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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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26.12.2024

The West Bank's Men of the CIA – Why is the PA

Killing Palestinians in Jenin?



Image by Tahir osman.

Following a ten-day siege, the Palestinian Authority began, on December 14, a violent raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank.

The PA security forces used similar tactics as used by the Israeli occupation forces in their routine attacks on the area.

The camp, which is a mere half a square kilometer in size, hosts an ever-growing population of 24 thousand refugees, mostly the descendants of Palestinians ethnically cleansed by Zionist militias during the great catastrophe, or Nakba, of 1948.

The raid began with a tight siege, followed by an attack from multiple directions that resulted in the killing of an unarmed youth, Rebhi al-Shalabi, 19, then a 13-year-old child, Muhammad al-Amer.

The PA forces also killed Yazid Ja'ayseh, the commander of the Jenin Brigades, who had evaded Israeli assassination attempts for his leadership role in unifying all Palestinian Resistance fighters under the umbrella of a single group.

Expectedly, Israel is largely pleased with the PA's action against the Palestinian Resistance, though it expects more. "The Palestinian Authority has been acting resolutely against the Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters over the past several weeks, army and Shin Bet sources said, but the Israeli officials expressed the hope that their effectiveness could be enhanced," Haaretz reported.

Indeed, Israel had attempted to subdue Jenin 80 times in the last year alone, killing more than 220 people, Al Jazeera reported, citing Palestinian Ministry of Health sources.

By attacking Jenin, the PA is helping the Israeli army in more than one way: it is killing and detaining anti-Israeli occupation Resistance fighters, consuming the energy and resources of the Resistance, allowing Israel to spare thousands of soldiers so that they may carry on with the genocide in Gaza, and more.

For many, especially supporters of Palestine around the world, the PA's action is confusing, to say the least. Those surprised by the anti-Resistance policies of Mahmoud Abbas and his Authority, however, are driven by the erroneous assumption that the PA is a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and that it behaves in ways consistent with the collective aspirations of all Palestinians.

Nothing could be further from the truth. For many years, the PA has ceased playing any role that deviates from the interests of a small clique of pro-US and pro-Israeli wealthy elite who have enriched themselves, while millions of Palestinians continue to suffer an Israeli genocide in Gaza, and a violent system of apartheid and military occupation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The most telling and recent example is that, a short distance away from Jenin, illegal and violent Israeli Jewish settlers have burned the Bir Al-Walidin Mosque in the town of Murda, near Salfit – less than 70 kilometers from Jenin. Neither in this case, nor in any of the hundreds of settlers' pogroms carried out against Palestinians in the West Bank in the last year – or before – did the PA security carry out any action to confront the armed Jewish militias, nor, of course, the occupation army.

But how did the PA turn from a supposed national project – at least in theory – to another branch of the Israeli occupation?

It could be argued that the PA was structured since its establishment in 1994 as a body whose existence catered to benefit the Israeli occupation. There is much evidence that substantiates

this claim, including the arrests, torture and killing of dissenting Palestinians soon after the creation of the PA.

The CIA became directly involved in supporting the PA from the very start, expanding its role as early as 1996 following a series of Palestinian retaliatory attacks on Israeli targets in major cities. It was then that CIA director George Tenet became an important player in shaping the policies of the PA security forces, preparing it for massive crackdowns on Palestinian Resistance groups.

This involvement was a direct condition for US financial support under the Bill Clinton Administration – the kind of support that sowed the seeds of the Fatah-Hamas conflict, which reached its zenith in the summer of 2007.

The involvement of the US – and other armed forces of US client regimes in the region – became even more apparent under the leadership of US Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton, who helped train, prepare and equip the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (NSF), producing several battalions of young recruits (between 20 and 22 years old) to fight fellow Palestinians in the name of restoring law and order.

That supposed restoration of the law began in earnest as early as 2005 and continues until this day. Interestingly, this is the same language that the PA is currently using to justify its war on the Jenin refugee camp.

A spokesman for the PA security forces, Anwar Rajab recently told Al Jazeera that the objective of the raid on Jenin is to “pursue criminals” and lawbreakers, and to “prevent the camp from becoming a battleground like Gaza.”

Equating Resistance fighters with criminals and linking that supposed criminality to the Gaza Resistance is the typical PA discourse on resistance, a discourse that took the US and Israel years to craft and perfect – making the PA arguably the greatest achievement of Israel and the US in recent decades.

This behavior and language can be traced to a famous statement by General Dayton himself, who in a 2009 speech celebrated the US’s greatest creation in Palestine:

“And what we have created – and I say this in humility – what we have created are new men ... upon the return of these new men of Palestine, they have shown motivation, discipline and professionalism, and they have made such a difference.”

Indeed, the ‘new men of Palestine’ are making all the difference required by the US and Israel: they are fighting the very Palestinian Resistance that is defending Jenin against the Israeli onslaught, Nablus against the pogroms of armed settlers and Gaza against genocide.

None of these ‘new men’ – whose numbers are counted in the tens of thousands – have lifted a finger to help their brethren as they continue to starve to death in the Gaza Strip, tortured and raped en masse, burned alive in Jabaliya and Khan Yunis, and yet continue to fight and die in their thousands – alone.

To say that the PA has betrayed Palestinians, however, is an inaccurate statement. The PA was never set up, financed and armed by the US and Israel as a force of liberation, but as an obstacle to Palestinian freedom. We are witnessing the final proof of this claim. It is taking place in Jenin now; in fact, throughout the West Bank.

Of course, the PA will not be able to crush the Palestinian Resistance, which the supposedly mighty Israeli army has failed to subdue over the course of years. But the question remains: how long will the PA be allowed to serve the role of the enforcers of the Israeli occupation and the protector of settlers, while still promoting itself as the guardian of Palestinian rights, freedom and statehood?

DECEMBER 25, 2024

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