

Did Israel Kill Arafat?

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In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

On November 11, 2004, Arafat died in a Paris hospital. He was 75. He was hospitalized for an undiagnosed illness.

After developing, it worsened. He deteriorated badly. He needed special care. On November 3, he slipped into a coma. Days later he died.

Previous articles discussed his death. It wasn't accidental. It wasn't natural. Credible evidence points to assassination.

Israel wanted him eliminated. He became more liability than asset. His former aide, Hani al-Hassan, said he personally witnessed 13 attempts on his life.

Arafat said he survived 40 attempts. In 1985, he narrowly escaped an Israeli air attack on his Tunisian headquarters. It killed 73 people. He went jogging shortly before Israel struck.

In December 2001, Israeli missiles struck his Ramallah compound. He was rushed to safety shortly before the attack.

An Israeli military spokesman called the strike a warning. It sent a message. Arafat was marked for death.

At the time, he was a virtual prisoner inside his presidential compound (the Mukataa). Medical reports showed him in good health. Close associates said Ariel Sharon wanted him dead.

As defense minister in 1982, he failed trying to kill him during Israel's siege of Beirut. He let Phalangist fascists do his dirty work. He called slaughtering Palestinians "ridding the world of international terrorism."

Evidence suggests Sharon succeeded. At the time, the second Intifada was raging. Sharon declared war Palestinian freedom fighters.

"We must fight this terrorism, in an uncompromising war to uproot these savages, to dismantle their infrastructure because there is no compromise with terrorists," he said.

"This terrorism is activated, coordinated and directed by one man, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat."

He was targeted for elimination. Sharon awaited Washington's approval. Labor party MK Haim Ramon said:

"Sharon wants Arafat to disappear and for a moderate Palestinian leadership to replace

him.”

“What is happening is what we see now: the de facto destruction of what is left of the Palestinian Authority and Israel’s full or almost full re-occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.”

At the time, Netanyahu was Sharon’s chief rival. He called for “total military victory.”

“First, we must dismantle the Palestinian authority and (eliminate) Arafat. Second, we must encircle the main Palestinian population centers, purge them of terrorists, and eradicate the terrorist infrastructure.”

“Third, we must establish security separation lines that will allow Israeli armed forces to enter Palestinian territory, but prevent Palestinian terrorists from entering our towns and cities.”

Netanyahu, Sharon and other Israeli hardliners wanted Palestinian resistance entirely destroyed.

They wanted totally subservient PA leadership replacing it. They chose Abbas to replace Arafat.

Once Washington approved, they killed him. They chose the time, place and method. They thought they covered their tracks. They were wrong.

Veteran Israeli journalist/Sharon confidant/one time spokesman Uri Dan believed Sharon killed Arafat.

He discussed it in his book titled [“Ariel Sharon: An Intimate Portrait.”](#) He believed George Bush approved it. He said Arafat was poisoned.

His longtime physician, Dr. Ashraf al-Kurdi, believed it. On August 12, 2007, [Haaretz](#) headlined “Arafat’s doctor: There was HIV in his blood, but poison killed him.”

Al-Kurdi was a former Jordanian health ministry official. The Jordanian news site Amman quoted him. He said HIV was injected into Arafat’s bloodstream shortly before his death. Poison killed him.

Al-Kurdi was initially suspicious, saying:

“I would usually be summoned to attend to Arafat immediately, even when all he had was a simple cold. But when his medical situation was really deteriorating, they chose not to call me at all.”

After his death, al-Kurdi was denied access to his body. He demanded a French government inquiry.

In September 2005, he said “any doctor would tell you that (Arafat’s symptoms reflected) poisoning.”

Before he was flown to Paris, he’d lost half his body weight. Reddishness covered his face. His overall coloring was metallic yellow.

There was little doubt he was poisoned. It was slow-acting. It took its time killing him.

On October 12, 2004, he became suspiciously ill after ingesting a meal. Initial symptoms were nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Hours earlier he was in good health. Scientists called acute gastrointestinal symptoms “compatible with ingestion of a large quantity of radioactivity.”

“No other cause to explain the onset of the symptoms could be identified.”

Al-Kurdi initially diagnosed flu. Arafat’s health deteriorated. Tunisian doctors were flown in to see him. They weren’t able to determine the source of his illness.

