision, including the cars or homes of activists. They were first used in the current Intifada to assassinate Hussein Ubeiyat in Bethlehem on November 9, 2000.

This actually was not the first time Israel used rockets to carry out an assassination. Previously examples can be found as early as 1970 in Lebanon, when Israel unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Wadi Haddad at his house in the Sanaya' neighborhood in Beirut. At the time, Haddad was responsible for the international military operations of the PFLP and Israel considered him to be the mastermind behind the most damaging operations against it. Furthermore, two similar rocket attacks were attempted in the '70s against the office of the PLO in Beirut, and later against the Palestinian Research Center.

Still, it is important to point out the differences between these examples and the cases in the current Intifada. In previous cases, Israeli rockets were smaller, set up on the roof of a car, aimed at the target and then fired without any capacity to control the rocket once it was fired. In the current scenario, attack helicopters can move at high-speed, are highly maneuverable, can be used in all weather conditions, are equipped with night vision capacities and a navigator, which through laser and

electronic devices directs the location of the rocket after it is fired. This technique was originally used against the cars and offices of Hizbullah leaders, and was first used in the assassination of Abbas Musawi, former head of Hizbullah who was killed together with his wife and son.

Another innovation of the current Intifada is the much-increased use of the sniper's rifle. These operations take place after the careful monitoring of the victim, usually from a fixed observation position located in a settlement of a military installation, both of which are generally constructed on the high ground or near the periphery of Palestinian population centers. Gunfire is then opened on the subject from these locations at distances up to 800 meters.

This method has been used no less than six times in the current Intifada. Five times Israel has killed its target. The high rate of success can be attributed in part to the newness of the technique, Palestinian cadre's general ignorance of Israel's light and middle-weight sniping capabilities. The most prominent of these assassinations was against Thabet Thabet, a leading member in the Red Crescent Society and the Secretary General of Fateh in Tulkarem on December 31, 2000. (His was the first political assassination of the current Intifada). The most recent use of this method was against Abdel Hadi Al Natshe, a prominent Fateh activist in Hebron who survived the attempt on his life. In the latter case, an elite Israeli unit entered Area A in the middle of the night, established a position on top of a nearby house and opened fire upon Natshe when he parked his car.

Most of the assassinations in this Intifada have occurred in the West Bank. There are several explanations for the geographical discrepancy of assassination. First, the Gaza Strip enjoys more geographical continuity than the West Bank. Unlike the West Bank, the Gaza Strip has less of the archipelago-dominated status that characterizes the West Bank and is thus easier to control. The Gaza Strip's flat terrain, in addition to the four distinct settlement groupings that divide Gaza, are vastly different from the 190 West Bank settlements situated on the tops of strategic hills and

mountains, essential for observation, intelligence gathering, points of contact for collaborators and their recruiters, in addition to the formidable military presence on the ground. In my estimation, this difference is one indication that the role of collaborators in Israel's assassinations is less than that perceived by Palestinian society. In the West Bank, collaborators are not as crucial. In the Gaza Strip, where collaborators are needed by the Israeli military to plan and carry out assassinations, these killings have been less prevalent.

Most of the Israeli killings in the West Bank have been in the northern areas of Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem and their surrounding villages. As noted by Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein the day after the August 2001 Sbarro suicide attack in Jerusalem, the relationship between assassination and feelings of revenge among Palestinians is demonstrated by the fact that most of the young suicide bombers come from the same northern area. Quite simply, assassination must be considered the most damaging as well as enraging direct action Israel can take in its attempts to abort the national cause.

Ramallah and Jerusalem and Hebron have witnessed far fewer attempts at assassination than the remainder of the West Bank. This can be attributed to the fact that Ramallah and Jerusalem have a higher concentration of foreigners and journalists, and Hebron has hosted an international observer force since 1994. This demonstrates the crucial importance of Sharon's objections to the possibility of an international observatory body being sent to the Occupied Territories and shows that the existence of assassination is not only related to security, but is highly political as well.

Conclusion

Israeli assassination policy violates the right to life, the most fundamental of all human rights enshrined in religious, international and even Israeli law. There is no legal basis for these killings. The Israeli army plays the role of informer, attorney, judge and executioner and the decision to kill is implemented with no legal process whatsoever. As Yael Stein from B'tselem Human Rights Association put it, "Problems are rife from the initial decision through all stages of the process, problems which render any legal justification Israel could mount irrelevant."⁶³

Today, one of the roles of assassination as used by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, is to prevent the possibility for political compromise. However, while Israel may enjoy great technical success at killing the Palestinians it has targeted, the policy of assassinations is clearly a political failure. It has never managed to stop Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation and generations of activists have been replaced by new waves of leaders.

