

Video: Israelis Shoot Motionless Arab Woman

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In the age of phone cameras, we have become increasingly used to photos and videos of Palestinians in the West Bank being shot by soldiers in unjustifiable circumstances.

Think of 18-year-old Hadeel Hashlamon, who was [killed](#) late last month at a checkpoint in Hebron. A series of photos of her suggest, in the words of Amnesty International, that she was “executed” by the soldiers there. She was shot multiple times and left to bleed to death.

The army claimed she had a knife, which they photographed on the ground nearby. But whether she was carrying the knife or it was planted there, still an issue that has not been resolved, the more important point is this: she posed no threat, let alone a lethal one, to anyone when she was killed.

Now we have a disturbing video of a similar shooting but this time not in the occupied territories. This occurs inside Israel and the victim is an Israeli citizen – a member of the country’s Palestinian minority, which comprises a fifth of Israel’s population.

Israa Abed, a 30-year-old mother of three from Nazareth, was shot today at the central bus station in Afula, close to Nazareth. She was surrounded by many soldiers, police and what appear to be armed Israeli civilians. The soldiers there are probably passengers on the many buses that pass through Afula.

The Israeli media initially reported that she was shot while trying to stab a security guard. The video (below) shows that to be definitively not the case. She is shot after long moments of standing apparently terrified in the bus station, in what looks like a state of all-consuming panic, as more and more people point their guns at her.

From the quality of this video it is near-impossible to know whether she is holding a knife. But it is possible to see that, like Hashlamon, she poses no threat to any of the soldiers when she is shot. That point is underlined by the fact that several soldiers and policemen move closer to her, not away from her, in the final moments before she is shot. She does little more than sway throughout the video, appearing to turn when a policeman runs directly towards her as several gun shots ring out on the sound track.

Fortunately, she appears to have survived the shooting and is reported to be in a stable condition in hospital.

But this video is troubling for several reasons.

First, and most obviously, this woman was shot when she posed no immediate threat. The person or people who opened fire did so with no possible justification, apart from their own fears. One cannot help wondering whether the ease with which Israeli Jews shoot Palestinians, whether fellow citizens of Israel or victims of the occupation, reflects long-dominant discourses in the Israeli education system, media and politics that dehumanise “Arabs”.

Second, the shooting seems to occur not because the armed people around her fear they are in danger, but because the group push themselves into a collective frenzy about the alleged knife. In this kind of atmosphere, someone is going to pull the trigger sooner or later.

This is very similar to another recent video, in which a group of religious (and unarmed) Jews chase after Fadi Alloun in a large open area in Jerusalem calling for him to be shot. When security forces turn up, the [video](#) shows police opening fire, apparently on the orders of the crowd, killing him. Again, Alloun does not appear to be posing a threat to anyone at the time he is shot.

Third, Israeli politicians, including the mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, have [called on](#) Israeli Jewish civilians to carry their weapons at all times and be ready to use them. This video shows where this policy is likely to lead: summary justice carried out by the most unhinged link in the security chain.

Fourth, it is a deeply worrying new trend inside Israel that Jewish civilians are starting to mimic the settlers in the occupied territories in believing they should be carrying out revenge attacks themselves. Today, a Jewish man in Dimona [stabbed](#) four Palestinians, two of them Israeli citizens. This video offers a vivid illustration of the mood of victimhood that is sweeping Israel, one that makes Israelis fast on the trigger and ready to play the role of avenging angel.

It is bad enough that Palestinians in Israel have to face security forces that treat them like an enemy. But things will get much, much worse when even the highly prejudicial rule of law in Israel is replaced by the lynch mob.

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