

مدتها ستة شهور .

ز- تقدم للأسرى المحررين حديثاً للمساهمة في بناء مستقبلهم المساعدات المالية الفورية لهم حسب الجدول التالي :

أقل من عام يصرف له	(\$500)
أكثر من عام وحتى ثلاث سنوات يصرف له	(\$1000)
أكثر من 3 سنوات وحتى 5 سنوات يصرف له	(\$2000)
أكثر من 5 سنوات وحتى 8 سنوات يصرف له	(\$3000)
أكثر من 8 سنوات وحتى 11 عام يصرف له	(\$4000)
أكثر من 11 عام وحتى 15 عام يصرف له	(\$5000)
أكثر من 15 عام وحتى 18 عام يصرف له	(\$6000)
أكثر من 18 عام وحتى 21 عام يصرف له	(\$7000)
أكثر من 21 عام وحتى 25 عام يصرف له	(\$8000)
أكثر من 25 عام يصرف له	(\$10000)

ح- الأسرى المحررين الذين لم يتقاضوا راتب شهري عن فترة اعتقالهم يمكنهم الحصول على مستحقاتهم عن هذه الفترة كمتأخرات عبر وزارة شؤون الأسرى والمحررين .

#### مادة (7)

يعتبر الراتب المقطوع حق شخصي للأسير المحرر أثناء حياته لا يجوز بأي حال من الأحوال تحويله إلى منتفع آخر .

#### مادة (8)

1- يوقف صرف الراتب المقطوع عن الأسير المحرر في الحالات التالية:-

- أ- إذا مارس أو اتضح انه يمارس مهنة أخرى تدر عليه أجراً دورياً.
  - ب- إذا أعيد اعتقاله من قبل جيش الاحتلال الإسرائيلي ، يحول في هذه الحالة إلى متضرر ويعتمد الراتب المصروف من وزارة شؤون الأسرى والمحررين .
  - ج- إذا مارس وظيفته في حالة وجود شاغر في أحد المؤسسات أو الأجهزة أو الوزارات الحكومية وينتقل بذلك إلى ملاك الجهة المعنية ويحصل على راتب كامل .
  - د- إذا توفي ينتفع ورثته من الراتب وفقاً للتالي :-
- الأسير المتزوج :

1- الزوجة والأبناء القصر ينتفعوا بما قيمته 75% من الراتب .

2- آخر الأبناء القصر أو البنات الغير متزوجات ينتفعوا بما قيمته 50% من الراتب .

الأسير الأعزب :

- 1- الوالد والوالدة (شرط أن يكون المتوفي هو المعيل لهما أثناء حياته) + الأشقاء القصر ينتفعوا بما نسبته 75% من الراتب .
- 2- آخر شقيق قاصر أو البنت غير المتزوجة ولا تعمل ينتفعوا بما نسبته 50% من الراتب .
- هـ- إذا طلب منه الالتحاق بأحد الجهات الرسمية التي بها شواغر ، ورفض الامتثال لهذا

# Direct Taxpayer Support for Terrorism

He was just a clown. Big heart. Loved kids. Evyatar Borovsky, age thirty-one, was devoted to helping people across Israel—people of any background. His way was psychodrama and other role-playing techniques calculated to coax victims, especially children, out of their traumatic fog. Often the children were survivors of terrorism. Evyatar was part of a so-called therapeutic theatrical troupe. Now, he was advancing in his skill, studying to become a certified medical clown. When dressed in his bright, rainbow-mottled costume, Evyatar could open the padlocked soul of a child struggling to rediscover his or her path back. Evyatar was just a big guy with a big heart—a very big heart.

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Terrorism plagues Israel as it does the world. But, whereas the United States struggles to keep the threat from crossing our borders, in Israel, the challenge is to keep the peril beyond the next hillside. In Israel, terror often lurks just across the street. To reduce the risk, the Jewish State has learned to build social and economic bridges that dilute discontent and promote peaceful coexistence. When bridges fail, Israel builds fences. When those fail, taller fences

are built. If ordinary fences don't work, barbed wire is added. Not enough? Add more barbed wire. If such measures prove insufficient in certain locations, construct walls. Sometimes the walls must be built ever taller to block snipers in elevated perches. Not tall enough? Make them taller still. Terror persisting? Add watch towers. Dig trenches. Install electric monitors and cameras. In Israel, high-tech and inanimate methods are always preferred to militarized options.

Concrete has been known to the Middle East for more than a thousand years. But in this century, a rash of suicide bombings began to leach into the quality of daily life. Kindergartens, children's buses, teenage nightclubs, popular pizzerias, and other civilian soft spots became the targets for Palestinian mass murderers in the West Bank, in West Jerusalem, or even the west side of a beachfront avenue in Tel Aviv. Mass murdering in rebellion-torn neighboring Arab realms—north, east, and south—multiplied to astronomical levels. The permeable nature of Israel's border membrane was reconsidered and remodeled. The perimeter was made taller, sturdier, and smarter.<sup>1</sup>

No society wants to construct a national fence. India erected one hundreds of miles long, separating the mainly Hindu nation from mainly Muslim Pakistan—it is so brightly floodlit, it can now be seen by NASA from outer space as an illuminated gash in the subcontinent. Turkey assembled an unbreachable barbed wire and concrete "Green Line" across the island of Cyprus to hermetically seal tens of thousands of Greek Orthodox Cypriots away from Muslim Turkish Cypriots—this following Turkey's 1974 invasion of the island; the wall only came down in 2009. Great Britain established a forty-foot-high "Peace Wall," cleaving the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland to divide the feuding parties. The United States is building a multibillion-dollar, 13-foot-high, metal protective wall, the "Secure Fence," along the Mexican border; it even tries to briefly bifurcate the ocean at Tijuana. Saudi Arabia is fast-tracking its horizon-wrapping Yemeni-Saudi Barrier, a barricade of barbed wire and concrete-reinforced pipe designed to span the length of the Kingdom's 1,100-mile border. The world is filled



with many other tall, obstructive barriers designed to keep warring or dangerous parties on the other side.<sup>2</sup>

Because of bridges, barriers, and social betterment, many potential outbreaks of violence have remained within the fragile Palestinian cryptodome. But the Palestinian Authority still lives and breathes its legacy as a former Turkish domain bypassed by the Industrial Revolution and neglected for centuries into the economic margins. During the Mandate in Palestine, Arabs were killed by their Arab neighbors for just intersecting with the Jewish economy; and modernity itself—even electricity—was considered a western infection. Today, Palestinian society fights endemic joblessness next door to one the world's fastest growing and most enterprising economies, one that Warren Buffett defined as “the leading, largest, and most promising investment hub outside the United States.”<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, “the Arab Street” is still the main thoroughfare of every city from Tunis to Amman and from Damascus to Beirut. Eventually, that incendiary road courses through Gaza City with an off-ramp into the heart of Ramallah. True, in an Arab society struggling to get ahead, tens of thousands of Palestinians are gainfully employed in Israeli factories, hotels, and other emerging opportunities. But this prosperity is often only accomplished stealthily and not pridefully. This same dynamic means that the booming Palestinian cash crop is “protest and agitation”—and worse.

