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## ***Netanyahu's murdered Bibas children lie unravels after it was championed by Trump and world's media***

In the latest example of Zionism's resort to the "big lie" technique pioneered by Hitler, the far-right government of indicted war criminal Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have claimed that Palestinian fighters brutally killed two small Israeli children, whose bodies were recently returned to Israel, "with their bare hands".



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends a press conference in the Kirya military base in Tel Aviv, Israel, October 28, 2023. [AP Photo/Abir Sultan]

Their aim is to portray the Palestinians in general and Hamas in particular as monsters whose savagery fully justifies Israel's war of extermination, while also covering for the Israeli government's own criminal neglect of the hostages.

From the start, Netanyahu and his far-right coalition allies showed nil interest in the hostages, other than to make use of them for propaganda purposes, with the Bibas family, and father Yarden, becoming the focus of a huge campaign to vilify Hamas and secure their release, featuring orange balloons to symbolize the redheaded boys.

The 4-year-old Ariel and 9-month-old Kfir were taken hostage with their mother Shiri on October 7 by the Mujahideen Brigades, a lesser-known Palestinian faction. The Brigades' commander said, "Upon her capture, we placed Shiri's children with her out of compassion, provided them with a safe and comfortable shelter, and treated them humanely as our Islamic faith commands".

Backing up the Palestinian commander's statement is video footage of the Bibas abduction, first broadcast two days after the kidnapping by US broadcaster NBC—with audio removed. It appears to show the abductors' leader telling his men to take care of the mother and children and make sure they were not harmed and telling the family to "calm down" and "Don't worry, we are people with humanity".

The children's dead bodies were handed over to the Israeli authorities on February 20. Shiri's body was also returned, after an initial mix up—amid the turmoil of the mass destruction of Gaza—that saw the return of an unidentified Palestinian woman instead.

This prompted the IDF to declare, "This is a violation of utmost severity by the Hamas terrorist organization, which is obligated under the agreement to return four deceased hostages." Netanyahu bellowed that Hamas would pay a "full price" for the "cruel and malicious violation" of the deal. He used this as an excuse to delay the release of more than six hundred Palestinian hostages detained without charge or trial in Israel.

The children's father, Yarden, who had also been captured and held separately, was released alive on February 1. He had earlier issued an emotional plea from captivity in Gaza for Netanyahu to secure the release of the bodies of his family, saying, "Bibi [Netanyahu's nickname], you destroyed my family. You killed my wife and my children, everything in my life... I am begging you, please bring my wife and my children home."

This tragedy could easily have been avoided. But the Netanyahu government rejected offers from Hamas in October 2023 to release all civilian (but not military) hostages: the first to stop an Israeli assault on Gaza and the second to secure an end to the bombing. Israel continued its bombardment of Gaza.

Shiri and the children were expected to be included in a deal agreed 22 November 2023 that would release 150 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails in exchange for 50 Israeli women and children hostages. However, they were killed during Israeli airstrikes in the days after the

agreement. When Hamas offered to release the children's father Yarden along with the three bodies. Israel refused, insisting this was "propaganda" and that the living female hostages be released before the dead.

This stand makes clear that Israel knew the three were dead. But as late as last month, the Israeli military said it was "gravely concerned" about them. It was not until February 21 that IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari conceded in a television interview that the Israeli military had intelligence that the two Bibas children were already dead "no later than November 2023".

Nonetheless, the government continued its campaign of lies and disinformation, to the extent of releasing a video claimed to be of the family in Khan Younis, and calling for their release. For fully 14 months, the Netanyahu government maintained the fiction that the mother and two children were still alive. When their bodies were returned, IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari dismissed Hamas's statement that they had been killed in Israeli airstrikes as "lies". He brazenly lied that they "were brutally murdered by terrorists in captivity in November 2023".

Hagari said they were killed "in cold blood" with "bare hands." He added, "Afterwards, they [the terrorists] committed horrific acts to cover up these atrocities", involving mutilating their corpses to simulate death during an Israeli bombardment. He called on the world to condemn the "barbaric act of terror" committed against the youngest Israeli hostages. Hagari claimed this was based on both forensic evidence and intelligence but provided not a single scrap of evidence to support this. Israeli officials later said that the children's mother Shiri had been similarly "brutally" murdered by her captors in November 2023.

The next day, Dr Chen Kugel, head of the Israeli Institute for Forensic Medicine, issued a short video that purported to back Hagari's claim. But instead of presenting supporting evidence, he merely claimed, "There is no evidence of harm due to bombing", without saying what they did die of.

Netanyahu followed with a speech to soldiers at an officer graduation ceremony. He declared, "They [Hamas] murdered Shiri and her children in cold blood... they choked the young children with their bare hands, and if they only could, they would murder us all with the same cruelty."

Netanyahu's claims were widely regurgitated and amplified uncritically by the domestic and international media to whip up a foul atmosphere, with the Israeli government using this barefaced lie to whip up another anti-Palestinian "atrocities" campaign.

Its allies in Washington backed Netanyahu's lies to the hilt, with US President Donald Trump saying February 21 that he would be "fine" if Netanyahu decided to resume military hostilities in Gaza. Netanyahu "would like to go in, and he's just so angry, and he should be. If he's not angry, then there'd be something wrong with him, frankly. He is very angry; he's a very angry man at what happened, especially what happened yesterday with these kids. It's so barbaric. You wouldn't think that would happen in the modern age, but it happened."

The international Zionist press excoriated the Palestinians' cruelty and called for the alleged perpetrators of the brutal murders to be eliminated. In London, Jewish leaders condemned as "shameful" London Mayor Sadik Khan's failure to light up London landmarks in honour of the Bibas family, as in Rio de Janeiro, New York, Berlin and Paris, following Israel's call to light up landmarks around the world in orange, in their memory.

This filthy campaign elicited a furious response from the Bibas family, despite their apparent acceptance of the narrative of murder.

Ofri Bibas, the children's aunt, said "There is no forgiveness for abandoning them on October 7, and no forgiveness for abandoning them in captivity". In an accusation directed at Netanyahu, she added, "We did not receive an apology from you in this painful moment". Revealing details about the family's cause of death was "abuse for its own sake of a family that has gone through 16 months of hell and still has the worst ahead. So if I could say one thing to everyone on behalf of the Bibas family, just shut up".

The family sent a cease-and-desist letter, demanding Netanyahu and other government ministers and bodies refrain from publishing information about the deceased before they received the official forensic report.

Their lawyers stressed that releasing details on the deaths should only be done by the family, calling on the media to "stop adding details to the fact that Shiri and the kids were murdered by their captors" and requested that no representatives of the government attend the funeral held on February 26 and attended by thousands of mourners. They warned against using the children as an excuse to restart the war amid uncertainty over moving to the next phase of the deal, due to start soon.

The corporate and state media has glossed over all of this, just as they have never retracted the lies and deceit that has surrounded Israel's war propaganda, including Israeli claims that they and their US allies had no intelligence about the October 7 attack; the use of the Hannibal Directive by the IDF that killed around 360 of the 1,140 Israeli victims of the October 7 attack to prevent the capture of hostages; the horrific and fabricated stories of the "mass" and "systematic" rape and sexual abuse of Israeli women; the lurid and mendacious

claims about the slaughter, beheading, and cooking in an oven of babies; and Netanyahu's refusal to negotiate a hostage deal in good faith, turning down a hostage/ceasefire deal last summer that was identical to the one agreed in January.

Instead, the mainstream media continues to repeat the lies long after they have been exposed as complete fabrications.