As this study demonstrates, assassination as extrajudicial execution is deeply rooted historically, institutionally and theoretically in the political and ideological life of Israel. Assassination against Palestinians is carried out as Avraham Burg attests: through their complete dehumanization. It is this very same dehumanization and cultural differentiation that was the driving force behind the many massacres committed by the Zionist movement in 1948, which led to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.

63 B'tselem, p. 11.

Appendix

Assassinations in this Intifada - Extrajudicial Executions September 28, 2000 to August 15, 2001 62 Deaths, 35 of these Wanted Persons

The numbered individuals on this list represent those intended for assassination. Those without numbers represent individuals killed during assassination attempts, i.e. "collateral damage."

- November 9, 2000** **1. Hussein Muhammad Salim 'Abayet**, age 34, of Taamera - Bethlehem, Fatah. The first assassination of the Intifada, and the first to be killed by Apache helicopter missile fire (3 rockets) aimed at his car in Beit Sahur, West Bank.
Other Palestinians killed in the course of the Assassination:
- **'Aziza Muhammad Danun**, age 52, woman from Beit Sahur
- **Rahameh Rashid Sahiin**, age 52, woman from Beit Sahur
(mothers of 10 and 7 children, respectively)
- November 22, 2000** **2. Jamal 'Abd al-Qader Hassan 'Abd a-Razzek**, age 33, from Rafah, Fatah.
Killed by Israeli live gun and tank fire aimed at his car at Morag settlement junction, Gaza Strip.
Three other lower-ranking Fateh activists were killed in the course of the assassination:
3. 'Awani Isma'il Abu Dahir, age 38, from Rafah, Fatah
4. Naal Shahadeh a-Lidawi, age 20, from Rafah, Fatah
5. Sami Nasser Abu Laban, 29, Sheikh Rudwan in Gaza, Fatah
All were on their way to the university in Gaza City.

- November 23, 2000** **6. Ibrahim 'Abd Al Karim Bani 'Oda**, age 33, from Tammoun, Jenin, resident of Nablus, Hamas. The victim was killed as a result of an explosive device planted by Israel in the headrest of a car he was borrowing from a relative who later admitted to be an Israeli collaborator and was later tried in a Palestinian state security court and executed. The bomb was detonated by an overhead airplane. Israel denied any responsibility for the assassination.
- December 11, 2000** **7. Anwar Mahmud Ahmad Himran**, age 28, from 'Arabeh in Jenin, Islamic Jihad. Was killed by Israeli gunfire originating from Mt. Gerezim from a distance of 300 meters while he was standing at the entrance of the library where his wife works in Nablus. Himran was hit with 19 bullets. Israel claimed soldiers were responding to gunfire in the area.
- December 12, 2000** **8. Yusef Ahmad Mahmud Abu Sawi**, age 28, from Artas near Bethlehem, resident of Al Khader, Bethlehem, West Bank, Fatah. Al Sawi was hit with 42 bullets fired by an undercover unit of four people after he returned by car to his house from work.
- December 13, 2000** **9. 'Abas Othman al-'Awiwi**, age 27, Hebron, West Bank, Hamas. Killed by Israeli security forces sniper fire on Wadi a-Tufah Street in central Hebron in an area under Palestinian control (H-1), in The West Bank. Three shots were fired at a distance of 150 meters from the entrance of Shuhada Street. The Israeli occupation army claimed the assassination, saying that al-'Awiwi was carrying a gun.
- December 14, 2000** **10. Hani Hussein Abu Bakra**, age 31, from Rafah, Gaza, Hamas. Killed when IDF soldiers stopped the service taxi he was in and shot him at Gush Katif junction, Deir Al Balah in the Gaza Strip. The car was carrying 5 passengers, including one woman and others

going to work and to university. After having checked his identity card, the soldiers demanded in Hebrew that the woman step down from the car. As a result she was the only person uninjured in the incident.

An additional Palestinian was killed in the course of the assassination:

- **Abdullah 'Isa 'Abdullah Kan'an**, age 40, from Khan Yunis, Gaza Strip, who died of his wound on December 23, 2000.