Indeed, terrorism itself is a salient Palestinian industry, boasting high salaries and good benefits. For some—the perpetrators—it's a living. For others—the victims—it's a dying. Salaries and benefits escalate the more heinous the act of violence. Most surprising, this lethal economic mainstay is subsidized by American taxpayers and taxpayers of other countries, collectively known as “the donor countries.”

How does this work? Since the Palestinian Authority was created in 1993, it has treated terrorists imprisoned in Israel as “employees,” regardless of how revolting their crimes. Since the PA has no regular army to speak of, terrorists are its main militants—and are cherished by Palestinian society. The entire question of prisoners—far from being a source of collective revulsion—is among

the hottest buttons and most emotional topics in the Palestinian ecosystem.

Depending upon the timeframe, Israeli prisons and jails hold four thousand to five thousand security detainees, prisoners awaiting the judicial process, and convicted terrorists. Some are just caught up in dragnets, some are suspected of complicity in terrorist plots, and about one thousand carry confirmed blood on their hands. Many of the latter group have gleefully boasted of their horrific acts of murder against innocent civilians and are celebrated within Palestinian society for their violence against Israelis. Because there are so many security prisoners from so many villages, the subject reaches into average Arab households. “Prisoners Day” is April 17 and regarded as a national Palestinian observance.<sup>4</sup>

The prisoners glorified by Palestinian society are not common criminals convicted of transgressions as prosaic as theft, as horrific as honor killings against female family members, or as corrupt as trafficking in drugs or stolen goods. Rather, it is those who have perpetrated crimes of terror against Israeli civilians or infrastructure. Because, in the PA’s mindset, terrorists are undertaking a national duty, they are considered “employees” worthy of a salary. As such, those terrorists receive monthly payments from the Palestinian national treasury, that is, from public governmental funds that are officially and openly allocated by the Palestinian Authority. The monthly payments constitute the highest levels of personal compensation and family benefits anywhere in the Palestinian Territory, often dwarfing payments to civil servants. The salary expenditures amount to millions of dollars each month in direct payments to the terrorists.

Two national bodies exist to process those salaries and other benefits. The Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners Affairs, established in 1998, is an official bureaucracy of the Palestinian Authority, commanding as much priority as the Ministries of Health or Education—but with far more gravitas. The Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners Affairs works in tandem with the semi-official Prisoners Club, established in 1994. The Ministry dispenses the salaries. The Club functions as a vituperative advocate for the prisoners, and it is quite

willing to publically needle Palestinian leadership, generally, and the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs, specifically, into providing ever greater payments and benefits. The Ministry channels certain payments and benefits through the Prisoners Club.<sup>5</sup>

Terrorists' salaries have always totaled millions of dollars per month. As far back as 1995, total monthly payments to all security prisoners exceeded \$3 million per month. Beginning in 2002, the monthly amount swelled to \$9.6 million monthly—a 246 percent increase over the prior administration's payouts, according to records of the PA Ministry of Finance. The rate of increase in prison salaries grew at a far faster rate than the number of prisoners, stated the PA Minister of Finance with an element of satisfaction.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the twenty-first century, the salaries continued to consume millions of Palestinian budgetary dollars per month. In addition to salaries, between 2002 and 2004, the PA paid more than \$6 million to the Prisoners Club to cover legal fees, Israeli fines, and post-prison pensions. The Prisoners Club distributes its cash subventions to Palestinians in Israeli prisons and jails via “canteen accounts” and other modalities. In addition, the PA defrays the Prisoners Club's operating budget of more than \$40,000 per month.<sup>7</sup>

Like any salary, payments to prisoners follow a sliding scale based on “quality.” In this world, the more heinous the act of terrorism, the greater is the salary. In setting the salary level, the system allows the Israelis themselves to judge just how bloodcurdling the crime is. The more violent the terrorist act, the longer the Israeli prison sentence, and in turn, the higher the monthly compensation.<sup>8</sup>

Under the official schedule of payments, detention for up to three years fetches a salary of about 1,400 shekels, or almost \$400 per month. Prisoners who have been incarcerated between three and five years will be paid 2,000 shekels, or about \$560 monthly—a compensation level already higher than that for many ordinary West Bank jobs. Those who have committed more serious acts and are incarcerated for between five and ten years will be paid 4,000 shekels or more than \$1,100 monthly. Sentences of ten to fifteen years fetch salaries of 6,000 shekels, about \$1,690 a month. Even greater

acts of terrorism earning sentences between fifteen and twenty years earn 7,000 shekels or almost \$2,000.<sup>9</sup>

Among the worst cases, where the terrorist receives a prison term of between twenty and twenty-five years, the resulting compensation is 8,000 shekels or more than \$2,250 monthly. The most notorious terrorists imprisoned for between twenty-five and thirty years receive 10,000 shekels monthly or more than \$2,800 each month. In this hierarchy of mass murder, the most bloodstained offenders, receiving sentences of thirty years or more, are rewarded with the top wage, 12,000 shekels per month, or almost \$3,400 monthly—up to ten times the average pay earned by many working Palestinians.<sup>10</sup>

Prisoner salaries and funding, through both the Ministry and through the Prisoners Club, have always been a priority. During periodic financial crunches, the PA would advance the Prisoners Club funds before it cured the arrears in other social programs. Nevertheless, sometimes the Prisoners Club was unsatisfied with the pace of payments. On July 10, 2004, the Prisoners Club delivered two accusatory memos to Salam Fayyad, then the PA Finance Minister, entitled “Exceptional payment of the allotments of April and May 2004” and “Exceptional payment of lawyer fees for April and May 2004,” demanding additional funding despite what Fayyad described as “our lack of resources.” The letters accused Fayyad, personally, of an “inability or unwillingness ... to understand the resistance weight of the issue of prisoners.” Fayyad rebuffed both letters, sniping back in a speech, “We are facing a financial crisis, of which everybody is aware, but there are those that choose not to listen.” Fayyad continued, “The Palestinian Authority has always positioned the issue of prisoners on the top of its list of priorities.”<sup>11</sup>

Fayyad found the Prisoners Club attacks so vicious that he publicly declared, “The Ministry of Finance and I personally have been subjected lately to a tyrannical and unjust campaign based on the accusation by those that try to take advantage of the prisoners issue [to claim] that the ministry is neglecting prisoners.”<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, just four days after the letters, the PA transmitted a special check of \$175,000 to cover overdue Prisoners Club

expenses, and did so, “at a time when no ministry or PA institution received a payment,” as Fayyad bitterly complained.<sup>13</sup>

The venomous nature of the public squabble in 2004 and the accelerated millions of dollars spent on prisoners’ salaries was, on its face, just internecine politics. But it is also illustrative of the intense public, social, and governmental importance of paying terrorist salaries—and on time.