On October 29, he was helicoptered to Jordan. A French government plane awaited him. He was flown to Paris for emergency treatment.

French doctors couldn’t diagnose his illness. He deteriorated further. On November 3, he lapsed into coma. On November 11, he died.

No autopsy was conducted. No cause of death was announced. His medical records weren’t released.

Suspicious of foul play surfaced. In July 2012, his widow, Suha, ordered his body exhumed.

Al [Al Jazeera](#) published new information, saying:

“A nine-month investigation suggests that the late Palestinian leader may have been poisoned with polonium.”

His personal belongings were examined. They included his clothes, kaffiyeh and toothbrush. Polonium traces were found.

It’s a rare highly radioactive metalloid. It’s chemically similar to tellurium and bismuth. It’s found in uranium ores.

It’s around 109 times more toxic than hydrogen cyanide. Its main hazard is radioactivity. It’s most lethal when ingested or inhaled.

It’s hard to detect. It doesn’t emit gamma rays. It emits only alpha particles. Normal radiation detectors don’t recognize them. Hospital equipment only detects gamma rays.

Ingesting or inhaling alpha particles causes significant radiation damage. Special equipment is needed to recognize them.

Switzerland’s Radiophysique (SR) analyzed Arafat’s belongings. Blood, sweat, saliva and urine samples were obtained. Tests confirmed abnormal polonium levels.

At the time, SR director Dr. Francois Bochud said:

“I can confirm to you that we measured an unexplained, elevated amount of unsupported polonium-210 in the belongings of Mr. Arafat that contained stains of biological fluids.”

Israel wanted Abbas as Palestine's new president. In 2004, he was complicit in covering up what happened. Polonium poisoning deaths are rare.

Tests SR performed confirmed abnormally high contamination. It didn't come from natural sources. French doctors who treated Arafat were told not to discuss his case.

Israel had motive, opportunity and expertise to kill him. Mossad operatives are assassination experts. They've had decades of practice. Most attempts succeed. Some fail.

Hamas political leader Khaled Mashal was lucky. In 1997, he was in Amman. Mossad agents targeted him. They sprayed poison in his ear. He survived.

On November 6, [Al Jazeera](#) headlined "Exclusive: Swiss study says Polonium found in Arafat's bones."

Scientists examined his remains. They found levels at least 18 times above normal. It's clear evidence he was poisoned.

Lausanne-based University Centre of Legal Medicine published a 108-page report. Al Jazeera obtained a copy.

Unnaturally high polonium levels were found in Arafat's ribs, pelvis, and "soil stained with his decaying organs."

His body was exhumed from a Ramallah mausoleum. Last November, Swiss, French and Russian scientists obtained body samples.

According to Al Jazeera:

"Dave Barclay, a renowned UK forensic scientist and retired detective (said) results (showed) Arafat was poisoned.

"Yasser Arafat died of polonium poisoning," he said. "We found the smoking gun that caused his death. What we don't know is who's holding the gun at the time."

It doesn't take a leap of faith to hold Israel responsible. It bears repeating. It had motive, opportunity and expertise.

It wanted Arafat eliminated. It wanted Abbas installed to replace him. It rigged his election to assure it. Nearly five years after his term expired, he remains Palestinian president.

In 2005, he lacked legitimacy. He has none now. He's Israel's man. He's well rewarded for services rendered.

According to Barclay:

"The level of polonium in Yasser Arafat's rib is about 900 milibecquerels. That is either 18 or 36 times the average, depending on the literature."

Barclay believes proving who killed Arafat won't be easy. He died nine years ago. It's a cold case. If his death was more recent, "you'd have witnesses and cell phone records, emails, bank transfers," he said.

Today, this type information is hard to get. Israel is expert at covering its tracks. It doesn't always succeed. Arafat wasn't the first leader it eliminated.

In February 2005, compelling real time intercepted video and audio evidence showed Israel killed Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

Washington blamed Syria. Assad denied responsibility. Hezbollah was later falsely blamed. Israel bore full responsibility.

It remains unaccountable. Its rap sheet includes decades of targeted assassinations as well as crimes of war, against humanity and slow-motion genocide. Palestinian suffering persists.

On November 5, Suha Arafat got a copy of SR's report. "I'm mourning Yasser again," she said. "It's like you just told me he died."

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