December 17, 2000 **11. Samih Malabi**, age 30, Samiramis neighborhood, near Qalandiya Refugee Camp, West Bank, Fatah. After having received a telephone call, most probably from a collaborator, the victim was told to go to a nearby stone quarry and receive another telephone call from a specific cellular phone. The phone was laden with an explosive charge that detonated upon confirming Malabi was speaking. Israel did not claim the assassination.

December 31, 2000 **12. Dr. Thabet Ahmad Thabet**, age 48, from Ramin, Tulkarem, West Bank, Secretary-General of Fatah in Tulkarem, and Head of the Red Crescent Society in Tulkarem. Killed in Tulkarem by sniper fire aimed at his car when he was leaving his house in Tulkarem. Thabet's killing represented the first political assassination and aroused considerable controversy because of his former participation in Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups and his high standing in Palestinian circles.

February 13, 2001 **13. Masud Hussein 'Ayyad**, age 50, from Zeitoun, Gaza City, member of Force 17 security service. Killed by missile-fire from an Apache helicopter on the road between Gaza City and Jabaliya Camp, Gaza Strip. Israel accused the victim of maintaining relations with Hizbullah and smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip.

- February 16, 2001** **14. Anwar Mustafa Mohammed Meri**, age 35, Qarawa Bani Zeid in Ramallah, West Bank, Fatah, also employed in the Palestinian Intelligence service. The victim was found stabbed to death in his house. Collaborators are suspected in his death.
- February 19, 2001** **15. Mahmud Suleiman al-Madani**, age 25, from Balata Refugee Camp near Nablus, West Bank, Hamas. Killed by gunfire, presumably from Israeli undercover units who shot from a car or from sniper fire from a nearby Israeli military post on Tel al Ras.
- April 2, 2001** **16. Muhammad 'Atawa Abd al-A'al**, age 26, resident of Rafah, Gaza Strip, Islamic Jihad. Killed by Apache helicopter-missile fire aimed at his car in Rafah in the Gaza Strip. An accompanying passenger was also severely wounded in the attack.
- 5 April 2001** **17. Iyad Mahmoud Nayef Hardan**, age 24, resident of Arraba, Jenin District, West Bank, Islamic Jihad. Killed in an explosion in a public phone booth in Arraba, Jenin, West Bank, near the Jenin Palestinian Authority headquarters. The victim was imprisoned in the nearby PA headquarters, but had rights to leave the prison to continue his studies. Hardan was known to utilize this public telephone upon leaving prison. This was the first assassination of its kind.
- May 5, 2001** **18. Ahmed Khalil As'ad Ayish**, age 38, from Irtas village, near Bethlehem, West Bank, Islamic Jihad. The victim was a representative in the coalition of National and Islamic Forces in the Bethlehem region. He was killed by sniper gunfire next to his home in Irtas, from an Israeli position established on an opposing mountainside that was subsequently dismantled after the assassination. Witnesses also reported the presence of a local masked man at the scene of the crime.

May 12, 2001

19. Mu'atasem Muhammad a-Sabbagh, age 26, from Jenin Refugee Camp, West Bank, Fatah. Killed by Israeli Apache helicopter missile-fire aimed at his car while he was driving it in the middle of the city of Jenin, West Bank.

Another Palestinian was also killed in the course of the assassination:

- **'Alam Nasri 'Abd a-Razeq al-Jaludi**, age 26, a Palestinian police officer from Kfar Faqu'a, Jenin, West Bank. Sabbagh was unable to get out of the car in time because he was handicapped as a result of an injury sustained in the first Intifada.

May 18, 2001

Eleven policemen were killed during a failed assassination attempt on Hamas activist, Mahmud Abu Hannoud, that involved the F-16 bombing of the Nablus prison in the West Bank where Abu Hannoud was being held. The victims were:

- **Khaled Mohammed Subuh**, age 21, Tayassir, Nablus
- **Ayman Ahmed Mohammed Khalil**, age 25, Naqoura, Nablus
- **Rifat Haydar Rabaya**, age 34, Maytheloun, Jenin
- **Nasri Nasser Hassan Yacoub**, age 22, Deir al Hatab, Nablus
- **Mutez Najeh Sakher Al Kahteeb**, age 23, Burin, Nablus
- **Fadi Said Abdel Rahem Sad**, age 23, Beit Dajan, Nablus
- **Ahmed Khaled Sadeq Khadr**, age 25, Qusin, Nablus
- **Wael Odeh Abdel Karim Abu Khadr**, age 29, Jadideh, Jenin
- **Fahd Khalaf Beni Odeh**, age 19, Tammoun, Jenin
- **Rami Saleh Abdel Aziz Yassin**, age 20, Asira Al Shimaliyeh, Nablus
- **Nabil Issam Ahmed Ismail**, age 22, Deir Al Ghusoun, Tulkarem