Later that year, in December 2004, the PA went further, regularizing into law its custom of paying terrorists. Chapter 1 of the *Law of Prisoners*, also known as *Resolution 2004/19*, narrowed the definition of a salaried prisoner to “Anyone imprisoned in the occupation’s [Israel’s] prisons as a result of his participation in the struggle against the occupation.”<sup>14</sup> This definition separated those considered national heroes, by virtue of their attacks, from common criminals. Otherwise, common thieves could earn high public wages just for stealing from their neighbors.

In an interview, Ministry of Prisoners spokesman Amr Nasser confirmed as much when he was asked to read aloud the definition in English. Reading from the law, Nasser recited: “A detainee is each and every person who is in an occupation prison based on his or her participation in the resistance to occupation.” This means crimes against Israel or Israelis. On his own, Nasser added, “It does not include common-law thieves and burglars. They are not included and are not part of the mandate of the Ministry.”<sup>15</sup>

From time to time, special salary supplements have been extended to qualified security prisoners. In 2009, a \$150-per-prisoner bonus was approved to mark the religious holiday of Eid al-Adha. President Mahmoud Abbas also directed that an extra \$190 “be added to the stipends given to Palestinians affiliated with PLO factions in Israeli prisons this month.”

Reporting on the additional emolument, the Palestinian news service *Ma’an* explained, “Each PLO-affiliated prisoner [already] receives [a special allocation of] \$238 per month, plus an extra \$71 if they are married, and an extra \$12 for each child. The stipend is paid by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) each month.”<sup>16</sup>



Supplemental to the generous salaries are many other financial, social, and honorary benefits to both the prisoner and his family. For example, in 2011, PA President Abbas bestowed a special \$2,000 gift on the family of Khaldoun Najib Samoudy, who was shot to death by Israeli soldiers before he could detonate two pipe bombs. In Palestinian society, special honors and financial tributes are extended to the families of suicide bombers or those shot before they can kill—that is, “martyrs.”<sup>17</sup>

As recently, as July 29, 2013, the Palestinian Authority responded with anger when an Israeli minister used the term “terrorists” in referring to prisoners released as part of a 2013 deal to resume face-to-face peace negotiations. “Terrorists are those who occupy the lands of another people and displace them by force and settle in their place,” the PA Ministry of Foreign Affairs railed. “Palestinian prisoners are strugglers for their freedom and not terrorists.”<sup>18</sup>

Beyond the adage “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter,” a penetrating reality is delivered to taxpayers in the United States of America and Europe. These terrorists’ salaries constitute enough monthly millions to consume between 4 and 6 percent of the Palestinian Authority’s annual budget, depending upon the measuring stick. That money does not come from the Palestinian national economy but from donor countries paying billions in financial aid to the Palestinian Authority.<sup>19</sup> All money is fungible, especially when the percentage of budget that the PA devotes to prisoner salaries is often greater than those allotted for key social welfare and educational programs and are prioritized as highly-visible, top-line expenditures.

In other words, taxpayers around the world are providing direct financial support for terrorists’ salaries. This concept is hardly a surprise to the Palestinian-monitoring community, leading members of the media, or those who follow Palestinian diplo-economics. As early as 2006, a major *New York Times* feature story, quoting a deputy in the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs, almost casually mentioned that the ministry “normally spends \$3 million to \$4 million a month to support prisoners and their families and to cover some legal fees.” *The New York Times* specified that the ministry “distrib-

utes allowances averaging \$340 a month to families whose breadwinners are in jail.”<sup>20</sup>

The Palestinian media has covered the topic routinely from time to time. For example, the Palestinian news service *Ma'an* published at least two articles in 2009 detailing special supplemental payments.<sup>21</sup>

On February 9, 2009, *The Jerusalem Post* ran a story headlined, “PA Paying Salaries to Hamas Men in Israel’s Prisons.” The article led, “The Palestinian Authority revealed on Wednesday that it was paying monthly salaries to Hamas prisoners held in Israeli jails. Ziad Abu Ein, deputy minister for prisoner affairs, said that for years, the PA had been dealing with the prisoners ‘professionally and without political considerations.’ ... According to Abu Ein, the Hamas ministry pays monthly salaries only to prisoners who are affiliated with the Islamist movement.”<sup>22</sup>

However, it was only in 2011 that the question of terrorist salaries leapt onto center stage. The watchdog known as *Palestinian Media Watch* (PMW) began scrutinizing *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, the official gazette of the Palestinian Authority, for prisoner salary references. PMW digested and translated into English a summary of existing government regulations, resolutions, policies, and special benefits enacted the previous year, which were summarized in Volume 90 of *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, published April 13, 2011.<sup>23</sup>

Among the relevant decrees summarized was Government Resolution #19, issued in 2010, which stated, “A released prisoner will be exempt from tuition fees at government schools and universities if he served a period of five years or more in prison. A released female prisoner who served at least three years in prison will be exempt from tuition fees at government schools and universities. These prisoners are entitled to transfer the exemption to one of their children, or to their spouse ... The Palestinian Authority is committed to providing the opportunity for academic study for prisoners in Israeli prisons, by covering all study expenses for all stages of university study available to prisoners. A prisoner’s children will be exempt from 80 percent of university tuition fees if the prisoner was sentenced to at least twenty years and has been

in prison for at least five years. Children of female prisoners will be exempt from 80 percent of university tuition fees if the prisoner was sentenced to at least ten years, and has served at least three years.”<sup>24</sup>

Government Resolution #21, issued in 2010, declared, “Every prisoner will be paid a uniform sum linked to the cost of living index, as a monthly expenditure. Additionally, every prisoner will be paid a uniform sum of 400 [Israeli] shekels for clothing. The sum will be paid twice a year, and will be added to the prisoner’s salary.”<sup>25</sup>

Government Resolution #23, issued in 2010, states, “Every prisoner will be granted a monthly salary, to be paid to him or to his family, on condition that he does not receive a salary from a [different] governmental or semi-governmental body or official institution ... The salary will be paid to the prisoner from the date of his arrest, and a special supplement will be paid to prisoners from Jerusalem and from the Interior [i.e., Israeli Arabs]; a spousal supplement will be paid, and a special supplement for children up to the age of 18.”<sup>26</sup>

All references to terrorist salaries use the Arabic word “*ratib*,” which means only one thing: “salary.” The same word, *ratib*, is used to describe the regular compensation granted civil servants and other employees when discussed in official Palestinian budget documents.<sup>27</sup>

*Palestinian Media Watch*’s revelations triggered uproars in both the British Parliament and the Norwegian Parliament.

