

Israel's IDF Forces Kill Hebron Peace Activist, Hashem Azzeh

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Hashem Azzeh was the Israeli government's worst nightmare.

First, he was Palestinian. Second, he was educated, a medical doctor. Third, he was a leader in his community. Which brings us to his next offense, he was a peace activist. Finally, and perhaps most aggravating for the Israeli state, he adamantly refused to be forced from his home in Hebron's Old City – though the IDF and Israeli settlers, who lived in houses perched right above his, [never tired of using intimidation and violence to try and push Hashem and his young family from their home.](#)

IDF soldiers are a constant presence in the Old City, providing cover for the approximately 500 Israeli settlers who lord over and terrorize the tens of thousands of Palestinians who live in this part of Hebron.

Today, October 21, [those soldiers killed Hashem Azzeh.](#)

He [managed a psychological support group for members of his community](#), encouraging them to speak about the trauma that was a part of their daily lives. Together with his wife, Nisreen, he created a social enterprise for Hebron's young Palestinian women, helping them to learn skills and earn money to support themselves and their families.



Hashem Azzeh and his wife, Nisreen (date unknown)

When members of his community were in need of help, Hashem was there to support them. In July, [we published an article about one of the people touched by Hashem's caring character: eighty-year-old Zahirah Eweidah Dandees.](#) Known as "Um Mohammad," she is among the countless Palestinians in Hebron "[who have been victims of the settler-state repression machine.](#)"

Recently, Um Mohammed was forced from her home by settlers, and refused re-entry by the IDF, who barred the front door of her house. Homeless and without any close family in the city, Um Mohammed found a friend in Hashem, who arranged for her to stay in a house across the street from her own, ensuring the elderly woman had a roof over her head. Hashem also helped Um Mohammed secure legal representation to undertake the lengthy court battle to try and get her house back.



Hashem Azzeh and Um Mohammad, Hebron's Old City, 2015 (Photo credit: Muftah)

In many ways, Hashem was Hebron's unofficial spokesperson. Only this past Saturday, October 17, he [was quoted in a piece for the Middle East Eye](#), describing the impunity with which settlers in the Old City have been killing young Palestinians: "The settlers feel confident that they have a free pass to kill Palestinians here," he said. "We have asked the soldiers to help stop the settlers but they said it's not their role and that we should leave the city."

(Hashem Azzeh describing the violence he and his family experienced at the hands of Israeli settlers and the IDF)

Hashem would regularly give tours of the Old City to internationals, educating them about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, generally, and his city, more specifically. He was bold and would not shy away from standing a few feet from an armed IDF soldier and recounting, for tour participants, the Israeli government's litany of violations and crimes against the Palestinians.

One of Hashem's many friends (he was a man who made friends so easily) had this to say about his passing:

The heart is heavy tonight upon the news of Hashem Azzeh passing away little over 2 hours ago through tear gas inhalation fired upon him by the Israeli army.

He was a man who showed the world the courage and resistance of Palestine.

He stood for what he believed and that belief inspired a generation.

He rejected millions from the Israeli government to sell his land, his land was his pride and his pride was Palestine.

I remember him talking to us in his home in Hebron where his wife made us the most amazing food. He told us of his struggle, his battle to simply survive each day. Israeli settlers poisoned his trees, cut off the water supply, fired upon his home, they broke into his house and beat him and his wife, Nisreen, causing her to miscarry her baby on two separate occasions, I could go on.

But today his pain is gone forever but he left a legacy that will forever survive.

My heart bleeds for his family, I pray Allah protects them from the evil they have endured.

May you finally find your peace Hashem and may Allah grant you the highest of heavens.

Palestine will be free.

Another friend, Milla Katerina Tuominen said this:

It was just couple of months ago when I visited Hashem and his family at Tel Rumeida settlement in Hebron (al-Khalil). Today I heard that this old Palestinian man had been killed by tear gas from the Israeli army. He was a medical doctor who had founded a voluntary clinic in his neighborhood. He was famous for inviting everyone to his house regardless their religious or ethnic background and served as a perfect example of non-violent resistance despite having faced a lot of violence and hardship himself. Unfortunately his killers will never face any consequences for their actions. I want to convey my sincere condolences to his wife and four children.

Yet another friend, who asked to be identified as “Yasmin,” said this about Hashem:

This is my friend Hashem Azzeh. A husband, a father and an inspiration to all. He was killed today by the Israeli Occupation Forces in Occupied Hebron. I feel so incredibly honoured to have known someone so courageous and so determined to free the people of Palestine and resist the oppressor. I cannot even begin to put into words how special he was; there’s no doubt about it, he truly touched the heart of every individual he ever met. He’s daily life was spent informing people about the struggle to live in an apartheid city where being Arab means you are constantly subject to violence and abuse by illegal armed settlers. Today is truly a loss for Palestine, but In the words of Hashem “we will win, we will be free” [#freepalestine](#) [#الله یرحمه](#)

In killing Hashem Azzeh, the Israeli government has undoubtedly removed a thorn from its side. But Hashem’s work does not end with his life. There are tens of thousands of people in Palestine who will carry it forward. His legacy will remain vibrant and alive, through them, no matter how hard the Israeli government may try and eliminate the Hashem’s of the world.

For those interesting in doing more, friends of Hashem Azzeh have created a [Facebook page](#) and started a [GoFundMe fundraiser](#) to support Hashem’s wife and 4 young children.



Read more about Hashem’s life and work, [here](#) and [here](#).

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