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### Tair's Palestinian peers

Gideon Levy, Haaretz



Abir Aramin

February 11, 2007

A child a week, almost every week. In recent weeks, I again went out to document the circumstances of the killing of several children and teenagers, shot dead by Israel Defense Forces soldiers. A very ill wind is once again blowing in the army and no one is saying anything about it. An army that kills children does not concern the public. No committee of inquiry has been, and none will be, formed to deal with this matter. But the fact that the IDF kills children with such a light hand, and fully supports its soldiers who do so, should trouble us no less than the reserves of war supplies in the North. The ramifications of such behavior are not only moral - ultimately an army's operational capability will be affected when children are the targets in its soldiers' gunsights.

Jamil Jibji, the boy from the Askar camp who loved horses, was shot in the head after soldiers in an armored jeep taunted a group of children who threw rocks at them. He was 14 years old. Jamil was the fourth child

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:: Autodeter-  
minazione e  
resistenza irakena

di Aldo  
Bernardini,  
Ordinario di  
Diritto  
internazionale  
all'Università di  
Teramo

:: ONU - XX  
Assemblea  
Generale (1965):  
La XX Assemblea  
Generale dell'ONU  
(1965) dichiara  
"la legittimità  
della lotta da  
parte dei popoli  
sotto oppressione  
coloniale, per  
esercitare il loro  
diritto all'  
autodeter-  
minazione e  
all'indipendenza".  
Inoltre,  
l'Assemblea invita  
"tutti gli Stati a  
fornire assistenza  
morale e  
materiale ai  
movimenti di  
liberazione  
nazionale nei  
territori coloniali".

:: ONU -  
Risoluzione 1514  
"L'Assemblea  
Generale dichiara  
che: la  
soggezione dei  
popoli a dominio  
straniero,  
conquista e  
asservimento  
costituisce una  
negazione dei  
diritti umani  
fondamentali, è  
contraria alla  
Carta delle  
Nazioni Unite ed è  
un impedimento  
alla promozione  
della pace e della  
cooperazione  
mondiali.  
Tutti i popoli  
hanno diritto all'  
autodeter-  
minazione; in  
virtù di tale diritto  
essi devono  
liberamente

to be shot in that area under similar circumstances. Abir, the daughter of Bassam Aramin, a member of the "Combatants for Peace" organization, was leaving her school in Anata when a Border Police patrol jeep turned around near the school - no one knows why - and tossed tear gas grenades, one of which apparently struck her head. She was 11 years old. Taha al-Jawi touched the fence nearby the abandoned airfield at Atarot and in response, soldiers fired at his legs with live ammunition, and apparently left him to bleed to death. He was the eighth child to die in similar circumstances. He was not yet 17 years old.

All of these children were killed in cold blood; they did not pose a threat to anyone's life. With the exception of Jamil's case, the IDF, as usual, did not even bother to open an investigation into these children's circumstances of death. When it doesn't even investigate, it is obvious that the army has no intention of putting an end to the killing of children. Its commanders are not even troubled by this.

The last case, Taha, is perhaps the most egregious of all: The IDF Spokesman's Office defends the decision to open fire with live ammunition against a group of children who perhaps damaged a barbed wire fence, as the IDF claims, or perhaps played soccer near the fence, as the children claim - all in broad daylight. Not a word of sorrow, not a word of condemnation, only absolute backing for live gunfire from a distance at unarmed children, without issuing a prior warning. Taha died from a bullet in his leg. And, according to his friends, he bled for a full hour in a muddy ditch he fell into. The IDF Spokesman's contention that he received immediate medical attention does not reconcile with the fact that Taha was wounded in his leg, an injury, which is only fatal as a result of a prolonged loss of blood. But even if assistance was extended immediately, as the IDF claims, are we willing to accept rules of engagement that permit live gunfire from a distance at unarmed teenagers? Are there no other means of dispersing "suspicious" teenagers, as the IDF Spokesman refers to them? What goes through the mind of a soldier who aims his weapon at such a group and fires live, fatal rounds at them, taking such young lives? And what chilling message is the IDF sending its soldiers when it backs such inhumane action?

These stories, and similar ones, did not raise a stir among us. Some of them were not even reported in the news. The killing of a Palestinian boy or girl does not disturb the Israeli public. The West Bank is quiet, there are almost no terror attacks, attention is turned to other affairs, and under the cover of this false and temporary quiet our soldiers, our best sons, are killing dozens of children and teenagers on a routine basis, out of the sight of the rest of us.

The horrible murder of Tair Rada in Katzrin justifiably shook the country. She was an innocent child, 13 years old, murdered at her school with satanic brutality. What is the difference between the murder of Tair and the killing of Abir, also at the entrance to her school? The difference between Tair and Abir consists of the fact that Abir was Palestinian and Tair was Israeli. Israeli? Taha also carried an Israeli identity card. But he was a Palestinian. Can someone seriously argue that the soldier who aimed at Jamil's head did not intend to kill him? The bereavement is the same bereavement; the horror is the same horror. Just as Tair was the joy of her parents' life, so was Abir - a small girl who wanted to be an engineer when she grew up. But while there are still doubts concerning the identity of Tair's murderer, it is very easy to identify the killers of Taha, Jamil and Abir. We do not even denounce them; they receive automatic immunity, without investigation. "The mark of Cain will not sprout on a soldier who fires at the head of a child, on the mound of dirt by the fence of a refugee camp," Aharon Shabtai wrote once in his poem "Culture."

Thus, our soldiers have killed 815 children and teenagers during the last



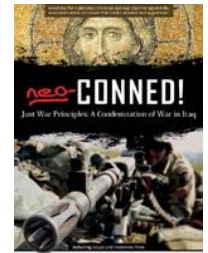
L'Impero si è  
fermato a  
Baghdad, by  
Valeria Poletti

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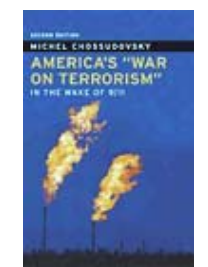
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seven years. The entire array of justifications for killing over 3,000 adults during the same period of time, which is also horrifying in its scope, collapses when it comes to children. Someone should listen to the emotional cry of the bereaved father from Anata, who said he is not going to lose his head because of the fact that he has lost his heart: "I don't want to take revenge. My revenge will be that this 'hero,' who was 'threatened' by my daughter and shot her, will stand trial. They send an 18-year-old boy with an M-16 and tell him that our children are his enemy, and he knows that no one will be brought to trial, and therefore he fires in cold blood and becomes a murderer." He says all this in his fluent Hebrew, which has improved during the course of his lectures throughout Israel about the need for peace.

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determinare il loro status politico e liberamente perseguire il loro sviluppo economico, sociale e culturale".

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La lotta armata può essere usata, come ultima risorsa, come mezzo per esercitare il diritto all' autodeterminazione.

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