The UK operates numerous financial assistance programs designed to cover the PA’s general budgetary needs. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been advanced. Citing PMW’s disclosures, British MP Robert Halfon wrote a letter of complaint to Britain’s Foreign Office and its Department for International Development demanding answers to whether or not taxpayer money was being utilized for terrorist salaries. International Development Minister Alan Duncan denied that British taxpayers were defraying salaries to terrorists, claiming, “The PA operates two social assistance programs to provide welfare payments to households who have lost their main breadwinner ... dependent spouses or children should

not be held responsible for the crimes of family members, or forced to live in poverty as a consequence.”<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, in Norway—a leading funder of the Palestinian budget—its Ministry of Foreign Affairs at first denied that terrorists were actually getting salaries.<sup>29</sup>

Continued coverage in major international media outlets kept the topic alive. *The Wall Street Journal* and *International Business Times*, as well as London’s *Daily Mail* and Norway’s government-owned NRK (also known Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation), devoted penetrating coverage. In 2012, Israel’s Channel 2 News, followed by an article in *The Times of Israel*, stated that the PA was expending 6 percent of its overall annual budget on terrorist salaries.

“Despite the Palestinian Authority’s financial hardships,” led *The Times of Israel*, “it spends tens of millions of shekels each month paying salaries to prisoners held in Israeli jails for security offenses and acts of terrorism against Israel—including mass murderers, and last year Prime Minister Salam Fayyad tripled their monthly pay. The PA also pays monthly stipends to the families of suicide bombers.” *The Times of Israel* recap, September 3, 2012, also detailed that, “As of May 2011, the PA spent NIS 18 million (\$4.5 million) per month on compensating Palestinian inmates in Israeli prisons and a further NIS 26 million (\$6.5 million) on payments to families of suicide bombers. In all, such payments cost the PA some 6 percent of its overall budget, Israel’s Channel 2 News reported ... citing documentation signed by Fayyad.”<sup>30</sup>

Hence, terrorist salaries—defrayed by US, European, and Asian taxpayer monies—have long been no secret at all.

In the United States, shortly after 9/11, it was becoming clear that funding terrorist salaries through the Palestinian Authority was a clear violation of American law. On September 23, 2001, President George W. Bush issued an executive order prohibiting the support of any organizations or individuals designated as terrorists. By 2003, it became clear to more than a few that American taxpayer money was directly supporting Palestinian terrorists. A number of “vetting” mandates were initiated to government auditors.

To many, these vetting mandates were almost cursory, based on a mere statistical sample.<sup>31</sup>

By 2005, several “vetting procedures” were written into the US laws attached to various forms of budgetary financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority and Gaza. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was charged with the duty to investigate two key avenues of that financial aid, the United States Agency for International Development, which channeled money into a spectrum of programs, and also monies going to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA. A GAO official explained that his agency “only audited USAID programs in the West Bank and Gaza and the State Department funding of UNRWA. We did not look at any other funding of the US government to Palestinian or UN entities. But what we looked at represents a large percentage of US monies.” The GAO determined the scope of the third-party “vetting” on what it examined, and it discovered that “vetting involves checking the names of individuals and organizations that implement USAID projects against databases and other information sources to determine if they are involved with terrorism.”<sup>32</sup>

A 2006 GAO investigation found that more needed to be done to comply with requirements impacting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that continued to reach the Palestinian Authority directly through a cornucopia of programs. In the background and repeatedly referenced in the 2006 report, were legislation and regulations “prohibiting the support of terrorists, and clauses in all prime awards prohibiting ... the use of US funds to recognize or honor terrorists.” Also covered was “the provision of cash to the Palestinian Authority.” The GAO’s 2006 report was itself titled “Recent Improvements Made, but USAID Should Do More to Help Ensure Aid Is Not Provided for Terrorist Activities in West Bank and Gaza.” It called for greater scrutiny and vetting.<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately, an elaborate maze-like organizational chart of vetting offices and procedures was salted across the State Department and related offices in both Washington and the Middle East. But the GAO concluded, “The timing of the RIG [Regional Inspec-



tor General] financial audits and certain other issues limited their usefulness to the mission for determining whether awardees had complied with the antiterrorism requirements.” It added, “Until recently, the mission’s vetting of individuals associated with award-ees was limited by the mission’s decision not to collect certain identifying information for key individuals.”<sup>34</sup>

A follow-up May 2009 GAO report was titled, “Measures to Prevent Inadvertent Payments to Terrorists under Palestinian Aid Programs Have Been Strengthened, but Some Weaknesses Remain.” The GAO’s 2009 report explained, “The U.S. government is one of the largest donors to Palestinians. It provided nearly \$575 million in assistance in fiscal year 2008.” Yet, the GAO found incomplete compliance with even the minimal paperwork requirements for vetting procedures—in other words, the inclusion of textual vetting “clauses.” In many cases, it seems, federal agencies and offices merely went through the motions. “An estimated 17 percent of sub-awards had insufficient evidence to assess compliance related to mandatory clauses,” the GAO concluded. “For the remaining sub-awards, an estimated 5 percent did not contain the mandatory clauses at the time of the award. The GAO also found limitations in the agency’s monitoring of sub-awards for inclusion of mandatory clauses.”<sup>35</sup>

Most tellingly, the GAO confined itself to textual vetting clauses. There is no mention in any GAO report of the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs or the Prisoners Club, the two prime portals for millions in dollars in monthly terrorist salaries. A GAO official explained that his agency’s inquiry was limited in its scope to monies involving USAID and UNRWA—not the PA itself. Moreover, a GAO official asserted, “Following the 2009 report, we were confident that the agencies made the changes we asked them to make. As of 2012, we closed our recommendations as implemented.”<sup>36</sup>

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 contains a strict anti-terrorist vetting requirement. In Section 7039(b), the law states, “The obligation of funds appropriated by this Act under the heading ‘Economic Support Fund’ for assistance for the West Bank and Gaza, the Secretary of State shall take all appropriate steps

to ensure that such assistance is not provided to or through any individual, private or government entity, or educational institution that the Secretary knows or has reason to believe advocates, plans, sponsors, engages in, or has engaged in, terrorist activity nor, with respect to private entities or educational institutions, those that have as a principal officer of the entity's governing board or governing board of trustees any individual that has been determined to be involved in, or advocating terrorist activity or determined to be a member of a designated foreign terrorist organization." In Subsection (c), Prohibition, the act clearly declares, "None of the funds appropriated under ... this Act for assistance under the West Bank and Gaza Program may be made available for the purpose of recognizing or otherwise honoring individuals who commit, or have committed acts of terrorism."<sup>37</sup>

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Standing astride the prodigious monies extended by Western governments in the form of grants and aid packages are vast pools of financing from the Arab world that find their way directly into Palestinian Authority coffers, as well as into a spectrum of Palestinian NGOs and Israeli NGOs. A superhighway of money goes directly from Israel's greatest adversaries into a vast interchange where it comingles with dollars, shekels, Euros, and yen from the finest financial nameplates and charitable funds in the world. This merged money courses throughout Israel with exit ramps into some of the most benevolent Arab programs—as well as those that stoke violence and confrontation.

A central financial crossroads for Arab and Islamic money in Israel is the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Established in December 1973, just after the Yom Kippur War, the multinational institution was created to foster financial projects in accordance with Sharia Law, according to the tenets of Islam. Membership of the bank is comprised of fifty-six countries in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The driving member, Saudi Arabia, controls 23.61 percent, according to IDB records. The second highest share ownership is Libya's

at 9.47 percent, followed by Iran with 8.28 percent. About half the other owners hold less than one percent.<sup>38</sup> Most, but not all, of the member states are avowed opponents of the Jewish State's very existence.