- June 24, 2001** **20. Osama Fathi Jawabra**, age 29, from Nablus, West Bank, Fatah.
Killed in an explosion of a device planted by Israel in a phone booth in the old city of Nablus, West Bank. This was the second use of this technique in and assassination.
- July 1, 2001** **21. Mouhamad Ahmad Suliman Bisharat**, age 28, from Tammoun, Tubas district, West Bank, Islamic Jihad. Killed by Apache helicopter rockets fired at his car while traveling towards Qabatiya, Jenin district. Also killed in the operation were:
22. Waleed Rasmi Sadeq Bisharat, age 20, from Beit Dajan, Nablus, Islamic Jihad
23. Sameh Nur Dhiab Abu Huneish, age 22, from Beit Dajan, Nablus, Islamic Jihad
- July 13, 2001** **24. Fawwaz Sherif Badran**, age 27, from Tulkarem, killed by a device planted in a car (not his own) on the streets of Tulkarem, West Bank that exploded as he passed by. This technique was first used when Israel killed the head of Force 17 in Beirut, Hasan Salameh in 1978.
- July 17, 2001** **25. Omar Ahmed Sa'ade**, age 43, from Bethlehem, West Bank, Hamas
26. Taha Issa al-'Aruj, age 37, from Bethlehem, West Bank, Hamas
Killed by helicopter-missile fire aimed at the house of 'Omar Sa'ade in Bethlehem. The Saadeh family was awaiting the return of a relative (Khaled Saadeh), from Megiddo prison where he had spent 3 years.
Other Palestinians killed in the course of the assassination were:
- **Ishaq Ahmed Mohammed Sa'ade**, age 51, from Bethlehem, West Bank, a peace and human rights activist in the joint Israeli Palestinian non-governmental organization, IPCRI

- **Mohamad Saleh Sa'adeh**, age 30, from Bethlehem, West Bank

July 23, 2001

- **Mustafa Youssef Hussein Yassin**, age 26, Anin, Jenin, West Bank.

Killed by undercover Israeli special forces agents pretending to be Palestinian chicken salesmen. The victim was shot in front of his house, after he was believed to be an Islamic Jihad activist that had sent a suicide bomber to Haifa that morning (one caught before carrying out the attack). Shortly after the incident, it became clear that the victim was the wrong person, whose only fault was that he took a service taxi that left the village that morning at the same time as the intended suicide bomber. This case is important as it demonstrates the speed with which the decision to assassinate can be made.

July 25, 2001

27. Salah Darawzeh, age 37, from Nablus, West Bank, political leader of Hamas. Representing a return to the assassination of political leaders, Darwazeh was a member of the coalition of National and Islamic Forces in the Nablus district. He was killed by 5 Israeli tank shells that struck his car from an Israeli military position located on Ebal mountain, north of Nablus.

July 30, 2001

28. Maher Jawabre, age 24, Fatah.

29. Abdu Rahman Mubarak, age 24, Fatah.

30. Abd el Karim Abu el Habl, age 27, Fara Camp, Fateh.

Killed upon the detonation of a large explosive device placed inside a garage that sold car parts in Wad el Fara, Tubas, West Bank.

Also killed during this assassination were:

- **Mohammed Taya**, Wad el Fara, the proprietor of the garage

- **Mounir Abu Jarour**, Fara Camp

- **Amin el Malik**, Tubas
Naseem Ishtayeh from Salem village, Nablus, West Bank was also injured in the assassination.

July 31, 2001

31. Jamal Mansour, age 47, Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus, West Bank Hamas political leader.

32. Jamal Salim Damouni, age 40, from 'Ein Beit El-Ma' Refugee Camp, Nablus, Hamas political leader. Both activists were killed by Apache helicopter-missile fire while at a Hamas media office in Nablus.

Also killed during the assassination were:

-**Uthman 'Abd al-Qader Qatanani**, age 25, from 'Askar Refugee Camp, Nablus, (in the office at the time of the attack), worked as a local journalist.

-**Muhammad 'Abd al-Karim al-Bishawi**, age 28, from Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus (in office at the time of the attack). Bishawi worked as a journalist at the al Najah University journalism department.

-**Fahim Ibrahim Mustafa Dawabsheh**, age 32, from Nablus, (in office at the time of the attack). Office manager.

