

# Israel's Moral Suicide

## The Fate of Yousef al-Rammouni

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*Abu Dis, home to descendants of Salah ad-Din, lies 3.8 kms from the Old City of Al Quds\* which can be seen over the obscenity of the [Annexation Wall](#) from homes on the village hilltops.*

To its east, the imposing ranges of Al-Ghor \*\* change from luminous cream to deep caramel in rhythm with the day's light: the magnificence is scabbed by the cancerous spread of Israel's colonial melanomas of Ma'ali Adumim (industrial site of Sodastream and Teva), Kfar Adumin, Qedar and Jabal.

On November 17, 2014, the earth of Abu Dis awaited the final homecoming of its son Yousef al-Rammouni whose tortured body had been further desecrated with lies by the Israeli coroner. The sky over the village wept.

The previous evening, like many preceding evenings, Yousef, 32, bid goodnight to his wife, Shireen and his little boys, Mohammed 6 and Jihad 3, then crossed to West Jerusalem for his 9.20 pm shift at the Egged Bus depot at Har Hotzivim where he was a valued driver for five years.

The grieving father of the young man, Abu Yousef, a respected resident and tailor in Abu Dis told [Dr Rima Najjar](#) a neighbour and lecturer at the local Al Quds University, that,

Yousef, like his two brothers, was a good boy and grew up following his father's footsteps of hard work and a family-centered existence. When he worked at the mechanics shop before applying for and getting a job at Egged as a bus driver, people so appreciated his work and helpful manners, they would call him from the road when they had a car breakdown.

At Egged, where his brother Yahya was also employed (Yahya resigned a few days ago afraid for his safety), he was known for his reliability and safe driving, so much so that when he was attacked by racist Jewish thugs for the second time and decided to quit, the company begged him to return after a week off and gave him a different route at his request.

Both of the attacks that Yousef endured happened recently after the kidnapping and murder of Mohammed Abu Khdeir, 16, on July 2nd (Mohammad was forced into a car on an East Jerusalem street and later brutally immolated). On the first occasion, Yousef's bus was stopped by thugs and the glass was smashed. But his Jewish passengers intervened and called the bus company, who came quickly to the scene.

Yousef was given another bus and reassurances for his safety. On the second occasion, large rocks blocked Yousef's bus and he was forced to stop. He tried to flee, abandoning the bus (which was empty) to the thugs, but was chased and beaten. A bystander called the police, which came and rescued him. Yousef wrote about the incident on his Facebook wall.

At 10 pm, on Sunday 16th, Yousef was found lynched with a thin cord in his bus by a [fellow driver](#) who was "waiting for him with two cups of tea, but after he realised his friend hadn't emerged from the bus he went in to check. "When I approached the bus, I knocked on the window assuming Al Ramouni was sleeping or that it was a joke, but I noticed that Al Ramouni was tied to his seat," said the colleague... He said it was only then that he realised that Al Ramouni was hanged. "I started shouting hysterically and many drivers gathered at the scene and opened the bus to reach Al Ramouni,"

Typically, in matters of Palestinian criminal deaths, Israeli police released misinformation blaming the victim, in this case stating falsely that Yousef committed suicide.

Inevitably, an Israeli autopsy reaffirmed this falsehood however [Dr. Saber al-Aloul](#), a Palestinian pathologist present at the same post-mortem at the request of the al-Rammouni's family, later said that the autopsy did not suggest suicide but rather an "organized criminal murder."

According to Dr al-Aloul - the autopsy showed postmortem lividity on the back, not on the lower extremities, indicating that Yousef was not dangling when he died. There was "no dislocation of the first vertebrae, which is usually found in cases of suicide by hanging," he added. The family posted [images](#) of Yousef's body

Mustasem Fageeh, a Palestinian driver who worked with Yousef, said he saw Yousef's body hanging from a bar above the steps over the back of the bus, in an area that would have been impossible for him to reach and hang himself alone.

Significantly, retired British surgeon, Dr David Halpin, in a [letter](#) to the BBC wrote: "The circle of the bruised/killed skin is low on the neck. I am NOT a forensic pathologist but say a. hanging is most unlikely b. garrotting is much more likely. The 'ligature' is closed from the back. Whatever - the greatest evil has been done to a native of Palestine. His suffering would have been terrible."

Dr Halpin included a [US army training video](#) to support his observation that garrotting is a skill acquired in elite forces. Israeli elite forces such as Sayaret Matkal, Shayetet 13, Duvdevan, Palsars from Golani, Givati Nahal Paratroopers train in Krav Maga martial art skills that includes garrotting. Given that the vast majority of Israeli adults have served or are serving in the military, there is a vast pool of suspects to draw from with Yousef's Jewish extremist co-workers at the top of the list.

So far CCTV footage from the bus depot, that might resolve the incident one way or the other, has not been released to Abu-Yousef's lawyer. What's more, the cover-up and waves of violent attacks prompted, on December 12, 100 Arab bus drivers quit their jobs at Egged because "it's better to earn less money and not come home in a body bag."

Ultimately, Yousef's family are the truest authority on Yousef's outlook on life: Dr Najjar writes,

“No, it wasn’t suicide. Yousef had everything to live for. His younger son’s birthday (Mohammad, 4) was on the Friday following his murder. He and his wife, who live in al-Tour neighborhood in Jerusalem were planning a party for the occasion and he had already bought the food, meat and dried yogurt for the mansaf and a large pot.

He was also planning to sign his oldest son’s school certificate on that day.

Yousef’s oldest son Jihad is six years old, a first-grader at Dar al Awlad in Jerusalem. The school issues a report every two months that the parents must sign.

The two boys are still in denial about their father’s sudden absence. Mohammad keeps hiding things, insisting that no one should use them because they belong to his father. Jihad, his grandfather says, heated the boiler the other day and told his mother, his father will need to take a bath when he got back.

His dream was to educate his children - one a doctor and one a lawyer, and to make sure that they owned their homes, not rented as he had been forced to do. He and his brother Yahya planned to save enough to buy their own taxi to work, one taking the morning shift and one taking the night shift.”

This sickening murder of a young father who simply went to work to care for his family is not just a family affair, it is a Palestinian affair. The black hole of grief-shock-anger-fear--helplessness that sucked in every desolate mourner in Abu Dis, seeped into every Palestinian home and heart.

According to Dr Najjar, Yousef’s father ‘brought up his three sons in a very difficult political situation to keep their heads down and follow the rules, however unjust they were”.

But deep down everyone knows that all of Palestine is Israel’s kill zone. No Palestinian is exempt. No one escapes the maze of dead-ends set up by Israel, the US, the UN, the EU, Australia, Canada, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority that blocks every hope of safety, freedom and justice.

Carte blanche impunity is Israel’s blindfold preventing each Zionist from looking in the mirror and seeing his /her colonist devolution from a human being to racist savage. As with Nazi colonialism, Israel’s flyblown myths of military might and Jewish supremacy that supposedly legitimise its fascist oppression actually spawn maggots of self-hate projected in hate-crimes and insane atrocities against the people of Palestine.

Yousef al-Rammouni did not commit suicide. He was murdered, and his father, like any father, wants, at the very least, the integrity of his son’s life respected through a non prejudicial criminal justice system.

Yousef al-Rammouni did not commit suicide - but the day Zionism launched its colonial occupation and oppression of Palestine, that is when the colonisers, past and present, committed moral suicide.

\* Jerusalem \*\* Jordan Valley

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2005 then withdrew on principle. Vacy was convenor of Australia East Timor Association and coordinator of the East Timor Justice Lobby as well as serving in East Timor with UNAMET and UNTAET from 1999-2001.

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