A series of protracted Palestinian riots and related unrest ignited in September 2000, collectively referred to as the Second Intifada or Al-Aqsa Intifada. *Intifada* means uprising. In December 2000, a few months after the onset of the riots, Arab ministers at a Cairo summit agreed to "economic decisions ... to support the Intifada," according to the semi-official Saudi weekly *Ain-al-Yaqeen*. Two multimillion-dollar funds were created to support the resistance: the Al-Quds Intifada Fund and Al-Aqsa Fund "to assert the comprehensive Arab support for the Palestinian people in face of continuous Israeli aggression." Their purpose was to support *Mujahedeen*—"freedom fighters"—and "martyrs," the term commonly given to suicide bombers. Dominant financial support for the twin funds was advanced by the Saudis, who announced, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [has] always maintained its support to the Intifada." Initial contributions amounted to \$40 million, chiefly emanating from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.<sup>39</sup>

The Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah was chosen to administer and manage both the Al-Quds Intifada Fund and Al-Aqsa Fund. The Secretary General of the Arab League said the total amount collected for the two funds had reached \$693 million, disclosing that "there were other financial donations from Arab businessmen, and these donations are apart from the funds' capital." Some years later, an internal document from the Islamic Development Bank stated, "*Al-Quds Intifada* [Fund] aims at providing assistance to the families of martyrs and wounded persons and to provide health care and education services to their children. The objective of [the] Al-Aqsa Fund is to finance projects aimed at preserving the Arab and Islamic identity of the City of Jerusalem and to enable the Palestinian economy to build its capacity, stand on its own against the Israeli onslaught, and gradually disengage from Israeli economy. The capitals of Al-Quds Intifada Fund and Al-Aqsa Fund are \$200 million and \$800 million respectively."<sup>40</sup>

Explaining who the recipients were, a Saudi statement read, “Financial assistance was disbursed to 28 families of the martyrs, 248 injured people,” as well as “232 families whose houses were demolished by the Israeli occupying forces and 29 Palestinian charitable societies in charge of distributing food baskets to the needy people.” Saudi officials added later that the funds had benefited “664 martyrs’ families and 201 of the POW’s [prisoner] families.” The Islamic Development Bank reported that “these families receive monthly allocations to ensure the minimum of their needs.”<sup>41</sup>

An Islamic Development Bank summary asserted that from December 2000 to June 2006, “total contributions to the Fund amounted to \$609.4 million.” That enormous sum covers all needs, from endowment building to identity-fortifying resistance efforts such as construction to financing a range of confrontations that span the gamut from ordinary riots to martyrdom. Monies channeled to prisoners and the families of martyrs are disbursed through both the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority’s ministries, including its Ministry of Prisoners Affairs. While those contributions were clearly Intifada funds, separate tranches of funding from the same Islamic Development Bank were funneled into various charitable works via two major top line Arab NGOs: The Welfare Association and the NGO Development Center. Both the Welfare Association and the NGO Development Center also receive money directly and indirectly from the most prestigious donors in the world, such as UNESCO, The British Lottery, Ford Foundation, and many governmental units, often via the Welfare Association of the UK.<sup>42</sup>

Welfare Association and NGO Development Center funding also finds its way to several Israeli beneficiaries that are also funded by the New Israel Fund. These include B’Tselem and Adalah. Ironically, some of the same Israel-based recipients who receive American tax-subsidized grants from the New Israel Fund have been selected for support by the most influential sovereign Arab and Islamic charitable organizations representing national treasuries committed to erasing the existence of Israel.<sup>43</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

It is clear that hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been used both legally and illegally to fund, honor, and salary convicted terrorists. Disgorgement, clawback, and recovery of illegal taxpayer expenditures could deprive the Palestinian Authority of billions. Moreover, to comply with long-standing law and receive additional legal funding, the PA would need to de-constitute its own Ministry of Prisoners and sever all connection to its semi-official Prisoners Club and any substitute, successor, surrogate, stand-in, shadow, or subvention—direct, indirect, or in effect. The whole system from A to Z would have to end to be legitimate under a complex of American laws. Then, when the smoke settled, it would take years of investigation by the US State Department to unravel how so many officials winked, nodded, and slept through so many years of this funding.

To determine just how substantial were the terrorist salaries in the bigger picture required an examination of scores of internal audit documents, going back years, from the Palestinian Authority's Finance Ministry's monthly reports. Amid the *mélange* of shape-shifting numbers and month-to-month tallies that rose and fell with various financial crises, shortages, and monetary infusions, it was clear that the Ministry of Prisoners is among the PA's most salient line items.

For example, in January 2012 alone, out of a Social Service budget of \$119 million, more than \$8.7 million was allocated to the Ministry of Prisoners; of that sum, according to Table 6A of the review, \$6.56 million was “transferred” to prisoners—hence the overwhelming majority of the budgeted funds paid were not for bureaucratic office expenditures, but for actual terrorist salaries. All told, funding for the Ministry of Prisoners was about ten times greater than the allocation for Ministry of Labor, and about half as large as that for the Ministry of Social Affairs.<sup>44</sup> With ups and downs for financial peaks and valleys, those January 2012 numbers were indicative.

A Palestinian Authority Minister of Information spokesperson confirmed in a May 2013 interview, speaking English, “There has been a great deal of talk about donor money to support terror-



ism by these salaries. The issue has been raised this year and last year.”<sup>45</sup>

Half-hearted investigations have not only percolated through the US government. The issue has roiled in London, Oslo, and other capitals where media reports and open Palestinian declarations have some taxpayers beginning to reach an inescapable conclusion: some of their tax dollars at work end up as salaries in the pockets of terrorists.

As a palliative, the Palestinian Authority recently began replacing the term *ratib*—Arabic for “salary”—with other words connoting “social welfare,” asserting the recipients were actually prisoners’ wives and children—not prisoners themselves. Minister of State Alan Duncan, in a letter to Britain’s Parliament, defended the PA’s program as just family welfare. Similarly, Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide answered his parliament with the explanation that the PA payments were merely family welfare stipends.<sup>46</sup>

But further investigation revealed that the monies were in fact not paid to families but to the terrorists themselves and solely as salaries. Nearly two thirds of the existing prisoners are unmarried without children and not the head of households, according to a Ministry of Prisoners summary reported by *al-Quds* newspaper January 3, 2010. “The Ministry of Prisoners’ Affairs in Ramallah said that there are 2,805 married prisoners, representing 37.4 percent of the total number. There are 4,695 unmarried prisoners, representing 62.6 percent,” reported *al-Quds*. Single and married prisoners received the identical salary, according to regulations.<sup>47</sup> Hence, the compensation is not based on family need, but strictly on the severity of sentence and the corresponding level of terror.

