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Israeli Organ Stealing - Harvesting Haitian Body Parts?

By Stephen Lendman

1-26-10

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On January 20, Lebanon's Al-Manar TV reported on the mission, citing a damning You Tube video posted by an American named T. West from a group called AfriSynergy Productions.

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Israel faced these charges before. In November 2009, Alison Weir's article in the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs headlined, "Israeli Organ Trafficking and Theft: From Moldova to Palestine." She cited an August Donald Bostrom article in Sweden's Aftonbladet suggesting that Israel

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"...Israeli organ harvesting - sometimes with Israeli governmental funding and the participation of high Israeli officials, prominent Israeli physicians, and Israeli ministries - have been documented for many years. Among the victims have been Palestinians."

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They pay "the poor and the hungry to slowly dismantle their bodies" or simply take what they want from fresh corpses. Body parts are commodities, to be harvested and sold to the rich, even though organ sales are prohibited in most countries, but not in international law.

Relevant International Law

The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime calls organ extraction for profit human exploitation. In 2008, Israel banned the practice, but it persists.

On October 13, 2009 at a UN press conference on the subject, Marja Ruotanen, Director of Cooperation of the Council of Europe, stated:

"We have legislation and definitions covering the trafficking in human beings for the purpose of organ removal, but the study points out that there is a legal vacuum for the traffic in organs, tissues and cells (OTC)."

Human trafficking for any purpose is a crime. Global instruments cover OTC trafficking, but missing are "internationally agreed-upon definitions within an international convention." One is needed that clearly defines the practice, protects donors, but prosecutes brokers, medical staff, and others engaging in it.

Chair of the Department of Medical Ethics of the University of Pennsylvania, Arthur Caplan, and Austria's Public Prosecutor, Carmen Prior, say many nations are taking steps to address the issue, emphasizing that OTC material should only be gotten by "voluntary altruism." In other words, donated, not sold for profit.

Caplan explained that "money for parts" violates "basic human dignity and medical ethics." It also exploits the poor, and they stay poor after the sale.

Also, their organ quality is usually low, and procedures used to extract them often harm buyers and sellers.

UN Secretary-General Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, Rachael Mayanja, didn't predict when the world body will begin work on a convention, but she hoped it would be soon. Discussions to this point are "just the beginning," she said, "and it gives us an impetus to go forward."

Kawther Salam - "The Body Snatchers of Israel"

Salam is a West Bank-based Palestinian journalist, active in reporting on human rights abuses by the Israeli military (IDF). In 2003, she was one of 28 writers in 13 countries to receive a Hellman/Hammett Grant from Human Rights Watch "in recognition of (her) courage in the face of political persecution."

On August 24, 2009, her above titled article presented what she "witnessed, saw, observed and heard during (her) 22 years of journalistic work under the Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza."

She states that from the early 1970s, the IDF kept bodies of Palestinians they killed, then later buried them in secret, numbered graves. In other cases, Israel's civil administration and military commanders returned corpses to families on condition they be buried immediately, late at night, for "security reasons."

They followed funeral processions in "armored grey cars," monitoring them through burial. Why so, asked Salam? "If the burial is normal, and the organs of the victims were not stolen, then why should they be buried in the dark of the night? The families of the victims all knew that they were receiving empty bodies, filled with cotton, to be buried in the middle of the night."

Salam said she "personally....witness(ed) Israeli soldiers and military vehicles kidnapping the bodies of dead Palestinians from (hospital) emergency rooms. In other cases, (she) saw the soldiers following the Palestinians to the cemetery, to steal the body from the family before burial. This practice became so widespread that many people started carrying the bodies of the murdered to be buried at home, in the garden, under the house or under trees, instead of waiting for the ambulance to take them to the hospital."

She said "everybody in Palestine" knows that Israel steals bodies for their organs. It was common IDF practice to "kidnap" Palestinians from emergency rooms in Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, Jenin, and most everywhere throughout Occupied Palestine, then transfer them to an Israeli hospital.

Her article lists names of IDF commanders and civil administration officials involved in the practice. "Everybody knew" they were doing it, yet their

families were told sincere efforts were made "to release the bodies of their relatives from the military headquarters," calling it a favor, when, in fact, their organs were stolen.

Perhaps "thousands of bodies and even people known to have been alive were transferred to the Abu Kabir" Forensic Institute near Tel Aviv, Israel's only autopsy facility involved in organ trafficking, a matter that became a scandal inside the country. Its director, Dr. Yehuda Hiss, admitted doing it, never was held accountable, and until recently remained the institute's chief pathologist.

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"accused of a long list of charges from inappropriate behavior as a medical professional to criminal acts such as the illegal sale of and dealings in organs and body parts, removing organs from deceased persons without consent, and misrepresenting organs in returned bodies."

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"in some cases (organs he took without consent were stuffed with) toilet paper rolls and metallic rods in their place to fill the voids and hide the theft of the organs. A court-ordered search of the institute revealed large supplies of stored organs illegally taken from bodies," thousands taken without permission.

During the first Intifada and other times, Salam said she "personally witnessed how the Israeli military were kidnapping Palestinian bodies and gravely injured people from the emergency room of Princess Alia hospital in Hebron (and dead bodies from) Al-Ahli hospital." The area was declared a military zone, the hospitals surrounded and invaded, and no one was allowed to move inside them.

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According to the Palestinian National Authority (PA) Director of the Department of Statistics, Abed Al-Naser Ferwana, many Palestinians were murdered in detention during the second Intifada, their bodies kept in secret

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Israeli "Transplant Tourism"

Rich Israelis take advantage, availing themselves of what's called "transplant tourism," traveling wherever a needed organ can be found, sometimes from fresh corpses, usually from the desperately poor.

The Israeli government acts as facilitator, providing subsidies of up to \$80,000 for "transplant holidays." According to Scheper-Hughes, Israeli officials exhibit "amazing tolerance....toward outlawed 'transplant tourism.' "

She said the Israeli Ministry of Defense is involved in a practice by which "bodies are broken, dismembered, fragmented, transported, processed, and sold in the interests of a more socially advantaged population....," Israel engaging in more of this globally than any other nation.

Its medical teams apparently are doing it in Haiti, exploiting fresh corpses and the living. The Manar TV cited You Tube said "there are people operating in Haiti who do not have a conscience and are members of the search and rescue teams, including the Israeli occupation forces," far from home harvesting Haitian organs, and the pickings are plentiful.

Apparently, the publicity about providing humanitarian aid is cover for this illicit operation, another crime against humanity among Israel's growing list, matched and exceeded by its Washington benefactor with generations more practice.

Stephen Lendman is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization. He lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to the Lendman News Hour on RepublicBroadcasting.org Monday - Friday at 10AM US Central time for cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on world and national issues. All programs are archived for easy listening.

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