-**Omar Mansour Muhammad Mansour**, age 28, from Balata Refugee Camp, Nablus (in office at the time of the attack), worked as Jamal Mansour's bodyguard.

- **Ashraf 'Abdel-Mun'em Khalil Abu Khader**, age 5, from al-Judeida, Jenin district. Killed while playing on the street outside the building.

- **Bilal 'Abd al-Mun'em Khalil Abu Khader**, age 7, killed in the same circumstances.

Two others in the office at the time of the strike were seriously wounded. These are: Ahmed Abu Shalal, age 34, who worked as a researcher for the International Solidarity Group for Human Rights, and Abdullah Abu Saleh.

August 5, 2001

33. 'Amer Mansur al-Hudeiri, age 23, from Tulkarem, West Bank, Hamas

Killed by Apache helicopter-missile fire while driving a car in the middle of Tulkarem

- August 13, 2001** **34. Nasser Ismain Jibril Abu Zeydiyeh**, age 21, Qalandiya refugee camp, West Bank, Fatah. Killed from fire by an undercover unit that waited for him to return in his car between Qalandiya refugee camp and Kufr Aqab. After the assassination, Israel accused the victim of being responsible for the killing of a settler from Pissgat Zeev.
- August 15, 2001** **35. Imad Sulieman Mahmoud Abu Sneineh**, age 25, Hebron, Fatah
Killed by fire from an undercover *mustaravim* unit in front of his house, in the early morning hours.

**List of Palestinians Killed in Unclear Circumstances and Possibly
Assassinated - September 29, 2000 to August 15, 2001**

"Unclear circumstances" denotes one of two possible explanations: that it is not clear that Israel is behind the death, even if Israeli might have used collaborators or that, even if it is clear that Israel is responsible for the death, it is unknown whether the victim was the intended target.

- December 14, 2000** **1. Sa'ed Ibrahim Taha al-Kharouf**, age 32, from Burin, Nablus, West Bank.
Killed by Israeli security forces gunfire in an ambush near Burin, apparently drawn to the location by someone who pretended to know him. Israel accused the victim of being a member of Islamic Jihad.
- December 18, 2000** **2. Rashid Haroun Abu Hassan**, age 35, Fara refugee camp, West Bank, Fatah. The victim disappeared for

three days before his body was found stabbed and partially buried in a building in Nur el Shams refugee camp in Tulkarem.

February 14, 2001

3. Abed Khaled Abu Harb, member of the Palestinian Navy killed in unclear circumstances, apparently caught in some kind of trap, near the village of Ramin, Jenin, West Bank.

February 25, 2001

4. Ramadan Ismain Azzam, age 33, Rafah, Popular Resistance Committees

5. Said Mahmoud Dabbas age 32, Rafah, Popular Resistance Committees

6. Samir Sabri Zorub, age 34, Rafah, Popular Resistance Committees

7. Yasser Ramdan Dabbas, age 18, Rafah, Popular Resistance Committees

All four victims were killed in a new assassination tactic where a suspicious cement block was planted and then detonated in a massive explosion. Witnesses said they saw an airplane flying overhead at the time of the explosion. It is not clear whether these four were the target of the assassination.

April 30, 2001

8. Hassan el Qadi, age 25, Ramallah, West Bank, Fatah.

The victim was alleged to be associated with the death of an Israeli teenager killed after being lured to Ramallah through the internet. Qadi was killed in a large explosion that destroyed the two-story house he was in.

Also killed during the explosion were two children:

- **Malak Jamal Barakat**, age 4

- **Shahid Jamal Barakat**, age 7

Israel claimed the explosion was the result of a work accident by el Qadi.

April 30, 2001

9. Hamdi Salim el Madhoun, age 21, Gaza, Hamas.

10. Mohammed Abd el Karim Abu Khaled, age 18,

Gaza, Hamas

Killed in a large explosion that completely destroyed the house the victims were in. Israel claimed the explosion was the result of a work accident. Witnesses reported the presence of an airplane overhead

July 20, 2001

11. Rajai Abu Rajab, age 30, Hebron, West Bank, Fatah

Killed in an explosion inside a Fatah building within Hebron. Israel claimed it as a work accident, while Palestinians claimed it to be the result of tank fire.

Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, JMCC was established in 1988 by a group of Palestinian journalists and researchers to provide information on events in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. JMCC's Jerusalem and Gaza offices provide a wide range of services to journalists, researchers, international agencies, individuals and organizations interested in obtaining reliable information on the Palestinian territory.