It is the prisoner who decides who shall receive and administer the salary on his behalf. The mechanism of payment involves a *wakil*, that is, a power of attorney, allowing the prisoner complete authority over the salary. Regulation #18 is explicit. Paragraph 1 defines, “Authorized agent: The person who is authorized to receive the salary in place of the prisoner.”<sup>48</sup>

The regulation adds in paragraph 5, “If the prisoner is married, his wife will be his authorized agent,” but the law provides personal-

ized exemption language, specifying, “Unless the prisoner appoints someone else instead of her.” The text goes on, “If the prisoner is not married, one of his parents will be the authorized agent. The prisoner determines which one of them or any other person [will be the authorized agent], in the event of a dispute. Authorization of an agent is done by an authorization of agent [form] issued by the Red Cross, that is signed by the prisoner, or by a special authorization of agent signed by him and approved by a lawyer of the Ministry [of Prisoners Affairs] and by the General Administration for Legal Matters of the Ministry. It will be valid for use by the Ministry only for the purpose of the salary.” The word *ratib* was used throughout.<sup>49</sup>

The Palestinian tax code specifies that prisoners will pay “income taxes” and typical “income tax withholding” because their PA monies are ordinary salary. June 19, 2011, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, the Palestinian Authority’s official gazette, reported “A meeting was held between the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs and the Ministry of Finance [wherein] several [financial] issues were clarified: The [withholding] tax applies to every citizen who receives income from PA coffers; it is within the framework of the Income Tax Act; and begins with salaries over 2,400 shekels [about \$674] per month. The beginning rate is 5 percent for salaries over that amount, that is, 2,400 shekels. The tax rate is graduated, reaching at most only 10 percent of prisoners’ salaries. The Minister of Prisoners Affairs said that the prisoners in the [Israeli] prisons and their families are subject to the [withholding tax] law, and [added that] the salary raise this year had been welcomed with great satisfaction among the prisoners and their families.” The word *ratib* was used throughout.

Most strikingly, *Palestinian Media Watch* discovered several telling interviews, TV reports, and official statements that undercut any attempt to mask the payments as anything but direct salary to the terrorists themselves for use as they saw fit.

The first was a sort of “consumer help” journalistic investigation of the type one might see on television any evening. But this one featured a leading Palestinian TV personality investigating the case of a prisoner who, because of a personal dispute, had forsaken his wife and children by not assigning her that highly-sought sal-

ary via a power of attorney. With a tense movie score in the background, and produced in a dramatic “you are there” format, the prisoner’s wife is depicted, her face pixilated, complaining of financial abandonment by her husband. He had assigned the power of attorney for his salary to others, and she was now left to fend for herself. “A year and a half ago, I went to the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs,” the wife complains in the footage, adding “Their answer was, ‘Your husband transfers it to the person he wants. It’s in his power not to transfer [it to you], and we can’t do anything about it.’” She added, “It’s not just me, this is a problem that many of the prisoners’ wives and children suffer from—from the transfer of his salary, the prisoner’s salary.” The word *ratib*, spoken by both the forlorn wife and a senior Ministry of Prisoners official, can be distinctly understood in the video, even by non-Arabic speakers.<sup>50</sup>

In a second TV interview in March 2012, a Palestinian on-air host conducted a telephone interview with a disgruntled ex-prisoner shortly after his release as part of the Gilad Shalit prisoner ransom. Iyad Abu Khaizaran spent twenty-two years in an Israeli prison after stabbing to death a 76-year-old Tel Aviv man. His complaint was that his salary dropped by half once he was released. An agitated Iyad protested on air on behalf of himself and his cohorts. “Since the day we were released from prison,” Iyad complains, “we were given [only] half a salary ... We killed Jews. I personally killed Jews. I killed settlers, and I injured soldiers. My house was destroyed. I have eleven bullets in my body. I served twenty-two years in Israeli prisons. The PA, which presents itself as responsible for the nation, must be faithful to everyone.” The TV host sympathetically presses, “You, like the other [prisoners], did you receive salaries in the prisons?” Iyad replies, “Yes.” After a further exchange to determine the terrorist’s rightful compensation regardless of organizational affiliation, the host recaps, “In other words, from two thousand, I mean, all the organizations, without exception, whether it was Fatah or Hamas, supporters of Abbas or not supporters of Abbas, they all received salaries—or not?” Iyad answered, “Yes, yes they did.”<sup>51</sup>

In December 2012, when the Palestinian Authority tried to substitute social welfare terms for *ratib*, the term for salary, both

Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa Karake and Prisoners Club chairman Qadura Fares took umbrage. They rebuked the verbal diminution of their constituency—that is, the prisoners. “[Minister of Prisoners Affairs Issa] Karake denies rumors about changing *salaries* [*rawatib*, the Arabic plural for salaries is used,] into social assistance,” reported WAFA, the official Palestinian Authority news agency on December 27, 2012. Karake added that the PA had recognized that “the prisoners’ cause is central, and has authorized regulations to support and protect them out of esteem for their sacrifice and struggle.”

At the same time, Prisoners’ Club Chairman Fares, commenting to the *al-Quds* Internet edition, insisted on using the term *ratib*, when describing a new version of the law “which considers payments made to prisoners as *salary* to which no other term applies.”<sup>52</sup>

A few days later, Wattan TV aired another interview with Karake. The TV host posited, “You speak of a permanent salary for every [released] prisoner who was in prison for more than five years, and he gets his salary while he sits at home. Some of them are in the prime of their lives and could get a job and work. Why not use him in the workforce and give him a salary?”

Karake replies, “That’s right. I presented it to the government and we decided to give preference to employ these prisoners ... in order to make the prisoner into a productive person.”

The host replied, “Do we have the number of prisoners who get full monthly salaries?”

Karake answered, “About 4,000.”

To this, the host quips, “That’s an army.”

Karake conceded, “Yes, that’s a big number, and it’s growing.”

Almost incredulous, the host responded, “They don’t work. They just collect a salary.”

Karake qualified, “Some work.”

But the host retorted, “A small number.”

To this, Karake rejoined, “Some volunteer and work in different institutions.”<sup>53</sup>

In an interview, I asked Prisoners Club chairman Qares what

type of employment training was being provided to ex-prisoners “beyond salary.”

Qares replied, “Beyond salary? We have a special garage for auto repair training, plus a college, Shahid Abu Jihad Martyr College in Ramallah, with some branches in Tulkarm, Nablus, and Jenin. The ex-prisoners learn graphic design, electricity and, as I say, car repair, and we help with job placement. We are an NGO—but not really. We receive government funding for our Legal Unit—it’s twenty-eight lawyers in ten West Bank offices. But we need much more money to help our prisoners and ex-prisoners.”<sup>54</sup>

Eventually, it became clear to some officials in Europe that the Palestinian Authority was being disingenuous in its responses and denials. They concluded that European tax dollars were, in fact, paying terrorist salaries. In March 2013, Norwegian Foreign Minister Eide was compelled to admit to NRK-TV that his office was misinformed by the Palestinian Authority. Eide stated, “The insufficient information [we] first received [from the PA]; I think that is very unfortunate.” NRK was among those that originally demanded answers from the Foreign Ministry following the *Palestinian Media Watch* revelations. NRK’s March 21, 2013, report stated, “At first, the Foreign Ministry denied such a program exists. But after checking with Palestine, it all looks somewhat different.” On camera, Eide admits, “I certainly have not had documented that it [the money] doesn’t go to people who have been convicted of terror, and information has been given that those who are [imprisoned] for many years receive more money than those [imprisoned for] less. That is precisely why we, along with the UK, have asked [the PA] for even more detailed information in a letter we recently sent the PA.”<sup>55</sup>

On March 19, 2013, Eide transmitted an updated statement to the Norwegian Parliament: “Norway and the UK agreed on drawing up a joint Norwegian-British letter to the Palestinian Authority (PA) with a series of detailed questions about the [support] program [for prisoners]. This letter has been delivered to the PA today.” He added, “I have brought up the matter directly with Prime Minister Fayyad.” Eide credited *Palestinian Media Watch* for the information.<sup>56</sup>



Palestinian officials reacted with defiance to any effort to end the salaries. “Deputy Minister of Prisoners Affairs Ziyad Abu Ein declared to satellite TV network Hona Al-Quds: ‘If the financial assistance and support to the PA are stopped, the [payment] of salaries (*Rawatib*) and allowances (*Mukhassasat*) to Palestinian prisoners will not be stopped, whatever the cost may be. The prisoners are our joy. We will sacrifice everything for them and continue to provide for their families.’”<sup>57</sup>

The demand by European and other nations to spend their billions on peaceful projects and not terrorist salaries has been derisively dubbed “donor filth” by some in the Palestinian intelligentsia. In a telling March 7, 2013, Palestinian TV interview about cultural matters, Abd Al-Fattah Abu Srou, Al-Rowwad Theater Director and Head of the Palestinian Actors’ Union, stated, “The theater’s purpose is not to be diplomatic and not to make peace between the nations ... And not to accept donors’ dictates for projects and programs that have nothing to do with us or with our Palestinian nation’s priorities.”

The TV host responded, “I ask you: ‘The donor’s filth’—in quotation marks or without quotation marks—how has it affected our theater and culture in Palestine?”

Abu Srou answered, “Unfortunately it has affected many institutions, not only the theater. It has affected many cultural institutions—with agendas and projects that have nothing to do with us. The EU works a lot on normalization projects,” adding, “under the name of ‘peace.’”<sup>58</sup>

The culture that lionizes terrorists with substantial public salaries, pensions, public-square and baby namings, and triumphant receptions upon their release is fortified by the expectation that eventually their men will come home—to a hero’s welcome. Indeed, prisoners are diplo-economic currency. Many Palestinian-Israeli diplomatic efforts include a release of prisoners as a bargaining chip. For example, the 1994 Agreement on Gaza Strip and Jericho Area included, in Article 10, this stipulation: “Upon the signing of this Agreement, Israel will release, or turn over, to the Palestinian Authority within a period of 5 weeks, about 5,000 Pal-

estinian detainees and prisoners, residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Those released will be free to return to their homes anywhere in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Prisoners turned over to the Palestinian Authority shall be obliged to remain in the Gaza Strip or the Jericho Area for the remainder of their sentence.”<sup>59</sup>

The 1999 Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum stated, “The Government of Israel shall release Palestinian and other prisoners who committed their offences prior to September 13, 1993, and were arrested prior to May 4, 1994. The Joint Committee shall agree on the names of those who will be released in the first two stages ... The first stage of release of prisoners shall ... consist of 200 prisoners. The second stage ... shall consist of 150 prisoners.”<sup>60</sup>

In 2011, the ransom for kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Shalit required the release of 1,027 terrorists, including numerous murderers of innocent civilians. In 2013, Israel agreed to Palestinian demands to release 104 security prisoners, many with “blood on their hands,” in exchange for a resumption of peace talks. The credentials of the released killers ran the dreadful gamut: an axe to the head; a knife in the back; an IED by the road; a Molotov cocktail into a bus; a rope around the neck; a beating with a hoe; a stabbing with pruning shears—mostly civilians, many children or elderly. For victim families, this periodic political reward heightens their grief forever. Disconsolate family protests are held in Israel’s public squares and posted to the Internet—but to no avail in the face of a cabinet decision, albeit a painful one, that comes with regularity.<sup>61</sup>

The Israeli government and society are left with the stark, visceral reality that the Palestinians seem to value prisoners as much if not more than peace and will only negotiate the latter in exchange for the former. All this means that becoming a terrorist offers a good wage sponsored by foreign-country taxes, plus a nice pension, good family benefits, local celebrity, and the seemingly sure prospect of early release to a local fireworks reception as soon as politics make it “their turn.” In this way, every new terrorist act disrupts the peace and, therefore, makes it more likely that a political release is in the offing—like a down payment on release for the previous man.

Paying it forward or paying it backward, the system depends upon ample outside funding from Western governments.

Every assassination, ambush, arson, or attack is a national tragedy for Israel. The news of each incident noisily topples through Israeli society like so many precarious, protective dominoes thudding. In bad times, terrorist acts can happen daily. In less bad times, they blister through the backdrop only occasionally. During 2013, a series of bridges and blockades, well-built high walls and well-constructed good wills, economic success and technologic security have all combined to make the random killings much less frequent. Easy to believe it doesn't happen much. When I was in Jerusalem in spring 2013, such an incident had not happened for almost eighteen months. To the casual observer, it can seem like just a litany of horrible headlines from the awful distant past.

\* \* \* \* \*

Evyatar Borovsky, 31, was a clown at heart. Big heart. In his pocket, he always carried two puppet eyes. Just slip them on the fingers, and make a child laugh. Especially a child too hurt to smile and too traumatized to see the sun through his or her own darkness. Nicknamed *Napo*, Evyatar was a therapeutic clown. His mission was to inject careful syringes of humor and comic diversion into those who needed it most—the children. He was known everywhere for the lustrous smile he always brought into the room. His five kids adored him. How about a funny daddy? Evyatar's face would burst into a goofy grimace. Evyatar's father always expected the joke from his son.<sup>62</sup>

Tulkarm is a Palestinian city of an estimated 60,000 residents nestled in the hills not far from the Mediterranean, about an hour northwest of Jerusalem. The town traces its history to the Canaanite period and also enjoys Roman, Crusader, and Ottoman traditions. Today, the city—which hosts the West Bank's second-largest refugee camp—is considered a flashpoint.<sup>63</sup> Many residents are eager to work in the robust Israeli economy. But others are devoted to intense militancy.

Shuka is a village near Tulkarm. The Zaghal family, an improv-

erished Arab family in Shuka, had been “shamed” because a son, Abdulfattah, had been convicted by Palestinians of spying for Israel and jailed. Among Palestinians, “collaboration” with the Zionists is considered the lowest of crimes. After a year in jail, Palestinian authorities, as a humanitarian gesture, paroled Abdulfattah back to his poverty-gripped family so he could help the household. But the stigma of being an Israeli spy came with him. Abdulfattah’s twenty-one-year-old brother, Salam, would make a very different mark for the family. Once, he tried to plant a bomb. That landed Salam in an Israeli prison for more than three years. Salam had been released just a few months earlier. But now he had no job and no economic prospects. Abdulfattah remembered that his brother increasingly began “talking more and more about the martyrdom of the prisoners in Israeli jails.”<sup>64</sup>

April 30, 2013, shortly after dawn, Salam Zaghal jumped onto a bus for the long drive to Tapuach Junction. He carried a blue plastic bag. Two items were secreted inside the bag.<sup>65</sup>

Tapuach Junction is a major highway crossroads about twenty-seven miles, or about an hour by car, from Jerusalem. The Book of Joshua in 12:17 cites Tapuach and its King as among the first encountered by the ancient Israelites. More than just a crossroads, Tapuach is an important hitchhiking nexus for Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians, those from the settlements and those from the Arab villages. As such, this simple stretch of nondescript roadway is ordinarily a perfect corridor of coexistence. It is a place where Palestinian day laborers and ordinary employees from the West Bank, high tech Israeli technocrats and office workers, all gather to grab a ride.<sup>66</sup> The junction is also good for a medical clown who needs to catch a lift.

On April 30, 2013, the man with a big heart, Evyatar, was waiting like many others for a ride. As usual, the Palestinians assembled in one spot, and the Israelis assembled in another, all trying to thumb their rides. Recently, the security checkpoint, about thirty paces from where Evyatar was standing, had been removed in an effort to normalize life. It was shortly after eight in the morning.<sup>67</sup>

Neither Evyatar nor Salam had ever met. But soon they would.

Zaghal asked to be dropped about sixty meters down the way from the intersection. When he stepped off the bus, he lit a cigarette. Then Zaghal texted his brother Abdulfattah. “My dear brother, take care of dad, mom and my sister, and keep your head up.” Zaghal sent a second text to his family: “Forgive me in life, in death, and in the end of days.” Then he broke his phone so no one would call back and dissuade him.<sup>68</sup>

Morning was now everywhere. It was 8:15 a.m., and the sun had emerged over the hills. Evyatar was standing about, looking somewhere over there, oblivious to the nearby Arab hitchhikers congregated about in gaggles. Zaghal approached, carrying his blue plastic bag, which contained two items: a piece of paper—a prosecution notice from a previous run-in with Israeli security, and the other thing. Zaghal reached in for the other thing. It was a kitchen knife almost eight inches long. Suddenly, he screamed, “Allahu Akbar!” and “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.” Salam positioned himself directly in front of Evyatar and plunged the metal blade directly into Evyatar’s stomach and then again deep into his chest. A moment later, the clown with a big heart lay on the ground, his life leaking quickly onto the asphalt. Salam then grabbed Evyatar’s gun, but before he could inflict more carnage, nearby Border Guards shot him. The killer was not shot in the head or upper body, but in the leg. In an instant, Evyatar—the clown with the big heart—was gone, stabbed to death. As for Salam, he was rushed to an Israeli hospital with a non-life-threatening leg wound. There, Salam received Israel’s world-renowned medical attention.<sup>69</sup>

Some moments later, in Jerusalem, I received a text on my Israeli phone. I ignored it. But I noticed several others in the hotel lobby suddenly look down at their phones. So I also glanced at my text. Then, I received a phone call as did others throughout Israel. People I was meeting with that very hour knew Evyatar’s family; their kids played together. In Israel, everyone seems to know everyone or someone close to someone until it becomes *everyone*.

Quickly, the Zaghal family expressed joy at their son’s act. Surrounded by a circle of comforting Shuka villagers, Salam’s elderly

father Assad, declared, “It was destiny, and we take pride in him as a family. What he [Salam] did is a duty for all Palestinians living with the aggression of the army and settlers.”<sup>70</sup>

Responsibility was immediately broadcast by the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, the militant wing of President Abbas’s Fatah party. “With dignity, honor, and profound respect,” the statement proclaimed, “the al-Aqsa Brigades in Palestine declares its full responsibility for the killing of the settler in the heroic operation ... this morning carried out by the liberated prisoner—the hero, Salam Assad Zaghāl.” The proclamation added that such “quality operations” were “a gift to all prisoners in the occupation prisons.” When the Palestinian news media carried news of the killing, Palestinian readers rejoiced, regaling the comment section with such snippets as, “May each illegal settler thief meet his end this way. FREE PALESTINE!”<sup>71</sup>

Salam was also promptly exalted on Fatah’s Facebook page. “The youth Salam al-Zaghāl, who stabbed the settler at the al-Za’atara [Tapuach] military checkpoint, comes from the village of Shuka, located in the Tulkarm District. He is a released prisoner who sat in the occupation’s prisons for four years. Peace be upon you, on the day of your birth, and upon the day of your arrest and on the day you will go free.”<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, the Borovsky family raced the sunset, as Jewish law requires. Evyatar’s body was rushed back to his village near Haifa in the north for the emotional burial. Hundreds of Israelis crowded the graveside. Wrapped in a shroud, surrounded by family and friends, and many who probably did not even know him, Evyatar with the big heart—stabbed to death—was carried to his final resting place. A friend haplessly brought the extra finger eyes which had just arrived from America; Evyatar had been planning to do more finger puppetry. Evyatar’s father spoke with incredulity, “I can’t believe that I’m here. Surely tonight you’ll get up—you’ll laugh and say, ‘I fooled you.’ That’s what you always did, made everyone happy.”<sup>73</sup>

Evyatar’s widow, Tzovia, bent over her husband in lamentation waving five fingers. “Five orphans he left behind! Five orphans!



Five orphans!” she cried, as wailing from other women fortified her anguish, and the men’s bleak faces tried to remain tough and taut. A woman gripped her face with her left hand as the pain reached the surface. One of Evyatar’s five young boys rested his head upon his father’s enshrouded chest. His ear was down on the chest, but no sound came.<sup>74</sup>

Later, in a court hearing, Tzovia said of her husband’s killer, “It is really useless to put him in jail, when one takes into account that he will be released in one swap or another, and will use his time there for academic studies free of charge, and the high standard of living that the state of Israel gives the murderers of its citizens. The continued court proceedings and jailing of the murderer until the next release of murderers, which will take place sooner or later, creates a false impression of justice, when the reality is that of a circus.”<sup>75</sup>

One man with a big heart is gone. One man with a big knife is in prison. For the medical clown, writers will write, children and the widow will remember, engraved plaques will be laid. For the killer, his—and his family’s—money problems are over. One moment he was penniless without a job. Now he enjoys one of the best salaries in the land. His salary is assured, based on a seemingly endless supply of cash. Those who fund his salary are not nearby—they are in the United States, Great Britain, Norway, and other nations.

When one asks who is financing the flames, the stunning answer can be seen with crystal clarity. It is us.